

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE RISE OF OLD LANDMARKISM

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of the historical factors that led to the rise of "Old Landmarkism," a nineteenth century religious movement that affected Baptists in the South. The introduction of this work introduces certain Baptist principles that early Landmarkers thought were important and briefly sketches the genesis of the movement. Chapter One is an historiographical essay that draws on the scholarly, historical studies of the movement to date. Chapter Two demonstrates that the American religious scene of the early 1800's was characterized by controversy over the question of religious authority. Chapter Three employs suggestions made by other historians and details four specific controversies within the ranks of Baptists that defined the issues and produced the spirit from which Landmarkism was ultimately developed.

This study develops two major points. First, it demonstrates that Landmarkism had a generic similarity to other early nineteenth century American religious movements, particularly with regard to the search for ultimate religious authority. Second, it demonstrated that in addition to providing Baptists with a platform for polemics, Landmarkism also offered a strong ideological and theological basis for the defense of Baptist doctrine.

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INTRODUCTION

Each of the many groups within the ranks of Christianity has carved for itself a particular niche. Since Baptists are no exception, a brief survey of certain Baptist principles may be helpful in understanding "Old Landmarkism," the subject of this thesis.

First among these principles is the Baptist attitude toward the Bible. Baptists maintain that the Bible is inspired by God, provides the principles for righteous living and stands alone as man's ultimate code of faith and practice. The first article of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833 states:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasury of heavenly instruction: that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.¹

A second fundamental Baptist principle is their understanding of how individuals achieve righteousness. Baptists believe that all men are sinners by nature and need salvation from God. This salvation is granted by God's graciousness and secured through faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. According to Baptist theology, salvation is an individual experience. Furthermore, no one may rightfully claim salvation without first having had an encounter with God, usually referred to as "the born again experience," having exhibited repentance of all sin and having believed in Jesus Christ as

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Savior.

Yet another basic Baptist principle is their observance of two ordinances, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptists believe that the rite of baptism is only for those who have exhibited faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. They believe that baptism is immersion in water as a symbol of inward regeneration and is in no way intended to convey God's merit upon the one being baptized. Likewise, Baptists believe that the Lord's Supper is also symbolic rather than sacramental, and depicts the broken body and shed blood of Christ. Concerning these ordinances, the 1963 Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Faith said:

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.³

Baptists have therefore rejected pedobaptism, the baptism of infants, because of infant inability to exercise faith in Jesus Christ as
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Savior.

Finally, Baptists practice congregational church government. Each Baptist church functions as an independent, autonomous, democratic body with each member being equal to the others. Baptists also believe that church membership is only for those individuals who have been converted and properly baptized. Furthermore, Baptists insist upon the complete
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separation of church and state.

These principles, especially the nature of the ordinances and the nature of the church, were of vital importance to the movement known as "Old Landmarkism."⁶

The principal leaders of the Landmark movement were James Robinson Graves, usually described as the father of Landmarkism, James Madison Pendleton and Amos Cooper Dayton. These three men were vitally concerned with the questions of religious authority and which denomination had the "legal" right to serve as Christ's ambassadors in the world. It was their opinion that only Baptist churches could rightfully claim the status of "true churches of Christ."

The question as to which churches were "true churches," as it related to "Old Landmarkism," was apparently initiated by a question submitted to the annual meeting of the Muscle Shoals Association, Alabama, in 1847. On February 25, 1848, the Rev. R. B. Burleson in turn posed the question to the Western Baptist Review, a denominational paper based in Frankfort, Kentucky. Burleson asked:

Will you give your views on the following questions, viz.: Is the immersion of a person in water into the name of the Trinity, upon a credible profession of faith in Christ, by a Pede-baptist minister who has not been immersed, a valid baptism? This question is agitating the Muscle Shoal Association very much and unless some judicious plan can be devised to settle the difficulties amicably, no one can divine what will be the consequences. Your views on the subject, published in The Review, will be much valued.⁷

John L. Waller, editor of the Review at that time, responded in the affirmative but asserted that it was, nevertheless, a matter for local churches to decide and that the association had no jurisdiction in such matters. He went on to say that no one could prove the administrator of their baptism had himself been properly baptized. Thus, if historical succession of valid baptism was necessary to

legitimize current baptism, no one could be sure that he had properly
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observed the ordinance.

At the same time, James Robinson Graves was editor of The Tennessee Baptist, a denominational paper based in Nashville, Tennessee. Graves disagreed with Waller. He felt that immersion performed by a Pedobaptist was not legitimate baptism and Waller's position was a deviation from standard Baptist practice. Graves maintained that, "The unbroken practice of the Baptist Church, from deep antiquity till now or within a few years, is higher than a score
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of Reviews." Thus was initiated an editorial warfare that marked the
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actual beginning of the Landmark movement.

Baptists in the South watched as the issue became more heated. Finally, Graves summoned all interested Baptists to meet at Cotton Grove, Tennessee, on June 24, 1851. As will be seen in Chapter Three, the issues transcended the battle between Graves and Waller. Nevertheless, Graves asked five questions at the meeting that came to be known as "The Cotton Grove Resolutions." They were:

1. Can Baptists consistently, with their principles or the Scriptures, recognize those societies, not organized according to the pattern of the Jerusalem church, but possessing a different government, different officers, a different class of membership, different ordinances, doctrines and practices, as the Church of Christ?
2. Ought they to be called Gospel Churches or Churches in a religious sense?
3. Can we consistently recognize the ministers of such irregular and unscriptural bodies, as gospel ministers in their official capacity?
4. Is it not virtually recognizing them as official ministers to invite them into our pulpits, or by any other act that would or could be construed into such a recognition?
5. Can we consistently address as brethren, those professing Christianity, who not only have not the doctrines of Christ and walk not according to his commandments, but are arrayed in direct and better

opposition to them?

On July 28, 1851 the Big Hatchie Association met in an annual session at Bolivar, Tennessee. After discussing these questions, numbers one, two, three and five were answered negatively. Question four was answered affirmatively. "These propositions of Dr. Graves," said one historian, "constitute the first official pronouncement of Landmarkism."¹²

Later in his life Graves wrote, "I think it no act of presumption in me to assume to know what I meant by the Old Landmarks, since I was the first man in Tennessee, and the first editor on this continent, who publically advocated the policy of strictly and consistently carrying out in our practice those principles which all Baptists, in all ages, have professed to believe."¹³

Clearly, the core of the movement may rightfully be considered ecclesiological with the various tenets, " . . . fitting into a very logical system centered around the primacy of the local church."¹⁴ Adopting the premise that churches were assemblies of properly baptized (immersed) believers, the Landmarkers argued that pedobaptists, those churches practicing infant baptism, were nothing more than religious societies. They further argued that since pedobaptists had no valid church affiliation, their ministerial ordinations and observance of the ordinances were null and void.¹⁵ As one student of Landmarkism has said, " . . . the issues for specific debate (in Landmark controversies) nearly always revolved around one central question: namely, whether the church is exclusively responsible for all gospel acts; and that underneath this question was another more fundamental, namely, what is the church?"¹⁶

Obviously the unique doctrines of Old Landmarkism were not forged in a social or religious vacuum. The question is, what factors led to the rise of this movement? It is this author's contention that Landmarkism was the result of a combination of factors. On the one hand, Landmarkism was a reaction to what Graves and other Landmarkers perceived as ecclesiastical encroachments from without the Baptist ranks as well as what they perceived as doctrinal perversion within Baptist ranks. On the other hand, the nineteenth century was a time when many denominations were seeking an identity. The Landmarkers found their identity in their ecclesiology. Hence, the movement is a portion of a much larger question in the history of American religion. Granted, this thesis is not entirely new. However, this project proposes a new approach to the study of Landmarkism's antecedents. Earlier studies have either examined the biographies of the "Great Triumvirate," or they have dealt with doctrinal issues raised by "Old Landmarkism." The majority of the doctrinal studies have sought to either vindicate Landmarkism or prove its unorthodoxy as compared with traditional Baptist beliefs. The questions raised by these doctrinal studies are good, legitimate questions. This study, however, will look at Landmarkism's historical genesis by investigating the events that led to the rise of Landmarkism as a mid-nineteenth century movement in American religious history.

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There are a number of reasons for undertaking this project. One reason is the impact that this movement had on Baptist life. Without question, Landmarkism constitutes one of the most significant controversies in Southern Baptist history.

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In fact, the controversy was so heated that in 1905, a group of churches separated themselves

from the Southern Baptist Convention and formed a group that later became known as the American Baptist Association.¹⁹ Furthermore, Landmarkism continues to influence a number of Baptists who are not affiliated with the new group. For many, the conviction remains that the only kind of church Jesus established or meant to establish was a Landmark Baptist Church. As one Landmarker put it, " . . . there is a distinct qualitative difference in the personal pronominal adjective 'My' in Matthew 16:18, when Jesus clearly distinguishes His congregation--His kind of congregation--from all others then in existence, as well as all to come later and any that had existed before."²⁰ Any movement that has generated such controversy deserves thorough historical investigation.

This study contains three chapters. Chapter One, a historiographical essay, surveys the scholarly investigations of the Landmark movement. Chapter Two surveys American religion prior to the rise of Landmarkism. Chapter Three discusses both the interdenominational and intradenominational strife Baptists experienced during the first half of the nineteenth century.

With the exception of the historiographical essay, the period discussed will be limited to the first half of the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, elements that precipitated the Landmark controversy occurred in this period. The three original Landmark leaders were born and assumed prominent places of leadership within the movement during this period. Further, by the mid-1850's the movement had already assumed a unique character.

This author does not expect to settle all controversies regarding Old Landmarkism. It is his hope, however, that this thesis will be a

welcome addition to the scholarly studies that have already been done. It is also his hope that this thesis will aid others who wish to know more about this interesting, albeit controversial, movement in Baptist history.

NOTES

1

J. Newton Brown, "The New Hampshire Confession of Faith," Article I, as found in A Baptist Church Manual (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1969), p. 5. Hereafter cited as The New Hampshire Confession. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith is only one of several employed by Baptists. Another common Confession is the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. See William Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969).

2

A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974), pp. 777-886. See also T. P. Simmons, A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine (Daytona Beach: Associated Publishers, 1969), pp. 241-277. Hereafter cited as Systematic Theology and Systematic Study respectively. See also Ephesians 2:1-9.

3

The Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Faith, Article VII, as found in Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 396..

4

Strong, Systematic Theology, pp. 951-959.

5

Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations in the United States (New York: Abingdon Press, 1975), p.38.

6

The name "Old Landmarkism" was taken from a tract written by J. M. Pendleton. In this tract Pendleton maintained that Baptists could not recognize Pedobaptist ministers (those practicing infant baptism) as valid ministers and their administration of the ordinances as "valid ministerial acts." He argued that the issues at stake were scriptural baptism and scriptural authority. Pendleton further argued that since pedobaptists lacked valid baptism they could not be a legitimate church. If genuine authority rested in legitimate churches, and pedobaptists could not consider themselves as a part of a legitimate church, they had no authority. This emphasis on church authority was a "Landmark" that Baptists had allegedly maintained throughout the centuries. Ironically, it was Graves, not Pendleton, who entitled the tract, "An Old Landmark Reset," a title taken from Proverbs 22:28 and Job 24:2.

7

Western Baptist Review, III, March 1848, pp. 276 ff. as quoted by W. W. Barnes, The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 102. Hereafter cited as SBC 1845-1953.

8

Barnes, SBC 1845-1953, p. 103.

9

J. R. Graves as quoted by Barnes, SBC 1845-1953, p. 103.

10

James E. Tull, "An Historical Appraisal of the Landmark Movement," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January, 1975), p. 3.

11 Barnes, SBC 1845-1953, p. 104.

12 Ibid.

13 J. R. Graves, Old Landmarkism: What Is It? (Ashland: Calvary Baptist Church Book Shop, n.d.) reprinted from 1880 edition, pp. 15-16.

14 Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, s.v., "Landmarkism," by W. Morgan Patterson. Hereafter cited as ESB. Landmarkers define the term "local church" in terms of individual Baptist churches.

15 Ibid.

16 James E. Tull, "A Study of Southern Baptist Landmarkism in the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1960), p. 261. Hereafter cited as SBL.

