

The New Testament Church

Nature Characteristics Perpetuity

W. R. Downing

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The New Testament Church
In 1981**

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the result of a series of lectures given to a Baptist congregation on Lord's Day evenings in 1981. These lectures were given so our Baptist people might be taught and brought again to the remembrance of our Baptist heritage and religious history. Our distinctives derive from the Scriptures, and in particular, the New Testament. Our history is neither Romish nor Protestant.

This material has been taken from lectures notes and put into readable form. The limits of space and time have not afforded the fullness and explanation of various scriptural passages and historical comments on persons and incidents which were given in the delivery of these lectures.

The first edition of this work was published in 1982 and has been widely distributed and translated into Spanish. This revised and enlarged edition is dated 2006. Some new material has been added and corrections made. Since the original publication, new materials have become available, although the older sources are still quoted at times through more recent authors, as they were in the first edition.

This work is re-issued without contention or apology, and with a love toward all who are willing to search the Word and the facts of history. May it assume a place of usefulness as a manual for teaching the nature, characteristics and perpetuity of a New Testament church and in helping further our Baptist convictions, which we believe, are faithful to and consistent with the teaching of God's Word and the facts of history.

W. R. Downing
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
2006

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PART I

THE NATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

...despise ye the church of God...?

1 Cor. 11:22

The word translated “despise” (καταφρονεῖτε) denotes “disdain,” “think down upon,” “think slightly of.” There are many, sadly, who seem to think lightly of church truth. The reasons are essentially three. The first is doctrinal. Many are content with traditional or established religious thinking concerning the church rather than a detailed, personal study of the Word of God. One’s spiritual pilgrimage ought to lead to an ever-deepening investigation, appreciation and application of all truth. The doctrine of the church should be no exception. The second reason is prejudicial. Many presuppose the traditional validity of the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory, and are therefore tempted to think slightly concerning the local assembly. Faithfulness to our Lord through the local church is central to Biblical obedience. The third is reason historical. Not a few are woefully ignorant of our spiritual heritage, a heritage steeped in the blood of martyrs. The untold millions who have given their life-blood for the truth of the Gospel suffered largely for what we consider church truth. The truth of Scripture and the witness of history must lead us to reconsider the doctrine of the New Testament Church.

CHAPTER I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM “CHURCH”

The word “church” as it occurs in the English language is capable of many meanings. It may denote a building, the congregation or assembly that meets in that building, a religious organization or denomination of national or world-wide scope, or the sum total of all true believers. This variety of uses has given rise to misconceptions as to the true nature of the New Testament Church. Distinction must be made between the historical or ecclesiastical use and the grammatical or biblical use of the term.

THE TERM “CHURCH” AS USED HISTORICALLY AND ECCLESIASTICALLY

The accepted usage of the word “church” differs widely from the biblical concept in several areas. There are at least four commonly accepted uses, and three, at least, are non-biblical.

The first and perhaps most common use considers the church as a building. As Christianity spread across the Roman Empire, and State hostilities ended in the time of Constantine (313 AD), buildings were set aside for worship. These buildings were designated as κυριακου, “of, or belonging to the Lord.” This term, denoting a place rather than a gathered group or assembly, is the source of the English “Church.” This word in turn was derived from the Middle English Chirche, or Kirk. The derivative idea of κυριακου is also noted in the Scottish *Kirk*, the German *Kirche* and the Swedish *Kyrka*. Thus, from at least early in the fourth century onward the term “church” would also denote the building and not only the assembled people.

The second non-biblical use, generally accepted and very common to refer to any religious organization or denomination as a church (e.g., The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, etc.). These organizations with their sessions, consistories, Presbyteries, Synods and Councils are religious, but are not “churches” in the biblical use of the term.

The third use is in reference to the supposed “Mystical Body Christ,” “The One True Church,” “Universal, Invisible Church” or “Kingdom of God,” which is at once composed of the sum total of the elect, or all true believers, at any given time. To refer to such a supposed entity as a “church” lacks proper biblical support.

The fourth use of the term “church” is in accord with the New Testament usage of the term ἐκκλησία which denotes an assembly or a gathered group, a congregation. This is the common word used in the New Testament for “church.” Such a retention of the true meaning is found in the Spanish *Iglesia* and the French *l’Eglise*.

THE TERM “CHURCH” AS USED GRAMMATICALLY AND BIBLICALLY

The term ἐκκλησία, commonly translated “church” was a common word in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century. A thorough investigation of its use in the New Testament reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles did not use it in a unique or uncommon way, but according to the *usus loquendi*, i.e., common usage of the language of that era.

A grammatical study of the word yields the following: ἐκκλησία is derived from the preposition ἐκ, “out of,” and καλέω, “call.” (Compare with the verb ἐκκαλέω, “to call out or forth.”) The word denotes an assembly of citizens called out to a public meeting, an assembly of Christians gathered for worship. This word occurs as follows in the Scriptures:

- ἐκκλησία occurs 115 times in the Greek New Testament. (The Critical Text omits τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ in Acts 2:47, giving a total of 114 occurrences).
- It is used to denote a Christian assembly or “church” 111 times (110 times in the Critical text).
- Three times the word refers to a town meeting of citizens (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).
- Once it denotes Israel as an assembly or congregation in the wilderness (Acts 7:38).
- In Acts 19:37 “robbers of churches” is literally “temple robbers,” ἱεροσύλους. In this text there is absolutely no reference to any ἐκκλησία whatsoever. The English mistranslation only serves to prove the strong influence of κυριακὸν a place or building, upon the idea of a “church.”
- The term occurs in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) 114 times. In every case it is the translation of the Hebrew word *qahal* [קהל], a congregation or assembly.

NOTE: For further study, see Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 195–196; Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon*, pp. 138–139; Arndt-Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 240–241; Liddel & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 509; *Englishman's Greek Concordance*, pp. 227–228; Moulton & Geden, *Concordance to the Greek Testament*, pp. 316–317; Hatch & Redpath,

Concordance to the Septuagint, I, p. 433; Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, III, pp. 501–536; B. H. Carroll, *Ecclesia—The Church*.

The term “church” as it is used biblically may be categorized into three aspects: local, institutional and eschatological.

- The “local” use of the term denotes a local assembly or congregation. This is the primary usage. This is referred to as the “concrete” or “particular” use of the word “church.”
- The “institutional” use of the word, also called the “abstract” or “generic” use, denotes the church as an institution in society. An example of this is the abstract or generic use of the term “jury.” The “jury” is a legal institution in society. The term is abstract until one particularizes it to refer to a certain “jury,” a jury that is local, visible, concrete, operational. It is likewise with the generic or abstract terms “the man” and the “the woman” in 1 Cor. 11:3, or “the husband” and “the wife” in Eph. 5:23. In this sense the New Testament mentions “the Church” institutionally, abstractly, or generically (e.g., Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 29, 32; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Tim. 3:15). This use is especially noted in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. This institutional, ideal, abstract or generic use of the term stands opposed to the supposition of a “Universal, Invisible Church” theory.
- The “eschatological” use of the term might also be called the “prospective” use. This refers to the church in glory, the “General Assembly” which will be composed of all the elect of all ages to be gathered or assembled in the future. This assembly or “church” does not yet exist as functional, but is yet “prospective” (e.g., Eph. 5:27; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 21:2).

The New Testament Church is not properly a building, a religious organization in a denominational sense, nor a “universal, invisible” body. It is, rather, the God-ordained institution for this economy that finds expression in local, visible assemblies of baptized believers, bound together by the Word of God for the proclamation of the Gospel and the edification of its membership. The church in glory will be composed of all the elect of all ages gathered or assembled as one final, festive “General Assembly,” glorified and complete. This final church will be both local and visible.

NOTE: for further study, see B. H. Carroll, *Ecclesia—The Church*; Willard A. Ramsey, *The Nature of the New Testament Church on Earth*; J. B. Moody, *My Church*; J. B. Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*.

CHAPTER II

THE SCRIPTURAL METAPHORS USED FOR THE CHURCH

Figurative language or the use of metaphors to emphasize certain aspects of truth is basic to human thought. Figurative language, however, is liable to misinterpretation. It must be remembered that the metaphor is derived from the truth; the truth is not derived from the metaphor. Failure to comprehend this principle has resulted in oftentimes grotesque misinterpretation of Scripture. As figurative language is used to illustrate certain truths, it must be asked why the particular metaphor and what in the metaphor corresponds to the truth being illustrated. There are three figures used in Scripture for the church: a building, a body and a bride.

THE CHURCH AS A BUILDING

Although the word “church” denotes the assembly and not the building or place where the assembly meets, the New Testament does use the figure of a building to describe the church. (See Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9–17; Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Tim. 3:14–16; 1 Pet. 2:5.) This metaphor emphasizes at least four aspects of the church. First, there is emphasis upon the builder, who is the Lord Jesus Christ through the labors of the Gospel ministry. A second emphasis is on the foundation of the church, i.e., the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in and through the ordinance of preaching. Third, there is consideration given to the materials of the church, converts, “living stones,” who manifest the evidences of saving grace and converted lives. Finally, there is thought given to the occupant of the church, the Holy Spirit, who resides not only in believers individually, but in a certain sense in believers corporately in a given church. The figure of a building, then, derives from the consideration given to these truths. Under the figure of a building the church is to be considered either institutionally (e.g., Matt. 16:18) or locally (e.g., 1 Cor. 3:9–17).

NOTE: Such a metaphor for the supposed “Universal, Invisible Church” would be senseless, a building yet unconstructed and unassembled, or at best, unseen.

THE CHURCH AS A BODY

Allusions to the church as a body are given in Rom. 12:4–5; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Eph. 1:22–23; 3:6; 4:4, 11–16; 5:28–32; Col. 1:18. Why is such a figure used? First, to emphasize the organic, vital unity of the church. The members of the local assembly have a relationship to one another much the same as the various members or parts of the human body. There is to be harmony of function, unity in caring and sympathizing with each other, demonstrating a unified life—principle (see Phil. 1:27, “with one mind” is $\mu\iota\acute{\alpha}\ \psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, “with one soul”). A second reason is to emphasize the one, unifying life—principle and true motivating force of the church—the Holy Spirit. He is the One who works throughout the various members of the body to coordinate, sustain and unify the life—functions of the church. The final reason is to impress upon the minds of believers the sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of all life and direction, the center of command.

What is the nature of this body or church? This figure can be used very satisfactorily of both the local and institutional aspects of the church, i.e., a local assembly and the church in the abstract or generic sense. For instance, 1Cor. 12:12–27 refers only to the local body or church at Corinth. This passage stresses the unity, harmony and unified principle of life that is to exist in the local assembly. Verses 25–26 emphasize that when one member suffers, all suffer with it, implying an organic unity. There may be untold multitudes suffering throughout the world who are believers, united to Christ, but not members of that local assembly. Is there that conscious, knowledgeable sympathy that exists in the local body? Of course not! In verse 27 the apostle refers to the Corinthian assembly as “a body of Christ.” ($\acute{\upsilon}\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\ \sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$, or the anarthrous use of $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$, in this case necessitates the insertion of the indefinite article “a”) This means that the Corinthian assembly was a body or entity complete in itself.

There arise several objections to this concept of the church as a local or generic body. These derive from the theory of a “Universal, Invisible Church.”

It has been objected that if the above interpretation be true, there must by necessity be many “bodies of Christ.” No. Each local assembly is a representative body, a concrete expression of the church as an institution, i.e., the church in the abstract or generic sense.

Another objection arises from 1 Cor. 12:13, which is meant to teach that all believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the “universal body of Christ.” The whole issue of the baptism of the Holy Spirit will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. For the present, note that the reading ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι (in one Spirit) has a more primary rendering of “in” rather than “by.” The reading εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν (into one body we have been baptized) with the aorist verb can be argued to refer to the baptism by the Holy Spirit that occurred at Pentecost upon the New Testament church as an institution, a past, singular event.

Finally, it is objected that the mystical union of every believer in Christ is synonymous with the corporate entity known as the “universal, invisible church.” Although each true believer is united to Christ by faith and “in Christ” positionally, it does not necessarily follow that such union a corporate manifestation or forms a corporate entity that could in any sense be called a “church.” Under the figure of a “body,” the “Universal, Invisible Church” would be a dismembered body, with members living and dead, scattered abroad, or an assembly unassembled. Only in the future church, the “General Assembly,” will the entire body of the redeemed be gathered together in glory. This future assembly will then be both local and visible. The metaphor of a body is most incompatible with any concept of the church other than local or institutional.

THE CHURCH AS A BRIDE

The church is presented in the New Testament under the figure of a “bride” (see Jn. 3:28–30; Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2; 5:22–27; Rev. 19:7–9; 21:2, 9–10). It is common to hear or read of the church referred to as the “Bride of Christ.” This term appears nowhere in Scripture verbatim. It has been assumed from combining a number of similar texts. Because of this, some teach that Israel is the “bride” while the “Church” is the “body” of Christ, combining certain Old Testament Scriptures with those of the New. Such thinking is a warning to those who would infer too much from figurative language or typology.

There are great, even insurmountable, obstacles in the figurative language to make the New Testament Church the “Bride of Christ” at this time. Some Scripture refers believers as united to Christ as “chaste virgins,” i.e., doctrinal purity, uncorrupted by a false Gospel or “another Jesus” (see 2 Cor. 11:1–4). Other Scriptures view the believer or church as already united to Christ in marriage i.e., as “one flesh” with Him. (See Eph. 5:23, 29–32). Another passage refers to believers being married to Christ already and “raising up fruit” from that relationship—a figure based on children as the fruit of a marriage relationship! (See Rom. 7:4). Yet other passages view the marriage as yet future. (See Rev. 19:7–9; 21:1–3). A final Scripture anticipates the presentation of the church to the Lord perfected and glorified at the consummation! (See Eph. 5:25–27). Such shifting in figurative concepts should serve as a caution to any who would dogmatically hold the church as the “Bride of Christ” at this present time. It is best to consider the “bride” as the church in glory, the church in an eschatological sense, perfected, glorified and ready to enter into eternal bliss with her Lord. This would explain the use of the figure. It connotes final, full separation from all and everyone else unto her Beloved, purity, and the entrance into the fullness of

wedded bliss. The marriage feast with its decoration and adornment suggests the saints glorified and perfected.

The three basic metaphors—building, body and bride—used for the New Testament church are meant to emphasize certain aspects of its nature and character. These figures are quite in accord with the Scriptural uses of the term “church,” viz., local, institutional and eschatological. None of these metaphors would be consistent with the theory of a “universal, invisible” church.

CHAPTER III

THE “UNIVERSAL, INVISIBLE CHURCH” THEORY

It is commonly assumed by many that all true believers together constitute the “One True Church,” the “Bride of Christ,” the “Universal, Invisible Church.” Some presuppose such a theory because of religious teaching and tradition; others assume this theory from ignorance or lack of personal investigation; still others accept this view for the sake of convenience; finally, some receive such teaching as an integral part of Reformed theology. It is, however, the studied opinion of others that such a concept of the church is founded upon non-biblical and un-scriptural principles.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THIS THEORY

The philosophy that formed the basis for a universal, invisible church derived from Plato (c. 428–348 BC). Platonic philosophy considered certain general truths or concepts to be immutable. This was the theory of “Forms.” These “forms” or “ideas” were immutable truths, spiritual realities that existed in the real, immaterial or spiritual realm. The material world consisted of the imperfect reflections of these deals or “forms.” Thus, inherent in Platonic thought was a dualistic concept of the universe. In the Graeco–Roman civilization of the first century AD, a revival of Platonic thought occurred. This Neoplatonism was manifestly dualistic, separating sharply the spiritual or immaterial from the material or physical. Such Neoplatonic philosophy became the basis for Gnosticism, and through Gnostic heresy, entered the ranks of Christianity.

Gnosticism was an admixture of Neoplatonic dualism, Eastern mysticism, Judaism and apostate Christianity. The word itself is derived from the term γνῶσις, “knowledge.” This philosophic–religious movement sought to refine Christianity into an intellectual philosophy, a cult of secret “wisdom.” Gnosticism held that the material universe was inherently sinful. Between the “Logos,” or eternal life–principle and creation were many “aeons,” or spirit–beings. One of the lesser of these aeons (the “Demiurge”) created matter and, therefore, imperfection. The aeons then put all their powers (i.e., “fullness,” a technical Gnostic term) upon the man Jesus to redeem humanity from the evil of matter. Salvation was then through “knowledge,” not through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Traces of incipient Gnostic thought are probably the cause of some New Testament warnings and admonitions. Cerinthian Gnosticism, which denied the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, doubtless called forth the Prologue to the Gospel according to John. (See Jn. 1:1–18). Note especially the terms “Word” (λόγος) and “fullness” (πλήρωμα), both technical Gnostic terms. Docetic Gnosticism, which denied the true humanity of the Lord Jesus was a major reason behind the writing of 1 John. (See 1 Jn. 1:1–3; 2:22–23; 4:1–3). The relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to the created universe and as the consummation of all

knowledge, as contrasted with human philosophy, reflects an apology against incipient Gnostic error. (See Col. 1:15–20; 2:2–9). Gnostic asceticism, borrowed in part from Judaism, may be the cause of writing Col. 2:20–23. The Epistle of Jude and 2 Peter Chapter 2 both reveal the entrance of such tendencies in the churches. Such thinking and teaching either led to severe asceticism or gross self-indulgence and immorality. The former tendency derived from belief in the inherent evil of matter, leading to a denial or neglect of the body and its lawful functions and needs; the latter derived from separating the material from the immaterial to such an extent that the spirit was free from sin while the body indulged in it. (See 1 Jn. 1:8; 3:4–10; 2 Pet. 2:1–22; Jude 3–25).

Neoplatonic philosophy in the form of Gnosticism was perhaps the single greatest threat to the vitality of Christianity in the second and third centuries. Indeed, the influence of Neoplatonic thought has never been eradicated from the nature of traditional Christianity. The mysticism (i.e., “other-worldliness”), monasticism (escaping from the world with its materialism), and asceticism (denial and neglect of the body and materialism) of early and Medieval traditional Christianity can be traced directly to the pervading influence of Neoplatonism. Modern, Evangelical Christianity with its legalism (“touch not, taste not, handle not” philosophy of the inherent evil of certain food and drink), “carnal Christian” heresy, and the idea that the believer has within him both the “old man” and the “new man” also betray a strong, traditional, historic Neoplatonic influence. The Neoplatonic contrast between the material and immaterial, spiritual and physical, exists most strongly in the Protestant distinction between the “Universal, Invisible Church” (i.e., the ideal, the true, the pure church composed of all the elect who are truly regenerate) and the “visible church” (i.e., the imperfect reflection of the true ideal, composed of both saved and unsaved).

With the entrance of such humanistic philosophy in the second and third centuries, the degeneration of many of the churches and the beginnings of baptismal regeneration, some of the church fathers began to make a distinction between the spiritual or invisible church, composed of only saved persons, and the visible church, which was a composite of both saved and unsaved members. Thus, an inherent Neoplatonic influence exists in the concept of the church that admits unsaved persons, or at least unconverted persons, into membership.

During the first three centuries (100–313 AD) there occurred a constant corruption of the New Testament truth of the church. Many churches departed from the New Testament pattern and a principle of ecclesiasticism permeated much of professing Christianity. The hierarchy progressed during this time from the local pastor or bishop to a parochial bishop who trained men for the ministry. The influence of such a man became in time so great that this lead gradually to the monarchical bishop and ultimately to the metropolitan bishop, who held power over a large geographical area. With this ecclesiasticism, coupled with an incipient sacerdotalism i.e., salvation by priestly manipulation of the sacraments), an entire and drastically different concept of the church arose. When the Emperor Constantine united the church to the State (313–325 AD), there was brought into existence an ecclesiastical hierarchy that centered largely in the bishop of Rome. With the union of Church and State, the rule of both became co-extensive. Both claimed all peoples within their geographical boundaries. Citizenship and church membership were thus made co-extensive. The church was no longer a local assembly, a *corpus Christi* (i.e., the body of Christ, composed of saved individuals), but a *corpus mixtum* (i.e., a mixed body of both saved and unsaved) or a *corpus*

Christianum (i.e., the body of Christendom, or all who had been baptized or Christened and so identified both with the church and the state). The term “catholic,” which originally meant that which was universally accepted as true (referring primarily to the canon of Scripture and to sound doctrine), was now applied to the religious hybrid formed by the union of church and state. It was the “Catholic” (i.e., universal) Church that existed visibly in every place where there was a priest to manipulate the sacraments. This sacralist concept of the church would continue until the Protestant Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation was a reformation of the Church of Rome, and much of Romanism never left Protestantism. The very term “Reformed” presupposes historically that the source was Rome. Paedobaptism was retained in Protestantism and modified. The concept of the church as a *corpus mixtum* or *corpus Christianum* was still retained. In the place of the old Constantinianism of Rome that unified the Church and State, the Reformers instituted a neo-Constantinianism with its sacralist view of a society or community held together by a common religious loyalty. There was one area of truth, however, that changed the concept of the church. That area was a revival of the doctrine of grace. The truths of justification by faith and the reality of salvation by grace (although obscured to a great degree by Protestant Covenant Theology) necessitated a distinction between the “visible church” of Protestantism and the truth of the New Testament church.

