

(3) Current Setting

Parenthetical note: We will mention somewhat later that in all of these bodies there are groups that have objected to the inroads of modern unbelief and in some cases raised very effective opposition. For the moment we are tracking out the history of the intrusions.

(3) The Baptist Community

This is not so easily treated as there are many kinds of Baptist fellowships. In many of them the lack of a centrality of government allows moves away from the center--some good, some otherwise, some unchartered as yet. Our notes, therefore, look at the broader range of the Baptist community. And we can in no sense consider all of them or all of it.

(a) Historical note:

/1/ Reformation forebears: Early anabaptist leaders and concepts. One will note that the distinguishing factor in the bodies is not the concept of baptism but the concept of polity and arrangement of the church without hierarchy, etc.

/2/ The English Baptists:

An important distinction in the development of "Regular" and "General" Baptist bodies.

/3/ Doctrinal and confessional alignment:

As with the Congregational bodies, the Baptist fellowships tend to be anti-credal but usually rally around some milder form of credal entity. The best known documents in our work are the New Hampshire Confession and the Philadelphia Confession. But it is hard for any credal form to be evenly understood in non-credal bodies.

Accordingly, doctrinal alignment tends to be geared to personalities, issues and general scripture appeal.

/4/ In the Colonies: the triennial convention and a very large number of varied groups

/5/ Development of the various fellowships.

(b) The Northern Convention (a term we will use popularly in historic setting)

/1/ Problems in the Seminaries: Rauschenbush, Matthews, et al.