17 The heart of Landmarkism involves doctrine, especially ecclesiology, or, the doctrine of the church. A number of studies have been done in this field from both the Landmark and non-Landmark position. The following list is intended as a sample. Non-Landmark: Hoyle Eugene Bowman, "The Doctrine of the Church in the North American Baptist Association," (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1960); George W. Hall, "The New Testament Church," (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1973); John MacArthur Jr., The Church: The Body of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973); Daniel Perry Olinger, "Parachurch Ministries and the New Testament: A Consideration of Neolandmarkist Ecclesiology," (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1984); Earl D. Radmacher, What the Church is All About (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978); Bob L. Ross, Old Landmarkism and the Baptists (Pasadena: Pilgrim, 1979); Robert Earl Woodard, "The Theology of Ephesians and Colossians" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1978); Landmark: R. Charles Blair, The Church on the Rock (published by the author: n.d.); Roscoe Brong, Christ's Church and Baptism (Lexington: Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 1977); B. H. Carroll, Ecclesia (the Church) (Little Rock: The Challenge Press, n.d.); Buell H. Kazee, The Church and the Ordinances (Little Rock: The Challenge Press, 1972); Roger Williams Maslin, "The Church: A Critique of the Universal Church Theory" (M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1951); Roy Mason, The Church That Jesus Built, 14th edition (Clarksville: Bible Baptist Church, n.d.); Edward Hugh Overbey, The Meaning of Ecclesia in the New Testament (Little Rock: The Challenge Press, n.d.).

18 Baker, "Editorial," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January, 1975), pp. 1-2, 8.

19 ESB, s.v., "Landmarkism," by W. Morgan Patterson. See also "American Baptist Association," by J. Don Hook, I. K. Cross, and Albert W. Warden Jr. in Vols. 1, 3 and 4 respectively.

20 R. Charles Blair, The Church on the Rock (published by the author: n.d.), p. 3.

CHAPTER 1:
THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF OLD LANDMARKISM

J. R. Graves, considered by most scholars as the father of "Old Landmarkism," died on June 26, 1893. He is buried in the Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee and his tombstone bears the inscription, "Brethren I will that ye remember the words I spake unto you while I was present with you."¹ Many indeed have remembered Graves' words and the resulting interpretations and comments have produced a considerable amount of written material.

Fortunately, studies of "Old Landmarkism" lend themselves to a systematic, topical arrangement. The first group examines the origin, progress and impact of the movement in nineteenth century American Baptist thought. The second group of studies focuses on Baptist divisions in the twentieth century when the American Baptist Association, Landmarkist in sentiment, withdrew from the Southern Baptist Convention. Later, a number of churches withdrew from this new Association and formed what today is known as the Baptist Missionary Association. Several studies have examined these schisms. The third group of studies examines the continuing influence of Landmarkism in the late twentieth century, particularly among Southern Baptist churches. These studies have attempted to assess the degree of this influence especially regarding ecclesiological matters.² To the three areas may be added a fourth, that, for the sake of this study, will be identified as a "general category." In the "general category" one

finds Landmarkism examined as a small segment of the larger Baptist picture. That is, they treat Landmarkism as a portion of a larger topic rather than the topic itself. Articles in reference works may be placed in the general category as may biographies of early Landmark leaders. The remainder of this chapter will employ these four topics as a framework for examining the literature pertinent to "Old Landmarkism."

Six studies have considered Landmarkism as a nineteenth century movement, of which three treat Landmarkism in relation to the Southern Baptist Convention. The Livingston T. Mays' 1900 study, "A History of Old Landmarkism," identified two principal factors that gave rise to the Landmark movement. According to Mays, the first was controversy over the nature of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. An example will illustrate these doctrinal disputes. Suppose a Presbyterian minister who had been baptized by sprinkling immersed an individual. Could such a baptism be legitimate? This question led to others. Baptists maintain that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. If an individual had been immersed as described above and that baptism was judged not legitimate, could that individual still participate in the Lord's Supper? The answer to these questions led to the second factor that gave rise to the Landmark movement. On the one hand, some Baptists maintained that such baptism was valid and any individual so immersed was entitled to all privileges pertaining thereto. Another group of Baptists, the Landmarkers, denounced such practices as irregular and unscriptural. They maintained that authority to administer the ordinances was only found in local Baptist congregations. The Landmarkers insisted that their position was

correct, and the more boldly they presented their position the more polarized opinion became. Friction was inevitable and neutrality was almost an impossibility.

In Mays' assessment, the primary evils of Landmarkism were pride and a tendency toward bigotry. He also felt that Landmarkism tended to elevate the church above Christ.³ Nevertheless, Mays condemned neither the movement nor its leadership. He saw the mid-nineteenth century as a time when Baptists had become "loose" on doctrinal matters. Landmarkism had met this "looseness" head-on; and while it may not have been completely orthodox, Mays felt that it helped restore a degree of doctrinal purity to Southern Baptists by causing them to focus more attention on doctrinal matters.⁴

For the most part, Mays' study was brief, generalized and uncritical. Later studies took a much harder look at Landmarkism. In 1947, E. T. Moore's work, "The Background of the Landmark Movement," correctly identified Landmarkism as one controversial movement among many that marked the nineteenth century. As was the case with Mays, Moore was primarily concerned with the relation of Landmarkism to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Moore saw Landmarkism as a parallel to the Oxford Movement in England. Moore argued that both movements focused on the question of authority. This need for Baptists to define the nature of authority was the result of a number of factors but chief among them was Campbellism, a separate movement that had originated within Baptist ranks. Alexander Campbell claimed that he and his followers preached the "Ancient Gospel." He believed that baptism was in some way necessary for the remission of sin. He further believed that this had

been the original apostolic pattern and that he was a restorer of the
"primitive order."⁵

Baptists rejected the idea that baptism could "wash away sin." Naturally, they also rejected Campbell's contention that the Apostles had baptized for the remission of sin. Since Campbell had not restored primitive practice, nineteenth century Baptists contended, he was without genuine authority himself. On the other hand, when the question of authority was placed before the Baptists, Moore contends that the Landmarkers overemphasized the autonomy of the local church⁶ and thereby introduced a form of "high-churchism" among Baptists. This is not to say that the Landmarkers believed salvation was obtainable through church membership. Neither does it mean that the Landmarkers felt the church could dispense God's grace where and when they pleased. The Landmarkers merely believed that local Baptist churches were the only true, legitimate churches. They felt that only Baptist churches had the authority to evangelize and administer the ordinances. Moore also credits Landmarkism with introducing a strong⁷ denominational consciousness to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Despite its title, Moore's work was more an extended character sketch of J. R. Graves than an analysis of the historical background of the Landmark movement. Moore's conclusions, nevertheless, were correct as far as they went. For the purposes of this study, the real significance of Moore's work is two-fold. First, he associated Landmarkism with other, similar movements. Second, he identified the "Restoration Movement" as a factor in precipitating the Landmark movement.

The negative reaction to Alexander Campbell's doctrine was a

significant factor in the rise of Landmarkism but it was not the only factor. In his work, A History of Southern Baptist Landmarkism in the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology, James E. Tull also identified the anti-mission movement as another key factor in the rise of Landmarkism.

The thrust of Tull's work, while it is historical, was not primarily concerned with Graves' influences. Rather, Tull was concerned with the cornerstone of Landmarkism, namely, ecclesiology. In systematic theology, ecclesiology concerns the doctrine of the church. That is, ecclesiology is the study of the nature and function of the church. Tull argued that rather than resetting an ancient Landmark, Graves had actually erected a new one. Furthermore, according to Tull's analysis, Landmarkism was not only unorthodox, it " . . . diverged significantly from Baptist tradition (or traditionalisms) with respect to every important point."⁸ Tull rejected Graves' contention that Baptists had existed since the first century. Graves had preached that through the ages Baptists had interpreted the church in local terms only and that those local bodies had the authority to administer "Gospel Acts" such as the administration of the ordinances and evangelization. Tull likewise rejected these assertions as historical Baptist doctrines. Thus, Tull's work was a vindication of that element within the Southern Baptist Convention that did not embrace Landmarkism.

Clearly, Tull identified Graves as an innovator in nineteenth century Baptist thought, especially with regard to ecclesiology. Two subsequent analyses have departed from a Southern Baptist Convention context and built upon Tull's contention that Graves was an innovator.

In perhaps the most succinct analysis of Landmarkism to date, Hugh Wamble identified the movement as resting upon the premise of the "sole validity of Baptist churches."⁹ He also identified the movement as having four major tenets that have become recognized by scholars as perhaps the most succinct description of Landmarkism:

1. Only Baptist ministers are authentic gospel ministers.
2. Only baptism by immersion, authored by an authentic minister, upon an authentic candidate (believer), as a symbol (not means) of salvation, is true baptism.
3. The church is a visible, local, and independent congregation, exercising plenary authority in a democratic manner, and only Baptist churches fit that description.
4. Baptists (Baptist churches) have an unbroken succession since the time of Christ.¹⁰

Harold S. Smith concurred with this analysis. In "A Critical Analysis of the Theology of J. R. Graves," Smith said, "Ecclesiology was always Graves' primary concern, and he wrote more on this theme, particularly the ordinances, than on any other theological subject. For almost fifty years, every book and numerous articles included the doctrine of the church as an integral element."¹¹ Beyond all doubt, Graves and the other early Landmarker's ecclesiology was the doctrinal foundation of the movement.

If scholars are generally agreed that Graves' primary passion was ecclesiology, they are not all agreed that Graves was an innovator in that regard. In "A Study of the Antecedents of Landmarkism," LeRoy B. Hogue concluded that long before Graves most Baptists, especially in New England, were loyal to the concept of the local church. Even those Baptists embracing the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, one noted for a dual concept of a universal invisible and local visible church, emphasized the local church most strongly. Hogue therefore concluded

that the heart of Old Landmarkism, the interpretation of the church as a local body, was not new. Therefore, Landmarkism itself was not new in the strictest sense. Furthermore, since the various elements of Old Landmarkism were found in one form or another among various Baptist groups, Hogue concluded that the Landmark movement was merely the¹² logical extension of Baptist thought in that day.

Thus, recent Baptist scholars, while clashing on the authenticity of Landmarkism's claim to be the historic Baptist tradition, agree that the heart of Old Landmarkism was ecclesiology. They also agree that ecclesiology was the primary reason for the schism that led to the organization of both the American Baptist Association and North American Baptist Association.

Particular points of contention regarding this division have been dealt with by David O. Moore and Philip R. Bryan. In 1945 Moore wrote a monograph entitled, "The Landmark Baptists: A Corner on Orthodoxy." Moore noted that the Landmarkers were opposed to missionaries operating under the jurisdiction of mission boards. They insisted that missionaries be supported exclusively by individual congregations. He also noted that the Landmarkers seemed to be opposed to all convention¹³ activities in general. The main bone of contention: ecclesiology. Moore restated these sentiments in 1947 with his Th.D. dissertation, "The Landmark Baptists and Their Attack Upon the Southern Baptist Convention Historically Analyzed." By this time the term "Landmark Baptist" had become strongly identified with those churches in the American Baptist Association. Thus, Moore was dealing primarily with the reasons why a new Baptist group had been formed in 1905. This work offered more critical examination of such Landmark doctrines as the

nature of baptism, ecumenicism, the local church and direct succession. Both works reached the same conclusion. The Southern Baptist Convention had divided over the doctrine of the church.

But the departure of the Landmarkers didn't settle basic questions of ecclesiology. In 1950, a number of churches from the American Baptist Association withdrew and formed the North American Baptist Association. In 1969, this group changed its name to the Baptist Missionary Association of America in order to dispel any confusion generated by the adjective "North."¹⁴

Philip R. Bryan studied both this division and its predecessor in 1905. In "An Analysis of the Ecclesiology of Associational Baptists, 1900-1950," he divided Baptists into two camps, non-Landmarker "Convention Baptists" and Landmarker "Associational Baptists," distinguished by differing ecclesiological interpretations. He also argues that the 1950 division of the American Baptist Association, while not a Landmark vs. non-Landmarker conflict, was nonetheless the result of ecclesiological presuppositions as well as personality conflicts in the A. B. A.'s leadership.

Bryan's analysis is also significant for two other reasons. First, he agreed with Hogue that Landmarkism was not new. Second, he enlarged on Wamble's analysis to include two other Landmarkist contentions. These two contentions were restricted communion and direct support of missionaries. Inseparably tied to the concept of the local church, both are usually practiced by churches adhering to Landmark doctrine.

Obviously, the Landmarker exodus from the Southern Baptist Convention did not settle all questions regarding ecclesiology for

either the American Baptist Association or the Southern Baptist Convention. The third division of the literature concerns the lingering influence Landmarkism exercises on non-Landmark Baptists.

William W. Barnes was among the first historians to critically examine this area of Landmarkism's historiography. In a 1934 work entitled The Southern Baptist Convention: A Study in the Development of Ecclesiology, he argued that Southern Baptists had assumed a corporate consciousness not unlike that found within the ranks of Roman Catholicism. That is, certain committees and officials were assuming power as the bishops had done in early church history. Barnes attributed this phenomenon to seven distinct factors ranging from the centralization of the Federal government to Landmarkism.¹⁵ Southern Baptists, thanks to the influences of Landmarkism, were more aware of this history and mission than ever before. According to Barnes, this attitude had resulted in a subtle shift. Barnes saw the Southern Baptist Convention of his day as evolving into a connectional or "Denominational Church" rather than a cooperating association of independent Baptist congregations.

