THE FAMOUS MR. KEACH:
BENJAMIN KEACH AND HIS INFLUENCE ON CONGREGATIONAL
SINGING IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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James Patrick Carnes
Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) was a seventeenth-century preacher and hymn writer. He is considered responsible for the introduction and continued use of hymns, as distinct from psalms and paraphrases, in the English Nonconformist churches in the late seventeenth century, and is remembered as the provider of a well-rounded body of hymns for congregational worship.

This thesis reviews the historical climate of seventeenth-century England, and discusses Keach's life in terms of that background. Keach's influence on congregational hymn singing, hymn writers, preaching, and education is also examined.

Keach's writings and contributions to hymn singing are little known today. This thesis points out the significance of these writings and hymns to seventeenth-century religious life.
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Plate 1. Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704, from his *Spiritual Melody, Containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London: John Hancock, 1691).
Chapter I

THE HISTORICAL CLIMATE OF THE SIXTEENTH AND
SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES IN ENGLAND

The first fullscale attempt at the reformation of
the church in England was embarked upon by Henry VIII in 1583
with the aid of a subservient parliament. Although he had no
intention of reforming the doctrine of the Church, he was
determined to get rid of papal jurisdiction. The political
aspect of his reformation may be seen in his appointment of
Thomas Cromwell, who was to plunder the monasteries, as Vicar-
General in Spiritual Matters. His determination to abide by
Roman doctrine may be seen from the Act of Six Articles (1539)
which (1) imposed the death penalty on all who denied transub-
stantiation, and (2) made the repudiation of clerical celibacy,
auricular confession, and private masses a felony.\(^1\)

In the area of music in the church, however, there
was little if any reform. There was no new, distinctive
liturgy and composers continued to write in the style then
current. Musicians fared rather well under Henry, who was
something of a musician himself. He increased the staff of

the Chapel Royal and even employed a small choir to sing the daily mass while accompanying him on his travels. In 1520 the entire Chapel Royal choir travelled to France and joined with the Chappelle du Musique du Roi to sing for the Kings of England and France.²

Toward the close of Henry's reign many arose who desired a more thorough reformation. These united with the boy King, Edward VI, who succeeded his father in 1547. Many who had been driven into exile on the continent by Henry's acts now came back, bringing with them the doctrines of Lutheran Germany and Calvinistic Zurich, Geneva, and Strasbourg.³

Under Edward a thorough attempt was made to purge the English church of its abuses. The Act of Six Articles was immediately repealed. In its place were formulated and published the Forty-Two articles of Religion, later revised and reduced to thirty-nine, setting forth the doctrines of the Church of England as distinct from those of Rome.⁴

In 1549 the Book of Common Prayer, which consisted largely of Thomas Cranmer's inspired translations of Latin prayers, appeared. It was designed to bring uniformity to the

services which were in English. There was ample provision for music in this new Anglican liturgy, but no music existed except for that of the Latin offices. John Merbecke (d. 1585), in his *The Book of Common Prayer Noted*, adapted the plainsong style to his own music and was the first to wed the Anglican liturgy to the traditional idiom.\(^5\)

Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, deplored most of the music because the words were so obscured, and as a result church musicians began to move toward the style that later developed into the anthem form. This used English texts instead of Latin, as well as a chordal musical style in place of a more florid style. The major remaining problem was to make some provision for congregational singing, which was done through the use of metrical psalms.\(^6\)

The singing of metrical psalms in public worship was not part of the authorized liturgy; however, there is little doubt that there was much unauthorized singing of them, especially in far-removed churches. The most famous of the collections of these psalms was by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins. Sternhold, who was Groom of the Royal Wardrobe, metricized psalms for the edification of Edward and for the improvement of the Court. When the young king died, just four

\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) Ibid.
years after the publication of the first prayer book, the English Reformation was still in its beginning stages.7

When Mary succeeded her brother in 1553, a Roman reaction set in. The queen returned the country to the papal allegiance. She exercised such reforms as had never before been seen in England and earned for herself the title of Bloody Mary. The stream of Protestant exiles to the Continent began again. In the five years of Mary's reign more than eight hundred persons crossed the Channel and settled in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Emden, where they encountered an already reformed church life. These exiles made it their business to train students of divinity, who, it was hoped, would one day become the ministers of a truly reformed Church of England. Those who returned formed the nucleus of the Puritan party which emerged in the next reign.8

During Mary's reign there were no more services in English, no more Prayer Book, and no more psalm singing. Indeed, there was little composition of church music at all during this period, and that the musicians survived at all during this time is a wonder. They seemed able to adapt to whatever style of liturgy was in favor at the time and to escape the penalties suffered by others.9

Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 and saw the necessity of steering a middle course. She was determined that England should not come under the papacy again, but she did not like Calvinism. All of her Church affairs were conducted through Parliament, but she did not hesitate to press her own views upon it. Parliament, not Convocation, was the source of ecclesiastical legislation. It passed both the Act of Supremacy, which made her Supreme Governor of the Church, and the Act of Uniformity, which enforced under heavy penalties attendance at the parish churches. Parliament also authorized the use of the Book of Common Prayer.\textsuperscript{10}

It was during Elizabeth's reign that the Puritan Party first came into prominence. The Marian exiles, now returned from the continent, were convinced that the English church required a much more thorough reformation, and that the constitution of a reformed church was revealed in the Scripture. Further, this constitution was presbyterian in polity and not episcopal. They demanded ministers who were learned and good preachers, and they inveighed against pluralism, non-residence, and wasted money.\textsuperscript{11}

During the early years of Elizabeth's reign there was little activity among composers of church music. The sudden changes that had taken place in the eleven years after

\textsuperscript{10} Underwood, op. cit., 29. \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 30.
Henry's death made musicians cautious of being misunderstood, or spending their efforts on compositions that might be discarded should another upheaval take place. Moreover, the queen was known to be capricious, and it seemed wise to wait on her changes in policies.\(^{12}\)

Plainsong was gradually dying out, and it became obvious to the church musicians that they would have to accommodate the different religious groups. It had become apparent to them that the Protestant order of things was likely to continue. Christopher Tye (1500-1573), who contributed to John Day's psalter of 1563, and Thomas Tallis (1550-1585), who contributed to Parker's psalter of 1567, began to develop the anthem style as did William Byrd (1543-1623), who, despite his avowed Catholicism, was made organist of the Chapel Royal in 1572. After the death of Tallis in 1585, Byrd was the only outstanding composer of church music. His mass settings are some of the finest ever written by an English composer.\(^{13}\)

Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign small groups appeared among the Puritans who had come to feel how hopeless it was to stay within the state church. These were the Separatists, whose leaders were the founders of modern

\(^{12}\) Etherington, op. cit., 108.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
Congregationalism. Perhaps the greatest musical activity among the Separatists was in the area of metrical psalms. There were many people in England of strong Calvinistic leanings and they preferred to restrict the use of music to the psalms. Indeed, the number of metrical psalters published in England often exceeded that of countries where the Calvinistic mode of worship was the only one.

As long as Elizabeth ruled, no kind of nonconformity was allowed to flourish in peace, and the Nonconformists were pleased to greet her successor, James I of Scotland, who had been brought up in the Calvinistic and Presbyterian Scottish church. James, however, was destined to disappoint the Puritans. He rejected Presbyterianism because of its democratic tendencies but kept to the ideas of Calvinistic theology. Toward the end of his reign he even sent four representatives to the Synod of Dort (1618-19). This Synod was in many respects the most important meeting ever held by Reformed churches. Its purpose was to unify the religious administration of the United Netherlands and to make it a more perfect instrument of the centralized State. The years leading up to this meeting had been filled with revolution against

14. Underwood, *op. cit.*, 32
Calvinism in the Netherlands; the revolting party came to be designated "Arminians," from James Arminius.  

In 1609, after several years of heated debate, Arminius and his chief opponent, Francis Gomar, along with four other ministers, were invited by the government to discuss all the questions at issue. The discussion lasted for several days and was later continued in writing. In mid-course Arminius was struck down by illness and died in October of 1609.  

The death of Arminius, instead of allaying the controversy, made his followers more aggressive than ever. In 1610 they set forth in a carefully prepared document, the Remonstrance, their views on the five points that had come forward in the controversy. From that time on they were designated either "Arminians," or "Remonstrants."  

The Calvinists responded in a Contra-Remonstrance, which allowed little moderation and much bitterness. This in turn was followed by a large body of polemical literature in which the Remonstrants mercilessly exposed and condemned the harsher features of the Reformed theology. 

During the next eight years the two forces earnestly strove for political power. The calling of the long-deferred

17. Ibid., 344.  
18. Ibid., 345.  
19. Ibid., 346.
national synod in 1618 marked the triumph of the Calvinists. The decision of the Synod was a foregone conclusion. The five articles of the Remonstrance were disallowed, while the five articles of the Contra-Remonstrance were unanimously upheld.20

The condemnation of the Remonstrants as heterodox involved their exclusion from fellowship and the deposition of their ministers. Many of them were sentenced to banishment and threatened with severe treatment should they return without permission. It was not until 1625 that they were granted toleration. Five years later they were accorded complete freedom to live anywhere in Holland and to build and conduct churches and schools. It was not long before they established a theological seminary in Amsterdam and slowly began to regroup.21

The events of the English Reformation and the briefer Calvinistic/Arminian controversy in the Netherlands prepared the way for the emergence of two distinct groups of Baptists in England, the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists. The General Baptists were the first to arise and had their origin in John Smyth (d. 1612) who had strong Puritan leanings. Persecution drove him and his Separatist church from Gainesborough to Amsterdam in 1608. Smyth strove hard

20. Ibid. 21. Ibid., 349.
to build his church according to the New Testament pattern and his study of the Scriptures brought him to practice believer's baptism. He soon came in contact with the Arminians and the Mennonites. When he sought union with the Mennonites he caused one member Thomas Helwys to lead several others from his church. 22

Helwys and his followers returned to London in 1612 and there established the first Baptist Church on English soil in Spitalfields outside the walls of the city of London. As Heys and his followers had accepted Smyth's Arminian opinions, especially those of an unlimited, or general, atonement, they became known as "General" Baptists. Helwys died in prison in 1616 and was succeeded by John Murton. By 1630 there were six congregations. Their Arminianism made them obnoxious to the Puritans, to the Independent Separatists and also to the vast majority of Anglicans who were committed to Calvinism. In those days Calvinism was orthodoxy and Arminianism was heresy. 23

The origin of the Particular Baptist churches during the reign of Charles I (1625-44) was different from that of the General Baptists. The former had no connection with the

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22. Underwood, op. cit., 34.

Anabaptists of the continent, but represent the last stage in the evolution of English Separatism as it moved forward to its logical outcome in believer's baptism. They seceded from an independent Separatist church whose Calvinistic theology they retained. Their belief in a restricted and, therefore, particular atonement, confined to the elect alone, earned for them the name "Particular" Baptists.  

The success of the Particular Baptists depended greatly on the religious policy of Charles I, who, though more religious than his father, was thought to be inferior to him in intellectual capacity. Unfortunately, Charles allowed himself to be guided in ecclesiastical matters by Archbishop Laud, a pious but narrow-minded man who was determined to secure religious uniformity at all costs, especially by suppressing everything that savoured of Puritanism. He was not allowed to burn men for their opinions, but he was quite ready to torture their bodies for the good of their souls. Laud's cold and calculating wrath was shared equally by the Puritans who tried to stay within the established church as well as by the Separatists. All were compelled to keep their meetings secret but the treachery of informers caused them to be sought out and cast into prison.  

25. Ibid.
It was during these trying times of Charles' reign that the Particular Baptists were formed. The first congregation can be traced to between 1633 and 1638 with John Spilsburg (1593-1668) as the pastor. Growth was so steady that by 1660 there were 131 Particular Baptists churches. This rapid growth was due mostly to three men whose last names all begin with "K": Hanserd Knollys (1599-1691), a Puritan who seceded from Anglicanism and became pastor of a Particular Baptist church; William Kiffin (1616-1701), a successful and wealthy merchant, who pastored another; and, Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), formerly a General Baptist, but brought to accept Reformed theology through the influence of Knollys and Kiffin.26

The persecution of Puritanism by Laud had far-reaching consequences. It forged Puritanism into State-Presbyterianism; and after the Civil War began, the Presbyterians demanded that the state church should be reformed according to the Genevan model and all dissent therefrom suppressed. Their majority in Parliament enabled them to subject the Church of England to the most complete and drastic revolution it has ever undergone. The Episcopacy was abolished and Presbyterianism was recognized as the form of church polity established by law.27

27. Underwood, _op. cit._, 63.
This period of Presbyterian dominance lasted only from 1640 to 1648, while the Army occupied London. Having done away with the tyranny of Laud (1640), the Presbyterians proposed a type of religious uniformity just as rigorous as had been the previous one. They were just as intolerant as the Laudians and were just as ready to suppress all Separatists. 28

As long as the period of Presbyterian dominance lasted, Baptists were under sharp attack from the presbyterian divines. No Baptists were included in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which was constituted in 1643 to advise Parliament on the best method of reforming the state church. For these reasons the Particular Baptists of seven London churches published in 1644 their first Confession of Faith. The Confession was revised in 1646 and the edition was dedicated to Parliament. 29

In May 1648, Parliament passed a Blasphemy Ordinance condemning heretical views and imposing imprisonment and even the death penalty on those who opposed the ordinance. This, however, was a belated gesture to the Presbyterians and before the year was out Parliament was purged and the Assembly of Divines died with the Parliament that give it birth. Both were defeated by the growing power of the Army, made up of

28. Ibid., 64. 29. Ibid., 72.
Baptists and Independents led by Oliver Cromwell. This new Army demanded liberty of conscience and refused to enter the new state church which Parliament had tried so hard to establish.  

Charles, who had attempted to govern without Parliament, was deposed, imprisoned and finally executed in 1649. The Commonwealth was established and Cromwell (1599-1658) was proclaimed the leader of the people. It is at this point that worship music reached its lowest ebb. The liturgy and the Prayer Book was abolished, choirs dispersed, all organs silenced, and many destroyed. The only singing permitted in churches was that of the metrical psalms, and even they were allowed only in their simplest forms.  

It was not that the Puritans had no liking for music. They were not the musical killjoys of the stereotype made fashionable by the historian Lord Macaulay. It was not a sin to touch the virginals as he tried to claim. In fact, many Puritans were fine performers of vocal or instrumental music. Cromwell, for instance, owned an organ, employed an organist, held choral music in high esteem, engaged an orchestra to play at his daughter's wedding, even encouraged  

30. Ibid., 73.

dancing at the height of the Puritan regime. Puritans privately encouraged music, dancing, and painting. If they were unable to encourage the use of organs and orchestras in divine worship, it was not that they disliked music, but that they loved religion more.32

Obviously, there were differences between the Anglican and Puritan views of worship music. On the one hand, the Anglicans followed the Lutheran view of Scripture and tradition, which argued that what was not forbidden in Scripture and had the authority of tradition behind it was permissible in the church. This is that view which made possible the use of hymnody of Luther and Gerhardt and the later tradition of oratorios and organ music of J. S. Bach.33

On the other hand the Puritans, and their successors the Nonconformists, demanded a Scriptural warrant for every part of worship. Man was not to assume that he was capable of deciding what was appropriate in the service of God when God had already decided for him in the Word of God. This inflexible Puritan principle thus restricted praise to God to metrical Psalms, which, they were convinced, were the Word of God; hymns were but human compositions.34

33. Ibid. 34. Ibid.
Furthermore, Puritans were critical of cathedral music for other reasons. The polyphonic compositions were too complex, the Latin motets and anthems were obscure, and well-trained choirs were required to perform such elaborate music. All of this was felt not to contribute toward two of the major Puritan doctrines, namely, the need for "edification," or building up in the faith, and the priesthood of all believers. The conflict between Anglican and Puritan over the nature of church music raised issues which are still acute and relevant.  

In 1653 Cromwell dissolved Parliament, began to strengthen his control of the government, and set up a Protectorate (1653-1658). However, there were some who were disappointed at his assumption of greater power, and were bold to challenge him. Some of these opponents even became associated with the Fifth Monarchy Men, a group of enthusiasts who were convinced that the time of Christ's return was at hand and that they were to prepare the way for his reign--by sword, if necessary.  