The Reformers were halfway between Rome and the New Testament, as it were. Their churches, on the basis of their own neo-Constantinian principle and their Covenant Theology, were composed necessarily of both saved and unsaved; the New Testament taught a regenerate church membership. Thus, the necessity arose to distinguish between the “Universal, Invisible Church,” composed of all the elect or truly saved and the “visible church,” composed of a mixture of saved and unsaved, the imperfect reflection of the ideal. The Protestant Reformation was a revival of the old Neoplatonic concept of a dualistic church.

Through the hermeneutic of Dispensationalism the theory of a “Universal, Invisible Church” has permeated evangelical and much of Fundamental Christianity. Thus, within Reformed ranks and among Evangelical and most Fundamental groups, this theory is accepted almost without question as biblical truth.

THE INCONSISTENCY OF THIS THEORY WITH THE ETYMOLOGY AND GRAMMATICAL USE OF THE WORD

The theory of a “Universal, Invisible” church is inconsistent with the etymology of the word “church” (ἐκκλησία) and its grammatical use in the New Testament. The derivation of the word, as noted in Chapter One, is from ἐκ, “out of” and καλέω, “to call.” Thus, the term ἐκκλησία in both secular and biblical usage denoted a called-out group or assembly. This essential definition was true whether it referred to an assembly of Greek citizens or an assembly of believers in a New Testament context. The Lord and His apostles did not use this term in a new or unique sense. The only distinctions between the assembly in Graeco-Roman society and a Christian assembly were in the purpose of meeting and the requirements for membership. The words “church” and “assembly” are therefore synonymous. It is, therefore, essential for a “church” to “church” before it can be a “church”! That is, an “assembly” must “assemble” before it can be an “assembly.” A “church” which has never assembled or met together in an organized fashion and for a

specific purpose, never having been functional, would certainly not be a “church” in the scriptural sense.

Those who hold to a “Universal, Invisible Church” theory refer to the church as the “called-out ones,” i.e., those called out of the world and so composing the mystical body of Christ, His bride or “true church.” This designation makes the church synonymous with the “called ones” (οἱ κλητοί), a common New Testament name for believers. The New Testament, however, does not consider believers as “out of this world,” but rather “in this world,” although not “of this world” (Jn. 17:11, 14–16). This use of ἐκκλησία as equivalent to being “called out of the world” is quite contrary to any legitimate or known use of the word (which necessitates not only “called out,” but implies a meeting of those “called out”), and echoes Neoplatonic thought.

The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament), as previously noted, uses ἐκκλησία in the *usus loquendi* for קהל [qahal], an assembly. Dr. John F. Walvoord, himself a strong adherent of the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory states concerning this term:

Qahal, when translated *ekklesia*, is always used in reference to an assembly or meeting of some description in one locality, i.e., a physical assembly, and the word is never used to represent the idea of a mystic company of saints joined in a spiritual way, though scattered geographically.¹

This common usage, it may be equally argued on etymological, grammatical and exegetical grounds, is likewise true of the New Testament.

John Murray, late Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, and an erudite biblical theologian, wrote in an article, “The Church: Its Definition in Terms of ‘Visible’ and ‘Invisible’ Invalid,” makes the following statements:

It has been common to make a sharp distinction between the church visible and the church invisible and with this distinction to apply definitions by which the differentiation can be maintained. This position calls for examination in the light of Scripture.

...The distinction between the church visible and the church invisible is not well-grounded in terms of Scripture. and the abuses to which the distinction has been subjected require correction.

...When Christ said to Peter: “Upon this Rock will build My church,” the investiture of the succeeding verse shows that the church is something to be administered upon earth. It is not an invisible entity but one in which ministry is exercised.

...There are those aspects pertaining to the church that may be characterized as invisible. But it is to “the church” those aspects pertain, and “the church” in the New Testament never appears as an invisible entity and therefore may never be defined in terms of invisibility. This is why...the advisability of the use of the term ‘invisible’ has been questioned. It is a term that is liable to be loaded with the misconceptions inherent in the concept “invisible church,” and tends to support the abuses incident thereto.²

Although Mr. Murray saw a “universal” aspect to the church and was by no means exclusively “local church” in his thinking, he nevertheless saw the inherent errors in the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory.

¹ John F. Walvoord. *The Church in Prophecy*, p. 18.

² John Murray, *Collected Writings*, I., pp. 231–234.

There are certain grammatical necessities, scriptural qualities and various other incidentals characteristic and necessary to a New Testament assembly. If an assembly has never assembled, if it cannot be functional or operational, if it has no purpose and no active members, then it can be seriously questioned whether such an entity exists! A “Universal, Invisible Church” could have:

- No address or location, yet every church in the New Testament was located at a particular place (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:2).
- No pastor, elders or spiritual leadership that was functional or operational.
- No deacons or property, no distributions or administrative activity that is inherent in the very nature of a New Testament church.
- No organization, yet every church by virtue of its nature must have some organization, i.e., membership, leadership. Without some basic functional organization, there is properly no church.
- No active membership and so no functional or practical purpose within the body. Imagine a church with only an “inactive membership list.” Some, at least, hold tenaciously to such a theory because it relieves them of their biblical responsibility to the local assembly.
- No treasurer, no administration, no giving, no distributing to the necessity of the saints.
- No preaching, yet the ordinance of preaching is the primary Gospel ordinance of the New Testament church! No teaching for edification.
- No prayer meetings, indeed, no prayer at all. Imagine an ideal “church” totally without prayer.
- No commission, yet the New Testament as an institution, manifest in every local assembly has been given the great responsibility of the “Great Commission” (See Matt. 28:18–20).
- No missionary, indeed, no Gospel effort whatsoever. Every true Gospel church is missionary by its very nature.
- No ordination because of no need or purpose for leadership, yet it is found that “they ordained them elders in every church” (Acts 14:23).
- No discipline, yet discipline is essential in principle for any true New Testament church.
- No responsibility, to one’s self or to anyone else. No care. No sympathy. No relationship to others as is true in the essential nature of any church (1 Cor. 12:26).
- No business meetings because of no business to discuss and no one with which to discuss any business. The Jerusalem church held a business meeting before Pentecost (Acts 1:15–26).
- No function, nothing operational or actual.
- No worship, yet worship is to be a primary exercise and purpose for every church.
- No singing, yet every God-ordained institution—The Tabernacle, Solomon’s Temple and the New Testament churches all engaged in singing. The Church in glory will sing.

- No purpose.
- No name, yet every church is identified by a name and a location.
- No assembling, and thus, no church.

Believers are united to Christ by faith, but such a union finds absolutely no expression or corporate entity as a church.

THE INCONSISTENCY OF THIS THEORY WITH REDEMPTIVE HISTORY

There are two prevalent theories of the history of the church. The first is that the church began in the Old Testament with the Hebrews. The New Testament church, according to this view, is but a continuation of the “Jewish Church.” The second theory is that the church began at Pentecost and will continue until the “Rapture.” Both theories attribute, in the context of their respective advocates, qualities to the New Testament church that are unscriptural.

The concept of the New Testament church as a continuation of an Old Testament “Jewish Church” is largely the view held by Reformed Theology and Churches. The Old Testament seems to hold an unprecedented position in traditional Reformed thinking. There is a pervading principle in traditional Reformed theology that permeates the historic Protestant concept of the church, the relationship between church and state, civil government, church membership, baptism and worship. This inherent principle, as contrasted with Baptist thinking, may be stated as follows:

Traditional Reformed Christianity essentially stands in the Old Testament and looks at the New Testament through Old Testament eyes. Baptist Christianity stands in the New Testament and looks at the Old Testament through New Testament eyes.

It is from such a position that the Protestant Reformation established, not indigenous, autonomous congregations of believers after the New Testament pattern, but rather State and National religious organizations to maintain a sacralist society. The Old Testament gave the pattern for Protestants to consider the civil magistrate as an “arm of the church” for the punishment of “heretics” and their extermination. It is in this principle that one finds the source of Covenant Theology and the supposed relationship between baptism and circumcision. From such a presupposition traditional Reformed churches bring unsaved persons into their membership through infant baptism. Thus, as with Israel under the Old Covenant, the church in traditional Reformed thinking is to be a corpus mixtum of both saved and unsaved. It is, then, this same principle which caused a retreat to a Neoplatonic, dualistic concept of the church in terms of “invisible” and “visible.”³

Was there a “Jewish Church” in the Old Testament? When the Israelites formed a company in the wilderness in the years of their wanderings, they were an assembly. (See the proper designation of ἐκκλησία as used in Acts 7:38, which should have been translated as “assembly” rather than “church”). This assembly was not in character nor in relationship to the New Testament, a church. The Hebrews in the Old Testament were nationally, both saved and unsaved, a covenant people. The term to describe such a people is not “church,”

³ See Appendix I, “Covenant Theology.”

but rather, technically, a *groepsverbandgodsdiens*.⁴ This describes a group of people bound together by religious, racial and social distinctives. Such a term is inherent in the concept of a sacralist society, a society necessarily held together by a common religious loyalty.

The national religious life and organization of the Old Testament Hebrews were fitted for a sacralist society, not for the composite society of the New Testament, which would make a sharp distinction between saved and unsaved, and between those who were in the fellowship of New Testament churches and those who were not.

The New Testament church is not built upon a supposed “Old Testament Jewish Church,” but rather upon the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and in and through Him, the activity of the Gospel and personal faith. In Matt. 16:18, Christ stated “My Church,” implying a distinctly new institution. The play on words in the Greek, ‘Πέτρος... ταύτη, τῇ πετρᾷ’, well apply to the Lord Himself as the “bedrock” upon which the church is built. See also 1 Cor. 3:10–11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4–7, and statements that the New Testament church is a new entity, hidden in the past, but revealed in the New Testament as a great “mystery” e.g., Eph. 3. These distinctions between the Old Testament national religious organization of Israel and the New Testament Church are evident. These distinctions are essentially spiritual, not merely racial, social or civil. Membership in the New Testament church is individual, not based upon family or blood relationship. (See Gen. 17:10–14 for the Old Testament significance of circumcision). The principle of salvation in the New Testament, however, is emphatically personal and individual. See Jn. 1:12–13. Note that “not of blood,” οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, [plural], refers to genealogy or family descent. The “children of believers” have no saving priority or infallible grace before God. The New Testament pattern for membership is given in Acts 2:41–42. Personal salvation or conversion is prerequisite for baptism, and both are prerequisite for church membership. The covenant–sign of circumcision (given only to the males among the Hebrews and their slaves without exception on the basis of blood relation or ownership) has been replaced by true circumcision, i.e., circumcision of the heart, or regeneration. (See Jn. 1:13; Rom. 2:28–29; Col. 2:11–13). Those fitted to be members in a New Testament fellowship are only those who evidence regenerating grace. Worship in the New Testament centers in the ministry of the Word rather than in ritual observance. The Old Testament order and ritual were typical (i.e., types), preparatory, and found their completion and reality in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. His church is a new and distinct entity, not merely the pouring of “new wine” into the “old wineskins” of Jewish national religious life and organization. The racial and household distinctions (i.e., children and slaves) of the old economy have been set aside. Personal faith unites to Christ in whom “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ.” (See Gal. 3:28).

Inherent in the concept of a Protestant Church, composed of both saved and unsaved after an Old Testament pattern, was the necessary distinction between the imperfect “visible” church and ideal or perfect “invisible” church.

⁴ A Dutch term used by Leonard Verduin to describe a sacralist society.

The second theory, that the New Testament Church began on the day of Pentecost (commonly referred to as the “birthday of the church”) and will continue until the “Rapture,” is largely the concept of Dispensational Theology. Inherent in such thinking is the advent of the Holy Spirit at that event. (See Acts 2:1–4). With this unique incident, hailed as the beginning of the “dispensation of the Spirit” and the “dispensation of the church” or “Church Age,” everyone who exercised saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ from that moment on was “baptized” into the (mystical) “body of Christ,” the “true” or “universal, invisible church.” This view gives great prominence to the church as a “universal, invisible” entity, and, true to its Neoplatonic derivation, usually gives the local assembly (as being secondary and the imperfect reflection) a position of secondary importance. It has already been demonstrated that the New Testament church, manifest in every local New Testament assembly, is neither universal nor invisible. It now remains to offer proof that the institution of the New Testament church was established by the Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. This institutional church, manifest in a local assembly composed of our Lord and His disciples in prototype, was not only existent, but functional before the day of Pentecost. Before Pentecost the New Testament church had the following:

- They had the Gospel (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:18–20).
- They had been converted (Jn. 6:67–69).
- They were baptized (Matt. 3:6; Acts 1:22). It has been objected on the ground of Acts 19:1–7 that John’s baptism was not Christian baptism. It should be noted that John baptized only repentant (and in this context of his mission, converted) individuals. His baptism was the only baptism that the Lord or His disciples ever received. With reference to Acts 19:1–7 it should be remembered that every recorded message of John emphasized the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (See Matt. 3:1–3, 7–12; Mk. 1:1–8; Lk. 3:2–18; Jn. 1:32–33.) If these men at Ephesus had been under John’s ministry long enough to have heard his message and become his converts, they would have been taught concerning the Holy Spirit. It is a valid conclusion that John did not baptize them. Further, when Mark opened his Gospel record, he began by stating, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” and immediately began with the ministry of the Baptist! Peter did likewise in Acts 1:15–26 (see v. 21–22) when the Jerusalem church sought to find a replacement for Judas in obedience to Scripture.
- They had the Lord Jesus Christ for their Head (Matt. 23:8).
- They had church discipline (Matt. 18:15–17).
- They were ordained (Matt. 10:1–5; Jn. 15:16). They were set apart by the Lord for their specific ministry.
- They had their commission (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15). This was given to the church as an institution, composed of the disciples (and possibly others, see 1 Cor. 15:6) as a representative assembly.
- They were organized sufficient for their needs. Christ was their Head and teacher. They had a treasurer. Although Judas was unconverted, his spiritual condition was not suspected by any but the Lord, Who kept him that the Scriptures might be

fulfilled. The unique position of Judas does not set aside the spiritual qualifications of a regenerate church membership.

- They were missionary in character (Matt. 10:1–5; 28:19).
- They had a teaching ministry (Matt. 28:18–20; Jn. 21:15–17).
- They had Divine authority (Matt. 18–20; Jn. 20:21–22).
- They possessed the essentials of church life (Matt. 28:19–20).
- They had qualified pastors (Jn. 15:16; Jn. 21:15–17).
- They observed the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:26–28).
- They possessed the Holy Spirit (Jn. 20:22).
- They held prayer meetings (Acts 1:12–14).
- They had a definite church membership (Acts 1:15). The wording implies a definite membership roll, an organized church membership.
- They held a business meeting (Acts 1:15–26). It has been objected that they acted without the Holy Spirit (Who, according to such a theory, did not begin the church until Pentecost) and consequently God did not own their choice of Matthias to replace Judas, for he is never mentioned again. This may be answered by the following: nothing is heard concerning many of the other original disciples whom the Lord Himself chose. But Matthias is mentioned in the context of the other original disciples. In Acts 2:14 Peter stood together with (σὺν) the eleven. In Acts 6:1–2, “The Twelve” is a technical term which designates the original disciples as being in a position of authority, and Matthias is the last of that number.

Thus, it should be clearly seen that the New Testament church, expressed in the local assembly meeting at Jerusalem, was actual and functional before Pentecost.

THE “GENERAL ASSEMBLY” AND THE PRESENT NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

In defense of the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory it is claimed that all believers are already identified with, or members of “the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” (See Heb. 12:18–24.) This entity, it is supposed, is composed of all the truly elect or saved and is therefore synonymous with the “universal, invisible church.” It is further supposed that this entity is presently in existence in its entirety. There are at least seven objections against identifying the “general assembly and church of the firstborn” with a “universal, invisible church.”

First, the tense used (v. 18, οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε...; v. 22, ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε; i.e., perf.) does not necessitate a present or abiding existence of such an entity, but rather stresses a present or abiding relationship of believers to the covenant of grace centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Mediator. Believers are related to the “grace-covenant,” not the “law-covenant” construed with the externals of the Mosaic economy. (See the same imagery in Gal. 4:21–31 and the metaphorical references to “Hagar” and “Sarah”). Such an interpretation is quite in harmony with both the immediate context (Heb. 12:1–29) and the larger context of the entire epistle. Believers, having such a relationship,

are not to be slack, but rather persevering with utmost reverence and grace (Heb. 12:18, 22–24, 28–29).

Second, the “general assembly” is identified with the “heavenly Jerusalem.” This language refers to the church in glory (Rev. 19:7–9; 21:1–3). It is quite within the harmony of this passage to refer this to the eschatological church, or the church in prospect.

Third, the term “general assembly” (πανήγυρις, from πᾶν, “all” and ἀγείρω “assemble, gather together, collect, accumulate”) is distinct from “church” (ἐκκλησία). The “general assembly” in the *usus loquendi* denoted the great public, festive gathering of the Greek peoples from all the city-states or any great public, festive gathering for celebration (used for the public or Olympic games). As construed with “the heavenly Jerusalem” and other significant terms in the immediate context, the “general assembly” very adequately and appropriately describes the festive occasion of the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (to use biblical metaphor), or the great final and complete gathering of the elect of all ages as the “bride” or church in glory.

Fourth, the New Testament church on earth is imperfect, as it is composed of imperfect, still-sinners. Further, not every member of every New Testament church is truly regenerated because of human imperfection and liability in knowledge or discernment—not because of church policy. The “general assembly,” however, will not only be composed solely of those who are truly regenerate, but each one will then be glorified, and among the “just men made perfect.”

Fifth, the qualification for entrance into that “general assembly” is perfection or glorification—a future certainty, not a present reality.

Sixth, when the “general assembly” is convened, the New Testament church will have passed away with its respective economy. (See Rev. 21:1–4). There will be a new “church” for a new economy. The church in glory will need no regeneration, preaching, baptism, discipline, business, etc. These characteristics belong to the present economy, not that of the future. Each God-ordained institution has borne certain characteristics belong to the present economy, not that of the future. Each God-ordained institution has borne certain characteristics suitable to its given economy, the characteristics passing away with that institution. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was succeeded by the Temple of Solomon, the Temple has been succeeded and has found its fulfillment in the New Testament church. The New Testament church will find its completion and fulfillment in the church in glory, the “bride,” the “glorious church without spot or wrinkle.”

Finally, the “general assembly” has not yet assembled. It is not yet an actuality, but rather a church in prospect, eschatological. Although many have departed this life and are now with the Lord, these individuals are not yet glorified or perfect. When all the redeemed are both glorified and perfected and then assembled, the “general assembly” will be an actual entity. Then and only then, convened for that great, final, festive occasion, will the “general assembly” come into being as such—local and visible. Only then will all the redeemed of all ages assemble together—glorified and perfected—to “be forever with the Lord.”

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Roman Catholic theology, at least from the time of St. Augustine (see Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*), considers the kingdom of God and the church to be synonymous. Traditional Protestant theology remains divided over the issue. Those who do equate the kingdom with the church are again divided between those who would hold the "Universal, Invisible Church" as synonymous with the kingdom and those who view the "visible" church as such. This latter concept finds expression in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ...⁵

In commenting upon this statement, A. A. Hodge, a strong defender of this confession, states:

This visible Church is called "the kingdom of heaven" on the earth; and its nature and progress are set forth in the parables of the "sower and the seed," the "wheat and the tares," the "mustard seed," the "leaven," the "net which was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind," etc. Matt. xiii.⁶

Both Roman and Protestant theology err, however, in confusing the church with the kingdom of God or the "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of Christ;" a thorough study will reveal that these three are ultimately synonymous terms. Romanism errs in viewing the church as a universal, visible entity, co-extensive with the State and its spiritual counterpart. Protestantism errs in believing the church to be composed of both saved and unsaved in its "visible" aspect, thus either identifying it with the parables of the kingdom (which emphasize the mixed nature of the kingdom into the good and the bad), or retreating to a "Universal, Invisible Church" synonymous with a spiritual kingdom composed only of the truly regenerate. The essence of all such error is found in a radical departure from the New Testament usage of the term "church."