Apparently, Barnes' argument did not go unheeded. Baptists in the North and South began to question their respective ecclesiological interpretations. The culmination of this inquiry resulted in two significant studies. The first study entitled What Is the Church was edited by Duke McCall. This volume contained ten essays concerning the New Testament church and represented some of the papers presented in two consecutive summer symposiums at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

John E. Steely wrote the essay entitled, "The Landmark Movement in

the Southern Baptist Convention." He analyzed Landmarkism as having a three-fold impact on the Convention. First, there was a tendency toward high-church exclusivism as manifested in the concepts of Baptist succession and closed communion. Second, a schismatic or divisive element developed in Baptist fellowship toward the end of the nineteenth century centering primarily on ecclesiology that led to the founding of a new group of Baptists. Finally, Steely contended that Landmarkism was still having an effect on twentieth century Baptists, particularly regarding questions relative to the ordinances and mission methodology.¹⁶ In his words, "The impulses set in motion by J. R. Graves in the Baptist family have not yet spent their force, and their final and total effects remain to be seen."¹⁷

One year after the Southern Baptists published What Is the Church, the Northern Baptists published Baptist Concepts of the Church. This work included eight essays on various ecclesiological topics as well as an appendix entitled "Dispensational Ecclesiology." This work employed Robert Torbet's skills in a chapter on the topic. Torbet viewed the Landmarkers as reflecting both the individualism and interdenominational rivalry of the frontier. He also credited New England separatism as influencing a young Graves who was originally from Vermont.¹⁸ In reflecting on Landmarkism's influence in the twentieth century, Torbet agreed with both Steely and Barnes that the Landmark element within the Southern Baptist Convention stressed Baptist distinctiveness even if it generated a combative spirit. He also agreed with Steely that the crux of Old Landmarkism was the question, what is the church?¹⁹

These studies paved the way for subsequent studies that focused on

Baptist thought and polity. David Saunders identified the doctrines of Landmarkism as having a definite influence on missions methodology. W. Morgan Patterson took a close look at Landmarker claims to historical succession in Baptist Successionism A Critical View. Walter B. Shurden examined controversy as a way of life for Baptists in Not A Silent People.²⁰ Finally, James E. Tull identified J. R. Graves as one of nine key people in Baptist history in Shapers of Baptist Thought. In this work, Tull continuously asserted that Landmarkism was on the way out. "In short," said Tull, "the Landmark movement, though still in being, is now undergoing a gradual decline."²¹

Tull's death notice for Old Landmarkism may have been premature, for many share the opinions of Torbet and Steely that Landmarkism is no dead issue. This was evidenced in the January 1975 issue of Baptist History and Heritage, the Southern Baptist Convention historical journal. The majority of this issue was dedicated to the subject of Old Landmarkism. Among the five essays and editorial, three were character sketches of Graves, Pendleton and Dayton by Harold S. Smith, Bob Compton and James E. Taulman respectively.²²

The remainder of the articles approached Landmarkism from a more analytical perspective. James E. Tull's article, "The Landmark Movement: An Historical and Theological Appraisal," described the movement as a defense of what its leaders felt were, " . . . the historic and distinctive principles of Baptists."²³ Tull's essay echoed the sentiments expressed in his earlier writings, namely, that Graves had been a great innovator in Baptist thought.²⁴

W. Morgan Patterson's assessment was somewhat different than Tull's in that he made moderate corrections to Tull's perception of

Graves as an innovator. Such practices as closed communion, non-acceptance of "alien baptism," even historical Baptist succession were all widespread prior to Graves.²⁵ On the other hand, Graves did synthesize certain practices and beliefs into what became known as Landmarkism. "But not all tenets," cautioned Patterson, "were born in the genius of Graves. He was eclectic, and his creativity was to be found in constructing a cogent system (given his premises) and popularizing it for the Baptist masses in the South."²⁶

Patterson identified three strong influences of early Landmarkism. First, the writings of Graves, Pendleton and Dayton influenced many regarding doctrine. Second, the Landmark attitude toward the church led many to abandon board-based, non-church related missionary enterprises in favor of local church missionary projects. Third, Landmarkism left many thoroughly convinced that Baptist churches had an unbroken continuity since the New Testament era. William H. Whitsett was forced to resign as professor and president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in 1899. Whitsett had maintained that Baptists, as a denomination, could not be found in history prior to 1641, a position that Landmarkers strongly resented.²⁷ Today, the majority of Graves' writings are still in print. Many Baptists refuse to support missionaries supervised by a denominational board or agency. Likewise, a number of Baptists continue to maintain the doctrine of church perpetuity.²⁸

The fourth and final category of Landmarkist literature, identified earlier as the "general category," has also received a considerable amount of attention. Among these sources are biographies on Pendleton and Dayton, as well as The Life, Times and Teachings of J.

29

R. Graves, by O. L. Hailey. The Graves' biography is personal and emphasizes the "non-public" Graves. This is easily understood in light of the fact that Hailey was Graves' son-in-law.

Other works have approached Landmarkism as a small part of the larger Baptist experience in the United States. Among these are William W. Barnes' The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953, Robert O. Baker's The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People 1607-1972, A History of Baptist Churches in the United States by A. H. Newman, Robert G. Torbet's A History of the Baptists and A Religious History of the American People by Sydney Ahlstrom.

Significant contributions to the historiography of Landmarkism have also been made in two reference works, The Baptist Encyclopedia, edited by William Cathcart in 1881 and The Southern Baptist Encyclopedia, edited by Norman Cox in 1958.

Of these two, The Baptist Encyclopedia is particularly noteworthy for several reasons. First, the biographical sketches of Graves, Pendleton and Dayton offer intimate glimpses of how their peers perceived the early Landmark leaders. Second, Cathcart, defining the church as local, visible and autonomous, defended Landmarkism by citing as authorities passages from several historic Baptist confessions of faith. The article entitled "Old Landmarkism" is even more specific. Here the author identified William Kiffin, an English Baptist of the seventeenth century, as an Old Landmarker. According to this article, "The doctrine of landmarkism is that baptism and church membership precede the preaching of the gospel, even as they precede communion at the Lord's table. The argument is that Scriptural authority to preach emanates, under God, from a gospel church" Lack of proper

baptism and church membership therefore invalidated any pedobaptist claim to proper authority. The writer went on to say:

Inseparable however, from this matter, (non-ministerial affiliation) is a denial that pedobaptist societies are Scriptural churches, that Pedobaptist ordinations are valid and that immersions administered by Pedobaptist ministers can be consistently accepted by any Baptist church. All these things are denied and the intelligent reader will see why.³²

By the publication of this work in 1881, the term "Old Landmarkism" had³³ become a standard adjective in theological circles.

Complementing Cathcart is The Southern Baptist Encyclopedia, edited by Norman W. Cox, which features several articles relevant to Landmarkism. Biographical sketches of Landmark leaders appear along with articles on developments since 1881. This work differs from Cathcart on a number of points, not the least of which is that it assumes a non-Landmark stance. In fact, Lynn E. May identified Landmarkism as one of seven major crises that have significantly³⁴ affected much of Baptist life. Articles in this work tend to characterize the Landmark movement as schismatic, non-scholarly and³⁵ militant.

In assessing Landmark historiography topically, one clearly sees that the majority of studies to date have addressed the conflict over the authenticity of Landmarkism. Some such as Cathart and Hailey have argued in favor of Landmarkism. Others such as Tull and Barnes have argued against it. Later studies characterized by Hogue and Bryan, have moved the discussion to new ground by entertaining broader issues such as Graves' role as an innovator and how ecclesiology influenced Baptist polity in the twentieth century. This study will continue in this vein by seeking to examine the historical factors that led to the

rise of Landmarkism.

Another noteworthy facet of Landmarkism's historiography is that it may be divided into three approximate eras. Early analyses tended to be favorable. After 1900, however, studies became more critical until the mid-1960's when a more moderate attitude began to be exhibited, especially with Patterson and Hogue who corrected earlier, more critical assessments of the Landmark movement.

A survey of this literature indicates that several questions regarding Old Landmarkism remain unanswered. How did other denominations resolve their questions of authority? What intra-denominational factors helped trigger the Landmark movement? Besides Campbellism and anti-missionism, what interdenominational factors helped initiate the Landmark movement? The remainder of this study will be dedicated to these questions.

NOTES

¹
Harold S. Smith, "The Life and Work of J. R. Graves," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January 1975): 19.

²
W. Morgan Patterson, "What Is Landmarkism?," Southern Baptist Convention, Public Relations Office n.d., pp. 1-4. Patterson's essay was valuable in forming the framework for this essay. The first three of the essay's four categories were adopted from "What Is Landmarkism?"

³
Livingston T. Mays, "A History of Old Landmarkism" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1900), p. 50.

⁴
Ibid., p. 49.

⁵
Campbell's influence on Landmarkism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

⁶
E. T. Moore, "The Background of the Landmark Movement" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947), p. 66.

⁷
Ibid., p. 67.

⁸
James E. Tull, A History of Southern Baptist Landmarkism in the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology, (New York: Arno Press, 1980), see the abstract. This work was originally submitted as a Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University, 1960.

⁹
Hugh Wamble, "Landmarkism: Doctrinaire Ecclesiology Among Baptists," Church History XXXIII (December 1964): 429.

¹⁰
Ibid., p. 430. Note that this analysis is chronological.

¹¹
Harold S. Smith, "A Critical Analysis of the Theology of J. R. Graves" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966), p. 151.

¹²
LeRoy B. Hogue, "A Study of the Antecedents of Landmarkism" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966), pp. 298-299.

¹³
David O. Moore, "The Landmark Baptists: A Corner on Orthodoxy," unpublished monograph, 1945, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. While this work is not polemical, D. B. Ray's pamphlet, "That New Revolutionary Landmark Baptist Faction," certainly was. Ray, an avowed Landmarker, denounced men such as J. N. Hall and Ben Bogard for the division and accused them of using

Landmarkism as a "hobbyhorse" to further their own ambitions.

14

J. Don Hook, "North American Baptist Association," ESB, II, p. 984. See also Leon Taylor, "Baptist Missionary Association," ESB, III, pp. 1597-1598; Louis F. Asher, "Baptist Missionary Association," ESB, IV, pp. 2105-2106.

15

William W. Barnes, The Southern Baptist Convention: A Study In the Development of Ecclesiology, (published by author, 1934), pp. 60-80.

16

John E. Steely, "The Landmark Movement In the Southern Baptist Convention," Chapter 8 in What Is the Church, ed. Duke McCall, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), pp. 134-147.

17

Ibid., p. 147.

18

Robert G. Torbet, "Landmarkism," Chapter 7 in Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. Winthrop Hudson, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1959), pp. 171-173.

19

Ibid., pp. 193-194.

20

David L. Saunders, "The Relation of Landmarkism to Mission Methods," The Quarterly Review (April 1966): 43-57; W. Morgan Patterson, Baptist Successionism A Critical View (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1969); and Walter B. Shurden, Not A Silent People (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972).

21

James E. Tull, Shapers of Baptist Thought (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1972), p. 150.

22

Harold S. Smith, "The Life and Works of J. R. Graves;" Bob Compton, "James M. Pendleton, A Nineteenth Century Baptist Statesman (1811-1891);" and James E. Taulman, "The Life and Writings of Amos Cooper Dayton (1813-1865)," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January 1975).

23

James E. Tull, "The Landmark Movement: An Historical and Theological Appraisal," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January 1975): 3.

24

On page 10 of this article Tull states, "The question of alien immersions was not an issue among the early English Baptists (and indeed has never become one to this day in this branch of the Baptist family). Also, the question had been here and there an issue of only sporadic interest among Baptists in America." This statement may be a bit over zealous. For example, the question of irregular immersion came before the Philadelphia Association no fewer than six times between 1707-1807. Usually, these queries questioned the validity of immersion by non-ordained individuals. Each time the Association considered the question, it answered in the negative because: (a) unordained individuals were not qualified to baptize and (b) acceptance of such baptisms would "throw contempt on Christ's authority" (see

Minutes of Philadelphia Association 1707-1807, especially 1787-1788).

25 W. Morgan Patterson, "The Influence of Landmarkism Among Baptists," Baptist History and Heritage 10 (January 1975): 54.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., pp. 49-53.

28 In addition to the American Baptist Association and Baptist Missionary Association, a number of Baptist churches remain unaffiliated with any particular group. They prefer to be known as independent Baptists. Many have their own publications which reflect Landmark ideas. Three such churches and their respective publications are: The Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, publishers of The Ashland Avenue Baptist; The Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, publishers of The Baptist Challenge; and the Berea Baptist Church, South Point, Ohio, publishers of The Berea Baptist Banner.