On September 3, 1658, Cromwell died. His son Richard, an incapable individual, wisely resigned the office which had

35. Ibid., 255.

been passed on to him at the death of his father, and confusion prevailed throughout Britain for a year. Order was brought out of chaos by General Monk, a distinguished officer in Cromwell's army, who marched to London and reconvened the Long Parliament. The new Parliament invited Charles Stuart, who was living in exile in Holland, back to England, and he entered London as a conquering hero on May 28, 1660. He reigned for the next twenty-five years and was one of the most popular kings ever to sit on the British throne.  

Trouble now began anew for the Puritans and other non-Anglican Protestants. The Parliament of Charles II was united in one religious opinion—that the Church of England and nothing but the Church of England was to be tolerated in England. The Anglicans returned with power and determination to coerce where they could not convince. In 1661, the abortive Savoy Conference was held to decide whether there was a place for the Presbyterians in the established church. Presbyterian hopes were dashed by Anglican insistence on the reordination of all clergy who had received Presbyterian Orders. The Episcopalians then pressed home their victory in a succession of Acts from 1661 to 1665.  

37. Underwood, op. cit., 89.  
38. Ibid., 95.
1. **The Corporation Act (1661)**—This compelled all officeholders to take certain oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, and to receive Holy Communion according to the Anglican rites. Nonconformists were thus excluded from Parliament.

2. **The Act of Uniformity (1662)**—Clergyman and schoolmaster refusing to consent to everything in the Prayer Book were excluded from holding a benefice. Approximately 2,000 clergy resigned. From this time forward, all who refused to assent were called Dissenters.

3. **The Conventicle Act (1664)**—This punished persons of sixteen years and upwards attending a Nonconformist service, with fines or imprisonment for the first and second offenses, and with deportation for seven years or a fine of 100 pounds for all subsequent offenses.

4. **The Five Mile Act (1665)**—This applied to men in Holy Orders and prohibited them from coming within five miles of any town in which they had ministered unless they took an oath promising that they would not at any time endeavor to make any alteration of government in either church or state.\(^{39}\)

   Drawn up by Charles' chief advisor and Lord Chancellor, Edward Hyde Clarendon, these acts, specifically the Conventicle Act, were very hard on the Nonconformists. All non-Anglicans were declared illegal. Probably the most famous of the preachers to be incarcerated was John Bunyan whose allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*, was written during his

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third imprisonment. Many fascinating accounts can be found of ingenious devices used by congregations to outwit magistrates who raided their services to arrest the minister.40

In 1667, Clarendon fell from power, having incurred the hostility of both King and Parliament. His fall allowed the King to plot for the restoration of Catholicism. The intrigue provoked a fierce demonstration. In 1670 the members of the Cavalier Parliament met in a rage and renewed the expiring Conventicle Act.41

In 1672 a Declaration of Indulgence was passed in favor of non-Anglicans. It suspended all penal laws on matters ecclesiastical against Dissenters and Romanists. After twelve years of severe persecution, the Declaration brought a real measure of relief to all Dissenters. However, this relief was temporary and aroused fears that the Catholics would gain prominence.42

To counteract this danger, Parliament passed in 1672 a Test Act which required all officers of the Crown to renounce transubstantiation and to receive the Lord's Supper at their parishes. This measure affected not only Catholics, but precluded all Nonconformists from military, civil or municipal service. It also showed that Parliament was

42. Whittaker, op. cit., 222.
determined to keep the Clarendon Code in full working order and to foil the King's plot in favor of Catholicism.\textsuperscript{43}

Naturally, persecution broke out again. However, this renewal of persecution brought Baptists and Congregationalists nearer to the Presbyterians who, since the Ejection of 1662, had defied the Conventicle Acts. This led both Particular and General Baptists to issue new Confessions of Faith. In both cases the aim appears to have been to demonstrate their unity with other Protestant Dissenters.\textsuperscript{44}

To indicate their agreement with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, the Particular Baptists put out their Confession in 1677. Admittedly, it was based on the Westminster Confession of 1648 and the Congregationalists' revision of 1658. It was approved by the representatives of over one hundred churches who met in 1689, and is even now endorsed by many British Baptists and some Reformed Baptists churches in the United States.\textsuperscript{45}

From 1673 to 1681 persecution of Dissenters was fierce. All laws were strictly, even cruelly enforced, and Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Quakers were greatly afflicted. To prevent Parliament from passing

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.  \textsuperscript{44} Underwood, \textit{op. cit.}, 104.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 105.
any more bills, Charles dissolved it, and, for the last four years of his life, ruled without it.  

As might be expected, the Restoration led to a reaction against austerity, drabness, and propriety in both life and music, as well as to a demand for pomp and circumstance, pleasure and mirth. Charles, during his exile on the continent, had become fond of the French style. After the coronation, Charles sent Pelham Humfrey (1647-1674), a member of the Royal Chapel Choir, to study music in Paris under the renowned Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). When Humfrey returned to England, he was appointed composer to His Majesty.

Church music did not fare very well under Charles II, since the Stuarts had little personal regard for music in general and even less for music in the church. In many areas the money allocated for church music was siphoned off for other uses. Choirs often deteriorated completely. Most of the clergy showed no more interest in church music than did Charles himself.

For churches favored with regular choirs, there were good collections of choral music on the market by the early 1660's. John Playford's famous *Introduction to the*
Skill of Music was a great aid in reviving choral societies as was another publication of 1663, entitled *The Divine Services and Anthems Usually Sung in the Cathedrals and Collegiate Choirs of the Church of England*, which listed over four hundred recommended anthems.\(^{49}\)

Despite the liturgical limitations under which the English composers worked, their achievements were highly competent and, in several cases, even distinguished and brilliant. For this accomplishment some credit must be given to Charles and to the high standard of music set by the Chapel Royal.\(^{50}\)

The services in the Chapel Royal were musically superb, drawing the most talented composers, organists, and singers in the nation. They were attended by the famous, the fashionable, and the cultured. The men of the Chapel Royal were England's nearest equivalent to Italy's opera stars.\(^{51}\)

It is difficult to understand how cultured Puritans, many of whom were music lovers, could have jettisoned this rich tradition of sacred music unless they were convinced that the Word of God refused to countenance it.\(^{52}\)

\(^{49}\) Ibid. \(^{50}\) Davies, *op. cit.* 263.

\(^{51}\) Ibid. \(^{52}\) Ibid., 268.
We have already seen that cathedral music violated by its obscurity and its complexity two strong tenants of the Reformed faith, those of edification and the priesthood of all believers. However, we must not forget the importance of the alternative, Scriptural paraphrases in metre and rhyme, sung with such gusto by the Puritans.53

It is exceedingly difficult to imagine how almost universal the use of the psalter was. Psalms were sung at the feasts at city banquets; soldiers sang them on the march; ploughmen whistled or sang them at their tasks; and pilgrims searched for new continents in which to gain liberty to sing only the Psalms; they were even sung by ladies and their lovers.

Despite the dominance of metrical psalmody in the seventeenth century, there were some notable exceptions to the rule. The more one studies metrical psalmody, the sorrier one is that Protestant England did not follow the example of the Protestants of Luther's Germany in encouraging the writing and singing of hymns as freer transcripts of Christian faith and experience.54

After Charles' death in 1685 the fear of Catholicism again arose. The Whigs tried to divert the succession from Charles' brother James, an avowed Roman Catholic, to the

53. Ibid.  54. Ibid., 281.
Duke of Monmouth, one of Charles' illegitimate sons. However, this diversion failed and James II was crowned King of England.  

James openly attempted to frustrate the Anglicans and issued a Declaration of Indulgence in 1687. This suspended all laws against Dissenters, dispensed with tests for public office, and allowed unhindered public worship. The relief may have been welcome, but there remained a general hostility to the King's pro-Catholic policy and a fear that Catholics might succeed to the throne. James was forced into exile in 1688.

In 1689 William III and Mary were proclaimed the rulers of England. Soon after they were seated on the throne, the Act of Toleration (1689) was passed which relieved Dissenters of the burden of all the persecuting measures of Charles II, except that of the Corporation and Test Acts. After two revolutions, Dissenters had secured a real measure of religious liberty, but they were still disqualified from office, though no longer criminals. The state church was still privileged but could no longer persecute.

A new day had dawned for the Dissenters but without the ever-present persecution their dreams and desires were

55. Whittaker, op. cit., 223.
56. Ibid.
turned instead to leaness in their souls. Instead of advancing, they stagnated and even retreated.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 117.
Chapter II

LIFE OF KEACH

Beginnings: Early Education and Ministry

Benjamin Keach was born February 29, 1640 at Stoke Hammond, near Bletchley, North Buckinghamshire, England, and was christened in the parish church March 6, 1640. As one of three sons of John and Fedora Keach, he was educated and engaged for a short time in the tailor's trade. Of his brothers, Joseph and Henry, one was a bricklayer and preacher, while the other became a miller occupying Stableford Mill at Soulbury.¹

Keach's parents were honest and pious people who could not afford to give their son a formal education, yet somehow they instilled in him such a desire for knowledge that he was soon the peer of any man of his time. He early applied himself to the study of the Scriptures and noting their silence concerning the baptism of infants, he began to suspect the validity of the ministration he had received in his infancy. At the age of fifteen his deliberations on

this matter led him to conclude that it was right to profess his faith in Christ. He was then baptized by Mr. John Russel, a Baptist minister probably of Berkhamstead, and thereafter joined with a Baptist congregation.²

The Baptists with whom he joined generally subscribed to the Arminian view of Christ's atonement and were designated General Baptists. These were Benjamin's instructors, whose preaching he had sat under for some years, and in whose principles he was educated.³

His proficiency in learning the Word of God was so notable that those with whom he had joined thought it right, when he was eighteen, to call him to the work of the ministry, "... and from that time he continued to preach publicly, to the great comfort and edification of them that heard him."⁴

At this time the General Baptists had three kinds of preachers. One was called a "messenger" who superintended a large area, both preaching and administering. Another kind was an "elder" who was ordained by a local congregation and who worked with them. A third was a "minister" who acted as a lay preacher. Keach was in this third group and was not ordained until he went to London in 1668.⁵

³. Ibid., 270. ⁴. Ibid. ⁵. Ibid.
When he was twenty (1660), Keach moved to Winslow, which was some ten miles from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. There he married his first wife, Jane Grove, and ministered to the General Baptists. His meeting place (dating back to 1625) is known as one of the oldest Nonconformist places of worship in Buckinghamshire as well as in Britain.6

In his work on the English Baptists, H. Wheeler Robinson notes that the relation of Baptists to the State during the seventeenth century passed through three general phases. In the first (1612-1640) they were subjected to persecution, since they were considered offenders against both civil and ecclesiastical law. In the second phase (1640-1660) Baptists profited by the removal of Stuart tyranny, themselves contributing largely to Cromwell's army and its officers. The third phase (1660-1786) brought a return of persecution by the Episcopalian Parliament.7

Keach was born at the beginning of the second phase and when he went to Winslow to continue his ministry the second epoch of religious persecution under the Stuart kings was just beginning. During his first two years in the ministry he had met with no trouble or opposition, but after

6. Ibid., 271.
the return of Charles II in 1660 the persecution of the Baptists began again in earnest.

Keach shared in the sufferings of these times. He was often seized when preaching and committed to prison, sometimes bound, sometimes released on bail, and sometimes threatened with his life. On one occasion, some soldiers, sent down into Buckinghamshire to suppress the meetings of the Dissenters, discovered an assembly where Keach was preaching. They descended on the congregation and swore they would kill the preacher. He was quickly caught and four of the troopers yelled that they were going to trample him to death with their horses. They bound him and laid him on the ground, and just as they prepared to spur their horses at him their commanding officer interceded, preventing his death. Keach was then tied behind one of the soldiers and carried away.8

In this same year, 1664, Keach wrote and published a little book entitled *The Child's Instruction; or a New and Easy Primer*. Crosby commented that

No more useful book for a child can be conceived of. It is educational; containing the alphabet, instruction in spelling and composition, lists of numerals and exercises in arithmetic, religious injunctions, verses and hymns; with an eulogistic preface by 'Hansard Knowles' [Hanserd Knollys]. Altogether, a book calculated to make a studious child's heart leap for joy.9

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In this book Keach not only rejected the Church of England's teaching on infant baptism, but also the restrictions placed upon laymen, and the church's interpretation of the Apocalypse. It was the Rector of Stoke Hammond, Thomas Disney, who first gave information against Keach for printing his Child's Primer. Immediately Stafford, the justice of the Peace, took Constable Neal of Winslow to arrest Keach. They seized all of his books, and "bound him over to the Assizes, in a recognizance of one hundred pounds, and two sureties with him, fifty pounds each."  

On October 8-9, Keach was subjected to an unfair trial by Lord Chief Justice Robert Hyde at Aylesbury. The charges against him were  

1. heresy—that one must believe to be baptized;  
2. schism—non-episcopally ordained men preaching;  
3. sedition—Christ is King, not Charles II.  

Keach was refused permission to defend himself because the judge feared that he would break into preaching and thereby


"seduce the King's subjects."\(^{12}\) Though the jury found perjured information in the indictment, Keach was nonetheless found guilty and sentenced to stand for "two full hours to the minute"\(^{13}\) upon the pillory in both Aylesbury and in the market place in Winslow where his book was to be burnt before him. On his head was to be placed a paper bearing an inscription: "For writing, printing, and publishing a schismatical book."\(^{14}\) The real issue, however, was the state church versus a free church, and the most objectionable feature of the state church in Keach's mind was its ministry. Contrasting them with true ministers he wrote:

> And Christ's true ministers have not their Learning and Wisdom from Men, or from Universities, or human Schools for human Learning. Arts and Sciences are not essential to the making of a true Minister, but the Gift of God, which cannot be bought with Silver and Gold; and also as they have freely received the Gift, so do they freely administer; They do not preach for Hire for Gain and filthy Lucre: They are not like the falst Teachers, who look for Gain from Their Quarters; who eat the Fat, and clothe themselves with the Wool, and Kill them that are fed; those that put not into their mouths, they prepare War against; Also they are not Lords over God's Heritage, they rule them not by Force and Cruelty

\(^{12}\) Crosby, op. cit., II, 199.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 208.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 202.
neither have they power to force and compell
Men to believe and obey their Doctrine,
but are only to persuade and intreat; for
this is the Way of the Gospel, as Christ
taught them . . .\textsuperscript{15}

It is easy to see that this trial was carried on in
a very arbitrary manner. No pardon could be obtained and the
Sherriff took pride in punctually performing all that was
expected in the execution of the harsh sentence. According
to the law, Keach was kept imprisoned until Saturday when he
was taken to the pillory at Aylesbury, accompanied by some
of his friends. When they began to speak to him of his
troubles and the injustice of his sufferings he replied
cheerfully, "The cross is the way to the crown."\textsuperscript{16} His head
and hands were no sooner fixed in the pillory when he turned
to the spectators and addressed them to the same effect:

\begin{quote}
Good people, I am not ashamed to stand here this
day, with this paper on my head: my Lord Jesus
was not ashamed to suffer on the cross for me;
and it is for his cause that I am made a gazing-
stock. Take notice, it is not for any wickedness
that I stand here; but for writing and publishing
his truths, which the Spirit of the Lord hath
revealed in the Holy Scriptures.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Hugh Wamble, "Benjamin Keach, Churchman," \textit{The Quarterly

\textsuperscript{16} Crosby, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 204.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}
A nearby cleric interrupted Keach with the remark, "It is for writing and publishing errors; and you may now see, what your errors have brought you to."\(^{18}\)

Keach replied, "Sir, can you prove them errors?"\(^{19}\); but before the clergymen could answer he was attacked by some of the spectators. One reminded him of his being pulled drunk out of a ditch: Another upbraided him with being lately found drunk under a haycock. At this all the people fell to laughing; and turned their diversion from the sufferer in the pillory to the drunken priest; insomuch that he hastened away with the utmost disgrace and shame.\(^{20}\)

After all the noise was over, Keach began to speak again:

\[
\text{It is no new thing for the servants of the Lord to suffer, and be made a gazing-stock; and you that are acquainted with the scriptures know, that the way to the crown is the cross. The Apostle saith, that thro' many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of heaven; and Christ saith, He that is ashamed of me and my words, in an adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, before the father, and before his holy angels.}^{21}\]

Keach was frequently interrupted by the jailer, who told him not to speak. After staying silent for some

\(^{18}\) Ibid. \(^{19}\) Ibid. \(^{20}\) Ibid., 205. \(^{21}\) Ibid.
time, and freeing one of his hands, Keach pulled his Bible out of his pocket, and held it up to the people, saying,

... take notice, that the things which I have written and published, and for which I stand here this day, a spectacle to men and angels, are all contained in this book, as I could prove out of the same, if I had an opportunity.22

The Persecution of the Dissenters continued unabated, and though Keach suffered little physical abuse after this 1664 event, the blood of many others was shed. From their viewpoint, justice was finally rendered by the London cataclysms of the next two years. Neale described them as "two dreadful judgments, one upon the back of the other."23 The first was the plague of 1665 and the second the great fire a year later.