The New Testament church and the Kingdom of God are closely related, yet entirely distinct. A thorough study will reveal that the Kingdom of God is a comprehensive term for the sovereign rule of God and the realm over which this rule extends. Scripturally, the kingdom has past (prophetical), present (historical) and future (eschatological) aspects. After a survey of the various terms in Scripture, Dr. Ladd attempts a definition of this kingdom: "We may now define the kingdom of God as the sovereign rule of God manifested in Christ to defeat His enemies, creating a people over whom He reigns, and issuing in a realm or realms in which the power of His reign is experienced."⁷

Thus, the kingdom of God is universal and includes all believers. It also includes a realm in which the power of Divine rule is experienced. These qualities have led some to confuse the kingdom with the church.

The distinctions between the kingdom of God and the New Testament church may be seen by contrast. Men "see" and "enter into" the kingdom of God by regeneration. This is

⁵ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXVII, 2.

⁶ A. A. Hodge. *The Confession of Faith*, p. 313.

⁷ George Eldon Ladd, "Kingdom of God," *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, p. 466.

quite apart from any direct connection with a church, but is concerned with the sovereign grace and power of God alone in its realization. (See Jn. 3:3, 5. Of course, the church is indirectly connected through the preaching of the Gospel, but the church in its ministry does not regenerate individuals). Entrance into the New Testament church is upon the scriptural prerequisites of conversion and baptism (Acts 2:41). The kingdom is universal; the church is necessarily local (i.e., a body, assembly, congregation. Such language would be utterly foreign in reference to the kingdom of God). The kingdom is an indistinct, unobservable entity (Lk. 17:20–21); the church is observable and quite distinct in all its characteristics (e.g., membership, leadership, ordinances, ministry, etc.). The kingdom of God is the inclusive, comprehensive, sovereign and redemptive work of God in the world; the church is an organ of this kingdom, proclaiming its message and furthering its advancement as it has been commissioned. (See Matt. 16:18–19; Acts 19:8; 20:24–25; 28:23, 31; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:4–5). The kingdom of God will be progressively manifest until it is entirely comprehensive in its revealed or experimental scope, finding its ultimate conclusion in filling the world and in the “new heavens and earth” (Dan. 7:13–14; 1 Cor. 15:24–28; Rev. 11:15; 19:6; 21:1). The New Testament church as an institution will end with this economy, finding its fulfillment in the church glorious. Thus, the church is contained within the kingdom, but the kingdom is neither contained within the church nor equivalent to it. Such contrast manifestly distinguishes between the kingdom and the church and affords no foundation for a “Universal, Invisible Church” theory.

PROBLEM PASSAGES

The various aspects of the nature of the New Testament church and the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory have been investigated. It remains to consider several problem passages. These may be categorized in three groupings.

The first group, which has already been mentioned in Chapter One, contains those statements which are usually referred to the “universal, invisible church.” These same statements may equally and rightly be applied to the New Testament church as an institution (i.e., the church in the abstract or generic sense) without deviating from the *usus loquendi* and importing a radical, hitherto unknown philosophical denotation to the term. The passages are: Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 29, 32; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Tim. 3:15. The use of the term “church” in the Ephesian and Colossian epistles rightly falls into this category, as these were circular letters. The institutional or generic, abstract use would fit any local assembly. There are other statements, not mentioning the word “church” in every instance, that can also rightly be included in this group: e.g., Jn. 10:16; Eph. 3:6; 4:4; Col. 1:18, 24; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:5. In each case any reference to the church (assumed or actual) as a “flock,” “body,” or “house” denotes the church in the abstract sense which immediately becomes concrete (i.e., local, visible) when applied to any specific assembly.

The second consideration consists of a solitary passage, Acts 9:31. The KJV reads “the churches” (Ἀι... ἐκκλησίαι, plural), after the *Stephanus Text*; most modern versions read “the church” (Ἡ... ἐκκλησία, singular), following the *Critical Text*. The use of the singular is commonly taken to mean “churches” collectively, thus establishing a legitimate use of the term to describe a provincial or national church, or a “universal, visible church.” (The issue of the so-called “Universal, Invisible Church” does not apply to this passage.)

There are two other possible explanations. First, it is possible that the plural reading is correct. Such is stated by Dr. Carroll:

The texts vary. Some manuscripts and versions have the very plural noun with its plural verbs that one would naturally expect from uniform usage elsewhere. The *King James Version* follows these. The oldest... manuscripts, however, have the singular noun with corresponding verbs. The *Revised Version* follows them... It is well to note that Murdock's translation of the *Peshito Syriac* cites a Greek plural in the margin.⁸

Second, it is entirely possible to refer this statement to the Jerusalem church which had been scattered over that same geographical area during the persecution headed by Saul of Tarsus. (See Acts 8:1–5, 25–26, 40; 9:1–2, 31). Any assembly or church might be so scattered and not lose its identity as a distinct entity. After the dispersion those in given localities then formed distinct churches. This is the view of Acts 9:31 taken by Carroll and others, including Broadus.

...the word probably denotes the original church at Jerusalem, whose members were by the persecution widely scattered throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and held meetings wherever they were, but still belonged to the one original organization. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, nearly twenty years later, these separate meetings had been organized into distinct churches; and so he speaks (Gal. 1:22), in reference to that same period, of "the churches of Judea which were in Christ."⁹

Finally, there are several statements, already considered under the first category which are capable of being interpreted of the local church (*viz.*, 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). Paul, as an unregenerate, religious zealot, persecuted "the church of God." This could be taken either in the institutional (abstract, generic sense) or concretely in the local sense, as he in reality only persecuted the Jerusalem church. (See Acts 8:1, 3: 9:1–6).

In conclusion there are objections offered against the institutional, generic or abstract use of the term "church" because of prejudice in favor of the "Universal, Invisible Church" theory. Typical of such objections is the question, "How can the Lord love an institution?" (See Eph. 5:25). It is thought that the Lord's love is retained if there is an entity composed of all believers, but diminished or changed in character if the church is considered generically (and, as the objector wrongly supposes, impersonally). That the Lord loves each and every believer is certainly true. (Yet if He loved them all corporately as a "universal, invisible church," would not that in itself be greatly impersonal?) The Lord also "loved the church and gave Himself for it." (See Eph. 5:25). He loves the church as His handiwork, creation, ordained institution for this economy. He also loves the church as a man is to love his own wife and his own body (Eph. 5:25, 28–31). Two considerations are in order. first, the abstract use of the term in no way diminishes such love. The intimate, personal love of the Lord is expressed or manifest to all and in every local New Testament church as He "nourishes and cherishes it" (Eph. 5:29) by His Spirit, Word, grace and providence. The abstract (generic, institutional) is always expressed or realized in the concrete (specific, local). Second, this objection is confined specifically to Ephesians 5:22–33. The immediate statement extends from verse 25 to verse 27. The reason why the Lord "loved" and "gave" Himself for the church is given in verses 26–27 (ἡγάπησεν...καὶ... παρέδωκεν); both verbs

⁸ B. H. Carroll, *Ecclesia—The Church*, pp. 33–34.

⁹ John A. Broadus, Matthew, *An American Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 359.

are aorist and syntactically equal. The eschatological, or prospective, glory church is definitely in view. This church will be ultimately composed of all true believers. Therefore, whether one considers the “church” in this passage as present and generic or future and glorified. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church is neither diminished nor impersonal.

It now remains to investigate the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Although this “baptism” is associated with the “Universal, Invisible Church” theory, it is reserved for a separate chapter.

For further study, see Davis W. Huckabee, *The Origin and Nature of the Church*; Buell H. Kazee, *The Church and the Ordinances*; B. H. Carroll, *Ecclesia—The Church*; Willard A. Ramsey, *The Nature of the New Testament Church on Earth*; T. P. Simmons, *A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*, pp. 348–355; J. B. Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*; For a study of Gnosticism and Neoplatonism, see John L. Von Mosheim, *Historical Commentaries on the State of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 2 vols.; Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Vol. II.; Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pp. 449–497; Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. I, pp. 98–126; *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, pp. 187–189; *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. II, pp. 1240–1248; R. J. Rushdoony, *Flight from Humanity*; Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. III, pp. 533–535.

CHAPTER IV **THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND THE** **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The biblical teaching concerning the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” bears investigation because of the diversity of interpretations given to it. It is commonly held by many among Evangelicals, Fundamentalists and even some of Reformed persuasion, that when an individual believes savingly in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is at that moment “baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.” Thus, the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is assumed to be something that the Spirit of God does in reference to the believer and his union with Christ or his entrance into the “body of Christ,” synonymous with the “universal, invisible church.” This act is taken to be non-experimental, individual and received by faith. The Charismatics, however, teach this “baptism” to be an experience of the fullness, power and very Person of the Holy Spirit. It becomes, experimentally, a “second work of grace,” evidenced by “speaking in tongues” and, at times, a manifestation of various other physical and emotional phenomena. Others have used this terminology of “baptism” to describe a fullness anointing or empowering the Holy Spirit for a given ministry or event. Despite their diversity, the preceding views have two common elements: they all hold that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is for the individual believer and is in no way directly associated with the church. There is another view, a view which is essentially non-personal, historical and in complete harmony with the scriptural teaching concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This view holds the baptism of the Holy Spirit to be centered in the institution of the New Testament church.

THE SCRIPTURAL TEACHING CONCERNING THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The error of the common assumption that every believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the “Body of Christ” at conversion derives from confusing two distinct lines of scriptural teaching. The error of the Charismatics stems from seeking as a present, individual experience, an event ordained by God for His church. The error of the last group is founded upon confusing the fullness or anointing of the Spirit with the New Testament event of the Spirit’s baptism. These common, traditional views are exposed when the Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves without tradition or prejudice.

There are six passages in the New Testament that definitely and expressly teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit: Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:15–17. (1 Cor. 12:13 will be considered at a later point). These statements, then, must form the substance for the doctrine in question. A close and thorough investigation reveals the following: first, the Lord Jesus Christ himself is the Administrator, or the One Who does the “baptizing,” “He (i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ) shall baptize you with (“in” ἐν) the Holy Ghost...” (See Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16). “...the same is He which baptizeth with (“in” ἐν) the Holy Ghost.” (See Jn. 1:33). Second, the Holy Spirit is the One into Whom or with Whom they were baptized or identified. This is specifically stated in every single passage. Third, the incidents that occurred at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1) and at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–47; 11:15–17) are the only instances identified by inspiration with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There are four passages in the New Testament that are assumed to teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit: Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27–28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:11–13. Although some of these passages are questionable as to their relevance, they are nevertheless so used and thus included. A careful study will bring the following conclusions: first, there is absolutely no mention made of any administrator or one who performs the baptism. There is not the slightest mention of the Holy Spirit. Second, the Lord Jesus Christ is the One into whom these are baptized. Third, it may be inferred from the context in these statements that all believers are included.

Up to this point there are two lists of Scriptures, one diametrically opposed to the other. To explain the seeming contradiction, some use 1 Cor. 12:13 to teach that the Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into “one body,” which they interpret as the “Body of Christ,” or the “universal, invisible church.” This, of course, neither explains the primary teaching as given in the first list (which should be the very foundation of the doctrine), nor considers it at all. The second list is used as a foundation for the doctrine on the basis of assumption. The Corinthian passage is vital to the doctrine and bears close study. An exegesis of this verse rightly brings it into harmony with the passages that definitely teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Mark the following: first, the rendering “by one Spirit” is literally “...ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι...” The primary meaning would be “in” rather than “by” (ἐν occurs in every single instance). This would bring the first part of this statement into accord with the basic and foundational teaching. The phrase “...are we all baptized into one body...” reads: “...εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν...” The verb is aorist, punctiliar, referring to the event of Pentecost, and should be grammatically translated “were” rather than “are.” (Further, Paul includes himself in the “we.” This stands against the argument that this verse refers to water baptism in the local Corinthian assembly). If this verse is taken in the light of those

statements definitely teaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then it logically refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost upon the New Testament church as an institution. This leads logically to an examination of the true significance of Pentecost.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

It has been fairly common to refer to Pentecost as the “Birthday of the Church,” assuming that this event heralded the advent or “dispensation of the Spirit,” who at that time formed the church. It has previously been shown that the New Testament church located at Jerusalem was already formed and functional, already possessed the Holy Spirit before the fullness of Pentecost. It is then valid and vital to ask and investigate the true significance of this Pentecost. The Scriptures themselves reveal a two-fold significance.

First, the day of Pentecost had great prophetic significance. The sermon of Peter on that day (see Acts 2:12–40) began with a quotation from the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28–32). Peter stated that this prophecy had that day found its fulfillment (Acts 2:16, “...this is that...”) This was also the fulfillment of the prophecies of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33) and the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:4–8). This was the promised “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

Second, Pentecost had tremendous typical significance: first, it was the anti-type or final fulfillment of the “Feast the Firstfruits” yearly observed at that time. (Pentecost was the yearly Feast of the Firstfruits when the wheat harvest commenced and a celebration was held. The first sheaves were then “waved” before the Lord as a “wave offering.” This was a great time of joy. (See Ex. 23:16, 19; 34:22; Lev. 23:10–12; Numb. 28:26). Because of the better weather and traveling conditions at that time of year, Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims and Pentecost became the major feast and celebration (Acts 2:1, 5–12). On this Pentecost the Spirit-empowered New Testament Church (Acts 1:4–5, 8) reaped an ingathering of the “First-fruits,” some 3,000 souls, a prototype of Spirit-sent and Spirit-empowered revival and awakening. Second, this Pentecost was the credentialing and empowering of the already-existing New Testament church as God’s ordained institution for this economy. This is seen plainly when consideration is given to the former institutions. The God-ordained institution for the Israelites in their travels was the Tabernacle, or Tent. (See Ex. 25:1–9). Everything in and about the Tabernacle was of typical significance. Its main purpose was that God might “dwell among them” (Ex. 25:9). When this Tabernacle was completely constructed and functional, the priests ordained and the first offerings completed, then God in the visible *Shekinah* descended upon the Tabernacle “and the glory of the Lord filled” it (Ex. 40:33–35). It then became the God-ordained institution for that economy. The Tabernacle continued as the only God-ordained institution until the completion of the Temple of Solomon. When Solomon’s Temple was completed, the people and priests sanctified and the first offerings completed, then the *Shekinah*, or visible glory of the presence of God, descended upon and filled the Temple (1 kgs 7:51–8:11). The Temple was then marked out as the God-ordained institution for that time. The same was true of the New Testament church at this Pentecost. The great and final anti-type or fulfillment of both the Tabernacle and the Temple was visibly and unmistakably set apart, or credentialed as the only God-ordained institution for this gospel economy. This is the significance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurred at Pentecost (Acts 1:4–5, 8; 2:1–21, 32–33).

The incident at the home of Cornelius demands notice (Acts 10:44–48; 11:1–18). Why this second reference to a “baptism of the Holy Spirit”? This question may be answered in a twofold manner: first, “the Jews require a sign.” (See 1 Cor. 1:22; Ex. 44:1–9; Matt. 12:38; Jn. 3:1–2; Acts 2:22, 30–33; 3:1–16; 4:1–10, 14–16. 29–30; 5:12–16; 10:38–41). God credentialed His work, Word and spokesmen by signs. This is marked in His ordained institutions (i.e., Tabernacle, Temple and Church), the ministry of Moses and the prophets and predominantly in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in this context that the event at the home of Cornelius must be viewed. Peter was greatly prejudiced against the Gentiles (Acts 10) and so were the other Jewish Christians (Acts 11:1–3). God sent a demonstration, a “baptism” of His Spirit to credential His work among the Gentiles and answer Jewish prejudice (which was prone to think of an earthly kingdom or a “Jewish Church”; see Acts 1:6–8; 11:1–3; 15:1). When Peter rehearsed his ministry among the Gentiles and then recounted this baptism of the Spirit, such a “sign” was acknowledged as the work of God. (See Acts 11:1–18). “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, ‘Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.’”

Second, Peter, as spokesman and representative preacher for the New Testament church was given the “keys of the kingdom,” which he used in the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews at Pentecost and the Gentiles at the home of Cornelius. (See Matt. 16:18–19).

Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was with reference to the New Testament church as the God–ordained institution for this present time or economy. To overcome Jewish prejudice and credential the entrance of Gentiles into this institution, God further sent a baptism or credentialing work among the Gentiles representatively at the home of Cornelius. The truth that all and every believer is united to Christ by faith and in union with Him spiritually is certainly biblical truth, but such a union cannot scripturally be referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

PART II

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Tim. 3:15

The New Testament church derives from “The living God” and is the “pillar” (bulwark, upholder) and “ground” (stay, support, base) of the truth.¹⁰ The New Testament church exists to uphold the truth in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ for the glory of God. The church upholds or supports the truth by declaring the truth in and through her ministry; by symbolizing the truth in her ordinances; by vindicating the truth in her discipline; and by illustrating that truth in her life.

The New Testament church, as derived from God and as the upholder of His truth, manifests certain distinct characteristics in accordance with the New Testament pattern. The governing principle must be: to the extent that a church holds to the truth of the New Testament—to that extent it is a New Testament church. Conversely, to the extent that a church departs from the New Testament—to that extent it ceases to be a New Testament church.

CHAPTER V

THE ONLY HEAD OF THE CHURCH: THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is, scripturally, the indisputable Head of the church. (See Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22–23; Matt. 23:8 and Matt. 16:18). In this last statement the distinction made between “Peter” (πέτρος, a pebble, rock or stone) and “this rock” (πέτρα, a mass or ledge of rock) ultimately points to the Lord Himself. The church is neither founded upon Peter nor his confession of faith (a confession or profession of faith by itself does not constitute the foundation of the church), but ultimately upon the Lord Himself. (Eph. 2:19–22, in referring to being “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,” includes the “apostles and prophets” all as New Testament orders and in no way diminishes the Lordship of Jesus Christ over His church).

THE ERRORS CONCERNING THIS TRUTH

Doctrinally, historically and practically, many churches soon departed from the truth. The rise of ecclesiasticism in the second and third centuries obliterated in many churches the truth of Christ’s lordship in and over the local assembly. The development of various errors and heresies (baptismal regeneration, Gnostic influences, sacerdotalism, etc.) further deprived churches of the truth. The development of Romanism and the later rise of Protestantism further obscured the purity of New Testament truth.

The Church of Rome forms the very epitome of ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism. This world-wide system finds its ultimate expression in one individual, the pope, who claims universal authority over both secular and spiritual government as the “Vicar of Christ on earth.” He further claims infallibility in matters of faith and practice, ruling *ex cathedra*.

¹⁰ ...ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

This power or headship he claims by “Apostolic Succession” from St. Peter; i.e., each successive pope rules with the authority of Peter, who was supposedly the first “pope.” This follows the Romish interpretation that the church was founded upon Peter (Matt. 16:18–19), and upon the tradition that Peter moved to Rome after the Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15) to become Bishop there for twenty-five years before his martyrdom. The truth of Scripture simply does not bear such interpretation and tradition. The Lord makes a sharp distinction between “Peter” and the “Rock” (Matt. 16:18). He further revealed that Peter, as holder of the “keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:19) would only act in obedience to God.¹¹

Peter himself was severely rebuked by the Lord immediately thereafter as being influenced by Satan (Matt. 16:18–23) and later by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 2:11–21). He denied the Lord under oath through cowardice (Matt. 26:69–75). Peter did not claim for himself any infallibility, superiority or undue prominence (Acts 10:25–26; 11:1–3, 15–17; 15:7–14, 22–23; 1 Pet. 1:1; 5:1–4; 2 Pet. 1:1). Peter did not go to Rome and become Bishop after the Jerusalem meeting, as he was found at Antioch later (Gal. 2:11) and even later in Babylon (Cf. 1 Pet. 5:13. Any attempt to equate Rome with “Babylon” in a cryptic sense should only prove embarrassing to Romish theology). When Paul wrote to the church at Rome, Peter was not mentioned in the multitude of acknowledgements (Rom. 1:1–7; 16:1–24). Only later tradition put Peter in Rome. The ecclesiastical system known as the Church of Rome came into being and power during the second to the eighth centuries in the gradual rise of ecclesiasticism and the later Constantinianism of a sacral society. It simply has no foundation in Scripture.

Protestant or Reformed Churches, deriving from Romanism, carried with them the inherent leaven of ecclesiasticism. Historically, the major Protestant church-systems have expressed themselves in an unscriptural hierarchy. The Church of England [Anglican] from its inception at the time of Henry VIII has held the Crown to be the Head of the Church. The Lutheran Church has its head or ruling body in the synod. The Presbyterian Church has a structured ecclesiasticism through its sessions, presbyteries, Synods and National or General Assembly. The Methodist Church has as its head the General Conference under the Ruling Bishops. The various Reformed Churches usually have consistories (Sessions), a Classus [Presbytery] and a Synod.

Baptists have held closely to the New Testament pattern of the autonomy of the local church, believing that God has ordained nothing above or beyond the local assembly except the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Sadly, some have given up this autonomy when identified with unscriptural conventions or associations to which they have delegated this power.