29 W. C. Huddleston, "James Madison Pendleton: A Critical Biography" (Th.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1962); J. E. Taulman, "Amos Cooper Dayton: A Critical Biography" (Th.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1965); and D. L. Hailey, The Life, Times and Teachings of J. R. Graves (Nashville, n.p. 1929).

30 The Baptist Encyclopedia, s.v., "The Church." Hereafter cited as BE.

31 BE, s.v., "Old Landmarkism."

32 Ibid.

33 BE, s.v., "William Crawford."

34 ESB, s.v., "Crises, Southern Baptist," by Lynn E. May.

35 ESB, s.v., "American Baptist Association," by J. Don Hook.
See also note 14.

CHAPTER 2: CONTROVERSY AND THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

As previously noted, most studies of Landmarkism focus on doctrine, and especially on the relationship of Landmarkism to traditional Baptist teachings.

Doctrinal debate among Baptists over the orthodoxy of Landmarkism, let alone debate between Baptists and other religious bodies, may go on forever. The point here is not to settle such questions; rather it is to illuminate the historical circumstances within which Landmarkism emerged as a self-conscious movement. This chapter will illustrate with selected examples the widespread quest in America for a basis for religious authority. It will serve as a sketch of the contours of the search for authority and as an introduction to the principal questions that Landmarkist leaders faced as they sought their own firm foundation.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century came a turbulent time in the history of American religion. Complete religious liberty, guaranteed in Virginia as early as 1786, several years later became the right of every American. The first amendment to the Constitution killed the possibility of an established religion in America. Lacking a national religious establishment to assert and defend the foundations of religious belief, American religious groups sought, each in its own way, some firm ground for faith. Viewed historically, Landmarkism was the result of one of these searches.

A general survey of American religion in the first half of the

nineteenth century reveals that no fewer than four significant, divergent trends emerged from this period that provided a context for the Landmark movement. The first trend questioned the authority and legitimacy of existing ecclesiastical structures. A second trend was the emergence of new religious groups based on extra-Scriptural revelation. A third trend found certain groups reaffirming both the importance and validity of the church as an institution. Finally, a number of groups rejected traditional concepts of God and Christianity in favor of a less restrictive, less dogmatized form of Christianity. As it dealt with frontier life and revivalism, Presbyterianism encountered a series of controversies that provide three examples of the first trend. The Presbyterians, in fact, receive considerable attention in this chapter because they provide such clear examples of the search for authority and the exact role of the church in society.

Western frontier conditions compounded whatever religious problems existed in the early nineteenth century. In many places, settlers were arriving so quickly that existing churches could not keep pace. Frontier life was characterized by hard work, loneliness and general privation. There were few meeting houses, and facilities already in existence tended to be small. Congregations likewise tended to be small. Preachers were scarce, and they frequently had to support themselves by whatever means they could find.¹

Since society did not provide a consensus on what constituted an orthodox religious society, many Americans initiated their own search for a religious identity. They were aided in their search when the western region began to experience a renewed religious awareness near the dawn of the nineteenth century. The "Great Revival," as it came to

be known, originated in the Cumberland River region in Logan County, Kentucky, due largely to the efforts of James McGready, a Presbyterian minister. Born in Pennsylvania, McGready was licensed to preach in 1788. On his way to North Carolina he visited Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia and found himself in the midst of a revival among the students. On reaching Guilford County, North Carolina, McGready began preaching intense revivalistic sermons only to encounter stiff local opposition. He left North Carolina in 1796 and in 1797 he took charge of three Kentucky churches; Red River, Muddy River and Gaspar River. He labored there with steady results until June 1800 when several hundred members of the three congregations gathered for a sacramental meeting at the Red River church house. By the end of the meeting, many had become emotionally excited to the point of singing and shouting. A number of people professed conversion. As Catherine Cleveland expressed it, "During the summer of 1800 the revival assumed such proportions that McGready wrote that all before was as a few scattering drops before a mighty rain."²

News of the revival spread quickly and meetings took place almost spontaneously throughout the region. Eventually they became so large that they had to be held outside. Wagon loads of frontiersmen would leave their chores for days at a time to attend these meetings. Facilities were practically non-existent and participants had to camp on the location. Hence, the name "camp meeting."³

There were numerous benefits involved with the camp meetings. Many frontier church buildings were too small to accommodate large crowds. Camp meetings attracted persons unlikely to attend regular worship services. Curiosity, the novelty of the situation or the

opportunity to hear new preachers provided incentive to attend the camp meetings. These gatherings also provided a time for intensive religious training apart from the normal routine. Finally, camp meetings were a means of spreading religion in areas that had few churches.⁴

Perhaps the greatest of all camp meetings occurred in Bourbon County, Kentucky in August 1801. Thousands of people were present for this meeting and witnessed some unusual sights. The Rev. John Lyle attended the meeting but did not stay until it was over. In his diary he said:

The meeting at Cane Ridge continued on to Thursday we have heard and do not know whether it be yet broken or not. It was allowed a thousand had fallen before I came away and then I recon there were 60 down and they continued to fall and be exercised. The last account on Wednesday I heard they were almost all men that fell on Tuesday. Tuesday morning I viewed the camp and saw a number down.⁵

Richard McNemar described the "typical" camp meeting by saying:

At first appearance, those meetings exhibited nothing to the spectator, but a scene of confusion; that could scarce be put into human language. They were generally opened with a sermon; near the close of which, there would be an unusual out-cry; some bursting forth into loud ejaculations of prayer, or thanksgiving for the truth. Others breaking out in emphatical sentences of exhortation: Others flying to their careless friend, with tears of compassion; beseeching them to turn to the Lord. Some struck with terror; and hastening through the croud (sic) to make their escape; or pulling away their relations.--Others, trembling, weeping; crying out, for the Lord Jesus to have mercy upon them: fainting and swooning away, till every appearance of life was gone; and the extremities of the body assumed the coldness of a dead corpse.⁶

The "falling" mentioned by Lyle and McNemar in their accounts was common to the frontier camp meeting. As the name implies, men, women and children literally fell to the ground and some stayed there for hours or days at a time. Falling was usually accompanied by groans,

shrieks, cries for mercy and praises to God.⁷ After such an experience many claimed conversion.

In all, there were seven categories of extraordinary responses to revival preaching. There was the falling exercise, as mentioned above. Additionally, there was the rolling exercise where participants rolled on the ground. Some were seized by "the jerks," an involuntary jerking action of the body. Others made noises that sounded like barking.⁸ Some danced. Others laughed uncontrollably. Still others sang.

As camp meetings grew in popularity, religion on the American frontier exerted a noticeable influence. Some believed that prior to the Great Revival drunkenness, gambling, and other forms of vice were common. After the revival, however, there was less drunkenness and a seemingly more consecrated spirit. There was also an increase in the missionary impulse. Between 1796 and 1802 no fewer than seven missionary societies were formed in New England alone. There was also a heightened social awareness that raised questions on issues such as slavery.⁹ The Great Revival also greatly strengthened Baptists and Methodists. Between 1800-1802 the six Kentucky Baptist Associations went from an initial membership of 4,766 to 13,569. In the five years following the beginning of the Great Revival the Methodist Church in Tennessee and Kentucky grew from 3,030 members to 10,158.¹⁰

The Great Revival began within the ranks of Presbyterianism but they seemed to have suffered most from its ultimate effects. The unorganized structure of camp meetings and their seeming disregard for conventional worship aroused opposition. Sharp differences of opinion soon divided Presbyterians into pro and anti-revival parties. Doctrine also caused differences of opinion, seeing that the more successful

frontier evangelists were Methodists who espoused an Arminian theology. That is, the Methodists emphasized God's love and the availability of salvation to all for the taking. Presbyterian views of predestination made many of them skeptical of revivalism. Furthermore, the tendency toward excessive emotionalism, disorder and extravagance that was generally found in camp meetings also came under¹¹ the scrutiny of many Baptists.

In analyzing the Great Revival one scholar has concluded, "Paradoxically, the Great Revival, which promised religious harmony, not only began an evangelical culture that came to characterize the Southern mind but also brought forth stress that cracked existing church structures. A greater degree of religious diversity was the long-range heritage of the Great Revival."¹² Most denominations experienced this diversity, but none felt it as quickly or as severely as the Presbyterians.

One of the first problems associated with the revival was, ironically, new converts. Through the efforts of the revival many were converted and added to the churches of the various denominations. This increase of church membership led to an increased demand for ministers to hold services and administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. For example, the minutes of the Cumberland Presbytery for Friday, October 7, 1803 read in part:

A written petition from the congregations of Spring Creek, McAdow and Clarksville praying the ordination of Finis Ewing, in whose circuit these congregations are included. Considering the petition of those congregations and particularly because of the large circuit and many young societies earnestly desiring and really needing the administration of the sealing ordinances amongst them Presbytery agrees that Mr. Ewing be ordained on the Friday before the third Sabbath in November next.¹³

The Cumberland Presbytery licensed and ordained a number of men to fill the demands of new congregations that were coming into existence. Typically, ministerial examinations dealt with such matters as one's conversion experience, personal motivation for entering the ministry and preaching ability.¹⁴ There was little attention paid one's formal education, and many conservatives became concerned that the general quality of ministry suffered.¹⁵

By the end of 1805 the Kentucky Synod, the supervising body over the Cumberland Presbytery, had investigated the Cumberland Presbytery and found a number of "irregularities" ranging from defective, poorly kept records to licensing and ordination of uneducated, unqualified men. Judging such practices "irregular,"¹⁶ the investigating commission also found seventeen men unqualified as preachers because of their lack of formal education. Summoned for a re-examination of their qualifications, these men refused to submit; they were immediately prohibited from, " . . . exhorting, preaching and administering ordinances in consequence of any authority which they have obtained from the Cumberland Presbytery, until they submit to our jurisdiction and undergo the requisite examination."¹⁷ This schism deepened until the Cumberland group formed an independent Presbytery in 1810. They became the Cumberland Presbyterians.

While the battle regarding the Cumberland Presbyterians was being waged, another schism captured the attention of the Kentucky Synod. Richard McNemar, having already come under the scrutiny of his Presbytery, the Washington Presbytery, for preaching anti-Calvinistic doctrines, was brought up on charges before the Kentucky Synod in 1803. He was not alone, however, in his sentiments. In a letter signed by

Robert Marshall, John Dunlavey, Richard McNemar, Barton W. Stone and John Thompson (dated September 10, 1803), the group protested the proceedings and formally withdrew themselves from the Synod's jurisdiction.¹⁸

These five men cited three reasons why they were disassociating themselves from the Kentucky Synod. First, they felt that McNemar had been deliberately misrepresented. Second, they claimed:

. . . the privileges of interpreting the Scriptures by itself according to Section 9 Chapter 1 of the Confession of Faith, and we believe that the Supreme Judge by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined; and all decrees of Counsels, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of Men, and private Spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest--, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.¹⁹

Third, they pledged allegiance to the "doctrines of grace" but felt these doctrines had been, " . . . darkened by some expression in the Confession of Faith which are used as the means of strengthening sinners in their unbelief and subjecting many of the pious to a spirit of bondage."²⁰ In closing the letter Stone and his associates bid the "Reverend body" adieu until through God's providence they saw fit to adopt, " . . . a more liberal plan respecting human Creeds and Confessions."²¹ Such a plan was never adopted. Three days later these five men had formed a new Presbytery which they called the Springfield Presbytery and the Kentucky Synod had suspended them from the ministry²² until they manifested sorrow for the schism they had caused.

The new Presbytery soon boasted some fifteen congregations in Kentucky and Ohio but by the spring of 1804 the seceders had reached the conclusion that the new Presbytery was hindering their work. The Springfield Presbytery was disbanded; and the churches, who, like their

pastors, had withdrawn from the ranks of regular Presbyterianism became
²³
 known simply as Christian churches.

Even this confederation did not last long. Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy eventually became Shakers. John Thompson and Robert Marshall returned to Presbyterianism. This left Barton W. Stone who
²⁴
 eventually joined forces with Thomas and Alexander Campbell. The association of the Campbells and Stone produced the Disciples of Christ which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Presbyterianism experienced yet another division in the 1830's that came to be known as the Old School-New School controversy. In 1801 the Presbyterians and Congregationalists united their evangelistic efforts under The Plan of Union. Initially, the two groups functioned smoothly in evangelizing both the home and foreign fields despite their
²⁵
 doctrinal differences.