The completion of Keach's first poetical work Sion in Distress; or the groans of the Protestant Church24 immediately preceded the outbreak of the great fire of London. Amid the confusion, the Nonconformists and Dissenters

22. Ibid., 205-206.
23. Ibid., 209.
24. Sion in Distress was published in London in 1666; it was largely confined to writing against Roman Catholicism. A revised second edition surfaced in 1682 and in 1689 Keach traced the history of his work further in Distressed Sion Relieved.
resolved to help the people in any way possible, but this had little influence upon the courts, other than that they relaxed their persecution for a short time.

**Geographical and Theological Changes**

From the end of 1666 to the beginning of 1668 little is known of Keach's activities except that he preached whenever an opportunity was offered amid the continuing tribulation. It was thought that the persecution would subside when the House of Commons put a stop to the activities of the Earl of Clarendon in 1667. Clarendon, then Lord High Chancellor of England, was also known as the great patron of persecuting power. The reining of Clarendon's power turned out to be of little help, however, because Parliament continued to persecute the Nonconformists, particularly the preachers, on its own. Besides employing General Monk to disperse the Dissenters meetings and to imprison those in attendance, they even went so far as to pass a death sentence on the conventiclers.25

About the middle of 1668, Keach, then 28 years old, moved from Buckinghamshire to London.

His public trial and suffering rendered him more acceptable [susceptible] to the informers than other preachers . . .; and he, having not then taken upon him the charge of any special congregation, thought of removing to London, where he might have an opportunity of doing more good. Herein obeying his Lord's counsel to flee to another city when persecuted where he was. Accordingly, he turned his effects into money, and set out with his wife and children to London, in the year 1668. In his journey up to town the coach was beset with highwaymen, who compelled all the passengers to come out of the vehicle, and then took from them all they could find of any value . . . This was no small trial, to be bereft of all that he had, and left to shift with a wife and three children in a strange place. Thus he came to London, without any money, and almost without acquaintance. However, a man of such a public character, and spotless conversation, was soon taken notice of; and the Baptists, who are as ready to acts of charity as any others; took care to supply his present necessities. He also joined with the rest of the passengers in suing the county, and so recovered the whole of his loss again in due time.26

There is no doubt that the fame of Keach's sufferings helped him among the London Baptists, for they took him into a small congregation soon after he arrived. According to Crosby this congregation had formerly belonged to one of the oldest separatist assemblies of the Baptists in London. Because of the continued persecution they met weekly for worship in different houses throughout the city. Their elder was Mr. William Rider of whom not much is known except

that he had published a small tract concerning the practice of laying on of hands on baptized believers; the importance of this work will be seen later. 27

Soon after Rider's death the church unanimously chose Keach to be their elder, and he was ordained with prayer and laying on of hands. This was a formal ordination, the first known in dissenting circles since the restoration, it occurred in 1668 at the expiration of the 1664 Conventicle Act. 28

Meetings continued to be held secretly because of the oppression, but even here the church could not meet in peace, for they were seldom able to enjoy the singing of God's praises because of fear of discovery. The congregation usually met at a private house on Tooley Street, Southwark, but once when they were meeting at widow Colse's house a messenger was sent from the King to apprehend her, and "being informed that she was nurse to one who lay sick of the smallpox, he departed with an oath, and sought no more after her." 29

Not long after, another messenger was sent to arrest Keach for his printing of The Child's Instructor, which had been rewritten from memory. It may be recalled that this was the book for which he had earlier been imprisoned

and pilloried. Keach was then a tenant of the noted informer Cook, but since he was not known by his real name, he was not identified by Cook when the messenger came. Unfortunately, however, a warrant was left by the messenger, and Keach was soon taken and carried before Justice Glover. The Justice, having been informed of an esteemed gentleman in Keach's congregation, a Doctor John Roberts, sent for him and asked him if he did in fact know Keach.  

The doctor answered, Yes; very well. Then said the justice, will you be bound for him? Yes, replies the doctor, body for body. The doctor's bail being taken, Mr. Keach was discharged: but in the issue, he was fined twenty pounds; the which he was obliged to pay, when others, under the like circumstances, escaped through the insufficiency of the bail, that was generally taken in those times.

Keach was obviously loved by his congregation for they were willing to back him up whenever trouble arose. He must have endured much in these times because the church, as it grew, began meeting in several different locations, and he "hastened from one house to another, having thus to preach several times on each Sabbath, evading the watchful eyes of church wardens, constables and informers as best he could."  

The death of his wife in October of 1670 greatly affected him. He had married her at age twenty, and Crosby

30. Ibid. 31. Ibid., 146-47. 32. Spurgeon, op. cit., 25.
tells us that she was a very tender and loving wife as well as a very pious and good woman. She had endured Keach's troubles and sufferings with him for ten years during which she had borne five children of whom three were then living. These were Mary, Elias, and Hannah.33

Keach, obviously distraught at her loss, used an uncommon method of expressing his love by writing a poem to her memory. This was entitled A pillar set up,34 and by way of explanation he cited the example of Jacob found in Genesis 35:19-20.

And Rachel died and was buried, and Jacob set up a pillar on her grave, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.35

After lamenting the great loss of his wife he wrote of her character, commending her for her zeal for the truth, sincerity in religion, uncommon love of the saints, and her peaceful qualities in any circumstances. Keach observed how great a help and comfort she had been to him in his sufferings for Christ, and he also told how she had led many to Christ by the example of her godly life.36

34. Benjamin Keach, A Pillar set up, to Keep in Remembrance his first dear and beloved wife, 1670.
35. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 273. 36. Ibid., 274.
After her death, Keach remained single for about two years. In April 1672 he married Mrs. Susanna Partridge, neé Skidmore of Rickmansworth in Hartfordshire. She was the widow of Samuel Partridge of Rickmansworth who had died about nine months after their marriage. By this wife Keach had five daughters: Elizabeth, Susanna, two named Rachel, and one Rebekah. All sources relate that the two lived together in great love for 32 years until his death in 1704. She survived him by 23 years, continuing as widow until she died in February of 1727. Crosby tells us that she was a woman of extraordinary piety and was respected by all who knew her.

She lived with me many years, and during the time I was acquainted with her, which was near the last twenty years of her life, I must say, That she walked before God in truth; and with a perfect heart, and did that which was good in his sight. She lived in peace, without spot and blameless. Her eyes were turned away from beholding vanity, and her hands were stretched out, according to her ability, to the poor and needy. Her clothing (sic) was humility, and her ornaments, a meek and quiet spirit. Her conversation was upright, as became the gospel, without covetousness, honest, holy, and heavenly.37

This second marriage proved to be a pivotal point in Keach's life. Until this time he had been connected with the General Baptists and their Arminian views concerning the atonement of Christ, but the new Mrs. Keach was a Particular

37. Ibid., 275.
or Calvinistic Baptist and seems to have encouraged a change. Keach also came under the influence of two very prominent Particular Baptist leaders, William Kiffin and Hanserd Knollys, who were to stay his close friends throughout their lives.  

As a result of his marriage and new friends, Keach became a Particular Baptist in 1672, and led many of his members to assist him in organizing a new church. During the time (1672) of an indulgence issued by Charles II the congregation erected a large meetinghouse in Goat's Year Passage, Fair Street, Horse-lie-down, Southwark.  

The great nineteenth-century preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon commented in his history of the Metropolitan Tabernacle on the unusual growth of Keach's church which quickly had to be enlarged to accommodate almost a thousand people.


39. After Keach's death his son-in-law Crosby felt it necessary to defend his father-in-law's theological change of heart which some had called fickleness or weakness of judgment. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 270.

40. His former church is now housed on Borough Road but his new church disbanded in 1853. A schismatic group from the latter organized in the time of his son-in-law Thomas Crosby, now flourishes at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.
Benjamin Keach was one of the most useful people of his time, and built up the church of God with sound doctrine for thirty-six years. Having been in his very earliest days an Arminian, and having soon advanced to Calvinistic views, he preserved the balance in his preaching, and was never a member of that exclusive school which deems it to be unsound to persuade men to repent and believe. He was by no means so highly Calvinistic as his great successor, Dr. Gill, but evidently held much the same views as are now advocated from the pulpit of the Tabernacle... his teaching was sweetly spiritual, intensely scriptural and full of Christ. Whoever else kept back the fundamental truths of our holy gospel, Benjamin Keach did not so.41

As Keach preached the gospel truths and his church continued to grow he once again picked up his pen and wrote what was to become his first truly successful work. It was entitled War with the Devil and was published in 1674. It was written "to affect the Heart, ... convince the Conscience," and win young people to Christ.42 It shows both Keach's evangelical method and Baptist thought during this period.

The work seems to have been very popular for in 1876 C. H. Spurgeon wrote that he had seen the 22nd edition of it, also noting that there were probably more editions than that. It was generous of Spurgeon even to make that

42. Benjamin Keach, War With the Devil (London: Benjamin Harris, 1674).
comment as he actually thought very little of Keach's poetical skills.

As for the poetry of Keach's work, the less said the better. It is a rigamarole almost equal to John Bunyan's rhyming, but hardly up even to the mark of honest John. We will inflict none of it upon our readers, except a few lines from "War with the Devil."43

In 1675, J. Mason obtained a license for an exegesis of Keach's work. Mason's book was entitled ... Directions To The Readers of the Divine Poem Intitled Warre With the Devil.44 It may be pointed out that Keach published his work in 1674, a year before John Bunyan completed his masterpiece, The Pilgrim's Progress. It would be interesting to discover the influence of Keach's success as one of Bunyan's motivations.

Keach also published another work in 1674 entitled The Glorious Lover. This was a Miltonian poem upon the mystery of a sinner's redemption which humble people read rather than Paradise Lost. It was written in the interest of evangelism, as the "Proem" of the work shows.

43. Spurgeon, op. cit., 30. Spurgeon then quoted a section from the worst part of the work. On pp. 92-104 there are some of Keach's hymns and spiritual songs.

44. J. Mason, Mentis Humane Metaporphosis Five Conversio; The History of the Young Converted Gallant or Directions to the Readers of that Divine Poem Intitled Warre with the Devil (London: Benjamin Harris, 1676).
A Verse may catch a Wandring Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a blest surprise--
convert Delight into a Sacrifice.

Here's no such danger, but all pure and chast;
A Love most fit by Saints to be imbraced:
A Love 'bove that of Women: Beauty, such,
As none can be enamour'd on too much.
Read then, and learn to love truly by this,
Until thy Soul can sing (Raptured in Bliss)
My Well-beloved's mine, an I am his.45

Years of Controversy

In 1674 Keach embarked upon a new facet of his
career. He was thirty-four and emerging from the stresses
caused by his move to London, his first wife's death, his
re-marriage, his theological turn-around, and his new church.
Although the experiences of the preceding six years had been
detrimental, everything now looked better than ever. His
changed preaching proved as successful as his recent poetry,
and best of all his church was growing.

The growth of Keach's dissenting church in London
during these times was phenomenal, especially when one
considers the constant disputation and discussions that
embroiled the newly converted. As a result the congregation
turned toward the stronger ministers, those that could with-
stand and fight back against the damaging assaults. Keach

45. Benjamin Keach, The Glorious Lover (London: J. D. for
C. Hussey, 1679), ii.
was often engaged in such controversies, and was renowned as one of the fairest and most moderate of the disputants. 46

One of Keach's first public disputes was with Richard Baxter, a well-known author of a treatise on infant baptism and confirmation. Baxter viewed these as necessary parts of the reformation of the church and the easement of the differences between the Protestant groups. In this work he endeavored to prove that infants of believers were admitted into the church by baptism and had by baptism a title to many privileges; yet when they grew up, this title ceased, if they did not make a public profession and be received as adult members. 47

In the fifth proposition of the work, however, Baxter advanced several poorly constructed arguments and Keach, observing the contradictions, published a list of the faults. Keach's pamphlet, entitled Baxter's Arguments for Believer's Baptism, had a somewhat detrimental effect on Baxter's reputation. Some fifteen years before Keach's critique, a Mr. Tombes had published a similar essay, but Keach's work was much shorter, cheaper, and more widely advertised by the


hawkers with whom Keach had placed it. Crosby further prejudiced Baxter's reputation with the remarks:

It is a pity, that a man who found time to write so many books, and engage in almost every controversy on foot in his time should want an opportunity to clear himself from such entire contradictions; how much it would have tended to his honour, and the confutation on Antipaedobaptism, will be seen in one instance.48

Keach put aside this dispute with the Paedobaptists for a short time and turned his thoughts toward publicizing a doctrinal argument with the Quakers. His work The Grand Imposter Discovered sets forth the Quaker's doctrine as well as his view of that doctrine which is quickly comprehended from the subtitle of the work: The Quaker's Doctrine Weighed in the Balance, and found Wanting.49

From that public dispute Keach turned to a controversy among the Baptists on the practice of laying on of hands. Those Baptists that held the opinion of the Remonstrants generally held to this practice on baptised people, performing it customarily with prayer, or when new members were admitted

48. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 280. Crosby then relates the circumstance, attempting in the meantime to further lower Baxter's reputation.

49. It would be interesting to know more about this argument and the circumstances which brought it to Keach's attention. The only hint that Crosby gives us (p. 309) is that Keach's daughter Hannah was a Quaker.
to the church. On the other hand, those Baptists who were Calvinistic were divided in its practice. Some of their churches did not use it at all; some were indifferent; and some made it a part of their initiation into the church, accepting none except those who held completely to the view. Keach's church was of the last opinion.  

This difference occasioned several treatises from each side, and had been argued over since the first formation of Baptist churches. This was due to the fact that the members came from diverse sources, some from the Anglican church, while others formed from the Presbyterians and Independents. The chief Baptist advocates were Mr. Sam Fisher, Mr. William Rider, Mr. Thomlinson, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Grantham, and Keach. Those opposed included the author of a treatise entitled, A Search for Schism. In 1674 one Mr. Danvers wrote zealously against it. His work and Keach's reply, Darkness Vanquished (1675), fairly well summarize both sides of the controversy. Keach, according to Crosby, "has so far put an end to it (the controversy); that scarcely anything has been published upon it since."  

Keach then paused in his disputation, at least with regard to his publications, and it was not until 1689 that he was again involved in a public controversy. In the

50. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 290.  
51. Ibid., 292.
interim years, 1675-1689, he busied himself with preaching and other writings. In 1676 he preached a sermon at the funeral of his friend John Norcot, who had died on March 24. This was later published under the title of *A Summons to the Grave, or the Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death.*

In 1678 Keach wrote a recommendatory preface to a Mr. William Balmford's poem entitled, *The Seaman's Spiritual Companion.*

It is evident from this preface that Keach was genuinely concerned about evangelism.

> With Grace, thy ship must be balanced . . . Christ is to be thy Pilot . . . Avoid the dangerous rocks of presumption and despair . . . Faith is your cable rope, to which make fast the anchor, Hope.

It would be interesting to know the relationship between Keach and Mr. Balmford, and perhaps John Flavel, who also had spiritualized several areas of the seaman's life.

In 1682 Keach published a book of sermons that he had preached during the past few years. These sermons were


54. Spears, *op. cit.*, 75.

published under the title, *Tropologia; A Key to open Scripture Metaphors*. Keach tells us how the work came into existence.

Having a particular inclination to study the nature of Metaphors, Tropes, and Figures, principally for the edification of my hearers, I betook myself to preach upon some Metaphors, which, by the aid of Divine goodness, wanted neither success, nor the general satisfaction of my auditory. Having many brief heads of my notes by me, it was gladly judged worthy of my time and pains to compile the work before thee; and to render the utility of the work as valuable as I could, I applied for the assistance of men most eminent in piety and literature, and was so happy as to succeed in the application... 

It is demonstrable to every one, that the volume of God's Word abounds with Metaphors, Allegories, and Other Tropes and Figures of speech. Similitudes or Metaphors are borrowed from visible things to display and illustrate the excellent nature of invisible things... This Sacra Philologia was more particularly designed for the benefit and assistance of young students and ministers... Allegories are not intended to clear facts, but to explain doctrines, affect the heart and convince the conscience.

