Revivals And Church History :: English Dissenters: Adamites

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Adamites were an early Christian heresy dating from the fourth century. As Adam and Eve were naked and without sin in Paradise, so too did later groups embrace a type of "holy" nudism. Various sects have embraced these attributes since the early Church: The Adamiani, a small Gnostic sect of the second and third centuries A.D.; in Roman Spain during the fourth and fifth century A.D.; the Turlupins of Medieval France ca. 1370's; and the Taborite's of Bohemia ca. 1640. Some Anabaptists were even accused of stripping their baptismal candidates before being immersed.

English Adamites
A small English radical sect active around London ca. 1641-1650. The sect probably bears antecedents to the Brethren of the Spirit, a medieval heretical sect sharing many of the same views. The Adamites were viewed on a contemporary basis as the archetypical radicals of the 1640's. Information about this sect is uncertain. The primary sources are contemporary writings of the period ca. 1641-1650. The first published reference to the Adamites date from mid-1641. The sect may have started by early 1641. Any organizational structure to this sect is questionable. Contemporary accounts have been attributed to nay sayers and critics. Bona fide information on this group is uncertain at best. The references begin to be stereotyped after 1643 in later publications. Specific knowledge of this group after 1650 is scarce.

Thomas Edward(1599-1647)used the term in his monumental work Gangraene(1646). Adamites as were other radicals of the period were portrayed as Antimonians. Antimonianism was the general belief that Moral Law was no longer binding on Man, and that those individuals were not responsible to a higher authority for their actions by virtue of being in a state of grace or perfection. Wanton and lewd behavior were generally ascribed to these groups. Anitnomianism became a common charge against the radical fringe. Adamites were attributed to be in a "divine state of grace" or religious perfectionism as were Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. They rejected most civil, moral and social restraints on their behavior. Individuals could regain their innocence by being unfettered of their clothing and the false modesty of Society, as the reasoning went.

Adamites reportedly held their meetings in private with their members in various forms of undress. There seems to be little evidence to support any public displays of nudity by Adamites, as were attributed to some latter radical groups. Contemporary drawing of the period generally show Adamites in the nude. These became stereotypical iconographic images used as propaganda of fear by their critics. Some contemporary accounts have alleged that this was a female dominated sect. Adamites behavior was often attributed to other radical groups. Among these were the Ranters, who exhibited some public "nakedness". Later Ranter images were often based on earlier Adamite iconography. Some early Quakers were also know to appear in public the all together. Not a great deal is know of these English Adamites except from their critics. Whether "straw men" , or just a few small isolated groups the Adamites probably existed, if only as a mere shadow of their contemporary accounts. The sect probably did not survive the Restoration (1660).