Not all Presbyterians were satisfied with the Plan of Union, however, and in 1837 Presbyterianism experienced yet another division. There were three factors that led to the division. First, there was a matter of polity. The Old School, those Presbyterians who held to more traditional ideas and interpretations, charged that churches established under the Plan of Union were not genuinely Presbyterian. Proper discipline in their opinion was therefore impossible. The Old School also favored denominational boards responsible to the General Assembly administering missionary activity rather than non-denominational agencies. The New School was satisfied with the Plan of Union and saw no reason to abandon it. Second, the Old School was more doctrinally inclined toward a rigidly structured Calvinism while the New School was more liberal and less Calvinistic. Third, by the 1830's

slavery had become a dividing issue. The Old School tended to favor slavery while the New School tended to favor abolition. When the General Assembly met in 1837 the Old School constituted the majority. They abrogated the Plan of Union, declared their action retroactive and pronounced the synods formed under the Plan of Union to no longer be a part of the church. This one action effectively excommunicated²⁶ the New Schoolers, most of whom were members of the excluded synods.

For many people each of the mentioned divisions involved questions pertaining to authority. The Cumberland Presbyterians rejected the authority of the Kentucky Synod and formed their own body. The Presbyterian revivalists likewise rejected a rigidly structured, centralized, ecclesiastical authority, arguing that a more decentralized church structure was more in conformity to New Testament teaching. The Old School Presbyterians sought to reassert Presbyterian authority and distinctiveness which they thought had been compromised by the Plan of Union.

A second early nineteenth century American religious trend featured the rise of new denominations based on extra-Scriptural revelation. Among the new denominations introduced to the American scene one of the most influential was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormons. The father of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, was born on December 23, 1805 in Sharon, Vermont. When he was eleven the family moved to Palmyra, New York. Young Joseph and his father were both fond of searching for buried treasure and on at least one occasion Smith was convicted in a Palmyra court for being disorderly and fraudulent in the use of a so-called²⁷ "seer stone."

At the age of fourteen, Joseph Smith attended a local revival meeting. A number of preachers were present and at the end of the service the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist ministers had each begun to exhort sinners to conversion. Smith looked upon the scene with confusion. Shortly after this meeting in May 1820, Smith allegedly received the first of several revelations from God. According to Smith, God was displeased with Christianity and a restoration of true Christianity was needed. Furthermore, God had²⁸ chosen him to be the leader of this restoration.

In 1823 Smith was visited once again, this time by the angel Moroni who told him that the genuine Bible of the world was buried nearby. In 1827 he received permission to excavate this "Bible" and found a stone box, two seer stones to aid in translation and a book of these golden plates with writing in the "reformed Egyptian" language²⁹ which Smith translated into the Book of Mormon.

Smith soon found a number of people who recognized him as a prophet. His message was plain and direct. He was convinced that he knew a better way to live. A number of people agreed with him.

Between 1831-1846 Mormonism spread to Kirtland, Ohio, Jackson County, Missouri and Nauvoo, Illinois. Mormonism was particularly popular in Nauvoo until Smith received a revelation in 1843 legitimizing polygamy. The town was outraged and the friction between the residents of Nauvoo and the Mormons continued until Smith and his brother Hyrum were arrested and imprisoned in the Carthage jail. Shortly after their arrest, a mob broke into the jail and shot both Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Two years later Brigham Young led the Mormons³⁰ to a new home in what today is Utah.

The heart and soul of Mormonism is the Book of Mormon. Yet in the assessment of one Mormon scholar, "It was not, in its own terms, a substitute for the Bible but rather a complement to it."³¹ Thus, the Mormons rejected the exclusive authority of the Bible. In 1842 Joseph Smith wrote, "We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly."³² Nevertheless, he felt that errors had crept into the Bible through carelessness and mistranslation. Smith's subsequent revelations were preserved in Doctrines and Covenants and Mormons accept them as complementary to the Bible and The Book of Mormon.

The Mormons were not the only nineteenth century group to embrace extra-Biblical authority. The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, also known as the Shakers, placed great faith in the revelations of Ann Lee Stanley. Mother Ann, as she came to be known, immigrated to America with eight followers in 1774. She was the wife of an English blacksmith who mothered four children, none of which survived infancy. In England she had become a Shaking Quaker, a group notorious for noisily announcing Christ's second advent and foretelling of destruction that would soon befall the wicked. They received their name from the trembling and shaking their bodies would experience during worship.³³ She convinced her followers, ". . . that she was Christ in his 'second appearing,' making manifest the female element in the Godhead and inaugurating the beginning of the millennium by gathering a faithful remnant out of the churches of Anti-Christ."³⁴

Ironically, the United Society was not formally organized until 1787, three years after Ann Lee's death. This organization occurred under the leadership of Joseph Meacham who also organized the groups

into "families" for communal living. Nevertheless, Mother Ann's influence was keenly felt in no fewer than two areas. First, she was convinced that the root of all evil was the sex act. Shakers, therefore, were to live celibate lives. Second, since Shakers were celibate, converts had to be introduced to the commune from the outside world. Significant numbers were added to the Shakers as a result of various revivals when the new converts were confronted by the question of what to do with themselves after their conversion. The simplicity of Shaker worship and their communal lifestyle appealed to many who chose not to affiliate with other denominations. As Ahlstrom summarized it, "To those who wondered what to do with their reborn lives, the Shakers offered a meaningful answer. You have not left the world and the flesh, they would say, bidding the seeker to confess his sin to Mother Ann Lee and enter the true millennial church."³⁵

Mormonism and Shakerism are representative of yet another way by which people of the early nineteenth century sought to solve the question of authority in matters of faith and religious practice. They rested securely in the knowledge that their prophets and prophetesses were instruments of God, and they found a sense of belonging within their respective communities. The Landmarkers followed traditional Baptist thinking by stressing the sole authority of the Bible as the source of religious belief and the local Baptist church as the exclusive agent for propagating the Gospel in the world. All three groups found security for their beliefs in an authoritative statement of God's will and membership in a religious body believed to be divinely ordained.

Still others addressed the question of authority by looking to the

church institutionally. In England between 1833-1845 a movement aimed at restoring the High Church ideals of the seventeenth century developed within the Church of England. The movement came to be known as the Oxford Movement.³⁶ Proponents of the Oxford Movement became staunch defenders of, " . . . the Church of England as a Divine institution, of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, and of the Book of Common Prayer as a rule of faith."³⁷

The American Episcopalians had their defender of High Churchism in John H. Hobart. Consecrated bishop in 1811, Hobart performed his duties with great zeal. He was an educator who proudly wore the badge of "High Churchman." He chided his "Low Church" associates for what he considered as their lukewarm attitude toward the distinguishing features of the "true church."³⁸ Through his preaching and teaching, John Hobart called many Episcopalians to a firmer commitment to their church.

Another American champion of High Churchism was John W. Nevin, a professor of theology at Mercersburg Seminary. He attacked the excesses of revivalism as an evil that had infiltrated the German Reformed churches. Nevin was also particularly critical of an individualistic concept of the church. He believed that churches were not confederations of individuals. Rather, the church was the medium by which men had access to the saving presence of Christ. It was Nevin's belief that the faithful enjoyed communion with Christ through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.³⁹ He said, "The question of the Eucharist is one of the most important belonging to the history of religion. It may be regarded indeed as in some sense central to the whole Christian system. For Christianity is grounded in the living

union of the believer with the person of Christ; and the great fact is emphatically concentrated in the mystery of the Lord's Supper."⁴⁰

Graves and other early Landmarkists were sympathetic with neither Catholicism nor Anglicanism. These movements are significant in relation to Landmarkism, however, because they demonstrate that many looked to the church as an institution in their search for authority. Graves' ecclesiology was different from that of Hobart and Nevin on many points. Nonetheless, Graves believed that a local, Baptist church was the only place where a Christian could legitimately serve God and receive God's sanction.

In addition to the movements already mentioned, a variety of other movements developed in the first half of the nineteenth century that challenged orthodox Christian thought. For example, conservative Christians conceived of God in the terms of trinitarian theology. That is, they believed God was one yet manifested in three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead was co-equal and co-eternal with the others. In opposition to the doctrine of the trinity, the Unitarians denied the deity of Jesus Christ. Conservative Christians also maintained that God would someday judge the earth and those whom He judged as wicked would spend eternity in the literal torments of hell. The Universalists denied the doctrine of eternal punishment and proclaimed instead that God's love was absolutely unlimited. Salvation, therefore, was for everyone.

The Universalists and Unitarians stand as examples of an element in Christianity that sought a less dogmatic and more rationalistic Christianity. The argument for human rationalism found no friends in the ranks of Landmarkism. The Landmarkers were strict Biblical

literalists. They felt the Bible was divinely inspired and any attempts to critically scrutinize its contents were seen as assaults on the veracity of God. If nothing else, Unitarianism and Universalism were instrumental in confirming Baptists in their conviction that the Bible was infallible and traditional theological interpretations were sufficient.

Clearly, the first half of the nineteenth century was a time of great religious controversy for American Christianity. The issue behind many of these controversies was the question of authority. In many, indeed if not most cases, the question of authority also involved one's fundamental understanding of the church. The Presbyterians struggled with the question of authority in the era following the Great Revival and experienced a variety of consequences. The Cumberland Presbyterians declared themselves to be a new, distinct church. Barton W. Stone and others left Presbyterianism entirely in search of Primitive Christianity. Likewise, the Old School-New School controversy was vitally linked to the question of authority in the administration of mission work.

The formation of new denominations such as Mormonism and Shakerism demonstrate that a number of individuals in the nineteenth century were willing to reject the exclusive authority of the Bible by accepting extra-Scriptural revelation. Furthermore, these groups used their new revelation and forged new denominations and new church structures.

Instead of forming new denominations, others such as John W. Nevin and John H. Hobart were convinced the existing Scriptures and church structures were both adequate and vital to the Christian faith. Thus, they emphasized the question of authority to their parishoners as they

encouraged them to build their lives around the church. Both Hobard and Nevin also encouraged their students to emphasize the church as an integral institution in man's life, especially for those who were already involved.

Others, such as the Unitarians and Universalists, rejected credal authority for a less rigidly structured and more subjectively oriented form of Christianity. Nevertheless, they did not deliberately set about to form new churches. Rather, when it was possible they worked within the framework of existing church structure.

Indeed, as Americans pushed further west, as the questions of home and foreign mission work became more complicated and as education and social issues arose, Christians of all denominations were faced with differing understandings of the church, its nature and function. As people searched for answers they generally resorted to one of three positions. First, some believed that the old European traditions should be followed without change. This position is characteristic of the Old School and High Church spokesman Nevin and Hobard. Second, some groups abandoned existing institutions to return to the "true New Testament" ideal. This position is characteristic of the Stoneites, Mormons and Shakers. Third, due to American life and freedom some felt religious differences could be ignored in lieu of a new type of Christian unity. This position is particularly characteristic of the
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New School Presbyterians.

America of the early nineteenth century provided an environment that allowed advocates of each of these positions to gain adherents. As the Mormon historian Leonard J. Arrington has observed:

It would be misleading to see deists, Unitarians, Universalists, primitive gospel advocated, Campbellites, and

Shakers as constituting anything like a majority or even a substantial minority within American Christianity. The mainstream--representing perhaps 90 per cent of church members--was still found in Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, Baptist, and Roman Catholic congregations. But because of the large percentage of unchurched Americans (about 90 per cent) and the simmering dissatisfaction within the established denominations, the fringe groups had an importance out of proportion to their numbers.⁴²

In the face of challenges from these "fringe groups," Baptists, like many other groups, intensified their search for ultimate Christian authority. J. R. Graves and others who shared his "local church only" sentiments sought to restore what they felt was authentic, New Testament practice. By identifying the local church as the body of Christ and exclusive agency for propagating the Gospel, Landmarkism provided Baptists with an identity, a purpose, and according to Landmark thinking, proper authority. Old Landmarkism may have seemed unique in the 1850's, but as LeRoy Benjamin Hogue demonstrated, Graves' ideas were not entirely new. Neither was Old Landmarkism unique; it, like other movements, merely sought a firm basis for religious authority.⁴³

In addition to facing the question of authority, Baptists also faced their share of strife and controversy. At times Baptists quarreled among themselves. At other times they argued with non-Baptists. These controversies helped crystalize the questions that precipitated the Landmark movement. Particular Baptist controversies and the questions they raised will be discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES

¹
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²
William W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), pp. 326-329. Hereafter cited as Story of Religion. See also Cleveland, Great Revival, pp. 62-64 and Boles, Religion, pp. 18-25.

³
William W. Sweet, The Presbyterians (New York: Cooper Square Publishers Inc., 1964), p. 85.

⁴
Anne C. Loveland, Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 72. Hereafter cited as Southern Evangelicals.

⁵
John Lyles' diary, August, 1801, as found in Cleveland, Appendix V, pp. 183-189.

⁶
Richard McNemar, The Kentucky Revival of 1807 (Cincinnati: John W. Browne--Office of Liberty Hall, 1807), p. 23.