Charles Spurgeon referred to this book several times, each time more favorably. First he reported that

56. This was reprinted by Kregel Publications in 1972 as *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible*.

This is a vast cyclopaedia of types and metaphors of all sorts, and was once very popular. It is a capital book, though too often the figures not only run on all-fours but on as many legs as a centipede.58

The second time, Spurgeon wrote

Although our honored predecessor makes metaphors run on as many legs as a centipede, he has been useful to thousands. His work is old fashioned, but it is not to be sneered at.59

While the third time he said

He (Keach) is the author of two well-known folios, "Key to open Scripture Metaphors," and an "Exposition of the Parables." These works have long enjoyed a high repute, and though they are now regarded as out of date, the time was when they were so universally used by ministers, the "Key to the Metaphors" especially, that Dr. Adam Clarke complains of the too great dependence of preachers upon them.60

Perhaps the most interesting comment on the book is by Herbert Lockyer in the recent Kregel reprint.

58. Charles Spurgeon, Commenting and Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981), 61. Spurgeon could not quite decide where to place this comment: "It is not strictly upon Leviticus, but we felt bound to insert it in this place.

59. Ibid., 154.

60. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, 28-29.
After preaching the word for over 60 years, I am not ashamed to confess how deeply in debt I am to the most substantial studies of this renowned expositor. The most voluminous and valuable handbook on the Metaphors... formed the foundation of a protracted series of attractive and profitable sermons in the earlier years of my pastoral ministry. To advertise a course of the "Animals of the Bible" treating them in alphabetical order--Lessons From Ants; Lessons From Asses, etc., and adapting Keach's factual and figurative material under each subject created tremendous interest and gave one an unusual way of presenting truth.61

The book is indeed "voluminous"--over 1000 pages--and is a very resourceful book. It includes one section on defining and interpreting the types and metaphors as used in the Bible; a second section lists source materials for preaching. The work is prefaced by an extremely useful article on the divine authority of the Bible.

When first printed the book was divided into several parts. Thomas Delaune wrote "The First Book" and Keach, "The Second and Third Books."

Crosby called the first author 'the learned Mr. Thomas Delaune.' He was born in Ireland and his parents were very poor. They were Roman Catholic, so young Delaune was placed in a Friary at Kilcrash to be educated. After several years he went to London where he became a Baptist and a close

61. Keach, Types and Metaphors, V.
friend of Keach. Whitley calls Delaune 'a school-master and printer, Ireland and London,' and this probably accounts for some of the pedantry of the book. . . however, . . . Keach himself was very pedantic.62

In 1685, three years after the printing of *Tropologia*, Keach published three works: *The Travels of True Godliness*, *The Progress of Sin; or the Travels of Ungodliness*, and *The Victorious Christian, or, the Triumph of Faith*. The first two were practical works and were two of the most popular books of Keach's times.63

A paragraph from *The Travels of True Godliness* adequately speaks of its nature and quality. It is fairly reminiscent of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The dispute ended, and Riches perceiving his chaplain was worsted, envied True Godliness much more, and raised all the rabble of the town upon him; amongst which were these following: Pride, Ignorance, Wilful, Hard-heart, Belly-god, Giddy-head, Pick-Thank, Rob-faint, and much more of such like rusticall and ill-bred fellows. And, moreover, he swore if he would not be gone the sooner he would send for the two constables, Oppression and Cruelty, to lay him fast enough; at which True Godliness was fain to get away and hid himself, or else for certain he would have been knocked on the head or basely put to death;

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62. Spears, op. cit., 86.
but he being out of their reach by the providence of God escaped without any hurt to himself, but many of his poor friends were sadly abused, who stood up to speak on his behalf, being reproached by the vilest of men.64

The Progress of Sin; or the Travels of Ungodliness was a companion volume to the above, wherein

the Pedigree, Rise and Antiquity of Sin is fully discovered; in an apt and pleasant allegory; To-gether with the great Victories he hath obtained, and the abominable Evil he has done to Mankind, by the help of the Devil, in all his Travels, from the beginning of the World to this very Day. Also, The Manner of his Apprehension, Arraignment, Trial, Condemnation and Execution.65

The third work published was a poem about the Christian's life of faith. It is mainly concerned with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. According to its subtitle it came to fruition during one of Keach's imprisonments.

After the Revolution in 1689, Keach published another poem entitled, Distressed Sion Relieved, or the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness. This work was a sequel to Keach's Sion in Distress (1666) and was dedicated to the recently crowned William and Mary. Hugh Martin laments that this work

65. Ibid., 8-9.
is largely a review in very pedestrian verse of the sufferings of the Dissenters and eulogies of their martyrs. Having struggled to read it, we can only endorse the judgment of C. H. Spurgeon that the less said about Keach's poetry the better.66

Keach published three more books in 1689. The first was a reaction to the on-going dispute over baptism and was entitled *Gold Refined; or, Baptism in its primitive Purity*.67 The second book dealt with another controversy among the Baptists concerning the financial support of ministers by their churches. This was called *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance vindicated*.68 The third book was entitled *Anti-Christ stormed*. The long subtitle of the work clearly declares its theme.

Mystery Babylon the great Whore, and great City, proved to be the present Church of Rome. Wherein all Objections are fully answered. To which is added, The Time of the End, or a clear Explanation of Scripture Prophecies, with the Judgment of divers Learned men concerning the final Ruine of the Romish Church, that it will be in this present age.

66. Ibid., 9.
Together with an Account of the Two Witnesses, who they are, with their Killing, Resurrection and Ascension. Also an Examination and Confutation of what Mr. Jurien hath lately written concerning the Effusion of the Vials, proving none of them are yet poured out, With Mr. Cann's Reasons to confirm the same.

Likewise a brief Review of D. Tho. Goodwin's Exposition of the 11th chapter of the Revelations, concerning the Witnesses, and of that Street in which they should lie slain, proving it to be meant of Great Britain.

And a brief Collection of divers strange Prophecies, some very Antient.

By Benj. Keach, Author of Sion in Distress to which is Annexet, A short Treatise in two parts. 1. The Calculation of Scripture numbers by Scripture only, without the help of Human History. 2. Upon the Witnesses; giving light to the whole Book.69

Crosby wrote about the second of these three books and revealed a little of the impact it had upon the ministry of Dissenters in the seventeenth century.

... from the very beginning of the Baptist Churches in England several of their teachers had been tradesmen, and continued in their secular employments, after they were ordained to the work of the ministry. In some places this was occasioned through necessity, the people being poor, and few in number, and exposed to many hardships by persecution, so

69. Benjamin Keach, Anti-Christ stormed (London: Nathaniel Crouch, 1689), title page.
that they were obliged to it for the support of themselves and families; and when it is thus no one can justly blame either the minister or people for it. The great apostle Paul himself did not disdain to work with his hands, when the circumstances of the whole church made it necessary . . . those who have been so ready to reflect on the Baptists, for this practice, have took (sic) the same method themselves . . . there were others who acted thus upon principle, thinking it a sin, either for the people to give, or the minister to receive, or take anything, as a reward for his labour in the ministry; and grounded this opinion on a mistaken interpretation of those words in the Old Testament, The priest teacheth for hire, and the prophets divine for money; not the words of our Savior, As ye have freely received freely give.70

Crosby further objects to the ill-gotten gain of the Anglican clergymen especially in the country towns outside London. He then speaks of the results of the "glorious Revolution" and of the Protestant Dissenters' desire for reformation in this matter.

. . . having now their liberty secured to them by law, they hoped to maintain a more regular ministry, and provide better for their maintenance. And the first thing they proposed in this was, to publish a treatise in vindication of this rite, and therefore fixed on Mr. Keach as the most proper person to do it. Accordingly a small treatise was prepared, in which Mr. Keach effectually proves it to be the duty of every congregation, if capable of

70. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 292-93.
it, to maintain their minister; not only from positive institution under the Gospel, and also from the care taken of such under the law, but also from the very light of nature. He considers the many sad effects and inconvenience that would attend the neglect of it, answers the objections usually made against it, and resolves several difficult cases made about it.  

At the Baptist General Assembly in London in 1689 the elders and ministers of over one hundred churches recommended that the "treatise be dispersed amongst all our respective congregations."  

It was at this General Assembly that the Confession of Faith, which was compiled in 1677, was signed by the most eminent Baptist ministers of the day, including Keach. This Confession remained the definitive Confession of Faith of the Particular Baptists churches of England and Wales for over 150 years. Keach was instrumental in the writing of section five of Chapter 22 which deals with singing and of section nine of Chapter 26 which speaks of laying-on-of-hands.  

Crosby relates one other incident in Keach's life during the year 1689. Sometime during the year, Keach became

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71. Ibid., 294-95.
72. Ibid., 296.
73. Spears, op. cit., 87.
so ill that physicians were called in along with fellow ministers, relatives, and Keach's immediate family. It seems that they

... had taken their leave of him, as a dying man, and past all hopes of recovery. But the Reverend Mr. Hanserd Knollis seeing his then dying friend, and brother in the Gospel, near, to all appearance, expiring, betook himself to prayer, and in an earnest and very extraordinary manner begged, that God would spare him, and add unto his days, the time he granted to his servant Hezekiah; and as soon as he had ended his prayer, he said, Brother Keach I shall be in heaven before you, and quickly after left him. So remarkable was the answer of God to this good man's prayer, that I cannot omit it; tho' it may be discredited by some, there are yet living incontestible evidences of the fact. For Mr. Keach recovered of that illness, and lived just fifteen years afterwards.\footnote{74}

In 1691 Keach published \textit{The Counterfeit Christian;} or the Danger of Hypocrisy: Opened in Two Sermons. These sermons were expositions of Matthew 12:43-45. According to the preface of the work, Keach had been preaching on the Parables for "more than a year ... on the Lord's Day at seven a Clock."\footnote{75} In that same year Keach returned to

\footnote{74. Crosby, \textit{op. cit.}, IV, 307-308; Knollys died in 1691.}

\footnote{75. Benjamin Keach, \textit{The Counterfeit Christian;} or the Danger of Hypocrisy: Opened in Two Sermons (London: John Pike, 1691), A2. It is interesting that Keach also mentions on page A2 that "in a short time" he would publish all of his sermons on the parables; however, this did not happen until the last year of his life, 1704.}
the still continuing baptismal controversy. Obviously his attempt to "disprove" paedobaptism was not that successful for from 1692-1694 he was constantly debating the same issues. 76

During the year (1690) that Keach had begun preaching on the parables another controversy was coming to a head. This was over the practice of singing in worship. In 1689, at the General Assembly, the General Baptists had taken a negative stand on the issue while the Particular Baptists had taken a positive one. In a desire to keep peace and harmony among the churches, the assembly had not allowed Keach to bring up the matter for debate; however, in this they failed completely. Because of the ever growing number of Particular Baptist churches adopting the practice of singing, Isaac Marlow published A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing in the Public Worship of God in the Gospel Church, in 1690. This negative discourse provoked an answer from Keach who, in 1691, published The Breach repaired in God's Worship; or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Proved to Be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ. 77

Obviously, this caused some disharmony in Keach's church; according to the witness of nine members who withdrew their membership,

76. Benjamin Keach, Paedo-baptism disproved; being an Answer to the Athenian Society (London: J. Harris, 1691).

the issue to have singing in all worship services was voted on December 22, 1690 and carried out January 1, 1691. 78

The argument turned into a red-hot issue when Marlow published the appendix to his A Brief Discourse before Keach's Breach Repaired was off the press. This necessitated Keach writing an appendix in answer to Marlow's. "The issue was now in sharp focus, the battle lines clearly drawn, and other pastors began to publish arguments for the side they had chosen to support." 79

After Keach published his answer to Marlow's appendix, no more was heard from him during the years of this controversy, except his Sober Reply to Mr. Steed's Epistle concerning Singing (1691). 80 Robert Steed knew Keach well for he was co-pastor with one of Keach's closest friends, Hanserd Knollys. Knollys lived until 1691, when he commended Steed to the Church as his successor. Steed believed that hymn singing was a horrid innovation of Keach's and published An Epistle Written to the Members of a Church in London Concerning Singing (1691). A year or two later Steed admitted


79. Ibid., 40.

80. Spears, op. cit., 251. According to Spears, this work was written by Thomas Whinnel; the preface contains a recommendation of the work signed by Keach and others.
about twenty members of Keach's church who were dissatisfied with Keach's practice of singing hymns. Robert Young presents two reasons for Keach's further silence on this issue: (1) Keach, in writing *The Breach Repaired*, had presented the most complete, best ordered arguments for hymn singing yet published; and (2) the bulk of influential ministers rallied to his cause.  

When the General Assembly convened in March 1692, the controversy had reached such serious proportions that the assembly was forced to take action.

According to the proceedings of the meeting, it was agreed by both parties, to refer the matter to the examination and determination of the persons subscribed. The result was a censure of both sides, the bulk of the condemnation going to Marlow, and an anathema pronounced on the books 'that have uncharitable reflections in them against the Brethren.' The action of the assembly seems to have had a sobering effect, for nothing more of the argument appeared in print until 1696, when the issue was reopened.

In 1692 Keach returned once again to the baptism controversy in *The Rector Rectified; or, Infant's Baptism unlawful: Being an Answer to Mr. Burkitt.*

81. Young, *op. cit.*, 40.

82. Ibid., 43-44.

was rector of Milden in Suffolk and the author of *The Practical Exposition of the New Testament*. He became very distraught when the Baptist minister, John Tredwell, moved to Lavinham, which adjoined Malden, and began proselyting and baptizing some of Burkitt's congregation. To put an end to this business Burkitt went down to Tredwell's meeting with a company of parishioners, and demanded the use of the pulpit for nearly two hours during which he discussed nothing but infant baptism; Tredwell was not allowed the opportunity to reply. Afterwards Burkitt published the substance of his discourse using the following language:

> Since the late general liberty, the Anabaptists, thinking themselves thereby let loose upon us, have dispersed themselves into several counties, endeavouring to draw away our people from us, by persuading them to renounce their first dedication to God in baptism, and to enter into their communion by way of dipping. One of their teaching disciples has set up in our neighbourhood for making proselytes, by baptising them in a nasty horsepond, into which the filth of the adjacent stable occasionally flows, and out of which his deluded converts come forth with so much mud and filthiness upon them, that they rather resemble creatures arising out of the bottomless pit, than candidates of holy baptism; and all this before a promiscuous multitude in the face of the sun.

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84. Crosby, *op. cit.*, IV, 282.

According to Spurgeon:

When so respectable a person as Mr. Burkitt could condescend to give currency to such ridiculous falsehoods, it was time that he should be withstood by some one who could teach him better manners. His calumnies were answered by the testimonies of those present at the baptism, and his reasonings were confuted by Mr. Keach in his book entitled The Rector Rectified.86

Also in 1692, Keach published The Marrow of True Justification: or, Justification without Works.87 The remainder of the subtitle adequately informs us of the contents of the work.

Containing the Substance of Two Sermons lately preached on Rom. 4:5. And by the Importunity of some gracious Christians, now published with some Additions.

Wherein The Nature of Justification, is opened, as it hath been formerly asserted by all sound Protestants; and the present prevailing Errors against the said Doctrine, detected.88

On January 25, 1693, Mr. Henry Forty, pastor of a church at Abindon, in Berkshire, and friend of Keach, died. However, on his death bed he asked Keach to preach his funeral sermon on the subject of the Covenant of Grace. On

86. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, 27.
88. Ibid., title page.
January 29, 1693, Keach did exactly that; it was later published under the title, *The Everlasting Covenant, A Sweet Cordial for a drooping Soul; or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Openen'd: In a Sermon Preached January the 29th At the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty.* The sermon gives us some idea of Keach's view of the covenants.

'Tis nothing but Christ, and his Righteousness, his Merits, can give Relief to a wounded, and distressed Conscience. I have endeavoured to shew, That the Distinction some Men make between the Covenant of Redemption, and the Covenant of Grace, is without Ground, being but one and the same Covenant; and, That the Covenant of Grace, comprehendeth that between God, and Christ for us, as Mediator about our Redemption, which was as full of Grace, in the first making of it, as in the Revelation, and Application thereof, according to what was promised thereupon, 2 Tim. 1:9, Tit. 1,2. Its Rise, and Constitution, was from Eternity, tho' the Revelation, and Publication, was in Time.