THE REASONS FOR THESE ERRORS

There are essentially four reasons why there exists such a variety of church governments: first, there is the often unconscious presupposition that the history of Christianity is but the natural and providential development of the “Church” in history. Thus, such a variety is taken as a natural and acceptable phenomenon. However, nothing

¹¹ Matt 16:19. ...ἐὰν δήσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. , i.e., “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have already been bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.” The Gk. is a periphrastic construction of the fut. verb with a perf. ptc.

could be further from the truth. The New Testament by precept and example reveals the doctrine of the church. Thus, a church is either New Testament in its government and headship or it is simply not a New Testament church. The history of Christianity is not the natural, providential and acceptable development of the “Church.” It is the history of people holding to New Testament truth in spite of great persecution by a false ecclesiastical system or systems. It is the history of a hybrid, a religious system supported by and amalgamated with the State to form a sacralist society.

The second reason for these errors is found in tradition. Both Romanism and Protestantism rest largely on tradition and expediency for their church government and ecclesiasticism. Most members of these churches accept such traditions as though they were biblical truth.

The third reason rests in the concept of the church as the religious counterpart of the State, i.e., a state-church hybrid with both secular and spiritual aspects. Such an unnatural and unscriptural relationship logically necessitates a church government that corresponds in a great measure to that of the State. This travesty is historically marked in both Romanism and traditional Protestantism.

The fourth and final reason is a misunderstanding of the New Testament teaching concerning the church. There exists in the New Testament itself the principles of the three main types of church government: Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational. With the apostolic office, there is the principle of episcopal rule (i.e., rule by bishops whose authority extends to more than one church, e.g., Romanism, Anglicanism, Methodism). Such churches presuppose an “Apostolic Succession” in which the office of the apostle has continued down from the Apostolic era to the present. According to this view, the Holy Spirit and Apostolic authority is conferred to succeeding bishops by ordination to the office. There exists, however, no such succession in the New Testament. Matthias replaced Judas. he did not “succeed” him. (Acts 1:15–26). When the apostles died, as they died, no one was ordained to succeed them. The Apostolic office ended with the death of the Apostle John. Presbyterian government, or rule by elders, is a New Testament principle, but these elders only functioned within the local assembly. The basis for such ecclesiasticism as characterizes some Protestant churches derives from the Old Testament concept of the seventy elders who judged with Moses (Num. 11:10–17). It is noteworthy that, to the contrary, every New Testament term for “rule,” when used of the office of the New Testament elder, is a pastoral term, not an Old Testament term or a Jewish term. (See the Old Testament concept brought into the New Testament by the Jewish ἄρχων, as distinctly different from the ἡγούμενος. See Jn. 3:1; Heb. 13:7, 17. The former has a more political or Old Testament connotation; the latter is pastoral in context, meaning “to lead, guide”). A further supposition is that the “First Church Council” was held in Acts 15. This meeting, however, was not a “council,” but rather a “conference” between two local churches over a problem that had arisen between them. It was attended by missionaries and messengers. It bore no resemblance to a “council” in either its proceedings or its recommendations. (See Acts 15:22–29). It is impossible for New Testament churches to hold a “council,” “synod,” or “General assembly” in the historic, ecclesiastical sense. Congregational rule, or a democratic church government, is the teaching of the New Testament. This does not mean that an assembly may vote or take a stand contrary to the Word of God, rather that each local church is autonomous and independent under the headship of Jesus Christ, with the

final authority resting with that local church (Matt. 18:17; Acts 1:15–26, 6:1–6; 1 Cor. 5:1–6, 12–13).

In summary, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head and Lord over His church. Each local assembly is autonomous or independent. There is no office, authority or rule above or beyond the local assembly save the Lord and His infallible Word. Local churches may confer with one another concerning issues (Acts 15), and cooperate in evangelistic or missionary efforts and in acts of mercy (Rom 15:25–28; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:1–24), but there exists no office or rule outside or beyond the local church.

For further study, see Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*; Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*; Hiscox, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*; J. M. Pendleton, *Baptist Church Manual*; John Q. Adams, *Baptists Thorough Reformers*; Leonard Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE FOR THE CHURCH: THE BIBLE

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the New Testament church, so the church's only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice is the Bible. Joan Boucher—or Joan of Kent, as she was known—was publicly burned by the Reformers in the Church of England on May 2, 1550. She was a Baptist. After a year and a half of endless and useless persuasion, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer and Rogers condemned her to the flames. Bishop Scorey preached at her burning. His sermon has long since been forgotten; hers lives on in every Baptist heart: “You lie like a rogue. Go read the Scriptures!” A true New Testament church possesses only one rule, the Word of God. “...what saith the Scripture...?” (Rom. 4:3) must ever be the watchword (Isa. 8:20; Matt. 4:4; Jn. 17:17; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:16–17).

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE CHURCH OF ROME

Human nature puts much stock in the word of man and in tradition. Such has never been more evident than in Romanism. The Romish system holds tradition and the word of man to be equal with Scripture for its authority. Inherent in Romish Theology are two great fallacies. First, little or no distinction is made between inspired truth (i.e., the Scriptures) and religious history. As the Church of Rome believes in a continuing inspiration and infallibility, such a distinction is an impossibility. Thus, Rome includes the Apocryphal writings within the inspired canon of Scripture. These books may contain historical data, but they lack the inherent characteristics of inspired Scripture. The Apocryphal writings are a source of theology for Romans, furnishing them materials for the doctrine of purgatory, prayers for the dead, etc. Rome also includes under tradition the writings of the Church Fathers (i.e., the works of the Christian writers of the first six centuries, e.g., Jeremy. Augustine, Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Tertullian, etc.), the Church Councils and the Papal Decrees. The second great fallacy is the claim that infallibility rests in the Church of Rome alone, and thus the Church has the sole right to interpret Scripture. This is based largely on a misinterpretation of Matthew 16:18–19 and 2 Peter 1:20.

NOTE: The passage in Matthew has already been examined; the section of 2 Peter 1:20–21 teaches that prophecy did not originate in the prophet or man himself, but rather from the Holy Spirit, Who inspired the individual to speak or write: $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha$

προθητεία γραθῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται· οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπων...ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι. This has nothing to do with an individual interpreting the Scriptures for himself. Thus, Rome in reality has three authorities: The Church, tradition and Scripture, the last being obscured by the former two.

The Church of Rome exists as the product of ecclesiasticism, tradition and Constantinianism. It is not and never was a New Testament church.

THE PROBLEM OF PROTESTANTISM

The Protestant Reformation was the dawning of a new day, a return to the authority of the Word of God, a turning from tradition and the word of man. The great cry of the Reformers was *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture only]. Both Baptists and Protestants in principle hold to the supremacy of the Scriptures over any and all man-made statements.

The problem of Protestantism stems from confessions and creeds. Both Baptists and Protestants have issued and hold strongly to various confessions of faith. Some of these are closely related. This is especially true of the *Westminster Confession* (Presbyterian) and the *Second London Confession of 1689* (Baptist).

NOTE: This second confession differs greatly from the Old or First London Confession of 1644 (1646). The first is an original Baptist document; the second is a Baptist version of the *Westminster Confession* with changes essentially only for basic Baptist distinctives respecting the church. The reasons for these changes are as follows: Baptists, with other Non-conformists groups had been severely persecuted in England. Various Acts had been passed against them for their suppression. This resulted in a united front among the various Dissenters, viz. Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists. With the success of the Presbyterians in defying such government measures as the *Conventicle Act* (prohibiting Dissenting meetings), the Baptists and Congregationalists presented a united front by taking the *Westminster Confession* as their model. The Baptist Confession was drawn up in 1677. The Congregationalist Confession (Savoy) followed suit. This Baptist Confession was re-issued in 1689 when William of Orange came to the throne in England and issued the *Act of Toleration* for the Dissenters. The popularity and traditional acceptance of this second confession is seen in the Philadelphia Particular Baptist Association in America re-issuing it as their own in 1742, with some changes. The theology of Calvinistic Baptists provides a further reason for the acceptance and continuation of this second confession. It must be stated that the Second London Confession of 1689 is still a great document.

Two distinctions, however, must be noted: first, Baptists and Protestants view confessions of faith differently. It is typical the Protestant mentality to state that their respective confession is the clearest expression of doctrinal or scriptural truth. This type of thinking is expressed by B. B. Warfield:

The significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed is to be found in three facts that: historically speaking, they are the final crystallization of the elements of evangelical religion, after the conflicts of sixteen hundred years; scientifically speaking, they are the richest and most precise and best guarded statements ever penned of all that enters into evangelical religion and of all that must be safeguarded if evangelical religion is

to persist in the world; and, religiously speaking, they are a notable monument of spiritual religion.¹²

Dr. Warfield was a great man, theologian and Christian, yet the tenor of such thinking has led to two attitudes or positions which are diametrically opposed to the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. It has led many Protestants to accept or argue from their respective confessions as the basis or standard of truth, rather than from the Scriptures alone. When anyone presupposes that his confession of faith is the “final crystallization of the elements of evangelical religion” and “the richest and most precise and best guarded statement ever penned of all that enters into evangelical religion,” he may well not grow biblically or progress beyond that confession. He may be limited to that man-made statement and its teaching (with its respective errors as well as its truths), prejudicing him against certain biblical truths by such a presupposition. Further, there is the tendency (which Dr. Warfield actually manifests) to obliterate the distinction between a confession of faith and a creed. Both of these positions are utterly foreign to New Testament thinking.

The second distinction is vital: there is a great difference between a confession of faith and a creed. A confession of faith is an extended, inclusive or exhaustive statement of biblical doctrine. A creed is an abbreviated doctrinal statement, a summary of what is believed. But further, a confession is a statement of faith while a creed is a personal affirmation of faith (“*credo in...*,” Latin for “I believe in”). Baptists, therefore, have never held any creed but the Bible. It is contrary to the principles of the New Testament either to elevate any man-made statement to a position of the standard of truth (at times the Protestant tendency with the Confessions) or make any statement other than Scripture a personal affirmation of faith (the principle of a creed).

NOTE: Protestantism traditionally has held such confessions to be binding upon all the members within the given denomination, especially among the clergy. This is not true among the Baptists, who have a given confession of faith in each local church, either a historic confession, e.g., Old London Confession of 1644, Second London Confession of 1689, the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, the New Hampshire Confession of 1833, a modification of these, or an original confession. Further, within the local church there may be differences of opinion concerning non-essential matters within any given confession.

THE INCONSISTENCY OF MANY BAPTISTS

While the cry *Sola Scriptura* was obscured in and after the Protestant Reformation by creeds, confessions and the principle of neo-Constantinianism, many among the Baptists have prided themselves with taking up that cry. But to say *Sola Scriptura*, one must abide by it in practice. Sadly, many churches at the present time adhere to practices that are plainly the products of tradition and expediency rather than *Sola Scriptura*. Among many evangelical and Fundamental Baptists there is a widespread denial of the biblical truths of the free and sovereign grace of God in salvation. (The truths of God’s gracious predestination, election and absolute sovereignty are biblical essentials). What is this, other than humanistic rationalism and tradition? Evangelistic methodology, with its “altar calls,” the “invitation system” and the carnal promotionalism of the day, does not find its roots in the Word of God, but rather in Pelagian mythology and humanistic philosophy that entered

¹² B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, Vol. II, p. 660.

into modern evangelism through Charles G. Finney in the 1820s. Such traditional “Revivalism” has all but inundated Baptist ranks. The denial of any biblical Christian liberty that is expressed by the current legalistic trend of Fundamental Baptists is the inheritance of a Neoplatonic philosophy. Baptists, as well as others, must return to the Bible as the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

The Scriptures must stand alone as the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Tradition or the word of man cannot intrude into the office of Scripture. Confessions of faith are necessary for the accurate and unmistakable definition of doctrinal truth, but they must never be considered as immune from improvement and correction. A personal affirmation of faith must never be given to any man-made statement, but to the Scriptures alone—*Sola Scriptura*.

NOTE: for further study, see Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*; Edward T. Hiscox, *A New Directory for Baptist Churches*; John a. Adams, *Baptists Thorough Reformers*; William J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*; W. L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions or Faith*; Phillip Schaff, *Creeks of Christendom*, 3 Vols.; *The Westminster Confession of Faith*; *The First (Old) London Confession of Faith* (1644); *The Second London Confession of Faith* (1677, 1689); *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith*; *The New Hampshire Confession of Faith*.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH: REGENERATED AND BAPTIZED

New Testament churches hold tenaciously to New Testament principles. The churches of the New Testament in obedience to the commands of their Lord preached the Gospel, baptized converts and brought these converts into the fellowship of the local assembly. (See Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42, 47; 1 Cor. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1). The New Testament knows absolutely nothing of a Christian church knowingly admitting unregenerate or unbaptized persons into membership. How is it, then, that traditional Protestantism extends its membership to the unregenerate? It does so for two reasons: its concept of the church and its adherence to an Old Testament principle of “Covenant Theology.”

THE CENTRAL ISSUE: THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

The qualifications for church membership necessarily presuppose the questions of an individual’s relationship to God and the nature of the church. This is the central issue, and one which Baptists and Protestants can never resolve. Paedobaptists presuppose the church to be dualistic in nature. This presupposition derives from the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy and the necessities of their theology. First, Protestantism teaches a dualistic concept of the church, dividing it into the “church visible,” composed of “believers and their children,” and the “universal, invisible church,” composed of all the saved or elect. The former is a composite group, due to infant baptism and church membership—the visible, imperfect reflection of the true, or spiritual, church. Thus, traditional Protestantism does not see the necessity of a regenerate church membership according to the New Testament pattern. It purposely, in accordance with its theological presuppositions, admits unregenerate individuals into church membership upon the basis of family relationship. Such thinking derives from an Old Testament mentality, not New Testament truth.

Second, paedobaptists presuppose a type of “Covenant Theology” that is essentially Old Testament in its thinking. Thus, they find a “Jewish Church” in the Old Testament and further believe that the New Testament church is but a continuation of the Jewish national religious system. Such assumptions have led paedobaptists to the following erroneous conclusions: first, they have historically and traditionally obscured the distinctions between the Church and State. First Romanism and later Protestantism sought to create a sacralist society on the basis of an Old Testament mentality and the principle of expediency. Second, such thinking has led them to view the church as composed of both saved and unsaved, a *corpus mixtum* or *corpus christianum*, rather than an assembly of believers baptized upon a credible profession of faith. Third, paedobaptists have thus sought to associate baptism with circumcision as the “covenant–sign” or “seal,” baptizing unregenerate infants upon an Old Testament principle without warrant in the New, and bringing such unregenerates into the membership of the church. Finally, this mentality has led them to consider both believers and their children as fit subjects for church membership, whether or not said children are regenerate. The “church visible” then becomes a family–oriented Old Testament entity rather than a New Testament entity comprised solely of believers admitted on a personal basis and on the prerequisites of conversion and scriptural baptism.¹³

Baptists and all New Testament Christians hold to the supremacy of the New Testament over the Old as the full, final revelation of God. The New Testament church is a new and distinct entity established by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18) and unknown in the Old Testament. The church that Jesus Christ founded, according to his commands, is to be comprised of baptized believers only and completely separate and distinct from the society of unregenerate people (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42). Thus, the issues of baptism, church membership, discipline and any other conceivable difference between Baptists and Protestants center on the nature of the church. A church that knowingly or purposely admits into its membership unregenerate individuals, or knowingly baptizes unconverted persons against the clear teaching of the New Testament cannot be a true New Testament or Gospel church.

The central issue is, is the church Old Testament or New Testament in character? The teaching of the Lord and His apostles is that the New Testament church is a new and distinct institution. The Old Testament national, religious organization of the Hebrews was a *Groepsverbandgodsdeinsten*, a sacralist society bound together by religious, racial, social and national distinctives. The New Testament church is an assembly of believers, scripturally baptized upon a personal profession of faith, completely apart from social, racial, national or family relationships or distinctives. The former, with its racial, social, national and family distinctives, was fitted for the Old economy; the latter, based solely upon spiritual distinctives, has been fitted for the New. (See Matt. 16:18; 18:15–17; Jn. 1:12–13; Acts 2:41–42; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27–28; Eph. 2:11–3:10.) The New Testament knows absolutely nothing of “national churches,” purposely admitting the unsaved into membership, or “Messianic Judaism,” with its “Christian Synagogues” and Old Testament mentality.

¹³ See Appendix I, “Covenant Theology.”

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF PAEDOBAPTIST COVENANT THEOLOGY

At the outset, a distinction must be made between “Covenant Theology” and the “theology of the covenant.” The term “Covenant Theology” is used in a twofold sense: first, to describe the eternal covenant of redemption and grace, or the agreement among the Persons of the Triune Godhead for man’s redemption. This covenant has existed in the purpose of God from all eternity, or supra-temporally. In this sense, Particular, Calvinistic or “Sovereign grace” Baptists have been preeminently “covenant theologians.” The second use of the term, however, concerns the “theology of the covenant,” i.e., paedobaptist covenant theology that includes both believers and their children in a covenant relationship before God and thus within the church. This is a family-oriented concept of the church based on a misplaced Old Testament pattern unknown in the New, a concept that obscures the very nature of the church.

Paedobaptists seek a New Testament basis for the continuation of the family relationship within the Old covenant or Testament. This is essential to their presuppositions and absolutely necessary for their doctrine of the church, as it is common for them to refer to the infant children of members as “born into the pale of the visible church.” This search has resulted in three main arguments: First, it is argued that infant baptism and thus, church membership, may be inferred from the statement in Acts 2:38–39, and especially the words, “For the promise is unto you and to your children.” This supposedly forms a basis for the inclusion of believers’ children in the “covenant” and church. The whole verse reads: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). To restrict the meaning to only “believers and their children” is to be grammatically and theologically dishonest. The text naturally and logically must include “all that are afar off” and “as many as the Lord our God shall call.” The paedobaptist theology of this text is the result of eisegesis, not exegesis. Second, this reasoning has been further buttressed by appealing to the “household” baptisms of Lydia, the Philippian Jailer and Stephanus. (See Acts 16:14–15. 25–34; 1 Cor. 1:14–17). Concerning the households of Lydia and Stephanus, there is no mention of infants or of any individual members other than the head of the household. In the instance of the jailer, the only case where any details are given, the members were baptized as believers, for “they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house” (v. 32). Further, “he... rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (v. 34). If one deals only with Divine revelation or Scripture, then there is absolutely no record or instance of infant baptism to be found in the New Testament—and no command or even a hint that such should be done. The third argument presupposes the weakness of the former two and bases the theology of the covenant upon Old Testament principles and the validity of a “Jewish Church” and its continuance as the pattern for the New Testament. It is an argument from silence (it ought to be silent), assuming that in the New Testament church circumcision was naturally replaced by baptism as the “covenant sign” or “seal.” If such were true, then one wonders why the Judaizers did not understand the transition and kept demanding circumcision (see Acts 15:1). Evidently no one told them which was true, although the apostles had every opportunity to make it plain in their ministries and writings. The subject of baptism is considered in a later chapter. Suffice it for the present to state that the New Testament church is simply established upon New Testament principles, and so is New Testament, not Old Testament, in character.

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Negatively, New Testament church membership is not based upon geographical locality (i.e., a national or State church in a sacralist setting) or family relationships (i.e., a church composed of believers and their children after the Old Testament pattern), nor yet is it to be composed of both saved and unsaved (i.e., a *corpus mixtum*, as the former two types of churches). Membership must be based upon New Testament principles: the teaching of the Lord and His inspired apostles. There are four essential considerations concerning the New Testament church.

First, the New Testament teaches a definite church membership. Some would teach that membership in a local assembly is quite unnecessary, or at the very most optional or secondary, since every believer is “a member of the universal, invisible or true church.” To such mistaught and misinformed persons, the doctrine of the local assembly is of very little importance. Such, however, is not the clear teaching of the New Testament. Acts 1:15 teaches a definite church membership or church “roll.” The New Testament throughout presupposes the identification of the individual believer with a local assembly. (See Matt. 18:15–17; Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:15–26; 2:41–42; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1). True New Testament fellowship, discipline, the observance of the ordinances and various interactions between believers almost always presuppose the context of the local assembly. The local church alone has the authority to baptize, to administer the Lord’s Supper and to discipline an erring believer. It is also the immediate context for fellowship among believers.

Second, the New Testament teaches a regenerate church membership. This principle and order are continually reiterated. (See Jn. 3:3; Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42, 47; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1). Regeneration is the essential prerequisite for baptism. Regenerating grace is evidenced by a converted life, or the manifestation of the “marks of grace,” or “fruits meet for repentance.” (See Matt 3:8, Jn. 3:7–8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:17–18, 8:12–17; 1 Jn. 2:3–5, 2:29–3:15, 24; 4:13; 5:13). A converted life or a credible profession of faith is not only a prerequisite for baptism, and both of these for church membership, but also for continuance as a member in the local assembly. If any member is not leading a godly life that is to a given extent in conformity with the Word of God, he is a fit subject for church discipline. (See Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10–11). No New Testament church knowingly admits unregenerate persons into membership.