⁷
J. H. Spencer, A History of the Kentucky Baptists, 2 vols., (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1885; reprinted ed., Gallatin, Tn.: Church History Research and Archives, 1984), 1:514-515.

⁸
Ibid., pp. 514-521. See also Boles, Religion, p. 27.

⁹
Cleveland, Great Revival, pp. 128-159.

¹⁰
Ibid. See also Boles, Religion, p. 29.

¹¹
Cleveland, Great Revival, pp. 47-50, 110-112. See also Loveland, Southern Evangelicals, p. 60.

¹²
Boles, Religion, p. 32.

¹³
Minutes of the Cumberland Presbytery, Friday, October 7, 1803. According to Presbyterian church government, administrative authority is divided four ways. Presiding over the local congregation is the session which is composed of the pastor and a number of ruling elders. The Presbytery has authority over the session and is composed of both

ministers and ruling elders from a number of congregations. Next in order is the Synod. A Synod is a larger body than a Presbytery. In fact, Synods are composed of a number of representatives from several Presbyteries. Finally, there is the General Assembly. This body represents Presbyterianism at the national level and is composed of representatives from the various Presbyteries.

14

Sweet, The Presbyterians, p. 91.

15

Lefferts A. Loetscher, A Brief History of the Presbyterians (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), p. 80. Hereafter cited as B.H.P.

16

Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, Thursday, October 17, 1805 as cited by Sweet in The Presbyterians.

17

Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, Monday, December 9, 1805 as cited by Sweet in The Presbyterians.

18

Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, Saturday, September 10, 1803 as cited by Sweet in The Presbyterians.

19

Ibid.

20

Ibid.

21

Ibid.

22

Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, Tuesday, September 13, 1803 as cited by Sweet in The Presbyterians.

23

Sweet, The Presbyterians, pp. 96-97.

24

Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 493. Hereafter cited as R.H.A.P. See also Cleveland, Great Revival, pp. 60-80.

25

Loetscher, B.H.P., pp. 82-91.

26

Vergilius Ferm, ed., "New School Presbyterian Church," and "Old School Presbyterian Church," An Encyclopedia of Religion (Paterson: Littlefield, Adams and Company, 1964), pp. 529, 541-542. See also Boles, Religion, p. 138 and Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), pp. 165-167.

27

Ahlstrom, R.H.A.P., p. 502. See also Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 10-13.

28

Carl Carmer, The Angel and the Farm Boy (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 47-52.

29

The Book of Mormon, "Origin of the Book of Mormon."

30 Sweet, Story of Religion, pp. 399-400. See also Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 193-195.

31 Arrington, The Mormon Experience, p. 33.

32 Joseph Smith as quoted by Arrington, The Mormon Experience, p. 30.

33 Ahlstrom, R.H.A.P., p. 492. See also Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 184-185.

34 Hudson, Religion in America, p. 185.

35 Ahlstrom, R.H.A.P., p. 493.

36 F. L. Cross, "The Oxford Movement," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 1001-1002.

37 Ibid.

38 Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 172-174 and Ahlstrom, R.H.A.P., pp. 625-626.

39 Hudson, Religion in America, p. 171.

40 John W. Nevin as quoted by Hudson in Religion in America, p. 171.

41 H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity, 2 vols., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 2:65. The analyses came from Smith, Handy and Loetscher while the examples were provided by the author.

42 Arrington, The Mormon Experience, p. 27. Emphasis Arrington, italicized in original text.

43 Campbellism was also a controversial movement in the nineteenth century. It will be discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3: CONTROVERSY AND THE BAPTISTS

Chapter Two sought to characterize the first half of the nineteenth century as a time of general religious strife and controversy. Baptists were certainly no exception to this pattern. This chapter will discuss four specific controversies that plagued early nineteenth century Baptists and ultimately led to the rise of Landmarkism. These four controversies are Anti-missionism; Campbellism, or the Restoration Movement led by Alexander Campbell; the "Baptizo" controversy within The American Bible Society; and an editorial conflict between R. B. C. Howell and Dr. J. B. McFerrin.

These four controversies helped precipitate the Landmark movement by posing new questions for Baptist consideration. Specifically, the anti-mission movement questioned the legitimacy of missionary societies. Campbellism boldly claimed to restore the authentic, New Testament pattern of worship. The "Baptizo" controversy questioned the translation of "Baptizo" as "immersion" and thereby questioned the validity of baptism by immersion itself. The Howell-McFerrin controversy intensified existing strife between Baptists and non-Baptists and forced Baptists to defend their doctrines, especially baptism by immersion. Old Landmarkism offered persuasive answers to these questions that many ultimately accepted as the final statement of Baptist thought.

Citing these four controversies as pertinent to the rise of

Landmarkism is not exactly new. Several scholars have noted the significance of these controversies in relation to Old Landmarkism. However, this chapter will tie together several threads that others have mentioned by bringing these controversies under one heading and showing how Landmarkism provided answers to some of the most searching questions that faced nineteenth century Baptists.

Anti-missionism, the opposition to organized missionary activity, divided Baptists during the early 1800's. Among the chief complaints of the anti-mission advocates was that missionary societies were un-Biblical. They also believed that missionary societies infringed on local church autonomy. This forced Baptists to consider the question of where final religious authority rested, a main question of Landmarkism.

Alexander Campbell, leader of what came to be known as "The Restoration Movement," introduced doctrines that deviated from standard Baptist interpretations. This was especially true regarding baptism. Many left the Baptist ranks to follow Campbell, and Landmarkism sought to stem this tide by demonstrating historically and theologically that Baptists were the true disciples of Christ.

The "Baptizo controversy" in The American Bible Society did two things that helped lead to the rise of Landmarkism. First, it forced Baptists to defend one of their most distinctive features, baptism by immersion. Second, it created a non-cooperative spirit between Baptists and Pedobaptists. These two things paved the way for a sectarian attitude that eventually characterized the Landmark Movement.

Finally, the Howell-McFerrin editorial conflict stirred denominational animosities between Baptists and Methodists in the

South, especially in Nashville. It was perhaps the final element that drew the ultimate lines of conflict for the Landmarkers.

As noted in Chapter Two, the early nineteenth century saw a dramatic increase in the formation of mission societies and the evangelization of the frontier. It was also a time of increasing awareness that evangelization of foreign nations was a Christian imperative. In 1814 the Baptists formed the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions. This Association, also known as the Triennial Convention, was organized chiefly through the efforts of Luther Rice who will be discussed later. Participation in the Convention was contingent upon financial support. Missionary societies or other Baptist bodies who contributed at least \$100 annually were entitled to send up to two delegates to the meetings.¹

As missionaries and other representatives of the Convention's missionary activities were dispatched to the frontier, they met increasing opposition from frontier preachers. By the 1820's this opposition had developed into what became known as the anti-mission movement. In its early stages anti-missionism had three champions in John Taylor, Daniel Parker and Alexander Campbell. In A History of Southern Baptist Landmarkism In the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology, James E. Tull demonstrated the significance of anti-missionism in relation to Landmarkism. Each of these men along with their reasons for opposing missions deserve special consideration for the way the anti-mission movement related to Landmarkism.

John Taylor was a prominent Kentucky Baptist preacher and farmer in the early 1800's. Although he received little formal education,

Taylor was a writer of some ability. In 1819 he used his writing skills against organized missionary activity in a pamphlet entitled, Thoughts On Missions. This pamphlet was polemical in nature but expressed Taylor's two main concerns with missionary societies. First, he believed that missionary societies and mission boards employed a hierarchical form of government that was contrary to traditional Baptist church polity. He feared these societies would soon arbitrarily impose their will upon churches scarcely regarding the feelings or opinions of church members upon whose support the Society depended. Second, Taylor said that those who were engaged in raising funds for missionaries were nothing less than "money grabbers" and went as far as comparing Luther Rice to Tetzels² in the art of money raising.

Daniel Parker was another Baptist who became critical of modern missions. Parker is best remembered as the leading propagator of a teaching known as "Two-Seeds in the Spiritism," an extreme form of predestination. Parker also attacked missionary activities in an 1820 pamphlet entitled, A Public Address to the Baptist Society. According to William W. Sweet, Parker's opposition to missionary activity was two-fold. First, Parker believed that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, the board established by the Triennial Convention to implement the Convention's missionary activities, would usurp the authority Christ gave to his churches. He further believed that the New Testament gave neither precept nor example of missionary societies.³ Hence, all such organizations were to be avoided.

A third early opponent of the mission movement was Alexander Campbell. Beginning in 1823, Campbell used his paper, The Christian Baptist to criticize what he perceived were the errors of modern

missionism. He believed that missionary societies were sectarian in nature, and thus their claim of preaching Christ's Gospel was invalidated. In fact, he said that in many cases the "heathen" were as much in need of conversion after the missionaries did their work as they had been before.⁴ Campbell also chided modern missionaries for their inability to work miracles as other Biblical missionaries had done. "From these plain and obvious facts and considerations," said Campbell, "it is evident that it is a capital mistake to suppose that missionaries in heathen lands, without the power of working miracles,⁵ can succeed in establishing the Christian religion." Campbell was also suspicious of the authority exercised by mission boards, Sunday Schools and Bible and Tract Societies. He saw no precedent for them in the New Testament; they existed only to gratify the leaders who created them.⁶

Campbell later moderated his position on missionary work as did John Taylor. For those who had already followed their lead, however, it was too late. By 1860 the Baptist historian Benedict noted that anti-missionism had continued to gain momentum, ". . . until in the churches and associations of our order, in this country, which oppose all organized efforts for the support of missions at home and abroad, are about sixty-thousand members; a number nearly equal to all the Baptists in America, in John Asplund's time, a little more than sixty years ago."⁷

In fairness to Taylor, Parker and Campbell it should be noted that none of them was opposed to the conversion of the heathen. In light of the fact that many analyses have focused on extreme Calvinism as a reason for anti-missionism, it should also be noted that of the three

only Daniel Parker was an ultra-predestinarian; moreover, Parker did not publish his views on predestination until 1826, six years after he publically opposed organized missionary activity.

It appears that as early opponents of missionism, Taylor, Parker and Campbell were agreed that the activities of modern missionary societies were contrary to the spirit and practice of the New Testament. While it cannot be denied that some later opponents of missionism based their arguments on extremely Calvinistic interpretations, these three early opponents of missionism were more concerned with the question of methodology.⁸ They all agreed that the church's authority was being circumvented.

The question of church authority was one of the mainstays of Graves and the early Landmarkers. Graves believed that Christ had issued the command to make disciples to only one organization, His Church. Thus, early Baptists pondered the question of how to evangelize. Later, J. R. Graves offered an authoritative answer. Graves believed that Christ had commissioned His churches to make disciples. Since the only true churches were Baptist churches, Graves⁹ said that only Baptist churches had the authority to evangelize.

Alexander Campbell, the outspoken opponent of missionism, has also been identified by James E. Tull and E. T. Moore as leading yet another controversy that was instrumental in the rise of Landmarkism. These conclusions were presented in Tull's A History of Southern Baptist Landmarkism In the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology and Moore's "Background of the Landmark Movement." According to Tull, Campbell's "main objective was to lead the Christian world to a recovery of primitive Christianity. The attainment of this objective was to be

accomplished by the destruction, first, of the corrupt forms of contemporary Christianity." ¹⁰ Campbell and his father Thomas had both left Presbyterianism due to what they perceived as sectarianism. Additionally, by 1813 the Campbells had adopted baptism by immersion and the church they had established, the Brush Run Church, had been ¹¹ accepted into the Redstone Baptist Association of Pennsylvania.

While Campbell united with the Baptists, he refused to submit to credal authority or "traditionalism." In a letter to his uncle, Campbell said:

As to our religious state, news, progress and attainments, I expect my father has written or will immediately write you. I shall therefore drop you but a few hints on this subject. For my own part, I must say that, after long study and investigation of books and more especially the Sacred Scriptures, I have, through clear convictions of truth and duty, renounced much of the traditions and errors of my early education. I am now an Independent in church government; of that faith and view of the gospel exhibited in John Walker's seven letters to Alexander Knox, and a Baptist in so far as respects baptism.¹²

From this statement it appears that Campbell's union with the Baptists was never complete. He cast himself as a reformer and sought to do so from within the Baptist ranks. In 1823 he began publishing his views in a paper called the Christian Baptist. In a series of articles entitled "A Restoration of the Ancient Order," Campbell criticized Baptist doctrine and practice. A division resulted and by 1830 one scholar noted, "One of three things was inevitable. The reformers had to abandon their demands and propaganda; or the Baptists had to change their beliefs and practices to conform to these demands; or it would be ¹³ necessary for them to separate." Campbell ultimately separated from the Baptists. Those who followed Campbell became known as the Disciples of Christ, and Alexander Campbell was their leader.