This Covenant is the only City of Refuge, for a distressed Soul, to fly to for Sanctuary, when all the billows and waves of Temptations run over him, or Satan doth furiously assault him: If We fly to this Armory, We can never want Weapons to resist the Devil, nor doubt of Success against him. And now that it may be of use of you all who shall read it, shall be the Prayers of your unworthy Servant, in the Gospel, Benjamin Keach.


90. Ibid., preface.
Later in 1693 and extending into 1694, Keach turned, for the last time, to the baptism controversy. He published *The Axe laid to the Root; or one Blow more at the Foundation of Infants Baptism, and Church Membership. Part I.* This was soon followed by *The Axe Laid to the Root; wherein Mr. Flavel's, Mr. Rothwell's, and Mr. Exell's Arguments are answered, Part II,* wherein Keach specifically dealt with Flavel's *Vindiciarum vindex,* Rothwell's *Paedobaptismus vindicatur,* and Joshua Exell's *Serious enquiry.* These two works were followed by Keach's answer to Mr. Shute's *Antidote to prevent the prevenency of anabaptism* entitled *A Counter Antidote.*

Spurgeon, quoting Crosby, mentions one other incident related to the baptism controversy in which Keach is proven a master of disputations,

... so able a polemic that sometimes the mere outline of his argument sufficed to let his opponents see that they had no very desirable task before them. An amusing instance of this is recorded by Crosby in the following paragraph:

He was challenged by some ministers of the Church of England, not far from London, to dispute on baptism; and the place appointed was at Gravesend. As he was going thither in a Gravesend boat, in company with others, there happened to be a clergyman in the same boat with him. The conversation

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Mr. Keach had in the boat, with some of his friends, caused this clergyman to suspect he was the person going to dispute with his brethren, and accordingly he attacked him in the boat, and from hence saw the defence he was able to make, and what little credit would be obtained on their side of the question. As soon as the boat arrived at Gravesend this clergyman hastened to his friends, and let them know the conversation he had had with Mr. Keach in the boat, and what arguments he intended to urge; which put an entire stop to the disputation, and Mr. Keach returned to London again without seeing any one of them. Though they had rendered the Baptists as contemptible as they could be stating that they had nothing to say for their practice in baptising adult persons, yet when all came to all, not one of them dared to appear and defend what they had spoken.

In 1694 Keach published a group of sermons under the title *A Trumpet blown in Zion*; then, immediately he republished them with some other sermons, almost forty in all, in *A Golden Mine Opened; or the Glory of God's Rich Grace displayed in the Mediator to all Believers; and His direful wrath against impenitent sinners*. All of the sermons are written with the intention of the clarification of the doctrines of election and the saints' final perseverance. It should be noted that Keach "borrows" heavily from such writers as Thomas Manton and, especially, John Owen for much of his material; however, these still represent some of the finest of Keach's expositional preaching.


On December 11, 1695, the day appointed by the King for public prayer and humiliation, Keach preached the sermon entitled God Acknowledged: or the True Interest of the Nation, And all that fear God. Keach's focal text for the sermon was Proverbs 3:6 and the major point of doctrine was as follows:

That it is the indispensable Duty of every Man, or all Men who are Sons of Wisdom, in every thing they enter upon or go about to do, to Acknowledge God; which they must do, if they would prosper or meet with Success.

In 1696, when the controversy over singing resumed, Keach published Spiritual Melody; containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns and A Feast of Fat Things; containing several Scripture Songs and Hymns. There is some confusion about the dating of the first work. Crosby reports that is 1696; however, the copy seen by the writer has 1691 as the date. Perhaps Crosby confused Spiritual Melody (1691) with Spiritual Songs, Being the Marrow of the Scripture in Songs.

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95. Benjamin Keach, God Acknowledged . . . fear God (London: George Larkin, 1696).

96. Ibid., A3.

97. Benjamin Keach, Spiritual Melody (London: J. Hancock, 1691).

of Praise to Almighty God; from the Old and New Covenant (1700), which contained A Feast of Fat Things (1696). As to the allusion in Spiritual Melody's title to "near Three Hundred Hymns" only 147 were enumerated. "By counting each part of a hymn as a separate unit the total is brought up to 283. The total number of hymns published by Keach, counting each part as a separate hymn, runs to nearly 500." On the title page of Spiritual Melody Keach gives both the Latin and English versions of a section of Augustine's Preface to the Psalms:

How sweetly have I wept in Hymns and Songs! At the sounding of thy Church, the Voices flew into mine Ear, and thy Truth melted into mine Heart; and from thence flew forth the effects of Godliness; the tears ran down mine Eyes, and it was well with me where I was with them.

Towards the end of the year (1696) Keach published a polemic against James Owen's Children's Baptism from Heaven, entitled Light broke forth in Wales Expelling Darkness; or the Englishman's Love to the Antient Britains. This work went through many English and Welsh editions and was Keach's last engagement with the baptism controversy.


101. Benjamin Keach, Spiritual Melody, title page.

In 1697 Keach published *The Early Seeker, and Love of a Dying Savior*, of which nothing is written, and *The Articles of Faith of the Church at Horsleydown.* The latter work was also published as, *The Glory of a true Church, and its discipline displayed.* Wherein a true gospel-church is described. Together with the power of the Keys, and who are to be let in, and who are to be shut out. Both of these editions were 74 pages in length.

In 1698 Keach published three more books: (1) another set of sermons on justification under the title of *A Medium betwixt two Extremes*, (2) fourteen sermons intended to clarify the doctrines of Reconciliation and Justification under the title, *The Display of Glorious Grace: or, the Covenant of Peace Opened,* and (3) four sermons on Genesis 28:12, under the title, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven: or, Jacob's Ladder Improved.* This work deals with the doctrine

104. Benjamin Keach, *The Glory of a true Church ... shut out* (London, 1697).
107. Benjamin Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven: or, Jacob's Ladder Improved* (London: B. Harris, 1698).
of Grace and has as an appendix: one sermon on Romans 8:1 and some reflections on Samuel Clark's book entitled Scripture Justification.

On March 20, 1699, Keach preached a funeral sermon for Mrs. Elizabeth Westen. This was later published as A Call to Weeping, or a Warning Touching Approaching Miseries.108 Later in 1699 Keach wrote the preface to Mr. Robert Prudom's Truth Unveiled by Scripture Light (1699).

In 1700 Keach published two works: (1) Instructions for Children or The Child's and Youth's Delight,109 and (2) The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated: or, The Saturday Sabbatarians confuted.110 This second work was in two parts. First, proving the abrogation of the old seventh-day Sabbath, and secondly, that the Lord's Day is of divine appointment. This was a much debated subject during Keach's day and much written upon as well. Thus Keach's apology and rationale for the work:

'Tis true, I differ from divers learned Men in one or two things. I have cited, and from Reverend Dr. Owen particularly. . . . You will find many new Arguments I think not found in former Authors.


O that God would put a Rebuffe on, and stop all the Errors of these evil days, and increase Love among his People! Let us all cry for more of the Anointing, or for the latter Rain, and the glorious Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is now just at the door.\textsuperscript{111}

In 1701 Keach's only son, Elias, died, at the age of thirty-four. Only two more works came from the hand of Keach after Elias' death: (1) \textit{The French Imposter detected; or, An Answer to Zachery Housel, and Dr. Coward, who denied the Soul's Immortality},\textsuperscript{112} which was an obvious polemic against the two mentioned; and (2) \textit{Gospel Mysteries unveiled; or, an Exposition of all the Parables}.\textsuperscript{113} The article on Keach in \textit{The Baptist Encyclopaedia} (1883) claims that this work . . . is more frequently offered for sale in the catalogues of the great London second-hand bookstores than any production of Richard Baxter, John Howe, or Jeremy Taylor.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid., iv-vi.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Benjamin Keach, \textit{The French Imposter detected; or, An Answer to Zachery Housel, and Dr. Coward, who denied the Soul's Immortality} (London: Ebenezer Tracy, 1702).
\item \textsuperscript{113} Benjamin Keach, \textit{Gospel Mysteries unveiled; or, an Exposition of all the Parables} (London, 1704). Spears reports that he found a copy of this work with 1701 as the publisher's date; cf. Spears, \textit{op. cit.}, 247.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Cathcart, \textit{op. cit.}, 638.
\end{itemize}
In the Foreward to the recent reprint of this work, Herbert Lockyer promises

To all pastors who decide to take their people through the parables with the aid of dear old Benjamin Keach, we can promise them happy and effective preaching.115

The Famous Mr. Keach

Mr. Keach was a zealous Baptist; he aided ministers who came to him from all parts of his country, he had many meetinghouses built, and his works in defense of Baptist principles were read all over the Kingdom. Before his death men spoke of him as the 'famous' Mr. Keach, and he is still described by writers as a man of great celebrity.116

Such is the opinion of the writer of the article on Keach in Cathcart's The Baptist Encyclopaedia. Further testimony to Keach's character and reputation is seen in this passage from Crosby.

To collect every peculiar transaction of this worthy minister's life cannot be expected at such a distance of time; may, even to collect all that was excellent and imitable in him, is too great a task to be now undertaken. I shall only observe, that he was a person of great integrity of soul; a Nathaniel indeed; his conversation not frothy and vain, but serious, without being morose or


sullen. He began to be religious early, and con-
tinued faithful to the last. He was not shock'd
by the fury of his persecutors, tho' he suffer'd
so much from them for the cause of Christ.
Preaching the Gospel was the very pleasure of his
soul, and his heart was so engaged in the work
of the ministry, that from the time of his first
appearing in public, to the end of his days, his
life was one continued scene of labour and toil.
His close study and constant preaching did greatly
exhaust his animal spirits, and enfeeble his
strength, yet to the last he discovered a becoming
zeal against the prevailing errors of the day; his
soul was too great to recede from any truth that
he owned, either from the frowns or flatteries of
the greatest. He, with unwearied diligence, did
discharge the duties of his pastoral office,
preaching both in season and out of season,
visiting those under his charge, encouraging the
serious, gently reproving the froward, defending
the great truths of the Gospel, and setting them
in the clearest light. How low would he stoop
for the sake of peace! and, How would he bear the
infirmitities of his weak brethren! That such as
would not be wrought upon by the strength of
reason, might be melted by his condescension and
good-nature. He was prudent as well as peaceable;
would forgive and forget injuries, being chari-
table as well as courteous. He was not addicted
to utter hard censures of such as differed from
him in lesser matters, but had a love for all
saints, and constantly exercised himself in this,
To keep a conscience void of offence, towards God,
and towards men. He shewed an unwearied endeavor
to recover the decayed power of religion, for he
lived what he preached, and it pleased God so to
succeed his endeavors in the Gospel, that I doubt
not, but there are some yet living that may call
him father, whom he hath begotten through the
Gospel. 117

117. Crosby, op. cit., IV, 304-305.
Finally, Spurgeon comments on Keach's ability as a preacher.

Very sweetly did Mr. Keach preach the great fundamental truths of the gospel, and glorify the name and work of Jesus. His Gospel Mine Opened, and other works, rich in savour, show that he was no mere stickler for a point of ceremony, but one who loved the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and felt its power. The doctrine of the Second Advent evidently had great charms for him, but not so as to crowd out Christ crucified. He was very solid in his preaching, and his whole conduct and behaviour betokened a man deeply in earnest for the cause of God. In addressing the ungodly he was intensely direct, solemn, and impressive, not flinching to declare the terrors of the Lord, nor veiling the freeness of divine grace. We quote a few sentences from one of his sermons, only remarking that such clear evangelical statements are found throughout all his works. . . . 'Come, venture your souls on Christ's righteousness; Christ is able to save you though you are ever so great sinners. Come to him, throw yourselves at the feet of Jesus. Look to Jesus, who came to seek and save them that were lost . . . You may have the water of life freely. Do not say, "I want qualifications or a meekness to come to Christ." Sinner, dost thou thirst? Dost thou see a want of righteousness? "Tis not a righteousness; but 'tis a sense of the want of righteousness, which is rather the qualification thou shouldst look at. Christ hath righteousness sufficient to clothe you, bread of life to feed you, grace to adorn you. Whatever you want, it is to be had in him. We tell you there is help in him, salvation in him. "Through the propitiation in his blood" you must be justified, and that by faith alone.'

Keach died July 18, 1704, at the age of sixty-four, and was buried in Southwark.

118. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, 31.

Chapter III
CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

Baptist Hymnody in the Seventeenth Century

In order to properly evaluate English Baptist hymnody of the seventeenth century, one should be aware that the two groups of English Baptists held differing views about music in the worship services. Throughout the century the General Baptists, with few exceptions, disapproved expressly of psalmody and to a lesser extent of hymn singing. This was due partly to their wish to avoid anything which seemed to ignore that there was a difference between the church and the world, and partly to their dread of formalism. However, they were not entirely a songless people. An article from the General Baptist Magazine clearly illustrates the General Baptists' view of music during this time:

For one thing they were afraid of forms, forms of praise as well as forms of prayer. They also urged that the praises of God, in order to be accepted, must be sincere, but in a mixed congregation of believers and unbelievers, many would be sure to utter words of praise with their voices, whilst their hearts were not engaged, which would be hypocrisy. If under the prompting of a spirit of gratitude to God, a brother in their assemblies felt moved to sing by himself a psalm of thanksgiving, they could not gainsay, provided he
confined himself to the words of Scripture, but more than this they could not admit.¹

Young points out that these negative views of the General Baptists toward congregational singing "... originated with their founder, John Smyth, and no tendency to break this prohibition is evident before the late 1680's."² Smyth's views of the liturgy and ministry of the churches, which were expressed in The Differences of the Churches of the Separation,³ were formulated during a disagreement with Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth, leaders of the Ancient Separatist Church from which Smyth's sect broke away. The principle of worship which Smyth defined was that worship is a spontaneous act of man's spirit; to use any kind of human aid (such as formal prayers, translations, written sermons, etc.), is to frustrate the free operation of the Spirit. Ainsworth, who was a staunch exponent of psalmody, replied to Smyth's views in A Defense of the Holy Scriptures, Worship and Ministerie, Used in the Christian Churches Separated from Antichrist: Against the Challenges, Cavils and Contradictions of M. Smyth: in His

2. Young, op. cit., 35.
3. Amsterdam, 1608.
This work confirms the suspicions that Smyth's views on psalm singing would stifle the practice, whereas Ainsworth's views advocated "... harmonious singing of the psalms of holy Scripture, to the instruction and comfort of our harts (sic), and praise our God."5

Thomas Helwys, who subsequently separated from Smyth's church and established the first General Baptist Church on English soil in 1612, left no record of his views concerning singing; however, the evidence of the next four decades indicates that they were substantially those of Smyth. George Wither, in A Preparation to the Psalter, went so far as to single out the negative attitudes of the Baptists of that period. He scorned their contention that since the Scriptures are not in rhyme and meter they should not be sung.6

Nothing else was written concerning singing among General Baptists until well past mid-century when in 1678 Thomas Grantham published his Christianismus Primitivus. Chapter VII of the work devotes eighteen pages to "the

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5. Ibid., 22.
ordinance of God touching the singing of Psalms, Hymns and spiritual songs in the Christian Church, according to Scripture and antiquity." This treatise is merely an amplification of Smyth's views, but is also supported by quotations from Augustine, Erasmus, Basil, and others.

Young cites one General Baptist who did not heed Grantham's warnings. This was John Reeve, pastor at Bessel's Green, Kent, who undauntedly published *Spiritual Hymns upon Solomon's Song* in 1684. In so doing he not only set the Scriptures in precomposed rhyme and meter, but advised that these hymns "... may be vocally sung in the ordinary tunes of the singing Psalms." A few years later a number of other church leaders took issue with Grantham's stand, and this led to an official declaration of the 1689 General Assembly prohibiting the practice of congregational singing.

Among the Particular Baptists, however, psalmody was another matter. While the General Baptists had been silent about their views for many years, the Particular Baptists did not at all hesitate to express their views.