Third, the New Testament teaches a baptized church membership. The principle passages are Matt. 28:18–20 and Acts 2:41–42. The order of the “Great Commission” and the practice of the apostolic churches was invariably salvation first (i.e., regeneration evidenced by a converted life or a credible profession of faith), baptism second, then church membership third and, in this context, the various aspects of church fellowship. To forego the ordinance or baptism as a prerequisite for church membership would be a radical and sinful departure from the New Testament.

Finally, the New Testament teaches a voluntary church membership (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42). A New Testament church is an assembly of baptized believers who have voluntarily covenanted together to meet for instruction, edification and the propagation of the Gospel according to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Compulsory or involuntary church membership would be utterly foreign to the essence of the gospel, the character of the Lord Jesus and the clear teaching of the New Testament, yet every paedobaptist church

practices involuntary church membership through the rite of infant baptism. Further, it is the unquestionable and manifest witness of history that both Romanism and Reformed Protestantism in Europe, acting upon the principles of an Old Testament mentality and a sacralist society, used the power of the civil authorities to compel everyone, Baptists and Jews included, to have their children “baptized.” These believed in the force of the sword; New Testament Christians rather believed in the power of the Spirit. Any church that would practice either compulsory or involuntary church membership could not be a New Testament or gospel church.

NOTE: for further study, see Edward T. Hiscox, *A New Directory for Baptist Churches*; David Kingdon, *The Children of Abraham*; Alexander Carson, *Baptism: Its Mode and Its Subjects*; T. E. Watson, *Should Infants be Baptized?*; Johannes Warnes, *Baptism*; Paul k. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace*; Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH: A DISCIPLINED BODY

The New Testament church is to uphold or support the truth as vouchsafed to her by her Lord (1 Tim. 3:15). An essential element is vindicating that truth in the church’s discipline. The principle of discipline is essential to the organization of the church, the growth or maturity of the members and the furtherance of the gospel. It is also necessary to maintain the purity of the assembly according to the clear teaching of the Scriptures. Thus, church discipline is both formative and corrective.

FORMATIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The word “discipline” is derived from the Latin, *disco*, “I learn”—hence the terms “disciple” or “learner,” and “discipline” or “teaching, training, submission.” The New Testament views the church as a disciplined body. The various members are to grow toward spiritual maturity individually and collectively. There is to be an increasing principle of unity pervading the congregation that is the result of such formative discipline. (See 1 Cor. 12:1–28; Eph. 2:21–22; 4:1–3, 11–16; 5:1–2, 21; 6:10–18; Phil. 1:9–11, 27; 2:1–5, 12–16; 4:1–9; Col. 2:6–7; 3:1–8; 2 Pet. 1:4–8; 3:18). This formative element is to manifest itself in what might be termed the “Christian Ethic,” governing the relationship of believers, not only to each other within the assembly. (See Eph. 5:1–17; 6:5–9; Col. 3:22–25; Rom. 12, 17–21). Such formative discipline presupposes a church in which the Holy Spirit is actively at work in and through the proper ministry of the Word and a church in which there is likewise the practice of corrective discipline.

CORRECTIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

As church discipline possesses a pervading formative or positive element, so it has a corrective or negative aspect. It is usually this aspect that draws attention. Corrective discipline is concerned with erring and sinning members who must be dealt with in accordance with New Testament teaching. There are seven considerations concerning this corrective aspect.

First, there is a definite scriptural basis for discipline in the New Testament. Church discipline, therefore, must not rest upon tradition or any legalistic standard or denominational bias, but the clear teaching of the Word of God. There does exist a more personal or private type of discipline or confrontation, both positive and negative, that in itself does not approach church discipline. (See Matt. 5:22–24; 18:21–22; Lk. 17:3–4; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12–13; Heb. 3:12–13; 10:23–25. These statements teach that it is primary to seek reconciliation with brothers or sisters in Christ that have been offended. It is further Christ-like to forgive in minor personal matters. There is also a principle of exhortation or encouragement that would be corrective, yet personal). However, matters that cannot be either forgiven or dismissed on a personal basis or become public knowledge, are subject to the discipline of the church. These matters may be major personal, though irreconcilable, situations (Matt. 18:15–17); immorality, manifest or characteristic greed or extortion (1 Cor. 5:1–13); known or public sins (Gal. 6:1); disorderly behavior (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6); or disruptive differences in doctrine (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:14–15; Tit. 3:10–11).

Second, it is the duty of the local assembly before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, to exercise scriptural discipline. Church discipline is not optional. To refrain from disciplining a member according to the command of the Word of God is in itself a corporate sin for the entire church. (See this principle and strong admonition in 1 Cor. 5:1–13).

Third, there is a manifold purpose for church discipline. It is to be done with the motive of glorifying God through obedience to His Holy Word. Not to exercise discipline when the Scriptures demand it dishonors God by disobedience (1 Cor. 5:1–8, 12–13; 10:31). God is never glorified in disobedience. A sentimental love (i.e., a love that derives from the emotions rather than reflecting the righteous and holy character of God) is sinful if it causes a church to refrain from proper discipline. Church discipline is for the maintenance of the purity of the church in doctrine and practice (e.g., Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10–11; 2 Thess. 3:6) and is absolutely necessary (when proper and demanded by circumstances and the Word of God) in either grieving or quenching the ministry of the Holy Spirit within the assembly (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). Discipline is further necessary to maintain a godly, scriptural testimony and witness in the community for the glory of God. Any scandal or sinful situation that becomes known to society brings reproach upon the Name and cause of the Christ. (See the principle of possessing a suitable testimony before those outside the church, 1 Tim. 3:7). Finally, the purpose is to either restore or remove the offending member. If there is genuine repentance (i.e., a repentance evidenced by suitable “fruits,” Matt. 3:8; Lk. 17:3), then there may be restoration; but without repentance, there must be removal (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13; Tit. 3:10–11).

Fourth, the attitude expressed by the church in corrective discipline is to be one of love, concern, meekness and faithfulness to Christ (Jn. 13:34–35; Rom. 12:19–21; Gal. 6:1). The church is to corporately remember its own liabilities to temptation and sin and not act in a vindictive, self-righteous or haughty manner. If the love of the membership is a righteous, holy, humble love (reflective of the moral character of God, as in Rom. 13:8–10) and not sentimental, there will be simple faithfulness to the Lord Jesus and His Word. When an erring member is excluded, the members of the assembly are to avoid all unnecessary contact with that individual, considering him only as a possible object of evangelism until he is restored in true repentance (Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

Fifth, the final authority in disciplinary matters rests with the assembly as a whole: "...tell it to the church..." (Matt. 18:17). The local assembly is the final court of appeal and alone possesses the authority to discipline one of its members. The elders, deacons or any "board" within the church has no such authority. Neither has God ordained any committee, session, presbytery, synod or General Assembly to exercise church discipline. Corrective discipline is a local church matter and must include the entire church membership (i.e., the church acting as a body, and not merely through its representatives or spiritual leadership). It must be understood, however, that all the sordid details would not have to be made public if a right scriptural relationship existed within the membership and between the members and the church leadership.

Sixth, the extent of church discipline is withdrawal of fellowship or exclusion from membership (synonymous terms). (See Matt 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:12–13; 2 Thess. 3:6). The nature and extent of discipline is determined by the nature of the church. Romanism, which considers itself the only true church outside of which there is no salvation, teaches that the ultimate in church discipline is an excommunication that is synonymous with loss of salvation, or damnation. Historically, both Romanism and Protestantism, adhering to the principles of Constantinianism and a sacralist society, made spiritual offenses civil offenses. Church discipline, then, was ultimately a matter for the civil magistrate and the ultimate in church discipline was capital punishment. The State existed, according to the Reformers, primarily to punish evil-doers and maintain the purity of the church. Such betrays an Old Testament mentality and a complete disregard for the convicting, effectual power of the Holy Spirit and the truth to change individuals.

Seventh, what offenses are to be disciplined by the church? This vital question must be investigated both negatively and positively. Negatively, the church must abide by the clear teaching and abiding principles of the New Testament. The church cannot properly discipline anyone for an offense that is not at least treated in principle in the Scripture. Traditional prejudices or practices, cultural or social mores and areas within legitimate Christian liberty cannot be made suitable grounds for church discipline. The New Testament reveals a wide latitude for individual preferences and differences that are in themselves legitimate if observed within the proper Christian ethic. (See, for example, Rom. 12:1–2, 16; 15:1–23; 15:1–7; 1 Cor. 8:1–13; 9:4; Col. 2:16, 20–23). The Scriptures must ever be the church's only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Positively, there are several types of offense that are within the area of church discipline: first, offenses of a personal nature that cannot be settled personally and privately that become public and of such a nature that the assembly must act (Matt. 18:15–17). Second, there are sins of an overt moral character (e.g., drunkenness, covetousness, slander, theft and sexual immorality; see 1 Cor. 5:1–13; Eph. 5:3). Third, there are general offenses of misconduct of such a nature that the unity and testimony of the church is threatened (2 Thess. 3:6, 11, 14–15). Finally, there are instances wherein serious doctrinal error or disagreement threaten the truth and doctrinal unity of the church (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6–9; Tit. 3:10–11). Such must be dealt with for the sake of the doctrinal purity of the assembly.

Church discipline may in itself be disruptive, but "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). It is the Lord's church; faithlessness to Him means more than offending those who will not abide by His Word.

CHAPTER IX

THE POWER OF THE CHURCH: SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND ETHICAL

The New Testament church possesses power or authority derived from the Lord Jesus Christ and communicated by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 16:18–19; 28:18–20; Acts 1:4–8; 2:1–4; 4:29–33; 5:12–16; Rom. 1:16–17). Such power or authority is spiritual, moral and ethical; never civil, political or military. The church, as an institution through the preaching of the gospel, the power of the Spirit, the authority of the Scriptures and the lives of its members, is enabled to transform the lives of individuals and bring a strong ethical and moral principle into society as the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matt. 5:13–14). The New Testament principle of a regenerate assembly in a composite society (i.e., a society composed of various religious and social elements as distinct from a monolithic or sacralist society held together by a common religious loyalty that demands absolute and total conformity) has been historically rejected and resisted by Romanism and traditional Protestantism. The reason is apparent from an investigation of religious history.

THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE OF THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

The existing societies up to the time of the New Testament were sacralist in character. Every society was held together, not only by various national, racial and social distinctives, but also by a common religious loyalty. A society is sacralist or monolithic when it is held together by a common religious loyalty that forbids any departure from the national religion. The society of Ephesus was sacralist. (See Acts 19:8–41. The only preventative against the death penalty for the apostle Paul and others was that the Ephesians were under Roman law and could not implement their total control without incurring Roman intrusion). Babylon was monolithic (Dan. 3:1–30). The Jewish Theocracy was sacralist or monolithic. (The moral, civil, ceremonial and dietary laws were all bound together in the religion and worship of the Lord God. Any departure from this true worship or any infraction of these laws was considered both a criminal and a religious offence). The Old Testament religious system ordained by God for that economy was totalitarian, sacralist and monolithic.

The Jews during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ held to a sacralist principle, but were largely unable to implement it, as they were under the yoke of Rome. They were taxed to support a pagan government. Their land was occupied with a foreign, pagan army. Their religious observances were often held in contempt and they had no power of capital punishment (see Jn. 19:4–10). This led to increasing discontent and finally to the revolt that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. One confrontation of the Pharisees with the Lord manifested this attitude and also the drastic, radical departure from a sacralist mentality in His pronouncement:

“...Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's” (Matt. 22:17–21).

Such thinking was utterly foreign to their mentality. The Lord was declaring the principle of a composite society, a society that recognized the “separation of Church and State.” To these Jews, society and religion were one, but not to the Lord. Both the State and the Church each have their God-ordained sphere (see Rom. 13:1–7), but each are distinct from the other. This principle would characterize New Testament Christianity. The New Testament church would not be a *groepsverbandgodsdiens* (i.e., a society or group of people held together by national, racial, social and religious distinctives), but an entity entirely separate and distinctly different from society. The sacralist society of the Old economy must give way for the New Testament church in a composite society (i.e., a society characterized by various nationalities, religious beliefs; a society in which religion is not united to the civil authority). The New Testament church would not have (as the Old Testament Jewish religious system) civil, political or military power, but rather it would be characterized by spiritual distinctives and would exercise spiritual power. This was new and radically different from anything known before. (Even the disciples after the resurrection continued to labor under a sacralist, nationalistic mentality, slow to comprehend the universality of the gospel. They anticipated an earthly, Jewish kingdom with earthly, nationalist power. The Lord revealed that their power and authority were to be spiritual through the Gospel and the Spirit. (See Acts 1:4–8).

As the New Testament church is ordained for a composite society, it possesses power and “weapons” suitable to its sphere, viz., spiritual weapons in the form of the preaching of the truth, prayer, and moral, ethical persuasion. (See 2 Cor. 10:3–6, where Paul states that “our weapons are not carnal,” i.e., fleshly, political, physical, man-engendered). The church is not to coerce men with the sword or threat of the civil authority, but challenge and persuade them with the truth by the enabling grace of God.

THE STATE OF PRE-CONSTANTINIAN CHRISTIANITY

A knowledge of the first three centuries of Christianity is vital to an understanding of the change from a composite society to a “Christian sacralism” that would characterize both the Church of Rome and the churches of the Protestant Reformation. Two principles were at work during this era that would shape the history of Christianity for a millennium and a half. The first principle was a sacralist mentality. All pre-Christian societies were sacralist or monolithic and so demanded a politico-religious loyalty. Heresy or departure from the national religion was considered treason. Religious conformity was viewed as essential to the preservation of the State. In the Roman Empire, with its State religion centering in Emperor worship, various religions could be continued if their adherents would simply acknowledge the Emperor as Lord. (As all pagans were polytheists, this presented no problem except to the Jews, who were avowed monotheists. Rome made them the sole exception, a *religio licita*, because of the great consternation and tumult in Judea). During the first three centuries, Christians were faced with this test of loyalty—to them, a religious test. They were required to burn a pinch of incense at the shrine of the Emperor (i.e., before his ensign or image) and declare “Caesar is Lord” (Καίσαρ Κύριος). Such was meant to keep the citizens loyal, but this the Christians could not do, for “Christ is Lord” (Χριστός κύριος). Although they were good citizens, paid their taxes and were loyal to the government in every other sphere, they were persecuted as “atheists” and traitors to the State! Such was life—and death—in a sacralist or monolithic society.

The second principle was the rise of ecclesiasticism in the churches that had grown worldly and degenerate. From local pastors or bishops, there arose parochial bishops, then monarchical bishops and finally metropolitan bishops who ruled over wide geographical areas. This ecclesiastical structure would be joined to the State under Constantine and assimilated into the old, pagan, sacralist Roman State system.

THE CONSTANTINIAN CHANGE

Pre-Constantinian Christianity had already largely departed from the New Testament pattern through the principle of ecclesiasticism and the fatal error of baptismal regeneration. This apostate part of Christianity (increasingly separate from the multitude of New Testament churches that continued to exist) was now prepared for its amalgamation with the Roman sacralist State.

Constantine the Great (274–337 AD) overcame the other two men of the Triumvirate (Maxentius and Licinius) to become sole Emperor of the Empire. He claimed victory the sign of a cross (*Hoc signo vinces*, “by this sign conquer”) and in the name of the God of Christianity. It seems evident historically that this was an astute political move on his part, uniting the forces of Christianity within his ranks. His opponents had already sought to propitiate the old Roman gods, and so Constantine could hope to gather support from neither them nor the people. In 313 AD (Edict of Milan), he gave full legal status to Christianity. From 316 to 321 AD, he sought to harmonize conflicting factions within Christianity by his official power. He personally presided over the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. (The Arian Controversy). During this time Constantine still retained his official title of *Pontifex Maximus*, or High priest of the Roman cultus (the title now assumed by the Pope of Rome). The apostate religious system, marked by ecclesiasticism and the heresy of baptismal regeneration, was now made the church of the Empire.

This “Constantinian change” brought about a contradiction in terms, a “Christian sacralism.” Christianity was meant for a composite society, with the New Testament church a separate and distinct entity, distinguished by spiritual characteristics. It was intended to be a society of believers in an unbelieving society. The apostate ecclesiastical system had turned to a pre-Christian mentality and so lost any remaining New Testament characteristic. The church’s power was no longer spiritual, but political, civil and military. This apostate church now possessed two “swords” (at least so she thought), the “Sword of the Spirit” and the sword of the civil magistrate. This system had forsaken the spiritual weapons and exchanged them for carnal ones.

The results of this “Constantinian change” were three in number: first, apart from the apostate church were large numbers of New Testament churches which were now considered heretical and subject to persecution by the State—Churches that maintained the New Testament distinctives of a regenerate church membership, believers’ baptism and personal conversion, denying the unholy alliance between Church and State. Second, the civil magistrate was now viewed as an office in the church, a legitimate constituent of the “Body of Christ,” the secular arm, bearing the sword of steel for the authority of “truth.” Third, the principle of coercion was born upon the premise of a “Christian sacralism” New Testament Christianity was meant to rely upon the effectual, Spirit-empowered preaching of the gospel, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and the moral forces of prayer, Scripture and godly lives to effect the conversion of men and to maintain a preserving

influence in society. Truth was to be embraced voluntarily by personal conviction and faith. The Constantinian principle brought coercion. This is noted graphically in the philosophy of Augustine (354–430 AD). He was a great Church Father, a champion of the grace of God, but he was also a thorough-going Constantinian. In his debates against the Donatists he used the Lord's parable of the supper and the servant (Lk. 14:23) to teach that men must be forced to receive the truth of the Catholic Church for their own good! He declared that in the time of the apostles, Christianity had not yet received its full power and was unable to retain some of its followers (Jn. 6:65–69), but now that it possessed the power of the State, it could coerce or 'compel' men to come into its fold.

...at that time the church was only just beginning to burst forth from the newly planted seed and that saying had not as yet been fulfilled in her 'All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him.' It is in proportion to the more enlarged fulfillment of this prophecy that the church now wields greater power—so that she may now not only invite but also compel men to embrace that which is good.¹⁴

As salvation was considered to be "in the church" and not apart from it, to coerce men into the church was to "save" them for their own good. This sacralist philosophy was no different from any modern totalitarian system (e.g., Nazism, Communism, etc.). Pope Pelagius in 553 declared: "...unto the coercing of heretics and schismatics the Church possesses the secular arm, to coerce in case men cannot be brought to sanity by reasonable argument."¹⁵

The custom of burning heretics was the product of this philosophy. This ungodly, barbarous practice was the result of allegorizing John 15:1–6 and applying the symbols to the Church. If a person were obstinate in spite of all the efforts of the church, he was to be delivered to the secular arm, the civil magistrate, for burning!

Thus, the "Constantinian change" produced a hybrid, a State church with a pre-Christian mentality, a church that alone could dispense salvation through her sacerdotalism (i.e., the manipulation of the sacraments by a priest, e.g., baptismal regeneration, etc.), an ecclesiastical system whose structure paralleled that of the State. This system had the power to coerce men and, under penalty of death, and bring them within its totalitarian grasp. In subsequent history, as the political power of Rome faded, ecclesiastical Rome rose to take its place, until the Papal power by the eighth century could crown or depose kings. Throughout Medieval Ages this Constantinian principle would be the basis for the death of untold millions of New Testament believers who dared to remain faithful to God. This illegitimate system would send forth armies to crush the strongholds of New Testament Christianity in the Piedmont and southern coast of France. From Poland to the Black Sea, from Africa to England, the dreaded armies of ecclesiastical Rome would bring inquisition, suffering and death in the name of God! Such was the nature of Constantinianism and religious totalitarian power.

¹⁴ Augustine, *Letter to Donatus Number 173, The Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers*, St. Augustine, Vol. I, pp. 546–547.

¹⁵ Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*. p. 71.

THE REFORMERS AND NEO-CONSTANTINIANISM

The dawn of the Protestant Reformation was the anticipation of a new day, a hoped-for time of religious freedom and the triumph of the gospel and the principles of New Testament Christianity. The Reformers raised the cry of *Sola Scriptura* against the traditions and practices of Rome and were met by untold thousands of New Testament believers who had remained hidden in the forests, mountains and rural recesses all over Europe. But these were to be bitterly disappointed in the Reformation and ultimately were to suffer at the bloody hands of the Protestant Reformers as they had suffered under Rome. The Protestant Reformers, leaving the Constantinianism of Rome, were, by the force of their sacralist mentality and Roman background, led into a neo-Constantinianism that became only a rival system to Romanism.