A number of studies have detailed the division between the Baptists and the Disciples of Christ.¹⁴ They have suggested a number of reasons for the division and each deserves due consideration. That is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, two important facets of Campbell's teachings must be considered because of their bearing on the rise of Landmarkism. These include Campbell's doctrine of baptism and the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

Initially, Alexander Campbell had advanced the Baptist doctrine of baptism by immersion in debates with Pedobaptists. Later, Campbell deviated from the Baptist concept of baptism. Baptists understood baptism as a symbolic representation of an inner, spiritual experience. Campbell, however, attached more significance to the ordinance. He said that baptism was connected both to the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵ In a debate with William McCalla, a Presbyterian, Campbell said:

Our third argument is deduced from the design or import of baptism. On this topic of argument we shall be as full as possible, because of its great importance, and because perhaps neither Baptists nor Paedobaptists sufficiently appreciate it. I will first merely refer to the oracles of God, which show that baptism is an ordinance of the greatest importance and of momentous significance. Never was there an ordinance of so great import or design.¹⁶

After quoting a number of Bible verses and making brief comments, Campbell said, "I know it will be said of me that I have affirmed that baptism saves us. Well, Peter and Paul have said so before me. If it was not criminal in them to say so, it cannot be criminal in me."¹⁷

In fairness to Campbell it should be noted that he did not believe that baptism had any sort of "abstract efficacy." He believed that before baptism had any effect, the one baptized had to exhibit faith in

the blood of Christ, as well as repentance before God.¹⁸ He nevertheless said, "Still to the believing penitent it is the means of receiving a formal, distinct, and specific absolution, or release from guilt."¹⁹

Campbell also differed with Baptists regarding the nature of conversion. Baptists believed that conversion was the result of a direct, subjective work of the Holy Spirit. Many Baptist contemporaries of Alexander Campbell argued that he believed otherwise. In December, 1830, eight churches from the Dover Association in Eastern Virginia met to discuss the alleged errors of Campbell. After some discussion it was decided that Campbell's chief errors were, ". . . the denial of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of man--the substitution of reformation for repentance--the substitution of baptism for conversion, regeneration or the new birth--and the Pelagian doctrine of the sufficiency of man's natural powers to effect his own salvation."²⁰ To these four charges Campbell pleaded not guilty and reduced the four Baptist concerns to two. Campbell denied the direct, subjective work of the Holy Spirit in conversion as Baptists understood it. He also insisted that baptism played a role in the remission of man's sins. Campbell said:

The whole matter in brief is the denial of their mystic influences of the Holy Spirit and immersion for the remission of sins. . . . That God has 'his own time' for converting every person is a favorite point of many And because we differ from them in this one opinion, they have, if we do not repent of it, assigned us our position with infidels and hypocrites.²¹

One may easily see why Baptists took such radical exception to Campbell's teaching and his "restoration movement." To accept Campbell's ideas of restoration meant the acceptance of what Baptists

considered heresy. And yet, Campbellism left Baptists in a dilemma. On the one hand, Campbell and his followers shared many common beliefs with Baptists. J. B. Jeter, a Baptist student of the Restoration Movement said:

Mr. Campbell embraces some views in common with Baptists. Whatever evils he may have done them, directly and indirectly--and they have been neither few nor small--he should have due praise for his indefatigable efforts to restore the apostolic baptism, or the immersion of believers, to expose the traditionary origin of infant baptism, and to shew that the primitive churches were composed of exclusively baptized believers.²²

On the other hand, Campbell found a sympathetic ear among many Baptists. A number of Baptist churches and associations found their membership roles depleted by defection to the Restoration Movement. In Kentucky, for example, the Green River Association dwindled from 2,951 members in 1830 to 740 members in 1832. The Elkhorn Association declined from 4,488 members in 1829 to 3,277 members in 1836. The Franklin Association went from 1,860 members in 1829 to 1,484 members in 1839.²³ Viewed from a broader perspective, the Disciples went from 22,000 in 1832 to approximately 192,000 in 1860.²⁴

This depletion of the Baptist ranks, as well as the many similarities between the Disciples and Baptists, forced Baptist preachers and editors to clarify their position on baptism and Campbellism itself. Throughout his life as a preacher and editor J. R. Graves was an outspoken opponent of Campbell's teachings and Landmarkism presented a formidable foe for Campbellism. Alexander Campbell had claimed that Christianity had become corrupt and needed renovation. Graves countered by claiming that no "restoration" was needed because Baptists had remained pure throughout the centuries. Those Baptists accepting this premise and the symbolic nature of

baptism, found in Landmarkism a measure of stability in a time of great religious controversy.

At this point a word should be said about R. B. C. Howell, a man who played a part in the rise of Landmarkism. Howell was a Baptist minister who had come to Nashville in 1835 to assume the pastorate of a Baptist church that had lost most of its members to Campbellism.²⁵ While Howell was pastor the church began publishing a paper entitled The Baptist. Howell used the paper to champion the cause of missions and express his views on contemporary events. Howell was not a Landmarker. In fact, in the middle to late 1850's Howell and Graves became bitter enemies. Nevertheless, Howell established certain principles that were later incorporated into Landmarkism, especially pro-missionism and anti-Campbellism. This provided Graves with a solid foundation that he ultimately used to his advantage.

The third significant controversy affecting Baptists in the early 1800's, and ultimately leading to the rise of Landmarkism, involved mission work in The American Bible Society. This argument has been demonstrated by LeRoy B. Hogue in his study "The Antecedents of Landmarkism." The missionary fervor that characterized American Christianity in the wake of the Second Great Awakening was not confined to the home front. The salvation of the heathen became a passion for practically each denomination and a number of missionary agencies arose to carry the gospel into the world as a result. In 1859 the Baptist historian David Benedict wrote, "Fifty years ago, not an agent for collecting funds for any object of benevolence or literature was to be seen in the whole Baptist field."²⁶ He went on to say, "No one then dreamed of so soon seeing such an army of agents in the field, for so

many different objects, and that the business would become a distinct vocation, of indispensable necessity, for carrying forward our benevolent plans and for performing our denominational work."²⁷

One particular missionary organization, The American Bible Society, was established in 1816 for the purpose of translating, publishing and distributing Bibles. As LeRoy Benjamin Hogue has noted in his study, "A Study of the Antecedents of Landmarkism," a controversy involving the translation of the New Testament was a contributing factor in the rise of Landmarkism.

Baptists were no strangers to missionary enterprises. The first American Baptist missionary to go to the foreign field was Adoniram Judson. In February, 1812, Judson and his wife of two weeks, Ann, set sail for India as Congregationalist missionaries. During the trip Judson studied the New Testament and concluded that immersion was the only valid mode of baptism and that the Baptist's position was correct.²⁸ Upon reaching India Judson and his wife were baptized by William Ward, a Baptist missionary in Calcutta, September 6, 1812. The Judsons resigned their appointment as Congregationalist missionaries and offered themselves to the Baptists as missionaries to India.²⁹

Ironically, Luther Rice had also sailed for India as a Congregationalist missionary and had an experience similar to Judson's.³⁰ Rice was baptized November 1, 1812. After receiving his baptism Rice returned to the United States where he became a spokesman for the cause of missions.

Judson remained in India until he was forced to leave by the British East India Company. In 1813 he and his wife made their home in Burma where Judson began to translate the Bible into Burmese. Judson

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completed this task in 1834.

In August, 1835 Dr. William Yates, who had been in India since 1815, and Rev. W. H. Pearce assisted William Carey in his final revision of the Bengali Bible. Carey, usually referred to as the "Father of Modern Missions," had been in India since November, 1793. He was an expert in the fields of botany and linguistics.³² It is said of Carey that he supervised the translation of the Bible into forty-two "Oriental tongues" and thereby provided one-third of the world with the Christian Scriptures.³³

With the final revision of the Bengali Bible complete, Yates and Pearce asked the British and Foreign Bible Society for financial assistance in printing the revision. The request was denied because the Bengali Bible had translated the Greek word "Baptizo" and its cognates as "dip" or "immerse" rather than transliterating the word as the translators of the King James Version had done in 1611.³⁴ Earlier versions of the Bengali Bible had translated "Baptizo" literally and received the sanction of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Nevertheless, by 1835 the Society had experienced a change of heart and decided not to aid in the publication of any translation where the Greek terms relating to baptism were translated in such a way as to be offensive to other denominations who supported the Society.³⁵

Having been denied aid by the British and Foreign Bible Society, Yates and Pearce made their appeal to The American Bible Society. They made it clear that they had translated on the principle adopted by the missionaries in Burma.³⁶ Judson and Carey had shared the same philosophy regarding translation of the Bible. They did not want to obscure the meaning of a Biblical term that the Orientals had no

equivalent for.³⁷ These British missionaries wanted The American Bible Society to know that they stood on the same theological footings as Judson, a man they already supported.

The American Bible Society had traditionally been supportive of Judson's work. As early as 1830 they had appropriated \$1,200 for the "Burman Bible." This money was given with the knowledge that Judson had translated "Baptizo" with terms that signified "immersion."³⁸ By 1835, The American Bible Society had appropriated \$18,500 to aid in the publication and circulation of Judson's translation.³⁹

A committee within the Society considered the request and decided to make no recommendation until the issue of translating "Baptizo" was settled.⁴⁰ The question was in turn referred to another committee of seven men for their consideration. Of these seven, six were affiliated with denominations that favored sprinkling rather than immersion as the correct mode of baptism.⁴¹ These men argued that if "Baptizo" was translated as "immerse," the Society would be guilty of favoring Baptists. They also claimed that they had no prior knowledge that American Bible Society funds had been furnished for versions that translated "Baptizo" as "immerse." Therefore, they concluded, as had the British and Foreign Bible Society, that funds should be appropriated for versions that conformed "in the principle of the translation to the common English version."⁴²

A minority report was issued by Spencer H. Cone, the only Baptist among the committee of seven. He feared that if the majority report was adopted that Baptists would be cut off from further use of Society funds. He was also amazed that the Society would require future translations of the Scriptures to conform to an English version.⁴³ He

went on to chide the committee for saying that they had no knowledge of Judson's literal rendering of "Baptizo." He suggested that since the Society had a large balance in the treasury, and since much of it had been donated by Baptists, a certain amount should be appropriated for the Bengali Revision.⁴⁴

The matter was not settled until February 17, 1836. The Society's Board of Managers accepted the English standard rather than the Greek⁴⁵ by a thirty to fourteen margin.

Many Baptist leaders quickly lodged a protest criticizing The American Bible Society for no fewer than six things. First, they criticized the Board of Manager's inconsistency in not releasing funds for a translation that was not significantly different from others that had received Society funds. Second, they charged the Society with sectarianism because their decision favored those who favored sprinkling rather than immersion. In Baptist thinking, The American Bible Society had become an official Pedobaptist society. Third, they charged the Society with establishing the English version as a touchstone for all other denominations. Fourth, the Baptists charged the Society with financial dishonesty. They felt that much of the financial security enjoyed by the Society was through the donations of Baptists. Under the circumstances, they felt that they were being defrauded.⁴⁶ In fact, the Baptists claimed that their contributions to The American Bible Society had exceeded \$170,000 while they had received less than \$30,000 for their various projects.⁴⁷

The Baptists felt compelled to organize a new, distinct society for the promulgation of Bibles. The final decisions were made in 1837 that formed the American and Foreign Bible Society. As Armitage put

it, "Thus, the Baptists took the high and holy ground that they were called to conserve fidelity to God in translating the Bible, and that if they failed to do this on principle, they would fail to honor him altogether in this matter; because the Society which they had founded was the only Bible organization then established which had no fellowship with compromises in Bible translation."⁴⁸

The leaders of the Landmark movement doubtless followed the controversy in the accounts presented by papers such as The Baptist. R. B. C. Howell closely monitored The American Bible Society's handling of the "Baptizo" controversy. In the May, 1836 edition of The Baptist, he lamented the schism but sided with the Baptist missionaries and vowed he would not support what he perceived as heresy within the Society:

If Pedobaptists are ashamed of the ordinances of Christ, and to avoid obedience to them will venture upon a mutilation of the sacred word, let them not expect our countenance or concurrence, and least of all, that to please them or receive their assistance in its circulation, will we make void the Law of God.⁴⁹

Howell also charged The American Bible Society with inconsistency for having no established policy for translating words such as "Baptizo." Furthermore, he felt that Baptists deserved more consideration in light of the money they had donated to the Society, and called for new measures. "The question will naturally suggest itself," Howell wrote, "what course will the Baptists now pursue in relation to this matter? We are, it is well known, able to help ourselves. Yes, with the blessing of God, we can, and will do our own work."⁵⁰

While the American and Foreign Bible Society was not officially formed until 1837, Howell praised the Baptist departure from The

American Bible Society in a July, 1836 editorial:

We are not disconnected from the Pedobaptists in everything. We hereafter, in this matter as in all others, do our own work in our own way. The result will, we think, be, that Baptists will be more united and vigorous in their exertions, and a larger amount of Bibles will be distributed among the heathen.⁵¹

According to Hogue's analysis, one of the greatest effects of this controversy was the awakening of a strong denominational consciousness that in turn yielded to the rise of denominational exclusivism. Baptists claimed to be the only group faithfully translating the Word of God, and therefore, the true defenders of the faith. All others obscured the truth, and Baptists used The American Bible Society as an example. What is more, this controversy introduced the doctrine of baptism as a vital issue into an era that has already been characterized as volatile.⁵²

The dust from The American Bible Society controversy had scarcely settled before Howell discovered that his paper, The Baptist, was in financial difficulty. In 1840, The Baptist was temporarily merged with The Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer, a denominational paper published in Louisville, Kentucky. While the two papers were merged Howell edited his own section dedicated particularly to news from Tennessee.⁵³

It was during this time that Howell engaged in an editorial debate with Dr. J. B. McFerrin of Nashville, Tennessee and as O. L. Hailey noted in J. R. Graves Life, Times and Teachings, this controversy had a profound effect on Graves. McFerrin was editor of the Methodist paper, South Western Christian Advocate. Linwood Tyler Horne has thoroughly documented this conflict in his Th.D. dissertation, A Study of the Life and Work of R. B. C. Howell. This editorial debate is mentioned in

this study for the sake of showing a connection with the rise of Landmarkism, namely, the highly volatile religious atmosphere that existed in Nashville prior to Graves' assumption of The Baptist's editorship.

