

## THE APOSTATES

More to be despised and feared than any outsiders were those who had been of the faith and had turned against their brethren. True, some simply fell away and were excommunicated for total inactivity. These were generally no more of a problem than the backslider. Some very few, however, were bitter and vengeful, allying themselves with the worst of the outsiders and posing a constant threat to the tranquility of the community and the integrity of the Church. Though they were relatively few in number, the fact that there was at least occasional reference to them throughout the ecclesiastical history of the settlement would indicate that their presence had some pragmatic effect.