The dilemma of the Reformers was that, although they knew from the Scriptures the nature of the New Testament church with a regenerate membership (i.e., a truly spiritual church composed of believers only), they had to face the armies and political power of Rome. Rather than being obedient to the principles of New Testament Christianity, they reverted to a pre-Christian mentality (They remembered their Romanism all too well), and joined forces with the civil powers to combat Rome and the Anabaptists. (Zwingli was convinced of New Testament principles and was numbered with the brethren at first, but turned against them for the aid of the City Council and the power of the State. He then became a bitter enemy of the Baptists). In so doing, the Protestant Reformation established a neo-Constantinian system that rivaled Rome.

The results of this neo-Constantinianism were basically three: first, a schizophrenic view of the church. In seeking to combine the old Constantinian view of the church (i.e., a sacralist society including all within given geographical boundaries, a *corpus mixtum* or *corpus Christianum*) with a New Testament concept of the church (i.e., a regenerate assembly, or believers' church), they were forced to retreat to a Neo-platonic idea of a "visible church" composed of both saved and unsaved (Constantinian, sacralist) and a "Universal, Invisible Church" composed of only the truly saved or elect. Second, they were led to a complete and utter misunderstanding of the Anabaptists, or New Testament believers. In their sacralist mentality the Reformers viewed the Anabaptists as against all civil government, when in reality they only (and rightly) saw the Church and State as separate entities. For this, they were severely persecuted as anarchists! The third result was a concerted and widespread effort to either bring the Anabaptists within the sacralist system or exterminate them. Thus, the Protestant Reformation found itself in the very position of Rome in dealing with dissidents who held to a New Testament concept of the church.

THE REFORMERS AND THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

The sacralist or pre-Christian mentality of the Protestant Reformers in their neo-Constantinianism led them to view the civil magistrate as an office within the church. All infants were to be baptized and made citizens of the State and members of the church. Anabaptists and Jews, when found, were forced to have their infant children baptized into the State church also as the Protestant or Reformed churches were sacralist in character, their concept of church discipline departed radically from the New Testament. Church discipline rarely fell upon those who indulged in sinful practices; rather, it was used against New Testament Christians who refused to identify with the State religious system. With a

dualistic view of the “visible church” as a *corpus mixtum*, no consistent New Testament discipline could be implemented. When godly Anabaptist dissidents argued against lack of discipline in sacralist churches on New Testament grounds, they found themselves being brought before the civil magistrates for being schismatic and heretical. The alternative was either conformity to the sacralist system with its lack of truly Christian character or banishment and death.

A survey of the Protestant Reformers and their concept of the civil magistrate reveals what might be called the “shadow” or “black mark” against the Reformation in its treatment of many New Testament believers who suffered under such a Constantinian philosophy.

Martin Luther at the first of the Reformation was given to the thought of freedom of conscience, but by varying degrees he became a strong persecutor of the Anabaptists for their beliefs, finally advocating for them the death penalty. In a recommendation drawn up by Luther, Bugenhagen and Creutziger, it is stated:

Every person is duty-bound to prevent and suppress blasphemy, each according to his status. By virtue of this commandment princes and civil authorities have the power and the duty to abolish unlawful cults and to establish orthodox teaching and worship. Concerning this point Leviticus applies: “He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, let him be put to death.” ...princes must not only protect the goods and the physical being of their subjects, but their most essential function is to promote the honor of God, to repress blasphemy and idolatry. That is why in the Old Testament the kings ... put false prophets and idolaters to death. Such examples apply to the function of the princes.¹⁶

Such thinking reveals the openness of the pre-Christian mentality of neo-Constantinianism and also the primary attachment all “Christian sacralism” has had with the Old Testament. It must be remembered that the Old Testament religious system was itself Pre-Christian and sacralist. Religious wars, persecution, and the death of heretics are Old Testament, not New. The New Testament church was ordained for a composite society, never a sacral. But such thinking characterized every single Protestant Reformer.

Urbanus Rhegius, a trusted associate of Luther’s, wrote the following:

When heresy breaks forth ... then the magistrate must punish not with less but with greater vigor than is employed against other evil-doers, robbers, murderers, thieves and the like... Therefore a Christian magistrate must make it his first concern to keep the Christian religion pure. ... All who know history will know what has been done in this matter by such men as Constantine... and others.¹⁷

It follows that our magistrates should punish heretics and faction-makers and exterminate them, not with less, but with greater zeal than did the kings in the Old Testament.¹⁸

Philip Melancthon, Luther’s main associate and successor, although personally not as imposing nor vehement in personality, was nonetheless just as strong a Constantinian.

¹⁶ Leonard Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, p. 195. Also see Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, pp. 294–296; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 401–403.

¹⁷ Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, p. 50.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

After hearing of Servatus' death in Geneva at the hands of Calvin and the Consistory, he wrote the following: "The church owes and always will owe a debt of gratitude to you for having put the heretic to death."¹⁹

Martin Bucer, another Lutheran Reformer, who lived first at Strasbourg (where Calvin sat at his feet during his formative years, 1538–1541), then in Britain where he labored among the English Reformers, stated: "It is the magistrates' duty not to tolerate that anyone assails openly or reviles the doctrine of the gospel... He is not to be tolerated in a Christian Republic who refuses to be taught the things pertaining to the kingship of Christ."²⁰

Although Ureich Zwingli at first embraced the Scriptures alone as the authoritative rule of faith and practice and fellowshipped with the Anabaptists, he later accepted the power of the State [The Council of Zurich] and turned against his brethren. He became one of the worst persecutors during the Reformation era. At his instigation, the Council of St. Gaul passed an edict which read in part:

In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If anyone is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment... Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers and leaders of hedge meetings are to be drowned... Foreign Baptists are to be driven out; if they return they shall be drowned... No one is allowed to secede from the (Zwinglian) Church.²¹

John Calvin in Geneva, although so astute in other areas of doctrine and biblical scholarship, was a devout sacralist and Constantinian in his thinking. His intolerance is noted in this statement:

The principle task of the magistrates is not the business of keeping their subjects in peace as to the body; rather is it to bring about that God is served and honored in their domains... the magistrates have the duty of purging the church of offences by bodily punishments and coercions...²²

It is in this light that the burning of Servatus must be considered. To lightly state that the Reformers must be viewed in their own times is to beg the question. They knew from the Scriptures the distinctives of a New Testament church; they opted for a sacralist society and a State church from their Romish background and for the sake of expediency. Calvin's successor at Geneva, Theodore Beza, did find fault with Constantine—he thought the Emperor too lenient!

After God had launched Christianity by unarmed Apostles He afterward raised up kings by whose wisdom He intended to protect His Church (Referring to Psalms 2)... When we invoke lawfully and divinely instituted protection against stubborn and incorrigible heretics we only do what the Word of God and the authority of the Holy prophets assert...

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²¹ John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*, I, p. 121. Also see J. M. Cramp, *History of the Baptists*, pp. 178–179; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 330f.

²² Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, p. 58.

Will not Constantine be judged to be guilty in this matter? He would have been wiser if he had defended more sternly the majesty of Christ so wickedly and stubbornly attacked...²³

Zwingli's successor at Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger, wrote the following upon the accession of Edward VI to the English throne:

Blessed be that bounteous Lord, which hath not suffered the princes, who by His divine providence He hath made and ordained to be the supreme governors of His church, immediately under Him... to err and be deceived any longer, but did most mercifully open their eyes to look upon that comfortable Son of righteousness and light of the truth... who shall with all prudence shed the blood of them that did shed the innocent blood...²⁴

The Belgic Confession, drawn up for the Reformed Church in the Netherlands in 1561 AD and revised at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1619, states in its thirty-sixth article:

God... hath invested the magistracy with the sword for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. And their office is, not only to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also that they protect the sacred ministry, and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of antichrist may be thus destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must, therefore, countenance the preaching of the Gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by every one. as He commands in His Word... Wherefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and would subvert justice, introduce a community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God hath established among men.²⁵

The sacralist mentality of the Reformers led them to consider the Baptists as seditious, anarchist in nature because they could not become part of the State church in a monolithic society.

Among the English Reformers who themselves were later burnt for their faith, Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and John Rogers had a young Baptist woman, Joan of Kent, burnt, as previously noted²⁶ The English Church was strongly Constantinian or sacralist. Indeed, among the Puritans and Presbyterians such thinking was well known. Edmund Calamy in a sermon to Parliament in 1644 stated:

If you do not labor according to your duty and power to suppress the errors that are being spread in the kingdom then all these errors are your errors and these heresies your heresies; then you are the Anabaptists... and 'tis you then that hold that all religions are to be tolerated.²⁷

Robert Baylie, a member of the august Westminster Assembly of Divines, wrote: "Liberty of conscience and toleration of any and all religious is so prodigious an impiety that this religious parliament cannot but abhor the very meaning of it."

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁵ Phillip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, III, pp. 432–433.

²⁶ See p. 32. See Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I. p. 46f.; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, p. 450; J. M. Cramp, *History of the Baptists*, pp. 235–236.

²⁷ Leonard Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, p. 217.

Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), who was first a Dutch Reformed minister, then the founder and Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, and finally Prime Minister of the Netherlands, was a thoroughgoing Constantinian. He wrote that:

If coercion by the State only worked we would not for one moment hesitate to employ it...I do not draw back if someone should say, "Then you desire and propose that if need require it idolatry and similar sins may be punished capitally!" If need be, very certainly...²⁸

In colonial America, Baptists and other dissidents suffered at the hands of the neo-Constantinian sacralist societies, especially in Massachusetts and Virginia. Baptists were disenfranchised, banished, their properties confiscated, their bodies beaten and their lives imperiled by imprisonment in the Colonies before the ratification of The Constitution of these United States. A community in Ashfield, near Boston, in 1770, comprised largely of Baptists, had to bear the expenses of a Presbyterian meetinghouse and minister. They were taxed heavily for it, and, unable to meet the expenses, were ordered by the court to forfeit their homes and property. This, in spite of their majority, their protection of the Presbyterians from the Indians, etc.²⁹ Many Baptist ministers were imprisoned and mistreated in Virginia and some beaten and imprisoned in other colonies.³⁰ The First Amendment to the Constitution of these United States of America was the direct result of Baptist influence and petition to the leaders of the country. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."³¹

THE TRUE RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND STATE

Both the State and the church are God-ordained (Rom. 13:1–7; Matt. 18:15–17). Each has its respective power and sphere of authority. The power of the State is civil, political and military. It possesses the power of capital punishment under God. The church possesses spiritual, moral and ethical power and authority (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:4–8; 2 Cor. 10: 3–5). The New Testament presupposes a composite society in which the church and State exercise their respective power and authority in their own spheres. Thus, the church does not possess the power of capital punishment, or even corporal punishment. The extent of the church's power or authority over an erring member is that of excommunication, exclusion from membership or withdrawal of fellowship (all synonymous terms. See Rom. 16:17; Matt. 18:15–17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15). Both the church and the State by nature are to exercise a moral and ethical influence in society, and do so to the extent that they reflect the Word of God in their moral fiber and administration. However, even when the spheres of the church and State do overlap, they do not at all coincide. For example, if a member of a church is convicted of a criminal act, the civil authorities may exact criminal charges. The church, however, deals with the criminal as an

²⁸ Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, p. 79.

²⁹ A. D. Gillette, *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707–1807*, pp. 115–116.

³⁰ See Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, pp. 200–228; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, II; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 619–732.

³¹ See John Q. Adams, *Baptists Thorough Reformers*, pp. 101–103; John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 241–252.

offending member. That person is to be excluded from the fellowship. This is the extent of church discipline. Should the individual repent (i.e., a true, scriptural repentance manifested by the proper fruits such as restitution in the case of thievery, for example, where such can be made), the assembly may reinstate him. This might not, however, bring a dismissal of criminal charges on the part of the State. The spheres of power and authority overlap, but they do not necessarily coincide.

Should the church be involved in politics? The answer to this question concerns the nature of the church. Those who hold to a “Universal, Invisible Church” theory cannot rightly separate the “church” from individual believers; i.e., where a Christian is, there is the “church” in principle. Thus, when individual believers (especially religious leaders) are involved in political issues, the cry goes out for “the separation of Church and State!” On New Testament principles distinction must be made between Christians as individuals pursuing their respective professions (law, politics, trade, labor) and the church as a corporate entity. A Christian as an individual has every right and obligation to be involved in preserving the freedom and rights of his society as a citizen. He has a further right and obligation to influence society by and through his personal moral and ethical standards (i.e., Biblical morality and ethics). He has as much right as those who labor to destroy the moral principles of society through their immoral and unethical principles and behavior (Matt. 5:13)! But such action does not constitute a “violation of the separation of Church and State.” Thus a distinction must be made between believers as individual citizens or as members of the community and the church as a corporate entity.

NOTE: for further study, See John Q. Adams, *Baptists Thorough Reformers*; W.J. Burgess, *Baptist Faith and Martyrs' Fires*; Thieleman J. Van Braght, *Martyr's Mirror*; John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*; *Christian Martyrs of the World*; Edward T. Hiscox, *A New Directory for Baptist Churches*; Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*; Leonard Verduin, *The Anatomy of A Hybrid: A Study in Church-State Relationships*; *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*.

CHAPTER X

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH: PASTORS AND DEACONS

The governing principle of these studies is that to the extent that a church conforms to the New Testament, to that extent it is a New Testament church; and to the extent that a church ceases to conform to the New Testament, to that extent it ceases to be a New Testament church. The question of church offices is relevant in view of the historical ecclesiasticism, tradition and pragmatism prevalent in church polity. There are basically three realities that determine the officers of the Church: first, the nature of the church. The New Testament reveals no religious organization or ecclesiastical office existing above and beyond that of the local assembly—no presbytery, convention, classus, synod, general assembly, archbishop, cardinal or pope. The offices are those within the local assembly alone. Second, the temporary nature of the Apostolic office (which ended when the last of the original Apostles died). No one was elected or chosen to succeed them. Matthias did not “succeed” Judas, he replaced him—a unique situation done in obedience to Scripture. (See Acts 1:15–26). No “Apostolic succession” has existed since the first century AD. Third, situations peculiar to the individual congregation. Most congregations have the positions of “church clerk,” “church secretary,” “church treasurer” or “trustee.” These are not properly called offices, as they are within the boundaries of the deacons’ administration of the

financial affairs of the assembly (Acts 6:1–6). Such positions are those of “helps,” existing by delegated authority from the deacons, and possess no inherent authority in themselves. These distinct positions arose because the deacons as individuals did not possess the skills or abilities for the particular tasks involved. The positions of “youth pastor,” “missionary chairman,” “social director,” “music minister, etc., are all unscriptural and, with the exception of the last, might designate either pastoral or deaconate work.

THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

The New Testament uses three basic terms interchangeably to designate the pastoral office. Each word emphasizes an aspect or character of the work of the ministry.³²

The first term is “pastor” (ποιμήν), which means “shepherd,” one who cares for the flock, and so one who pastors or shepherds the flock of God. This symbolism was inherited from the Old Testament and is impressive in its appropriateness to the work of the ministry. (See Jer. 32:1–4; Jn. 10:1–16, 26–30; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4. The verb form, ποιμαίνω, occurs in Jn. 21:16; Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet. 5:2 as “feed,” referring to the pastoral ministry).

The second word is “elder” (πρεσβύτερος, from πρέσβυς, “old, aged”). This refers to the dignity and responsibility of the ministry, having a derived meaning (from an elder being an old man or patriarch) of first in rank or order and responsibility, senior. (see Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1.)

The third term is “bishop” (ἐπίσκοπος, from ἐπί, “over,” and σκόπος, “to see”), or “overseer,” a shepherd, leader. (See Acts 1:20; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1–2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25; also see “overseers” in Acts 20:28 and “taking the oversight” in 1 Pet. 5:2.) All three terms describe the same pastoral office.

The qualifications for the pastoral office are clearly defined in the New Testament. (See 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9.) First, the individual must be a man.

NOTE: Women, although not inferior beings, persons or Christians, are biblically precluded from the pastoral office. The woman is not to be in a place of leadership in the local assembly, but to be in silence with a godly disposition. She is precluded from leading in prayer, preaching or teaching. The Greek of 1 Tim. 2:12 and the context (v. 8–15) clearly state, not only that women are not to teach men, but that women are precluded from a teaching position under the church's authority altogether. To object that many women are better suited personally, academically and psychologically to relate to children and that children respond better to women is to beg the question. The sphere of the woman is very practical. The older women are to teach the younger. This implies practical example, not doctrinal instruction. The unscriptural trend that has led to women teachers in the modern “Sunday

³² “Pastor” (ποιμήν, shepherd) and “Bishop” (ἐπίσκοπος, overseer, one who exercises oversight) both refer to the work of the Gospel ministry—that of pastoring or overseeing the local assembly or flock of Christ. “Elder” (πρεσβύτερος, has the primary connotation of “aged,” then of maturity, seniority of rank, or a position of responsibility). These terms are all used interchangeably in the New Testament for the ministerial office within the local church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Note also that often the terms “servant” (διάκονος) and “steward” (οἰκονόμος) are commonly used for the gospel ministry.

School” has reaped its share of evils in a disintegration of the leadership of the men in the local assembly. See 1 Cor. 11:1–16; 14:34–35; 1 Tim. 2:8–15; Tit. 2:3–5.

Second, he must evidence the call of God to the ministry. This is marked in his personality (note that the emphasis in 1 Tim. 3:1–7 is upon the individual’s personal character; if such is greatly defective, it would preclude an acceptable ministry), the possession of necessary preaching and pastoral gifts and some evidence that the assembly is edified by his ministry. Without these, the call of God stands in great doubt. Third, he must be desirous of his pastoral office. A man who would dare to enter the ministry unwillingly would be hard pressed to put his heart into it when he faced the inherent opposition associated with it. Fourth, he must possess an unblemished character (i.e., he must be of unquestionable morality). “Husband of one wife,” *μῑᾱς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, *anarthrous*, emphasizes, “a one–woman–kind–of–man.” Being married is not sufficient. He must also be temperate, self–controlled and a hospitable individual. Fifth, the minister must evidence the necessary gifts. Sixth, he must be the undisputed head of his home. Should he lack this, he could never exercise a suitable ministry nor gain the respect of the assembly. Seventh, he must be of a mature Christian character sufficient to the work of the ministry. Finally, he must have a good reputation in the community, as the entire assembly is reflected in him.

The responsibilities of the pastoral office are given in principle in Acts 6:4 (see v. 1–4): “prayer and the ministry of the Word.” It is noteworthy that prayer is placed in the primary position. It forms the basis for everything in the ministry. The “ministry of the Word” includes the whole realm of pastoral labor: preaching, teaching, the spiritual oversight or shepherding of the flock of God. It follows, therefore, that the pastor is not the “religious executive,” the “dictator” or the “public relations man” and administrator of the church. He is, however, to be the spiritual leader and he is to be organized. (See 1 Tim. 3:2; “good behavior,” *κόσμιον*, connotes orderly or organized).

Is there to be a plurality of elders? Acts 14:23 has been used to teach the necessity of a plurality of elders in every assembly. Two qualifications are in order for this consideration: first, God raises up men within the local assembly and qualifies them for the ministry or eldership. He may not raise up a plurality of men in a young church or in one that is rather small in number. A single elder or pastor does not disqualify any New Testament church. Second, it would be sinful and contrary to the nature of the church to elevate any person to the office of elder if he were not qualified. The office of elder–pastor–bishop must presuppose a definite call of God, the necessary gifts, personality and disposition for that work. Failure at this point would be extremely detrimental to the church.

Is there a distinction between a “teaching elder” and a “ruling elder?” (See Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17). The New Testament considers both to be within the pastorate (1 Tim. 5:17). The concept of a “teaching elder,” or pastor and a “board of ruling elders” who are not pastors (i.e., not gifted or qualified for the pastoral office) is not scriptural, but based upon an Old Testament concept of the church, tradition and expediency. The idea of ruling in the New Testament is a pastoral concept within the local assembly and is not to be identified with the Elders of Israel in the Old Testament or the Sanhedrin in the New. These latter two institutions were sacral in nature (i.e., political, social and religious), not pastoral in the New Testament sense.

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The office of deacon was instituted as an office of necessity, and was intended to bring a division of ministry into the church (see Acts 6:1–4). The eldership is the spiritual leadership of the local assembly while the office of deacon is the administrative aspect. The word “deacon” (διάκονος, from διώκω, “to pursue, hasten,” hence διακονεῖν, “to serve”) means literally to “serve tables.” and was used by Peter in this sense at the institution of the office (Acts 6:2).

The diaconate is not a minimal office in the church, but a very central and necessary one, hence the high qualifications and standard for any men who would fill the office. (See Acts 6:2–6; 1 Tim. 3:8–13). Deacons must be spiritually mature and outstanding men, proven, honest, temperate, serious, not greedy, doctrinally sound and good husbands and fathers.