The editorial debate between Howell and McFerrin began in the latter part of 1841 when McFerrin wrote a series of articles for the South Western Christian Advocate that criticized certain Baptist principles, especially such Calvinistic concepts as predestination and reprobation. Howell challenged McFerrin's contention that all Baptists were ultra-Calvinists and, according to Horne's analysis, "The focus of the Howell-McFerrin debate centered around McFerrin's efforts to prove that Baptists had adopted the total Calvinist system, and Howell's contention that Baptists held a modified Calvinist doctrine."⁵⁴

McFerrin based his argument on the assumption that the Philadelphia Confession of Faith was a universally accepted Confession and that its doctrinal content was totally Calvinistic. Howell agreed that Baptists held certain Calvinistic tenets. However, he denied McFerrin's charge that all Baptists were ultra-Calvinists. He further denied that all Baptists embraced the Philadelphia Confession as an authoritative expression of what they believed.⁵⁵

As the debate progressed Howell accused McFerrin of deliberately fanning the flames of division and strife between Methodists and Baptists and of smearing the Baptists as a denomination. McFerrin continued to chide Howell for his contention that Baptists were not totally Calvinistic.⁵⁶

Toward the end of the debate both participants abandoned their earlier emphasis and turned their attention to each other's character.

Quoting from the February 17, 1842 and March 10, 1842 editions of the South Western Christian Advocate, Horne demonstrated McFerrin's contempt for Howell. McFerrin said that Howell "raved almost to madness" and that his articles merely poured out the vials of his indignation.⁵⁷ McFerrin also called Howell, "the inflated bird of Nashville."⁵⁸

Howell responded in kind in the June 9, 1842 edition of The Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer. Casting himself as the defender of Baptists, Howell accused McFerrin of initiating the controversy. He said, "Mr. McFerrin does not deny, he dare not deny, that this controversy was instigated by his attacks upon 'the Baptist denomination.'⁵⁹ He is, therefore, confessedly the aggressor." He went on to say:

We saw very early in the discussion, that Mr. McFerrin was a writer of vulgar taste, uncultivated intellect; and no reading; who made up in quantity and cant what he wanted in argument and religion, and we should, long since, have turned away from him in disgust.⁶⁰

In his parting shot, Howell called McFerrin, " . . . a petty newspaper scribbler, and especially one who stands before the world convicted of having borne false witness against his neighbors."⁶¹

At this point the debate was virtually ended. Howell ceased to edit the Tennessee section of The Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer at the end of 1842 and devoted his attention to his pastorate until 1844 when The Baptist resumed publication.

According to Horne's analysis the Howell-McFerrin debate forced Baptists to produce a definition for "modified Calvinism."⁶² This analysis is no doubt correct. However, one must also conclude that the incident intensified the strife between Baptists and Pedobaptists that

had been generated in the "Baptizo" controversy.

Thus, when J. R. Graves assumed editorship of The Baptist in 1846 he faced a number of crises. Anti-missionism had posed the question of ultimate authority. Campbellism had critically depleted Baptist ranks. What is more, Baptists had engaged in a war of words with Pedobaptists over the Scriptural nature of baptism.

Landmarkism provided Baptists with a platform from which they could answer these challenges. The Landmarker assertion that only Baptist ministers were authentic gospel ministers, as well as their claim that Baptist churches had an unbroken historical succession, provided a basis to counter the claims made by the Restorationists under Campbell. The Landmarker claim that only baptism by immersion, at the hands of an authentic minister and performed on a believer as a symbolic act, gave Baptists a platform from which they attacked what they perceived as Pedobaptist errors. Finally, the Landmarker insistence that the church is a visible, local and independent congregation responsible for evangelizing the world and teaching converts gave Baptists a firm, tangible source of authority.⁶³

Perhaps even more significant is the sense of identity that Baptists received from Landmarkism. They proudly pointed to the "historical record" and Scripture itself as their proof of a Baptist heritage that was centuries old. They also used history and Scripture to justify baptism by immersion. And, when confronted with the question of ultimate authority in religious affairs, the Landmarkers justified their exclusivism by appeals to Scripture and their concept of church history, appeals that for many held promise of reinforcing Baptist ranks strained by controversy.

The idea of an historical succession of Baptists, as well as the idea that the local church was Christ's repository of religious authority provided Baptists with powerful arguments for supporting their positions against their doctrinal critics.

Doctrine was vitally important to the Landmarkers. They defined their movement in doctrinal terms, and, as Chapter One of this study demonstrated, historical scholarship concerning Landmarkism has focused almost exclusively on the relationship of Landmarkist ideas to traditional Baptist beliefs. This question, however, does not exhaust the historical significance of "Old Landmarkism." As Chapter Two showed, the American religious scene of the early 1800's was characterized by controversy over the question of final religious authority. Moreover, Chapter Three showed how particular debates and controversies affected the saliency of the particular principles espoused by the Landmarkers.

Whatever else may be said about Old Landmarkism, three things are true. First, Landmarkism made the question of ultimate authority important to Baptists and provided an authoritative answer for this question by insisting on the primacy of the local Baptist church. Second, Landmarkism gave Baptists a strong identity in the face of mass defection to the Restoration Movement. As Robert G. Torbet put it, "Even when allowance is made for Graves' biased judgement, there is little doubt that he had been influential in calling Baptists to a renewed self-consciousness and regard for their principles."⁶⁴ Finally, by its strict observance of the ordinances and refusal to recognize non-Baptist churches and ministers, Landmarkism drew clear lines of distinction between Baptists and non-Baptists.

Landmarkism's exclusiveness was the result of Graves' desire to preserve Gospel purity and what he perceived as the true pattern for New Testament churches. Graves believed that true churches were, and always had been, societies of regenerated believers.⁶⁵ Perhaps O. L. Hailey, Graves' biographer/son-in-law characterized Landmarkism best when he said, "Yes, Landmarkism sounded forth but did not originate in ecclesiasticism, in church forms, or even in regard to the ordinances. It was based upon the fundamental errors of Methodism--and Campbellism also."⁶⁶

NOTES

- 1
ESB, s.v., "Missions," by Herbert C. Jackson. See also ESB, s.v., "Triennial Convention," by Raymond A. Parker.
- 2
John Taylor, Thoughts On Missions, pamphlet, 1819, passim.
- 3
Sweet, The Baptists, pp. 68-70.
- 4
Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist (Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, Inc., 1983), p. 14.
- 5
Ibid., p. 15.
- 6
Tull, SBL, p. 86.
- 7
David Benedict, Fifty Years Among the Baptists (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1860), p. 126. Hereafter cited as Fifty Years.
- 8
Sweet, The Baptists, pp. 67-74.
- 9
The question of local church missionaries vs. board missionaries did not emerge as a real issue until after the Civil War in the "Gospel Mission Movement." Nevertheless, the anti-mission controversy did pose the question of authority.
- 10
Tull, SBL, p. 93.
- 11
James E. Tull, Shapers of Baptist Thought (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1972), pp. 101-105.
- 12
Alexander Campbell as quoted by Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, c. 1897), p. 460. Hereafter cited as Memoirs.
- 13
Alonzo Willard Fortune, The Disciples in Kentucky (The Convention of Christian Churches in Kentucky), p. 81.
- 14
Errett Gates, "The Early Relation and Separation of the Baptists and Disciples" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1904). See also Fortune, pp. 44-90 and Tull, SBL, pp. 90-124.
- 15
Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 20.
- 16
Ibid., pp. 80-81.
- 17
Ibid. Emphasis Campbell.

- 18 Alexander Campbell, The Christian System (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1980. Reprint from 1839, second edition), p. 42.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 349.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 349-350.
- 22 J. B. Jeter, Campbellism Examined (New York: Sheldon, Lamport and Blakeman, 1855), p. 115.
- 23 Walter Brownlow Posey, Religious Strife on the Southern Frontier (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 58.
- 24 John B. Boles, Religion in Antebellum Kentucky (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1976), p. 46.
- 25 ESB, s.v., "Howell, Robert Boyte Crawford," by Homer L. Grice.
- 26 Benedict, Fifty Years, p. 69.
- 27 Ibid., p. 70.
- 28 ESB, s.v., "Adoniram Judson," by Cal Guy.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 ESB, s.v., "Luther Rice," by Loulie Latimer Owens.
- 31 ESB, s.v., "Adoniram Judson," by Cal Guy.
- 32 ESB, s.v., "William Carey," by Herbert C. Jackson and Lynn E. May. Carey was professor of Bengali and Sanskrit languages in the Crown College, Fort Williams, of Calcutta for some 30 years.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 C. C. Bitting, Bible Societies and the Baptists (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1897), pp. 12-13.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid., p. 28.
- 37 Ibid., p. 14.
- 38 Thomas Armitage, The History of the Baptists; Traced by Their Vital Principles and Practices, from the Time of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Year 1886, 2 vols., (New York: Bryan, Taylor, and Co., 1887, reprint ed. Minneapolis, Mn.: James and Klock Christian Publishing Co., 1977), 2:893. Hereafter cited as History.

- 39 Ibid., p. 893.
- 40 Ibid., p. 894.
- 41 Bitting, Bible Societies and Baptists, p. 29.
- 42 W. H. Wycoff, The American Bible Society and the Baptists (New York: John Baker, 1841), pp. 1-4. Hereafter cited as ABS and Baptists.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 5-7.
- 44 Armitage, History, 2:895. Wycoff, ABS and the Baptists, pp. 7-9. Cone made no specific recommendation regarding the amount.
- 45 Bitting, Bible Societies and Baptists, p. 30.
- 46 Wycoff, ABS and the Baptists, pp. 79-110.
- 47 Armitage, History, 2:895.
- 48 Ibid., p. 899.
- 49 R. B. C. Howell, "Editorial," The Baptist, May 1836, II, No. 5, p. 258.
- 50 Ibid., p. 259.
- 51 R. B. C. Howell, "Editorial," The Baptist, II, No. 7, p. 290.
- 52 LeRoy Benjamin Hogue, "A Study of the Antecedent of Landmarkism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966), pp. 78-85.
- 53 See The Baptist, December 1839. See also ESB, "Western Recorder," Vol. 2, p. 1488-1489. Howell edited the Tennessee section of The Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer until the end of 1842. Howell began republishing The Baptist in 1844.
- 54 Linwood Tyler Horne, "A Study of the Life and Work of R. B. C. Howell," (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958), p. 201. Hereafter cited as R. B. C. Howell.
- 55 Ibid., p. 202.
- 56 Ibid., p. 203.
- 57 Ibid., pp. 203-204.
- 58 Ibid., p. 204.
- 59 Howell, The Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer, June 9, 1842, #23, Vol. IX, p. 41.

60

Ibid.

61

Ibid.

62

Horne, R. B. C. Howell, p. 204.

63

See Wamble's assessment, Ch. 1, p. 17.

64

Robert G. Torbet, "Landmarkism," from Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. Winthrop S. Hudson (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1958), p. 190.

65

Ibid., p. 193.

66

O. L. Hailey, J. R. Graves Life, Times and Teachings (Nashville: n. p., 1929), p. 55.

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