10. Ibid., 17.
The first reference to singing by a Particular Baptist appeared in 1646—in Francis Cornwell's *Some Reasons Against Stinted Form of Praising God in Psalms*. Cornwell had quit the Anglican Church to become a Particular Baptist before he published the work, and since all of the copies have unfortunately been lost we do not know of his exact point of view.\(^\text{11}\)

In 1649 Edward Drapes treated the question of psalm singing much like Smyth had, though a little more clearly. He insisted that singing is a gift of the Spirit to be performed by individual members of the church. The work was entitled *Gospel-Glory Proclaimed Before the Sonnes of Men, in the Visible and Invisible Worship of God*.\(^\text{12}\) Then in 1654, Thomas Collier, who had served as pastor in several churches, wrote *The Right Constitution and True Subjects of the Visible Church of Christ*.\(^\text{13}\) This concerned the order, ordinances, ministry, and government of the church, and asserted that the ordinance of singing praise consists of one person at a time in the church, and that all Scriptures that mention singing

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 19.


are to be understood in that light. In 1674 Collier published *The Body of Divinity* 14 which said many of the same things.

The records of several congregations which met together in Somerset County express a similar attitude. They interpreted Biblical singing to mean speaking God's praise. The reports of their meetings may be found in a manuscript contained in Bristol Baptist College Library, Bristol. The manuscript is entitled *Several Resolutions and Answers of Quaries, Sent in from Several Congregations at Several General Meetings of Messengers from the Said Congregations in the County of Somerset and the Counties Near Adjacent.* 15

One of the earliest positive voices for the use of congregational psalmody came from another minister of this period, John Skynner, who testified of the use of congregational singing. In a book on baptism entitled *Corruption Corrected,* he stated that his congregation "... refuses(s) not singing of Psalms to the honour of God." 16

In 1660 Vavasor Powell objected strongly to "stinted liturgies" in a small book criticizing *The Book of Common Prayer.* However, he was reticent to pass judgment on psalmody.

If by a Hymn be understood one of the psalmes of Scripture, why might not Christ and his Disciples use it, by singing . . . and according to the custom of the Jewes especially, since at that time the Church of the Jewes stood.\(^{17}\)

The following year, in the Epistle Dedicatory to one of his writings, Powell advocated "using carefully . . . all the Ordinances of Christ, as . . . singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs."\(^{18}\) He then gave further evidence of his approval of this practice by versifying the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Information concerning Psalm singing during the 1670's comes from The Records of a Church of Christ, Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687.\(^{19}\) Their compiler, Pastor Edward Terrill, related that in 1671 he was arraigned before the mayor, "... through the complaints, as we after understood, of one old Mr. Wright, that had been sheriff that he could hear us sing psalms from our meeting-place, at his house in Hallier's Lane."\(^{20}\)

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20. Ibid., 159.
In 1680 Hercules Collins wrote his \textit{Orthodox Catechism} which seems to be the Particular Baptist counterpart of Thomas Grantham's \textit{Christianismus Primitivus}. The end of the work contained "an appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing" which argued strongly for the practice. The full import of this work was not realized until a decade later, during the hymn singing controversy.

\underline{Years of Controversy: 1690-1700}

By the time of the General Baptist Assembly in 1689 tension had increased to the point that the General Baptists decided to prohibit the practice of congregational singing entirely; the Particular Baptists, however, decided that no real principle was at stake and that every church must be left to settle the question for itself. Keach challenged the men of the Assembly to debate the matter; but the Assembly "thought it not convenient to spend much time that way." After the publication of Hercules Collins' \textit{Orthodox Catechism} (1690), the number of Particular Baptist churches which had adopted the practice of congregational singing had


22. \textit{Ibid.}, 75.

been increased. Keach asserted that "above twenty Baptized congregations in this nation"\textsuperscript{24} were using singing in 1691, while Thomas Whinnel assessed the number at almost thirty.\textsuperscript{25} The increase of this innovation caused alarm among the opponents of the practice and this resulted in Isaac Marlow's \textit{A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing in the Public Worship of God in the Gospel Church}.\textsuperscript{26} Keach answered Marlow in his book, \textit{The Breach Repaired}, which appeared in 1691. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" he writes,

\begin{quote}
I have been provoked by our Brother who wrote against Singing, to set Pen to Paper, and not only by him and his Book, but I have been induced by Multitudes . . . to give him an Answer, so that I hope you will not be offended with me in what I have done.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

The controversy was under way.

What caused the argument to turn into a major issue was the appendix Marlow published to his \textit{A Brief Discourse} before Keach's \textit{Breach Repaired} was off the press. This necessitated Keach writing an answer to Marlow's appendix. The

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Benjamin Keach, \textit{An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix} (London, 1691), 4.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Thomas Whinnel, \textit{A Sober Reply to Mr. Robert Steed's Epistle Concerning Singing} (London, 1691), 6.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Isaac Marlow, \textit{A Brief Discourse . . . Gospel Church} (London, 1690).
\item \textsuperscript{27} Benjamin Keach, \textit{The Breach Repaired}, vi-vii.
\end{enumerate}
issue was now clearly in focus and others joined in to publish arguments for the side they had chosen to support.

Thomas Whinnel published two tracts in the years 1691-1692 in support of Keach. His paper was endorsed by seventeen prominent people, mostly pastors. In his argument, Whinnel gives us valuable clues concerning the attitude of earlier Baptist leaders of singing.

May not we cite Reverend Mr. Tomes, a man famous beyond most for the Baptized Way, who was for this way of singing; and so was the Learned and pious Mr. Gosnall, and the late pious, prudent, laborious learned and faithful Mr. Jesse, and learned and godly Vavasor Powell, and so is the learned and laborious Mr. Hanserd Knowls, and some hundreds of able Divines perhaps not inferior to any of time.28

Another pastor to write in defense of Keach was Joseph Wright, who in 1691 published Folly Detected. 29 This was followed by Marlow's Truth Cleared which contained several letters of Keach that appeared to vindicate Marlow's position. Keach then put forth A Sober Appeal for Right and Justice 30 in which he appeals to Christians to read both writings and determine which is correct. Keach asks that a group of men,

30. Benjamin Keach, A Sober Appeal for Right and Justice (London, 1691).
half chosen by Marlow and half by himself, should be allowed to make the decision. This appeal was given to the Assembly and it advised Keach and Marlow to choose the men to judge their writings. Both agreed.31

Soon after, a pamphlet called *Truth Vindicated* by S. W., J. C., and J. L. appeared which was in support of Keach. Marlow accused Keach of starting and prompting publication. Hanserd Knollys was the next to support Keach with *An Answer to I. Marlow*. Concerning this Marlow observed that it was because of advanced age that "he [Knollys] made hard reflections on me."32

According to Spears, Marlow soon sent a letter to Keach in which he proposed to choose four men and allow Keach to choose four to decide the issue. In the letter containing his answer Keach agreed and chose Brother Masters, William Collins, Leonard Harrison, and Samuel Baggwell. If Marlow objected to any of these then he must have freedom to object to any of Marlow's men. This letter was sent October 12, 1691.33

On October 20, 1691, Marlow replied that he was against William Collins, but he would admit him rather than retard the proceedings. He chose Edward Man, George Barrett,

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33. Spears, *op. cit.*, 129.
Robert Steed, and Richard Hallowell, and suggested a method of procedure for the judges to follow. Keach replied a week later with his approval of the judges but disapproved of the method of procedure being formulated by Marlow and himself. A week later Marlow insisted that he and Keach determine the procedure but Keach still disagreed.  

This stalemate led Marlow to stop writing to Keach and have his men render a judgment. The four unanimously vindicated Marlow. Almost simultaneously, Keach was involved in a controversy with one of Marlow's judges, Robert Steed. Steed, a Baptist minister, wrote *An Epistle Written to the Members of a Church in London Concerning Singing* which was a denunciation of hymn singing in 1691. *A Sober Reply to Mr. Steed's Epistle Concerning Singing* under the authorship of either Keach or Whinnel—it has been attributed to both—followed shortly thereafter. It would be interesting to know more of the background of this particular controversy for Steed was co-pastor with one of Keach's closest friends, Hanserd Knollys. Knollys supported Keach.  

One gets the impression that Marlow was an habitual agitator, stirring up trouble wherever possible. He had two of his four judges sign a pamphlet to aid Steed; it was entitled *A Serious Answer to a Late Book Stiled a Reply to Mr. Robert Steed's Epistle Concerning Singing*. The third man  

34. Ibid.  35. Ibid., 130.
to sign the pamphlet was William Kiffin, an elder statesman among Baptists, who like Knollys was a close friend of Keach; but, Kiffin was against Keach on this point.

By the middle of 1692 the controversy had become so heated and abusive that the General Assembly took it in hand and appointed a committee of seven to examine the pamphlets. Upon their report the Assembly rebuked the pamphleteers and urged the people neither "to buy, sell, give, or disperse" certain pamphlets, including two from Marlow. The action of the Assembly seems to have had a sobering effect, for nothing more of the argument appeared in print until 1696, when the issue was reopened.

Probably due to criticism from fellow ministers, Richard Allen felt prompted to defend the newly established musical practice of his church by publishing in 1696 An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms with Conjoined Voices a Christian Duty. Allen's essay provoked a prompt reply from William Russell entitled Some Brief Animadversions upon M. Allen's Essay. Marlow, also goaded by Allen's tract, rushed again into print with, The Controversie of Singing Brought to an End, which in fact served only to renew it. Allen answered

38. Isaac Marlow, The Controversie ... an End (London, 1696).
with *A Brief Vindication of an Essay to Prove the Singing of Psalms*.\(^3^9\) Towards the end of 1697 Richard Claridge wrote a lengthy reply to Allen's piece, called *An Answer to Richard Allen's Essay*.\(^4^0\) The appearance in 1698 of three more tracts—two by Marlow—signaled the end of the controversy over congregational singing. By this time all had apparently been said on both sides and the struggle came to a quiet end.

It is astonishing considering the obstacles he faced, that Benjamin Keach accomplished the 1673 inauguration of free church hymnody. This is especially so when one considers the prejudice against religious reform throughout the seventeenth century, the persecution of the Baptists during the 1670's and 1680's, and the different principles concerning congregational singing which divided the General and Particular Baptists. Keach demonstrated great tact and patience in persuading his congregation and others to discover the importance of congregational singing.

As the end of the seventeenth century drew near, hymn singing had become well established among Baptists. Altogether there are five stages through which the hymnody evolved. The Psalms were first translated into the prose


form of the Book of Common Prayer. A need for rhythmic settings led to the metrical psalms which were followed in turn by the versification of other passages of Scripture. These were then paraphrased, often with the omission of the least important parts, and finally the authors began to write the hymns which they felt would best elucidate the scriptural portions. It was this last phase to which Keach made many contributions, and which blossomed so wonderfully in the early eighteenth century under the pen of Isaac Watts.

Psalm and Hymn Tunes Among Baptists

The worship services of Baptists of the seventeenth century were in many ways similar to those of the Anglican churches. W. T. Whitley supplies the following description of a typical service:

A worshipper brought with him a Bible, at first a reprint of the Genevan version, with the metrical Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, or the newer translations by Frances Rous, and the melody of the proper tune above, in a fashion revived for us by the B. M. X. hymn-sheets. It may be that reading aloud, and prayers, were exercises in which many took a share; but the tendency was early and strong to commit this more and more to the minister.41

The minister would choose from the small supply at hand a tune well known to the congregation, and they would sing it from memory.

Any attempt to determine the psalm and hymn tunes used by Baptists in the seventeenth century presents some difficulties. One is the apparent lack of activity by Baptists in the area of tune writing, a fact which can be accounted for by the fact that the only Baptist hymnists were ministers, not musicians. Another problem is that hymn collections make only scanty references to hymn tune names. The last difficulty was the almost complete lack of tunebook editing and publishing by Baptists.42

The existing tunes were used by all English Protestants, whether Anglican, Puritan or Independent. Many versions of the psalters were written during this period, some for particular local churches, others for strictly personal devotional use. For public worship the psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins were sung and learned almost universally by English-speaking Protestants. "This 'Old Version' was recognized as the official psalter of the Anglican Church

from 1562 until 1696, at which time the 'New Version' of Tate and Brady superceded it."43

Other than the Sternhold and Hopkins versions, the two most important tune sources in general use were those of Ravenscroft and Playford. Among the Dissenters, the two editions of Barton's Books of Psalms, 1645 and 1682, and Patrick's Psalm of David were the most popular. We know from references that both collections were enjoyed and used by the Baptists in their services of worship.44 The following is a list of the main tune sources used in the seventeenth century:45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>Ainsworth Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>Ravenscroft Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Barton Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671</td>
<td>Playford Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Barton Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Sternhold-Hopkins Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>Patrick Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>Tate and Brady Psalter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neither Barton nor Patrick, whose works were the most popular among the Dissenters, attempted to present large


44. Young, op. cit., 93.

collections of tunes such as are found in Ravenscroft and Playford. However, Barton went so far as to claim that his were the "common tunes at this day used in, and about London." 46 This must be true for we know that "the Baptist churches in London . . . were among those . . . groups that preferred the William Barton to other psalters and hymns and used them for many years." 47 In fact, Barton nearly succeeded in replacing the Sternhold and Hopkins "Old Version" with his own psalter.

There is very little information concerning tune usage to be gleaned from the findings in the later seventeenth-century Baptist hymn collections; and even the information given can be confusing. In the hymn book Spiritual Melody by Keach, no tunes are indicated for common meter verse. "It was assumed that one of the well-known melodies would be chosen." 48 However, Keach does specify that some of his hymns were to be sung to the tunes of the 100th Psalm and the 25th Psalm: 49

Hymns to be sung as the 25th Psalm.

Hymn 59. 2d. Part. Page 146
Hymns 63, 64. 7th and 8th Parts. Page 160, 161.

46. Young, op. cit., 93.
47. Whittaker, op. cit., 281.
48. Young, op. cit., 98.
49. Keach, Spiritual Melody, table of contents.
Hymns to be sung as the 100th Psalm.

Hymn 20. 6th. Part. Page 47.
Hymn 14 Page 270.
Hymn 222 Page 383.

Still, a problem remains. Which version of whose tune book does one use? The problem is best illustrated in Young's The History of Baptist Hymnody where he compares no less than six versions of the tune "Southwell," the setting almost exclusively used for short meter.\(^50\)

It should be noted that Baptists shared the tunes common to Dissenters and Anglicans alike, that no more than fifteen tunes were very popular among Baptists, that those tunes were used for both metrical psalms and hymns and that there was quite a lot of inaccuracy, ambiguity, and confusion regarding the use of specific Psalm tunes during these times.

Hymns and Hymn Writers of the
Seventeenth Century

As we have seen in the preceding sections, Psalmody in general had fallen to a low level by the mid seventeenth century. Parish churches were, for the most part, using the inadequate Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, while Baptists who

\(^{50}\) Young, \textit{op. cit.}, 96.
were in favor of singing psalms were using Barton's psalter. During that time, some of the Baptists, among them Vavasor Powell and John Reeve, were beginning to versify sections of Scripture other than the Psalms. This practice of versification, along with the earlier occasional additions of hymns to several of the Psalters (such as the appendix to the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter and the hymns in the Playford Psalter), and a few brief appearances of collections of hymns (such as those of George Wither, Thomas Ken and John Mason), led only to "a repertory of hardly a dozen hymns" for seventeenth century churchgoers.\footnote{51}

Alongside those few hymns stands the work of Benjamin Keach, whose total number of hymns approaches nearly five hundred. While it is generally assumed that Isaac Watts "was the first to think out the theory of congregational praise and to furnish a well-rounded body of material for the Church to use"\footnote{52} with his publication in 1707 of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, the truth remains that Keach was the first, rather than Watts. Young points out that Keach first introduced his hymns to the congregation in Horsleydown about 1673, and published his Spiritual Melody in 1691, sixteen

\begin{footnotes}
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years before Watt's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. The value of Watts, then, lies not in his pioneering efforts, but rather in the quality of his work.

Keach's *Spiritual Melody* contains one hundred forty-seven hymns, many of them in several parts, bringing the total to two hundred eighty-three. Young believed that all of those hymns came "from the pen of Keach save the curious Insertion of one hymn taken from Dr. Patrick's *Century of Select Psalms*;" however, an examination of Keach's hymnals by David W. Music revealed many of the hymns came wholly or in part from the works of others.

With the exception of the hymn by Patrick and two short passages in *A Feast of Fat Things* the names of the original authors were not given in Keach's books. This leaves him open to the charge of plagiarism, but it should be noted that he never specifically claimed to have authored all the hymns in his books . . . Also, such transference of material was common in the seventeenth century. It is difficult to believe that he was trying to pass off these borrowing as his own work, for many of them came from the most popular hymnic works of his day.

Music continues by citing some of the authors from whose works Keach borrowed. The list includes John Patrick, John Keach, and others.