The responsibilities of the office must be considered both negatively and positively, as tradition has obscured this office more than any other within the New Testament church. Negatively, the deacons are not the “ruling board” of the church. The New Testament churches had deacons, but no “deacon boards.” The only boards in the New Testament were the ones on which Paul and his fellow companions came ashore from the shipwreck! (See Acts 27:43–44). Yet it is traditional (though decidedly unscriptural) for the deacons to form a “board” of the spiritual leadership of the church (equivalent to a Presbyterian “session” of elders or a Reformed “consistory”). This is an intrusion into the pastoral office. The ministry of the deacons is in the administration of the financial and physical affairs of the assembly. Traditionally, this has been cared for by a “board of trustees,” yet this is the very task of the diaconate! Trustees might be needed legally for the church as a corporation, a legal entity, but the deacons are the trustees. Positively, the deacons are for the administrative concerns of the church: the finances, the needs of the pastor, the distribution of the funds, the welfare of the needy within the assembly and the physical properties.

Deacons do form part of the (unofficial) spiritual leadership of the church. This is noted from their spiritual qualifications and deportment. They are to be spiritually preeminent men within the congregation, spiritual leaders by their own godliness and maturity. Some deacons in the New Testament had preaching gifts and utilized these in evangelistic work, although they did not hold the office of pastor or elder. (See Stephen in Acts 6:5, 8–7:60; Philip in Acts 8:5–6, 26–40).

It is a New Testament principle that preachers, pastors, elders, bishops (all synonymous terms) and deacons be chosen from the congregation by the local assembly (see Acts 1:15–26; 6:1–5; 13:1–4; 14:23; 1 Tim 3:1–13; Tit. 1:5–9), there being no apostolic office or succession. It should be noted that under the neo-Constantinianism of the Protestant Reformation and within sacralist societies, ministers must be licensed by the State in order to preach. This principle has rarely been favorable to spiritual qualifications, contrary to the New Testament, which holds them as primary.

NOTE: Some would make the “deaconess” an office within the local assembly, based upon the questionable rendering of Rom. 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:11. In the former passage “servant” is the feminine rendering of “deacon,” but as it is the general word for one who serves, it does not necessitate an official title or office. In the latter passage, “wives” is literally “women” and may possibly refer to deaconesses, but the context is in favor of the deacons’ wives. Further, there is no pressing need for

deaconesses in the local assembly, as there is for deacons. The sphere of labor, viz., practical work, could be performed by any godly woman member of the assembly.

NOTE: for further study, see Edward T. Hiscox, *A New Directory for Baptist Churches*; J. M. Pendleton, *Baptist Church Manual*; J. Clyde Turner, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Church*.

CHAPTER XI THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH: BAPTISM

BAPTISM AN ORDINANCE—NOT A SACRAMENT

The term “ordinance” (from the Latin *ordinare*, to put in order) denotes something ordered, decreed, or commanded. In the “Great Commission,” the Lord declared, “...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:20). Every command of the Lord to His church is an “ordinance” in principle. The primary and central Gospel ordinance is preaching. Historically and theologically, Baptists have distinguished between the “ordinances” of baptism and the Lord’s Supper and the Romish or Protestant “sacraments,” i.e., those rites that are meant to be a means of grace in some mystical sense.³³ Historically and theologically, therefore, the term “ordinance” distinguishes baptism and the Lord’s Supper as being only symbolic and representative in nature and considers them to be means of grace only insofar as they bring the mind and heart to fix themselves upon the spiritual reality thus symbolized. The term presupposes no mystical significance whatsoever.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Baptism is not a “seal of the covenant” as circumcision was in the Old Testament (Gen. 17). Even the circumcision of Abraham was “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised” (Rom. 4:11), i.e., the faith of Abraham preceded his circumcision. Circumcision was a sign of the Old Covenant made with Israel with respect to the land of Canaan; baptism is a gospel ordinance peculiar to the New Testament church and economy. It is the symbolic picture or representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Rom. 6:1–6). When a person submits to scriptural baptism in obedience to the Lord and his Word, he identifies himself publicly in the symbolism of the gospel. Baptism is at once an act of obedience, identification and submission. It is an act of obedience to God and His Word (See Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:41). As such, it is “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Pet. 3:20–21). It is an act of identification in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3–5). As such, it focuses upon His

³³ An ordinance is a direction or command of an authoritative nature (Lat. *ordo*, to put in order, decree, establish). A sacrament is a means of grace through a given element, e.g., baptism or communion (Gk. μυστήριον, mystery; Lat. *sacramentum*, secret, *sacer*, holy). Observance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are commands of our Lord (Matt. 28:20), not physical elements through which grace is secretly or mysteriously communicated. The Protestant “sacramental mentality” was inherited from the Romish notion of baptismal regeneration and the Mass. Romish *transubstantiation* is to a given extent revived in Lutheran *consubstantiation* and present to a given degree in the Reformed idea of the sacrament, which posits something mysterious and beyond the physical elements.

saving work and efficacious blood and so is a symbolic cleansing from sin (See Acts 22:16). It is an act of submission to the “Name” of the Lord Jesus, i.e., a public acknowledgment of His Lordship over the life (Acts 2:38).

THE REASONING FOR INFANT SPRINKLING

The argument for infant sprinkling is taken from the traditional Reformed view of “covenant theology,” not from the Scriptures, which are not only silent on the subject, but clearly and unmistakably teach the baptism of believers only, and that by immersion.³⁴ The idea that baptism replaced circumcision as a covenant–sign was first used by Zwingli and Bullinger in their debates with the Anabaptists in the early era of the Sixteenth Century Reformation.³⁵ Subsequent Reformed theologians have simply followed their lead and sought refine their argument, making the Abrahamic covenant identical with the Covenant of Grace. Infant sprinkling and believer’s baptism do not agree on any given point and cannot be parallel to any extent. It is not merely a question of the mode and subjects of “baptism,” it is also a question of purpose and significance that reaches to the very essence of salvation by grace alone. The “baptism” or “rhantism”(ῥαντίζειν, to sprinkle) of infants is a “sacrament” that to a given extent mysteriously confers or communicates grace. These “covenant children” are thus in some way “united to Christ,” have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life,³⁶ and enter within the “pale” of the church. They are considered as presumptively regenerated until the contrary appears in their lives. Should they die in such a state, they are certain of heaven. What is this, but the shadow of Rome obscuring the light of the Truth from the traditional Protestant mentality? The clear and unmistakable teaching of the New Testament is the immersion of believers in the name of the triune God. Neither subjects nor mode of baptism can be changed without altogether altering both its meaning and its significance.

NOTE: This change may be noted in part in a paper entitled “The Covenant Context for Evangelism,” Dr. Norman Shepherd, Chairman of the department of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, writes:

The covenant affords the perspective from which the evangelistic task of the church ought to be approached...1. The Great Commission arises out of and is patterned after the Covenant made with Abraham...2. Reformed evangelistic methodology must be consciously oriented to the covenant of grace rather than to the doctrine of election...3. *Baptism rather than*

³⁴ Infant sprinkling is neither a “good” nor a “necessary consequence” deduced from Scripture. It is rather a traditional idea imported into Scripture from Romish tradition and a process of arguing “from the covenant” in the context of an “Old Testament mentality.” Cf. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 632: “*The Scriptural basis for infant baptism*. It may be said at the outset that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children, and that there is not a single instance in which we are plainly told that children were baptized. But this does not necessarily make infant baptism un–Biblical...” He then proceeds to “argue from the covenant” and seeks to relate baptism to circumcision.

³⁵ See Appendix I, “Covenant Theology.”

³⁶ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, III, p. 588: “...those parents sin grievously against the souls of their children who neglect to consecrate them to God in the ordinance of baptism. Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life, even if they afterwards choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means of their salvation.”

*regeneration is the point of transition from lostness in death to salvation in life.*³⁷

This view is an example of what has become known as “The New Perspective on Paul” [NPP] and has also become the center of the “Federal Vision” Theology.

THE “NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL”

The “New Perspective on Paul,”³⁸ which became an issue in the 1970s, is the culmination of over a century of studies in Pauline Theology [the theological distinctives of the Apostle Paul] and a subsequent departure from essential truths. This movement began with an investigation of first century Judaism [“Second Temple Judaism”], concluding that it had been caricatured by Lutheran and Reformation Theology with their doctrine of a forensic justification by faith alone, contrasted with an alleged legalistic Judaism, which maintained a works-righteousness.

Major doctrines have been re-cast in Pauline Theology: e.g., Paul was not converted on the Road to Damascus, he simply had a call to include the Gentiles in the covenant people of God. The “law” in Paul’s writings included circumcision, Sabbath and dietary laws—markers for Jewish covenant distinctiveness—and was not a polemic against a works-righteousness, but against a Jewish exclusiveness. As the covenant-people of God was now to include the Gentiles, everything must be seen in the context of this covenant of grace [“covenantal nomism”], including the gospel, evangelism, baptism and justification. The “gospel” consists of community inclusion and Christ’s Lordship, not salvation. Baptism has been elevated by some within this movement to a regenerative sacrament [baptismal regeneration]. Justification is seen as essentially ecclesiastical [church or covenant-related] rather than soteriological [salvation related]. Justification by faith is synonymous with justification by faithfulness, i.e., living in terms of the covenant, or one may become unjustified—a doctrine of an infused righteousness by an admixture of faith and works rather than an imputed righteousness. This is in reality a return to Rome.

Other major doctrines have been adversely affected. Strangely, this “New Perspective” has made great inroads into Reformed Theology, and continues as the greatest debate in Pauline Theology today.

THE “FEDERAL VISION”

This new departure from orthodox and Reformed theology is closely related to “The New Perspective on Paul,” and also represents a radical departure from the biblical and historic doctrine of justification by faith. John M. Otis of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U.S. summarizes this movement:

The errors of the Federal Vision can be summarized as follows: Entrance into God’s covenant is objective via our water baptism....The term “elect” applies corporately to those who are objectively in the covenant. Water baptism is the distinguishing mark of those who constitute the elect of God. Our water baptism, be it infant baptism or adult baptism constitutes true union with Christ, meaning that we

³⁷ As quoted in *The Banner of Truth Magazine*, Issue 166–167, p. 60, Italics added.

³⁸ This term was coined by James D. G. Dunn, one of its leading advocates. Other leading individuals are: E. P. Sanders, N. T. Wright and Norman Shepherd. These men have furthered their influence through their writings, articles, commentaries and lectures as authors and seminary professors.

have all of the saving graces at our baptism. Since we are in genuine union with Christ at our baptism and since apostasy is a real warning in Scripture, those who renounce the Faith or who live rebellious lives with regard to God's commandments can lose their salvation. This means that one loses his initial justification. There is a final justification that must be maintained by faithful obedience to God's Law throughout one's lifetime. Justification is seen in terms of "obedient faith" or as "faithfulness." Good works are not merely the genuine fruit or evidence of saving faith; [they are] seen as the essence of faith. We are justified by covenant faithfulness, and justification is progressive in the sense that we will be declared justified on the Day of Judgment as long as we did not apostatize during our lifetime.³⁹

CIRCUMCISION, BAPTISM AND REGENERATION

The Old Covenant—sign of circumcision has been replaced, not by "baptism" of any type, but by a sovereign act of God, a spiritual "circumcision of the heart," i.e., *regeneration* (See Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Ezk. 36:25–27; Jn. 3:3–5; Rom. 2:28–29; Col. 2:11–13. See also Jer. 31:31–34; 2 Cor. 3:3–18; Heb. 8:1–13). As *circumcision* was the covenant—sign of the Old covenant for physical or national Israel, so "spiritual circumcision," or *regeneration* is the covenant—sign of the New or Gospel Covenant for believers, or "Spiritual Israel." Baptism is distinctly a New Testament ordinance. Its mode is immersion and its subjects are those who manifest a credible profession of faith, after the pattern of the New Testament.⁴⁰ Circumcision in the flesh has found its realization, or fulfillment and anti-type, in the circumcision of the heart, i.e., regeneration under the New Covenant.

ABRAHAM: HIS SEED AND HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN

The traditional Reformed argument from Rom. 4:9–12, that, as circumcision was a "sign or seal of the covenant," so is infant sprinkling, actually disregards both the statement of Rom. 4:9–12 and the context of Gen. 17, which describes the institution of circumcision as a token or sign of the covenant. In Rom. 4:9–12, the subject is Abraham, who was circumcised as a believer. Circumcision was to him, and to him alone, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he [already] had yet being uncircumcised." In Gen. 17 Abraham was commanded to circumcise every male—sons, servants, slaves, relatives—in his household as a "token" of the covenant. This circumcision—covenant had to do with the possession of the land of Canaan, and not with the eternal promises of salvation (cf. v. 7–10). Further, Abraham circumcised Ishmael (v. 25–27), whom he already knew was not included in the covenant of promise (v. 15–21). Lot, Abraham's nephew, was not circumcised, although he was in the covenant of grace as a "righteous" man.⁴¹ The covenant of promise (Gen. 12:1–3), as enlarged in Rom. 4:13–25; 9:1–11:32; and Gal. 3:1–29, was made to Abraham's spiritual children (τέκνα Ἀβραάμ, i.e., believers. Jn. 8:39; Rom. 4:11–

³⁹ John M. Otis, *Danger in the Camp: An Analysis of the Heresies of the Federal Vision*, p. 29. A view espoused by the Auburn Ave. Presbyterian Church Affirmation and Pastor Steve Wilkins, and popularized by Doug Wilson through his writings.

⁴⁰ If there is any reality at all to baptism being a "seal," "sign" or "token" of the covenant, then scripturally and logically under the New or Gospel Covenant, it must be the baptism of *believers only*, as *they alone are included within the New or Gospel Covenant*.

⁴¹ 2 Peter 2:7–8 "And delivered just (δίκαιον) Lot...For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul..."

17; 9:6–24); the covenant of circumcision, having to do with the land of Canaan, was made to Abraham’s physical seed (σπέρμα Αβραάμ, Jn. 8:33, 37).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND BAPTISM

What is the scriptural relationship and order that is to exist between faith and baptism? By the third century AD, the teaching that baptism as a rite is efficacious for regeneration and the forgiveness of sins (i.e., baptismal regeneration) became largely accepted in the degenerate and apostate churches. Closely and logically following this came the practice of infant baptism. This radical departure from the New Testament was a graphic example of confusing the symbol with the reality of truth. As a result of this principle, many religious groups in history have considered baptism either to be synonymous with the act of salvation or at least inherently related to it. In the former category are Romanists, Greek Orthodox, and certain Protestants (e.g., High Anglican, some Lutherans, and Episcopalians); in the latter are such groups as the “Church of Christ” Church (“Campbellites”) and United Pentecostals or “Apostolic” Churches. The former groups take their principle from such proof-texts as Jn. 3:5 and the latter from such as Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16.

The New Testament uniformly teaches that faith is to precede baptism, that baptism is a conscious, voluntary act of obedience, identification and submission on the part of the believer. John the Baptist baptized only repentant adults (Matt. 3:1–12). The apostles baptized only those who evidenced a profession of faith according to the Commission of the Lord (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42).

THE MEANING OF THE WORD “BAPTISM”

There is one root term used in the New Testament for baptism: βαφ, which denotes *depth*. From this derived the common Greek noun βάθος, “deep, depth,” and the verb βαθύνω, “to make deep.”⁴² This root has entered the English language in terms that derive from “bath,” e.g., “bathyscaph” and “bathysphere,” vehicles for deep-sea exploration. From this root derive two words: βαπτίζεῖν, a verb which denotes “to dip,” “plunge,” “immerse,” or “wash by dipping.” The noun form is βαπτίσμα, or “baptism.”⁴³ Had the inspired writers of the New Testament desired to convey the idea of sprinkling, they would have used the common term in the New Testament for sprinkling, ῥαντίζεῖν.

Those who seek to change the mode to sprinkling or pouring state that the central idea is not immersion, but rather being “washed” from sin (Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5), but this must consistently either literally teach baptismal regeneration or figuratively or symbolically teach believer’s baptism. Some have sought to use Isa. 52:15 and Dan. 4:33 to buttress their

⁴² These terms are used both literally and figuratively: Cf. Rom. 8:39 where the terms “height, nor depth” (βάθος) refer to the celestial and infernal realms. The term is also used for deep water (Lk. 5:4), depth of earth (Matt. 13:5; Lk. 6:48), deep poverty (2 Cor. 8:2), the inner workings of satanic intrigue (Rev. 2:24), and “deep” spiritual truths (Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:18).

⁴³ βαπτίζεῖν also carries a figurative significance of “identification” or being “overwhelmed” (E.g., Matt. 20:22–23; Mk. 10:38–39; Lk. 12:50; 1 Cor. 10:2; 12:13). To the meaning being “dip,” “plunge,” “immerse,” all standard lexicons and critical Greek works agree. The very term “baptize,” a *transliteration*, entered into the English language and Bible because the paedobaptists did not want to translate it as they would have had to, to be true to the text and language—as “immerse” or “dip.”

arguments for sprinkling. Isa. 52:15 is in the context of the suffering of our Lord, the whole passage extending through chapter 53. It is argued that the Ethiopian Eunuch must have read this part of chapter 52 and naturally came to the conclusion after Philip's preaching, that he was to be sprinkled (Acts 8:27–39). The basic Hebrew term is **נָזַף**, “to startle, spurt, sprinkle.” The basic term in the LXX is θαυμάζω, “to startle, astonish, marvel at.” in the context of the horrible physical suffering and mutilation of our Lord and the immediate context of v. 14, the term must be “startle or astonish many nations.” The use of ἐβαφή in the LXX in Dan. 4:33 must be taken as a hyperbole, “baptized,” i.e., “drenched with the dew of heaven.”⁴⁴ Some have taken the references to the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:1–4) as scriptural proof for pouring as a proper mode. Here, the connotation of “baptism” must be one of identification—the Holy Spirit identifying the church as His ordained institution for the Gospel economy.⁴⁵

THE WITNESS OF HISTORY

An examination of religious history reveals that immersion was the common mode of baptism for over 1300 years and was the common mode in Britain until at least the year 1600. This is proven beyond question by ancient church baptisteries, Romish and Protestant documents and the well-documented practices of the Church of Rome, the British Church and the practices of the Reformers. Mark the following quotes from writers, either Romish or Protestant, concerning immersion:

Mabillon, the great Roman Catholic historian, gives an account of the practice in the late Middle Ages, describing an immersion which was performed by the pope himself, which occurred in the church of St. John the Evangelist. It is said that the pope blessed the water and

then, while all were adjusting themselves in their proper places, his Holiness retired into an adjoining room of St. John the Evangelist. attended by some acolothysts who took off his habits and put on him a pair of waxed trousers and surplice and then returned to the baptistery. There the children were waiting—the number usually baptized by the pope. After the pope had asked the usual questions he immersed three and came up out of the baptistery, the attendants threw a mantle over his surplice, and he returned.⁴⁶

Luther, in his early days as a Reformer, wrote:

The term baptism is Greek, and may be rendered dipping, as when we dip something in water, so that it is covered all over. And although the custom is now abolished amongst many, for they do not dip children, but only pour on a little water, yet they ought to be wholly immersed and immediately withdrawn. For this the etymology of the term seems to demand. And the Germans also call baptism *taufe*, from depth. which in their language they call *tiefe*, because it is fit that those who are baptized should be deeply

⁴⁴ The Heb. reads **נִצְטַבַּע** from **נָצַב** to *dip*, necessarily a hyperbole. Such language does not buttress the idea of sprinkling, unless the very meaning of the terms becomes meaningless.

⁴⁵ This is in keeping with visible manifestation of the glory of God upon the tabernacle and Temple. Cf. Ex. 40 and 1 Kgs. 8:1–11. If the matter be pressed, then we will admit to pouring as a mode—but to be biblical, the subjects must be seated, and the entire room filled with water—an immersion (Acts 2:2).

⁴⁶ Mabillon, *Annales Ordinis sancti Benedicti*, I. 43, as quoted by John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*, I, p. 82.

immersed. And certainly, if you look at what baptism signifies, you will see that the same is required. For it signifies this, that the old man and our sinful nature, which consists of flesh and blood, are totally immersed by divine grace, which we will point out more fully. The mode of baptizing, therefore, necessarily corresponded with the significance of baptism, that it might set forth a certain and full sign of it.⁴⁷

The great Genevan Reformer, John Calvin wrote in his *Institutes*:

Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term baptize means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive church.⁴⁸

Archbishop Whately, Anglican:

Except upon extraordinary occasions, baptism was seldom, or, perhaps, never, administered for the first four centuries, but by immersion or dipping. Nor is aspersion or sprinkling ordinarily used to this day... England was the last place where it was received, though it has never obtained so far as to be enjoined; dipping having been always prescribed by the rubric.⁴⁹

Dean Stanley, preeminent Anglican prelate and scholar:

For the first thirteen centuries, the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word—"baptize"—those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water. That practice is still, as we have seen, continued in Eastern Churches. In the Western Church it still lingers amongst Roman Catholics, in the solitary instance of the Cathedral of Milan ...It lasted long into the Middle Ages... Even in the Church of England it is still observed in theory. Elizabeth and Edward the Sixth were both immersed. The rubric in the Public Baptism for Infants, enjoins that, unless for special cases, they are to be dipped, not sprinkled. But in practice it gave way since the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁵⁰

Thus, it is witnessed by history—even by Romish and Protestant historians—that the teaching of the New Testament is believer's baptism by immersion, any other mode being unscriptural and a product of expediency, tradition or prejudice.