53. Young, *op. cit.*, 56.
who published *A Century of Select Psalms* in 1679, William Barton, author of *Four Centuries of Select Hymns*, printed in 1668 and *Six Centuries of Select Hymns*, printed in 1688, John Mason, whose *Spiritual Songs* was first published in 1683, Richard Davis, author of *Hymns Composed on Several Subjects*, and Sternhold and Hopkins, authors of *The Whole Book of Psalms*.56

The only hymn in *Spiritual Melody* expressly attributed to someone besides Keach was "All Ye that Serve the Lord, His Name"57 from Patrick's *A Century of Select Psalms*. The largest source for Keach's borrowing in *Spiritual Melody* is Barton's *Four Centuries of Select Hymns*. Significantly, all of Keach's appropriations from this work appeared in Part VIII of *Spiritual Melody*. In fact, of the seventeen psalm versions in this section of the hymnal, ten were written wholly or in large part by Barton. These include:

- The Man Is Bless'd that Shuns the Snare, p. 370 (Barton, p. 199)
- God is a Righteous Judge Be Sure, p. 373 (Barton, p. 204)
- Thou Wilt Arise in Mercy Yet, p. 376 (Barton, p. 224)
- Mark and Behold the Perfect Man, p. 377 (Barton, p. 273)
- The Lord is Just in All His Ways, p. 378 (Barton, p. 192)

56. Ibid.

57. Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody*, 368.
A few stanzas from Mason's *Spiritual Songs* also appeared in *Spiritual Melody*. Mason's hymn, "Blest Be My God That I Was Born"\(^{58}\) was reworked by Keach as "Blessed By God that We Were Born."\(^{59}\) Keach also borrowed the second and fifth stanzas of Mason's "My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord"\(^{60}\) which he changed into the first stanza of "Down from Above the Blessed Dove"\(^{61}\) and stanzas four and five of "The Spirit's Swift, He's Swift in Flight."\(^{62}\) It also should be noted that several stanzas of hymns by Mason and by Richard Davis appeared in Keach's *A Feast of Fat Things*.\(^{63}\)

Concerning Keach's borrowings from the Sternhold and Hopkins work, it is of interest that they come almost exclusively from the same psalm, William Kethe's versification

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60. Mason, *op. cit.*, 36-37.
61. Keach, *Spiritual Melody*, 188.
63. *Music*, *op. cit.*, 150.
of Psalm 100. The most extensive use of Kethe's version occurs in Part 6 of Keach's hymn "An What Art Thou, Lord Jesus, Then?". In this hymn Keach paraphrased Kethe's paraphrase. Keach's version is given here.

Now let all People on the Earth  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Whose love was such to bring thee forth,  
But chiefly let thy Saints rejoice.

The Lord to us is good indeed,  
Tis he new Creatures did us make;  
We are his flock, he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter now his House with praise,  
Approach with joy his Courts likewise,  
Praise, laud and bless his Name always,  
For this is comely in his Eyes.

For why the Lord our God is good,  
His covenant it standeth sure,  
'Tis ratifi'd by Christ's own Blood,  
And shall from age to age endure.64

Just as Keach borrowed from others, he also gave ideas to his successors. The most significant hymn writer to come under Keach's influence was Isaac Watts, who is rightly acknowledged as the Father of English Hymnody. Keach's Spiritual Melody appeared in 1691 when Watts was a student at Stoke Newington. Watts wrote his first hymn in 1695 and published his first hymn book in 1707. The main significance of Keach's hymns for the subsequent work of

64. Keach, Spiritual Melody, 159.
Watts can be examined under two aspects. One is that Keach was the first Dissenter to publish a hymn book that was not simply a literary effort but was compiled to meet the liturgical needs of a definite congregation. Secondly, Keach is similar to Watts in his emphasis on the hymn book as a sung liturgy. "He shows us Watts' doctrinal hymn in embryo." 65

A comparative study of some of their hymns shows how Watts borrowed ideas from Keach.

Keach: Hymn 65

Christ All, and in All

Christ is Prophet, Priest and King,
A Prophet that's all Light,
A Priest that stands 'twixt God and Man,
A King full of delight.

Christ's Manhood is a Temple where
The Holy God does rest.
Our Christ he is our Sacrifice
Our Christ he is our Priest.

Christ is our Father, and our Friend,
Our brother and our Love;
Our Head, our Hope, our Surety,
Our Advocate above. 66


Great Prophet! I will bless Thy name:
By Thee the joyful tidings came,
Of wrath appeased, of sins forgiven,
Of Hell subdued, and peace with Heaven.

My bright Example and my Guide!
I would be walking near Thy side:
Oh, let me never run astray,
Nor follow the forbidden way!

My Advocate appears on high:
The Father lays His thunder by,
Not all that earth or hell can say,
Shalt turn my Father's heart away.67

Keach: Hymn 195

A What a Kind of Love is this
The Father grants to us,
To be the Sons of God above
And him to call us Thus!68

Watts: Book I, 64

Behold what wondrous grace
The Father hath bestowed
On sinners of a mortal race
To call them sons of God!69

68. Keach, Spiritual Melody, 360.
An interesting comparison of the hymns suggested by Keach and Watts for use after the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism can be found in Spears' *The Baptist Movement in England.*

Another hymn writer that Keach influenced was Augustus M. Toplady. One of Toplady's better-known hymns, "Rock of Ages," may be compared with Keach's poem on the same theme.

**Keach: Hymn 32**

The Rock of Ages Lord thou art,
On Thee we do depend;
Upon this Rock let us be built,
And then let Rains descend.

**Toplady: "Rock of Ages"**

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy river side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Keach had been writing and publishing hymns for some twenty-seven years before the publication of *Spiritual Melody,* and

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70. Spears, *op. cit.,* 142.
it would have seemed logical that he reprint some of these earlier hymns in a book designed primarily for congregational singing. Oddly enough, he seems to have utilized only three of his earlier hymns in Spiritual Melody. According to Music, these were:

Praise in the Highest, Joys Betide, p. 44
(from The Glorious Lover, p. 263)

If Conscience Is Become my Friend, p. 276
(from War With the Devil, p. 118)

Repentance, when Wrought in the Soul, p. 259
(from War With the Devil, p. 119)73

Keach's hymnals and their contents have continually been dismissed as "doggeral" and not deemed worthy of serious study. It is true that the majority of hymns do not commend themselves to modern congregational singing. Undoubtedly, they do not deserve the kind of attention given to Watts, Wesley, and other great hymnodists; neither do they deserve the complete neglect which is usually their lot.

It should be observed that the largest percentage of Keach's hymns were summaries of his sermons and were not designed to be great works of poetry. Keach simply was trying to educate his congregation through the use of the practice of congregational singing which he believed was a

73. Music, op. cit., 152.
biblical mandate. A brief comparison of Keach's *Tropologia* with *Spiritual Melody*, which appears below, reveals the sermonic source materials for Keach's hymns. It should be noted that this comparison could be carried out for about two thirds of both works.

**Tropologia: Part II**

- God The Father, p. 241
- God A Portion, p. 246
- God A Habitation, p. 250
- God An Husbandman, p. 254
- God A Builder, p. 260
- God A Man of War, p. 264

**Spiritual Melody: Table of Contents**

- God a Father
- God a Portion
- God the Saints Dwelling
- God a Husbandman
- God the Chief Builder
- God a Man of War

Apparently, the bulk of the hymns in Keach's books were by Keach himself. However, his extensive borrowing from other early hymnists suggests that his hymnals were more well-rounded than is usually reported.

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74. Benjamin Keach, *Tropologia; A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors* (London, 1682).
Keach was not the earliest, most original, nor most influential of the seventeenth-century English hymnodists. Thus, his fame will and should continue to rest on his 'introduction' of congregational singing and his famous treatise in defense of its practice. However, he should also be remembered and honored for his attempts to make congregational singing practical by the provision of an ordered body of church song. 75

Chapter IV
KEACH'S INFLUENCE

England

This thesis is an attempt to fill a longstanding lacuna in the annals of Baptist history. In the sphere of public worship Benjamin Keach is significant for the whole of England; however, most of his contributions were made by speaking to and for the Baptists. No serious study has ever been made of Keach, not even a biography; yet there is no dubiety concerning his widespread reputation during and immediately following the years of his work.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to select the one factor which produced Keach's influence on the people. Perhaps the key to Keach is expressed in the phrase, "tenacity for truth, particularly as he found it in the Scripture." 1

He studied the Scripture in order that it might be his "rule of faith and practice."

Perhaps the strongest factor which contributed to his influence was Keach's writings. He was a constant rival of John Bunyan and, for their day may be considered as equally

popular. Each took hints from the other and each wrote on many of the same subjects. Henri Talon, who made an extensive study of Bunyan, called Keach "the rival" of the Bedford tinker.\(^2\)

Allegories, expository sermons, catechisms, poems, hymns, and polemics flowed from the pen of Keach at an incredible pace. The word **prolific** is an understatement for this man who produced nearly fifty works, two of which were in tall quarto; indeed, it might be said that he had a sort of **furor scribendi**. Yet, it was not so much the mass of materials as it was the subjects and the types of writing that appealed to the people.

Keach's sermons were almost wholly expository, and were discussed with interest among the people of Keach's day (1640-1704). His enormous volume on Scripture metaphors was in print until 1858, almost two centuries after its first publication. Adam Clark, a Methodist minister who lived until 1832, complained that many pastors depended on it too much.\(^3\)

Catechisms, poetry, and allegories were quite as acceptable to the popular mind as Scriptural exposition. Two of Keach's catechisms exerted quite an important


\(^3\) Spears, *op. cit.*, 232.
influence in Britain. The thirtieth edition of his Instructions for Children was published in Southwark as late as 1763, which indicated its popularity in Britain. It is also significant that his poetry and allegories were published for quite a number of years after his death in 1704. Poems, such as The Glorious Lover, for example, were published as late as 1764. War With the Devil, his first allegory which appeared in 1673, was reprinted until 1776; and The Travels of True Godliness as well as The Progress of Sin were published as late as 1849.

Polemics on the religious problems of the day, such as the Quakers' position, Roman Catholicism, Sabbath Day observance, and congregational hymn singing, were eagerly devoured in an age when they did not compete with radios, television, magazines, and newspapers. One of the most important contributions of Keach to subsequent generations was his pioneering persistence in congregational hymn singing, especially against formidable opposition. Although his position was in advance of his age, he was one of the strongest contenders for this practice and he prepared the way for later hymnwriters to receive a ready acceptance.

Today the liturgy in a seventeenth-century Protestant congregation would be considered extremely bare, for

4. Ibid., 233.  5. Ibid.
only psalms, not hymns, were in general use. Keach's hymns were very poorly constructed; however, his *Spiritual Melody* not only represented the real beginning of modern hymnals in England, but also contained hymns which exerted a suggestive influence on both Isaac Watts and Augustus Toplady.

There can be no serious doubt that the people in his day felt that Keach's writings would endure. In an elegy after his death one person declared, "Thy Worth, Great KEACH, Thy works shall still endure, So many volumes of thy juster Praise."  

Having dealt with the writings of Keach, it is well to examine another important factor in his influence on the people, his preaching. It has been shown that it was necessary to enlarge his meeting house several times until finally it held nearly a thousand people. This was certainly a large congregation for a small, despised sect in seventeenth-century England. "His power was his self-evident sincerity, his compelling earnestness, and his transparent honesty."  

Not only did his writing and preaching tend to increase Keach's influence, but his persecution and practical work were factors as well. As a Dissenting pastor, Keach was

6. An ELEGY On the much Lamented Death of that Faithful and Laborious Minister of the Gospel, Mr. BENJAMIN KEACH (London, 1704), n. p.

7. Spears, op. cit., 235.
severely persecuted during the early periods of his ministry. Stories of a man snatched from his meeting house, threatened with being trampled to death by horses, imprisoned on several occasions, and placed in the pillory for two hours on separate days, all for his religious convictions, travelled fast in seventeenth-century England.

A fourth factor in Keach's popularity was his practical endeavors. Spurgeon states,

He was a practical man and he trained his church to labour in the Service of the Lord . . . He was mighty at home and useful abroad. By this means other churches were founded and meeting houses erected; he was in face as a pillar and a brazen wall among the Baptist churches of his day, and was in consequence deservedly held in honour. 

The most significant church founded by Keach was the one which later became the famous "Spurgeon's Tabernacle." He was also instrumental in erecting meeting houses in Essex as well as several districts in London.

For his own congregation Keach published in 1689 the Solemn Covenant, which was a church pledge for spiritual unity. It was read out at the beginning of every Lord's Supper service. Nearly three hundred years later that same church, now the Metropolitan Tabernacle, still requires of all members a pledge to keep this agreement, now called The Family Covenant.

8. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, 33.
Keach's writing, preaching, persecution, and practical efforts contributed to his widespread popularity during and immediately following the years of his work. How is it, then, that the reputation of this minister could decline until today his name is not remembered in many circles?

W. E. Spears, in his thesis on the Baptist movement in England, offers several reasons, summarized as following. First, Keach did not concentrate his efforts upon one single work which would immortalize his name. Second, there was a change in public concern, i.e., biblical exposition was no longer the topic of conversation in everyday life. Third, his views were in advance of his day, and as a consequence, the majority of people have accepted them without being conscious of the contribution which Keach made to their work and worship. Fourth, Keach's manner and style of preaching became outmoded, and fifth, Keach was not an extensive organizer.

Keach's writing, preaching and religious thought were no new things under the sun. He had not the sublimity of Milton, the human insight of Bunyan, the oratory of Spurgeon, or the poetic ability of Watts; yet, his devotion to Christ and evangelistic zeal, his earnestness and concern, burned just as brightly as in any of those religious giants.

Happily, not all have forgotten the name and significance of Benjamin Keach. From within the Baptist movement,
Joseph Ivimey declared that he was "a man with an active mind," "a genius," and "a faithful servant of Christ." John Stoughton, a man outside the Baptist movement, stated, "Keach and Kiffin were amongst the Baptist magnates at the end of the Revolution, and were far more influential than Bunyan."  

Keach's significance in the field of hymnology may be considered from the following statement by Escott:

The individual hymns are disappointing . . . But, despite their amateurishness, these compositions have some historical importance as early examples of the homiletical hymn, a genre in which Watts and especially Doddridge was later to excel . . . The Baptist hymnwriter more than any of Watts' predecessors grasped the truth if roughly, that a hymnbook is not only a book of praises, or a vade-mecum of the devotional life, but also a medium for the conveyance of moral and religious teaching.  

By way of conclusion the writer wishes to concur with the following part of W. T. Whitley's evaluation:

Keach is a fair type of what Baptists were to be for long; earnest, self-educated, intensely evangelical and orthodox. Within his limits he wielded great influence. 12

Benjamin Keach exerted an influence in the United States in the spheres of education and the Baptist movement by writing a section of The New England Primer and affecting the early history of both the Northern and Southern Baptist Conventions. Keach's hymns also achieved a certain amount of usefulness in early America. 13

To a historian of literature in the United States the importance of The New England Primer can hardly be overestimated. Sandford Fleming reported that it was "the most universally studied school-book that has ever been used in America" and that three million copies of it were printed. 14

There is some argument over Keach's authorship of this early textbook. Paul Leicester Ford, editor of The New England Primer, 1897, argues that Benjamin Harris was the author of the Primer. However, W. E. Spears points out

13. Spears, op. cit., 266.
that "Harris is said to have printed the book, not written it." 15

Harris printed and sold as many as seven of Keach's books from 1675 to 1698 and often took liberties with the titles. Clifford K. Shipton, former Archivist of Harvard University and Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, wrote:

Keach certainly was the author of the Child's Instructor which was published before the Protestant Tutor was printed by Harris. Keach wrote other things of this sort; Harris did not. To what extent Harris, the compiler, was indebted to Keach, the author, one would have to decide after comparing the whole series. 16

The decision to make Keach the author of the whole book cannot be completely conclusive. It is more probable that Harris compiled the book from several sources, including a section from one of Keach's works. The New English Tutor, which was the title of the book printed in London, contained a verbatim section from Keach's Instruction for Children. A comparison of parts of The New English Tutor with Keach's Instruction for Children positively proves that the work is of Keach, not Harris. 17

16. Ibid., 270.
17. Ibid.
Keach is not only significant in the sphere of education but in the Baptist movement in America as well. He published his *Articles of Faith* on August 10, 1697, and his son, Elias Keach, adopted the work of his father and published the *Articles of Faith* for his own congregation on the "2nd of the 7th Month, 1697." Since churches of this period still used the Julian calendar, this date would be September 2nd. William Joseph McGlothlin says that for Baptists, "This Confession is the first one we hear of in America." 

How did this Confession come to America? Elias Keach immigrated to America and was welcomed by the Cold Spring Baptist Church, founded in 1684 in Cold Spring, Pennsylvania. He left the Cold Spring congregation and united with another group of immigrants at Lower Dublin near Philadelphia. Here he was baptized by Thomas Dunjin in 1687. During 1688 Elias organized these people into what is now the oldest Baptist church in Pennsylvania. In subsequent years Elias returned to England and became pastor of a Baptist congregation at Tallow-Chandlers Hall, but he kept in contact with his friends in America.

18. *Articles of Faith of the Church of Christ or Congregation meeting at the Tallow-Chandlers Hall, Elias Keach, Pastor, as asserted this 2nd of the 7th month, 1697*, title page.


Meanwhile, the earliest Baptist association in the United States, the Philadelphia Association, was organized in 1707. As the Association grew and developed, it became desirable to have a Confession of Faith which would reveal their central views; therefore, they contacted Elias Keach in London. He must have sent them a copy of the Particular Baptist Confession of 1689 and a copy of his father's Articles of Faith as well as other documents, for in 1724 they referred to the "Confession of Faith, set forth by the Elders and Brethren met in London, 1689, and owned by us." It is to be remembered that Benjamin Keach took an active part in the Assembly of 1689 and with others signed this Confession.

The Association assembled at Philadelphia on September 25, 1742, and ordered the printing of a new edition of this Confession, the first of this or any other Baptist confessions to be printed in America. It contained two additional articles, Concerning Singing of Psalms in the worship of God, and laying on of hands upon baptized believers. These two articles, which are Numbers XXIII and XXXI, are reprints of Articles XXVII and XXIII of Keach's Confession. It is interesting to note that the practice of laying-on-of-hands upon newly baptized members of a

22. Ibid., 295
congregation has gradually become "the hand of fellowship" which is extended to all new members in most Southern Baptist congregations today.  

The Charleston Association of South Carolina adopted this same statement of faith in 1767, retaining Keach's article on singing but omitting his practice of laying-on-of-hands. By this entree this statement of faith came to be the accepted standard for the Southern Baptist Convention for many years. This Confession is still widely used and in the South is probably the most influential of all confessions.

The third influence of Keach in America was due to his book, The Baptist Catechism. Although catechisms were not used by American Baptists for any great length of time, The Baptist Catechism, adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742, was the most widely used. It is commonly called Keach's Catechism. Both the Catechism and the 1689 London Confession are still being used in many current Reformed Baptist churches in the United States.

The fourth influence of Keach in America was in the area of hymnody. It frequently has been reported that Keach's


25. Spears, op. cit., 274.
hymns were of little lasting influence; as David W. Music says in his article on the hymns of Benjamin Keach in The Hymn, "... the present writer has discovered nothing to contradict that opinion ... Nevertheless, some of Keach's books and hymns found their way to the New World, where they achieved a certain amount of usefulness." 26

Keach's hymns were the first to be used among the New Jersey Baptists, most probably due to his son's extensive preaching in that area. W. T. Whitley reported that many members of Benjamin and Elias Keach's churches emigrated to America, probably bringing their pastors' hymns with them in memory or manuscript. 27

Possibly the earliest American publication of a hymn by Keach is "All You that Fear the Lord Give Ear," printed in Sion in Distress. 28 The most frequently printed of Keach's hymns was "True Godliness Is Come to Me." Six publications of this hymn have been noted before 1812; each publication occurred in a reprinting of Keach's The Travels of True Godliness. Five hymns by Keach also appeared in an American reprint of War With the Devil.

26. Music, op. cit., 152
27. Ibid., 152-53.
29. Benjamin Keach, War With the Devil, 12th ed. (New York, 1705), 92-104.
One hymn by the author did find its way into an eighteenth century American hymnal. This was "Repentance Is Wrought in My Soul," found in the first Baptist hymnal compiled in the colonies, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. This hymn was revised by Keach for use in *Spiritual Melody*. However, the compiler of the "Newport Collection" preferred to use the older version.

No later American hymnal inclusions of this or other hymns by Keach have been found, excepting the 1975 Baptist Hymnal printing of "Awake My Soul, Awake, My Tongue" which, as David Music shows, should not really be attributed to Keach but rather to another early English hymn writer named John Mason.

In summary it may be acknowledged that Keach wrote a section of the most widely used school book in America, *The New England Primer*, two articles in the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, the accepted standard of most Baptist congregations, the *Baptist Catechism*, the one most extensively employed by early Baptists in the United States, and a select group of hymns seen predominantly in the seventeenth century American editions of Keach's works. Keach was not the most influential of the seventeenth century hymn writers in America by any

30. *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (Newport, 1766), 16.
means. However, his fame should and will rest on his introduction and continued use of hymns in the English Nonconformist churches and as the provider of a well-rounded body of hymns for congregational worship in the late seventeenth century.
Appendix A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLISHED

THEOLOGICAL WORKS BY KEACH

1664  The Child's Instructor; or, A New Easie Primmer.

1666  Sion in Distress; or, the Groans of the Protestant Church. London: Printed by George Larkin, for Enoch Prosser.

1670  A Pillar set up, to Keep in Remembrance his first dear and beloved wife.

1674  War with the Devil: or, The young man's conflict with the powers of darkness. London: Printed for Benjamin Harris, near the Royal Exchange.


1674  Mr. Baxter's Arguments for Believers Baptism.

1674  The Grand Imposter discovered; or the Quaker's Doctrine weighed in the Balance, and found wanting.

1675  Darkness Vanquished: Being an answer to Danvers on laying on of hands.

1676  A Summons to the Grave: Being Mr. John Norcot's Funeral Sermon. London: B. Harris.

1676  A preface recommendatory to Mr. Balmford's poem; entitled, The Seaman's Spiritual companion, 1678.


1685 The Progress of Sin; or the Travels of Ungodliness.  

1685 The Victorious Christian, or, the Triumph of Faith.  
Being Prison Meditations.

1689 Distressed Sion relieved. London: Printed for  
Nath. Crouch at the Bell in the Poultrey near Cheapside.

1689 Gold Refined; or, Baptism in its primitive Purity.  
London: Printed for the author, and are to be  
sold by Nath. Crouch, at the sign of the Bell in  
the Poultrey.

1689 The Gospel Minister's Maintenance vindicated.

1689 Anti-christ stormed; or, the Popish Church proved  
to be Mystery Babylon. London: Printed for  
Nath. Crouch.

1691 The Counterfeit Christian; or, the Danger of  
Hypocrisy. London: Printed and sold by John  
Pike, and by the author at his home near  
Horsley-down in Southwark.

1691 Paedo-baptism disproved; being an Answer to the  
Athenian Society. London: Printed for the  
author, and sold by J. Harris.

1691 Breach repaired in God's Worship; or, Singing of  
Psalms proved to be an Ordinance of Jesus Christ.  
London: Printed for the author, and sold by  
J. Hancock, and by the author.

1691 A sober Reply to Mr. Steed's Epistle concerning  
Singing.

1692 The Rector rectified; or, Infant's Baptism unlawful:  
Being an Answer to Mr. Burkitt. London: Printed  
and sold by John Harris.

1692 The Marrow of Justification; or, Justification  
without works. The substance of two sermons on  
Rom. 4:5. London: Printed for Dorman Newman,  
at the King's Arms in the Poultrey.

1693 The everlasting Covenant: a Funeral Sermon for Mr.  
Henry Forty. London: Printed for H. Bernard at  
the Bible in the Poultrey.
1693 The Axe laid to the Root; or one Blow more at the Foundation of Infants Baptism, and Church Membership. Part I. London: Printed for the author, and are to be sold by J. Harris.

1693 The Axe Laid to the Root; wherein Mr. Flavel's, Mr. Rothwell's, and Mr. Exell's Arguments are answered. Part II. London: Printed for the author, and are to be sold by J. Harris.

1694 A counter Antidote; or an Answer to Shute's Antidote, to prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism. London: Printed for H. Bernard, at the Bible in the Poultry.

1694 A Trumpet blown in Zion.

1694 A Golden Mine opened; or, the Glory of God's rich Grace displayed. London: Printed and sold by the author.


1696 Spiritual Melody; containing near 300 Hymns. London: Printed for J. Hancock.

1696 A Feast of Fat Things; containing several Scripture Songs and Hymns.


1697 The Early Seeker, and Love of a Dying Savior.

1697 The Articles of Faith of the Church at Horsleydown.

1698 The Display of glorious Grace; or the Covenant of Peace opened. London: Printed by S. Bridge, and sold by WIL. Marshall.

1698 A medium betwixt two Extremes. London: Printed for Andrew Bell, at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhill.

1698 Jacob's Ladder improved (Christ alone the way to heaven). London: Printed and sold by B. Harris, 118 pages.
1699  A Call to Weeping; or, a Warning touching approaching Miseries.

1699  A preface to Mr. Robert Prudom's Truth unveiled by scripture light, 1699.


1702  The French Imposter detected; or, an Answer to Zachery Housel, and Dr. Coward, who denied the Soul's Immortality. London: n.p.

1704  Gospel Mysteries unveiled; or, an Exposition of all the Parables. London: n.p.

1704  A preface to Mr. Robert Prudom's new world discovered in which Mr. Keach declares his opinion of the Millennium, 1704.

1704  An Introduction to Mr. Coleman's narrative of a schism made in the church at Kilbey in Leicestershire.
Appendix B

CHRONOLOGY OF PERTINENT EVENTS (1553-1714)

1553 Catholocism restored in England under Queen Mary (till 1558)
1563 Establishment of the Church of England
1575 William Byrd (1543-1623) and Thomas Tallis (1505-1585), Cantiones sacrae
1589 Byrd, Cantiones sacrae, Songs of Sundrie Natures
1594 Thomas Morley (1557-1602), The First Book of Ballets for Five Voices
1597 Morley, A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musick

John Dowland (1562-1626), First Book of Songs or Ayres

1603 James I of England (James VI of Scotland) crowned (till 1625)
1611 King James Version of the Bible
1625 Charles I crowned King of England (till 1649)
Religious differences: Archbishop Laud represses Puritans and Presbyterians
1640 February 29, Benjamin Keach was born at StokeHammond, North Buckinghamshire
1645 Archbishop Laud executed; victory of Presbyterians and Independents over Anglicans
1648 Presbyterian majority in Parliament voted to suppress all heresy
1649 King Charles I beheaded; Commonwealth established (till 1660); Cromwell master
1651 Thomas Hobbs (1588-1679), *Leviathan*

1653 Oliver Cromwell (1549-1658) dissolves Parliament and is made Lord Protector

1654 Puritan religion established, supported by tithes; Ministers, any brand of Puritanism (neither Anglican nor Catholic)

1655 Keach became a General Baptist

1658 Cromwell died; an Interregnum

1660 Restoration of Charles II (till 1685)

Samuel Pepys (1653-1703), *Diary*

1661 Corporation Act: Office-holders must take sacrament administered by Anglican church (Nonconformists thus excluded from Parliament)

1662 Act of Uniformity: Clergyman and schoolmasters refusing to consent in Prayer Book excluded from holding a benefice. Two thousand clergy resigned. (Henceforth, all who refuse to assent were called Dissenters.)

1664 Conventicle Act: Any person attended a Dissenting meeting punished up to seven years.

*The Child's Instructor* written by Keach; for this book he was forced to stand in the pillory.

1665 Five Mile Act: Dissenting ministers never to come within five miles of former preaching places.

Plague in London

1666 Great Fire of London

1668 Keach and his family moved to London, where he was ordained as an elder by a General Baptist congregation, the first ordination of a Nonconformist minister after the Restoration

1672 Keach becomes a Particular Baptist
1673 Test Act: Office-holders must swear disbelief in Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and receive sacrament by Anglican clergyman (Catholics driven from office)

War With the Devil, Keach's first allegory, written; this was published before John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.*

1682 Keach published *Tropologia,* a book on Scripture metaphors, which was reissued for almost two centuries

1685 James II of England crowned (till 1688)

1686 Judge Jeffries persecutes Dissenters but favors Roman Catholics

1687 James issues Declaration of Indulgence, suspending all laws against Catholics and Dissenters. Anglican clergy resist.

1689 William III and Mary rulers of England (till 1702)

Toleration Act: Dissenters (except Unitarians and Catholics) given right to worship publicly

Taking an active part in the London Particular Baptist Assembly, Keach was requested to go on a preaching mission to different congregations throughout England.

1690 John Locke, (1632-1704) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

1691 Keach's congregation was the first in the whole of England to maintain the practice of congregational hymn singing, and in this year he published the first book of English hymns that passed into general use.

1697 Keach published *The Articles of Faith* for his own congregation; this work influenced the Baptist movement in the United States

1702 Queen Anne of England crowned (till 1714); strong for Anglican Church and Tories
1702 Rise of Deism: reason the sole test of religion; God revealed in a world of law

1704 Keach died July 18 and was buried in the Baptists' burying ground in the Park, Southwark
Appendix C

CHRONOLOGY OF LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
ENGLISH BAPTIST HYMNODY

1664 Keach published *The Child's Instructor* which contained a few hymns.

1666 Keach published *Sion in Distress* which also contained a few hymns.

1671 The Broadmead Church in Bristol had a complaint lodged against it for singing too loudly.

1673 Keach introduced singing of a hymn at the close of the Lord's Supper at his church in Horsleydown.

1675 Keach published *War With the Devil* with a small collection of hymns and spiritual songs.

1678 Thomas Grantham published *Christanimus Primitivus*, which stated his objections to congregational singing.

1679 Keach published *The Glorious Lover* which contained a few hymns.

1680 Hercules Collins wrote his *Orthodox Catechism* which defended singing as a public duty.

1682 Keach writes in favor of singing in his *Tropes and Figures* followed by his *Treatise on Baptism* in 1689.

1684 John Bunyan wrote his *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized* saying that singing was a divine institution to be practiced by the church during public worship.

Keach published the third edition of *The Travels of True Godliness* which contained some hymns.

1689 The General Baptist Assembly made a resolution that singing was a dangerous practice that the church should avoid.
1690 Isaac Marlow wrote a Discourse Concerning Singing because Keach's church had voted to sing a hymn each Sunday at the close of the sermon.

1691 Keach published a hymnal entitled Spiritual Melody containing three hundred of his hymns, becoming the first English Baptist hymnal.

Keach defended his practice by writing The Breach Repaired in God's Worship in which he elevates singing to an ordinance.

Marlow published An Appendix to the Former Discourse refuting Keach's writing.

Keach replied to this book with An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix.

Marlow wrote three other papers during this year: Prestinted Forms of Praising God, Some Short Observations, and A Narrative to Prove the Singing of Psalms No Ordinance of God.

Robert Steed wrote An Epistle Written to the Members of a Church in London Concerning Singing.

Truth Vindicated appeared signed by S. W., J. C. and J. L. clearing Keach of Marlow's accusations.

Thomas Whinnel attached An Appendix to the former writing in support of Keach's views, and then answers Steed's epistle.

Hanserd Knollys lent support to Keach's cause in An Answer to I. Marlow.

1692 William Kiffin and others wrote A Serious Answer to Whinnel's book A Reply to Mr. Robert Steed's Epistle.

Keach published the second edition of Spiritual Melody retitled The Banqueting House.

Marlow replied again to Keach in his The Truth Soberly Defended.

1693 Unhappy members withdrew from Keach's church at Horsleydown because of singing in worship.
1694 Keach published *A Gold Mine Opened* which contained a few hymns.

1696 Marlow published his *Controversie of Singing brought to an end*, a paper which gave fresh impetus to the debate.

Richard Allen published *An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms with Conjoint Voices a Christian Duty*.

Dr. Russell refuted Allen with his *Some Brief Animadversions on Mr. Allen's Essay*.

Allen answered his critics with *A Brief Vindication of an Essay*.

Keach published *A Feast of Fat Things*.

1697 Joseph Stennett published his *Hymns in Commeration of the Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ compos'd for the celebration of his Holy Supper*.

1698 *Singing of Psalms Vindicated from the Charge of Novelty* appeared in support of singing.

Keach published *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven* which contained a few hymns.

1700 Keach published the second edition of *A Feast of Fat Things* under the title *Spiritual Songs*.
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