THE SCRIPTURAL SUBJECTS: BELIEVERS

The New Testament plainly teaches believers' baptism. The proper subjects for baptism are:

- "Disciples" (Matt. 28:19).⁵¹ The major force of the language falls on "make disciples" and the word "them" (αὐτοὺς, masc. pl.) has "disciples," (μαθητεύσατε, lit: "make disciples," and "disciples" as a noun would be masc. pl.) not "nations," (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, neut. pl.) for its antecedent. The "Great Commission" clearly states that only "disciples," i.e., converts, those evidencing

⁴⁷ Martin Luther, *Krip. Tyrol. Anab.*, p. 17, as quoted by Thomas Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, p. 398.

⁴⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chap. xv., section 19.

⁴⁹ Quoted by Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, p. 31.

⁵⁰ In *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1879, as quoted by Richard B. Cook, *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.

⁵¹ Matthew 28:19, πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς...

the marks of grace, are fit subjects for baptism (μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς...).

- Those who “bring forth fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:7–8).
- “He that believeth” (Mk. 16:16).
- The repentant and believing (Acts 2:38).
- “They that gladly received the Word” (Acts 2:41).
- A person who possesses heart-belief (Acts 8:36–37).
- One who was a “brother,” singled out by God as a convert, and who evidenced a genuine conversion experience (Acts 9:1–18).
- Those whose hearts the Lord has opened (Acts 16:14–15).
- Those who have heard the Word of God and believed (Acts 16:30–34).

It is an axiomatic principle of interpretation that no clear teaching of Scripture can be set aside from vague reference or silence, yet that has been the process of paedobaptists who argue from the vague reference of “household baptisms,” and from the silence of the New Testament to introduce an Old Testament mentality and practice.⁵² There is not any scriptural, historical, or logical place where baptism has replaced circumcision. The anti-type of circumcision is regeneration, or the true “circumcision of the heart” (Cf. Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Ezk. 36:25–27; Jn. 3:3, 5; Rom. 2:28–29; Col. 2:11–13). Further, the question that arose about the legitimacy or “sanctification” of children with at least one believing parent would have been entirely unnecessary if the rite of circumcision had been replaced by baptism. Certainly the Apostle could have clarified the matter for those still in ignorance concerning the position of “covenant children.” (See 1 Cor. 7:12–14.)

The inherent weakness of the above position has been presupposed by the paedobaptists themselves in their greatest argument, the continuity of the covenant. They assume or presuppose that the “covenant of grace” (not the eternal covenant of redemption and grace inferred in the Divine decree and the process of election, predestination and covenant-redemption; but a “covenant” of Old Testament proportions suited to the Hebrew race and nation) is the same in both Testaments; i.e., the Old Testament *groepsverbandgodsdienssten* extends into the New Testament church. Yet even this is allegedly an argument from silence.

The New Testament is silent about infant baptism, as are the Apostolic Fathers (i.e., those early Christian writers who lived in the generation after the Apostles, viz., Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Ignatius, Hermas, Papias, and Polycarp). In the following generation, Justin Martyr does admit to baptismal regeneration, but not to infant baptism. The first clear testimony is from Tertullian, who wrote in opposition to it (185 AD). The first clear testimony in favor of infant baptism is from the pen of Cyprian at the Council of Carthage (253 AD). It did not become a general practice until the fifth and sixth centuries when it was

⁵² The so-called “family baptisms” in the New Testament do not teach that infants are to be baptized. The only details given in the inspired record reveal that *the family members were converted before baptism*, i.e., they believed before they were baptized. (See Acts 16:30–34).

mandated by Imperial edict under Emperors Justin and Justinian (538 AD).⁵³ A few quotes from prominent paedobaptist writers should settle the issue. The great church historian, Augustus Neander, a Protestant paedobaptist, wrote:

It cannot possibly be proved that infant baptism was practiced in the apostolic age. Its late introduction, the opposition it met with still, in the second century, rather speak against an apostolic origin.

There does not appear to be any reason for deriving infant baptism from an apostolical institution, and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later, as an apostolic tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis.⁵⁴

Phillip Schaff, although a defender of infant baptism, admits that it is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and as a rite was not common until the time of Constantine:

...the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants; such a command would not agree with the free spirit of the gospel. Nor was there any compulsory or general infant baptism before the union of church and state...⁵⁵

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, and prelate of the Church of England, wrote:

In the Apostolic age, and in the three centuries which followed, it is evident that, as a general rule, those who came to baptism, came in full age, of their own deliberate choice. We find a few cases of the baptism of children; in the third century, we find one case of the baptism of infants. Even among Christian households the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa, Augustine, Ambrose, are decisive proofs that it was not only not obligatory, but not usual. They had Christian parents and yet they were not baptized till they reached maturity.⁵⁶

THE PROPER AUTHORITY FOR BAPTISM

The “Great Commission” was given to the church as an institution, not to the apostles as individuals or indiscriminately to anyone or any organization outside the New Testament church. (See Matt. 28:18–20). Part of this commission is to baptize. Thus, the authority for baptism rests with the New Testament church. The command of the Lord Jesus Christ and the example of the apostolic churches places baptism in an intrinsic connection with this institution alone. (See Acts 2:38–42).

PAEDOBAPTISM AND NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Are those who have been sprinkled in infancy proper subjects for church membership? Some who are known by the name of “Baptist” have, sadly, accepted such individuals. However, in faithfulness to the Word of God, such persons cannot be accepted for membership in a New Testament church. There are at least seven scriptural and logical reasons for such a definite stand.

⁵³ Augustine (354–430) became its champion, but even he admitted that its authority rested on ecclesiastical custom and not Scripture.

⁵⁴ Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, I., p. 430; See also Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, I, p. 470.

⁵⁶ *In Nineteenth Century*, October, 1879, p. 39, as quoted by Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, p. 27.

First, such a rite (i.e., sprinkling) was performed in an unscriptural mode. The mode cannot be changed without the meaning, and so the very nature of the New Testament baptism has been changed to conform by association to an Old Testament rite, thus making it impossible to assimilate baptism into Protestant covenant theology. Further, what relationship can an unregenerate infant have with even the sprinkling or ceremonial purification from sin? Much less can that infant have any personal identification in and with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism by immersion, by its very mode (symbolism) is restricted to believers. (The only other alternative would be baptism regeneration, a replacing of the reality with the symbol).

Second, such a rite was performed for the wrong purpose. Infant baptism was done either to regenerate the child, bring the child within the “pale of the visible church” by a covenant-relationship through its parents, or anticipate that child’s regeneration (presumptive, or anticipatory, regeneration). None of these purposes have any relation whatsoever to baptism as taught in the New Testament.

Third, such a rite did not have the proper subject—a believer, disciple or convert. To put baptism before the reality of conversion and faith would be the same as erecting a monument to a battle before that battle was fought! Baptism is a monument, a declarative act of obedience, identification and submission on the part of a believer. The Scripture never places baptism antecedent to faith (see Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:41; 8:35–38).

Fourth, such a rite was not a personal, voluntary, conscientious act on the part of the person himself in obedience to, identification with and submission unto, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The infant, with no personal or scriptural knowledge of morality or sin, salvation, or damnation, grace, mercy or faith, is accepted by this rite on behalf of its parents or “God-parents,” who, by proxy, answer for the child concerning matters of faith. Such a ceremony is absolutely opposed to scriptural revelation.

Fifth, such a rite had no proper authority. The authority for baptism rests with the institution of the New Testament church. If a church has departed from the New Testament in this matter (and if in this, then most probably on all matters), it is simply not a New Testament church and thus possesses no authority to baptize (See Matt. 28:18–20).

Sixth, to accept such a ceremony as scriptural baptism would be clear disobedience to the plain commands of the Word of God. Thus, any person sprinkled in infancy (which in reality is no baptism, either in subject or mode) must be scripturally immersed as a believer according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ and the example of the New Testament church (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42).

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND TRINITARIAN BAPTISM

Does the New Testament consistently teach baptism in the name of the Triune Godhead? In contrast to such passages as Matthew 28:19, the United Pentecostal churches, Apostolic churches and others teach that baptism ought to be performed in “Jesus’ Name only” (see Acts 2:38; 19:5). These groups are likewise Sabellian in their theology (i.e., they hold to One Person in the three manifestations, rather than Three Persons, and are therefore anti-trinitarian). Two considerations are in order: First, the emphasis given to “The Name” of the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts may be explained simply as a synonym for is power or authority. To be baptized in the “name of Jesus Christ” meant to acknowledge His authority

or rightful Lordship, i.e., Who He was and What He was. This had great significance for the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Their nation had reviled the Lord Jesus Christ and His claims. Peter called upon them to openly, publicly acknowledge Him as very Lord and take His authority upon them totally (see Acts 2:14–38). There is no true conversion without an acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Second, the statement of the Apostle Paul in Acts 19:1–3 is vital. These converts knew only of John’s baptism, but evidently they had never heard John preach or they would have known about the Holy Spirit. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed (not “since” they believed. Mark the combination of the aor. ptc. with the aor. verb: ...εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες;). They acknowledged total ignorance of the Holy Spirit. Paul then asked them, “Unto what then were ye baptized?” (εἰπέν τε· εἰς τί οὖν ἐβαπτίσθητε;). This question directly intimates baptism in the Name of the Trinity. Another attempt to explain this is quite impossible. The New Testament never departed from the “Great Commission” declared by the Lord.

NOTE: for further study, see Alexander Carson, *Baptism: Its Mode and Subjects*; T. E. Watson, *Should Infants Be Baptized?*; Johannes Warns, *Baptism*; Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace*; David Kingdon, *The Children of Abraham*; W. A. Jarrell, *Baptizo—Dip Only*; John Q. Adams, *Baptists Thorough Reformers*; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, pp. 133–301; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 25–35, 138–146, 215–223, 243–275, 425–445; Richard B. Book, *The Story of the Baptists*, pp. 285–300.

CHAPTER XII

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH: THE LORD’S SUPPER

As previously noted in the last chapter, every command of the Lord Jesus Christ to his church is an “ordinance,” i.e., something ordained, ordered or commanded. Historically and theologically, however, Baptists have distinguished the ordinances of the church as two: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The present study concerns the latter.

MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Lord’s Supper may be defined and described as the symbolic rite in which the church assembles to partake in worthy manner the unleavened bread and wine which symbolize the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., His Person and work); a rite that both commemorates His death (suffering and death in its vicarious properties) and anticipates His return. (See Matt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:17–20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:17–34).

This observance is purely symbolic and is in no way a sacrament or “visible means of grace” in such a way that the church partakes of Christ either literally (Romanism) or mystically (Protestantism). This rite could only be a “means of grace” in its symbolism as it would fix the mind or heart upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and thus bring one’s thoughts to the truth and reality of the Gospel. As the term “sacrament” etymologically, historically and theologically implies something mysterious and sacerdotal, it is quite unsuitable terminology for a New Testament church. This is one reason for the use of the term “Lord’s Supper” rather than “communion.” This latter term is likewise misunderstood and associated with a mystical relationship between the individual and the Lord, usually by sacerdotal mediatorship (i.e., through a priest or church), although it is true

that the local assembly as a body does commune with the Lord corporately and symbolically in the observance.

The Lord's Supper is a gospel ordinance, as is baptism. Both symbolize the realities of the Gospel as they center in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: It is commonly, though erroneously, thought and taught that circumcision has been filled in baptism. It has rather found its anti-type in regeneration. Likewise, it is believed that the Passover found its fulfillment in the Lord's Supper. This is likewise untrue. There may be common principles, but the Passover has its anti-type in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor. 5:7).

There are three aspects of the participants' consciousness in the observance of this rite: First, there is to be a "look backward" ("This do in remembrance of Me"). The church commemorates the death of her Lord with all its redemptive significance. Second, a "look inward" ("let a man examine himself"). This implies, in context, a serious preparation before participation, a preparation that centers not necessarily on introspection, but on Christ (see 1 Cor. 11:27–32). Finally, there is to be a "look forward" ("till He come"). A note of glorious anticipation should rest upon the minds and hearts of the church members.

THE ELEMENTS

The elements of the Lord's Supper are two: unleavened bread and wine. These the Lord used at the completion of the Passover meal for the symbols of His Person and work to institute this gospel ordinance.

The unleavened bread not only was used for its convenience at that Passover meal when the Lord instituted the Supper, but it possesses symbolic significance as well. Leaven is the usual symbol of evil in Scripture. (Note that the Old Testament sacrifices were not to be offered with leaven; see 1 Cor. 5:6–8.) The ultimate symbolism in the unleavened bread is the sinlessness of the Lord's humanity. This has a direct and vital bearing upon the redemptive significance of His work. Thus, unleavened bread is the only proper and scriptural symbol that should be used.

The Lord instituted the Supper from the remains of the Passover meal. He took the final cup of red wine to symbolize His blood that was to be shed in covenant-redemption for His people.

NOTE: In the original institution of the Passover (Ex. 12:3–20), no mention is made of wine at the Passover meal. Indeed, nowhere in the entire Old Testament is wine associated with the Passover! If the Lord's Supper was but the fulfillment of the Passover, why should a purely traditional element receive the emphasis and the major element of the lamb be omitted? Wine was the product of tradition and had become customary. The Lord used this providential custom for the symbol of His blood.

It is strongly objected by some that "fermented wine" (a contradiction in terms) should not be used for the Lord's Supper. Such objections are based upon a misinterpretation of Scripture, tradition, a misunderstanding of converting grace and a legalistic attitude derived ultimately from Neoplatonic influence (see Col. 3:16, 21; 1 Tim. 4:1–5). Wine is the proper element and should be used. Consider the following: First, wine was used in the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. It is noteworthy that Paul did not rebuke the Corinthian church for using wine, but rather for drunkenness (1 Cor. 11:21).

NOTE: The usual word for wine in the New Testament is οἶνος, denoting a fermented drink. The “new wine” of the feasts (see Acts 2:13–16) was literally “sweet wine” (γλεῦκος), hence the English “glucose.” The feast of Pentecost was held in early summer. The grape harvest was usually from September to October, thus the wine was almost a year old. “New wine” was produced by soaking raisins in old wine and re-fermenting it, making a sweeter, more intoxicating beverage. Much has been written concerning the idea of “unfermented wine” (again, a contradiction in terms), but the words used in Scripture and the contexts all denote wine. The idea of using grape juice rather than wine derived from the influence of such men as Charles G. Finney, who advocated a vegetarian diet in accordance with his Pelagian philosophy that man is not born depraved, but rather becomes a sinner through his environment. Hence, Finney preached not only against tobacco and alcohol, but against coffee, tea and all seasonings! Such things would evidently lead to the undue agitation of the animal nature and result in sin. (See Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on the Revivals of Religion*, pp. 397–398; B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*, pp. 6–7.) Thus, not only the modern “Temperance” movements (actually, “Abstinence” movements, for temperance connotes self-control, not total abstinence) found their source in this philosophy, but the modern “health food” phenomenon among Christians is largely derived from this source. Such thinking is inherently Neoplatonic. See Col. 2:16, 21–23; 1 Tim. 4:1–5. (Note that the word “meats” is literally “foods”).

Mr. Welch, a Methodist temperance leader and the communion steward of his church, was agitated at having to use wine (the common practice of his day). After reading about the pasteurization process, he perfected the process with grape juice that bears his brand name—“Welch’s Grape Juice.” This was originally bottled for communion services under the name of “unfermented wine.” The sincere desire to end the trend of drunkenness and dissipation that ruins so many families and lives resulted, however, in a legalistic and unscriptural denial of proper and legitimate Christian liberty.]

Second, the drinking of wine per se is not condemned in Scriptures, but its abuse is! The various warnings associated with the drinking of wine in every instance imply the sins of drunkenness and those things associated with drunkenness (e.g., Gen. 9:20–27; Gen. 19:30–38; Prov. 20:1; 23:29–35; 31:1–5; Hab. 2:15). Temperance was necessarily a principle for the consideration of kings, judges or those in authority lest they pervert judgement. Total abstinence was demanded for the priests only when they were officiating (Lev. 10:5–10). The Rechabites were blessed by God and set forth as examples, not because they were total abstainers per se, but rather because they had obeyed the commandment of their father (Jer. 35:10–19). In Scripture, wine is a symbol of joy and of the blessing of God. (See Dt. 14:22–29; Psa. 104:14–15; Prov. 3:10; Eccl. 9:7–9; Acts 2:13–16). The Nazarite was to abstain not only from wine, but from anything that derived from the vine because he was bearing a reproach for God during the time of his vow (Numb. 6:1–20). Wine was used medicinally, both externally and internally (see Lk. 10:34; 1 Tim. 5:23). It was also used to alleviate suffering and depression (Psa. 104:14–15; Prov. 31:6–7). Wine was included in the drink offerings made to the Lord (Ex. 29:40). Thus, the only prohibition in the Scriptures is against the abuse of wine or drunkenness.

Third, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself both drank and made wine (Matt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34; Jn. 2:1–11). Had He been a total abstainer, the charge would have been meaningless, for He was evidently a man of good appetite and did imbibe. Those who would teach that total abstinence is absolutely essential and a requirement to godliness cast a shadow over both the ethics and the moral character of the Lord! Further, the wine that He made at the

marriage feast was not only fermented, but aged to perfection, as acknowledged by the governor of the feast!

Fourth, all modern objections against the use of wine at the Lord's Table presuppose that wine is inherently evil or immoral; however, the issue of drinking wine is ethical, not moral. Morality is concerned with absolutes, things that are either right or wrong inherently as either reflecting or being opposed to the moral character of God. Ethics is concerned also with the subject of Christian liberty. Drinking wine is in itself neither right nor wrong, but a matter of Christian liberty. The principles of this liberty prevail in that it is the "weaker brother" who must abstain because of his tender conscience. It is the "stronger brother" who may enjoy his freedom—so long as he does not offend his weaker brother.

NOTE: The issue of Christian liberty or the freedom of conscience in neutral matters must be governed several principles: first, the objective standard for all behavior is the inscripturated Word of God. No believer has the option or liberty to be unscriptural. Questions or issues arise when men, for various reasons, seek to either make the Scripture broader or narrower to include and decide neutral matters. Second, God alone is the Lord of the conscience. Religious human nature has the innate tendency to force the conscience of others. Third, the supreme motive for all things is the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). Finally, the conscience of the weaker brother, i.e., the one who is more restrictive in his approach to neutral matters, must not be offended (Rom. 14:1–23 ; 1 Cor. 10:14–33).

Fifth, the social and ceremonial uses of wine must be distinguished. The latter is not within the realm of Christian liberty, but must be governed by New Testament example.

NOTE: It is objected that some have an inherent weakness for alcohol, and that, because of past sinful indulgence or genetic tendencies, such persons would be turned again to "alcoholism" through the use of wine at the Lord's Table. In answer, the Scriptures never treat drunkenness as a "disease." "Alcoholism" is not a disease per se, but the sin of drunkenness. It is a sin of intemperance, or loss of self-control (See Gal. 5:22–23) which grieves the Holy Spirit as does anger or a multitude of other sins. When God regenerates any person, He breaks the dominion of sin (i.e., sin as a reigning power and principle in the life; see Rom 6:1–15). Drunkenness, as any other sin, is to be overcome by Divine grace. To object to this principle is to deny the power of converting grace.

Finally, the symbolism is lost to a great extent if grape juice is used. The "fruit of the vine" is ceremonial terminology and does not advocate the use of grape juice. There is a natural leaven in the juice which is consumed in the process of fermentation. If it is necessary to use unleavened bread, it is likewise necessary to use wine.

THE TIME

When should the church observe the Lord's Supper? The phrase "breaking of bread" as used in the New Testament may denote the Lord's Supper, a regular meal, the common Lord's Day meal of the assembly, i.e., the "love feast" (see 1 Cor. 11:20–21, 33–34; Jude 12). As to the proper time of observance, the following should be noted: First, the New Testament nowhere gives a definite command to observe the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, although that seems to be the practice of the primitive churches. Second, the inspired apostle taught the principle "as often as" (1 Cor. 11:26), which might have some bearing on the observance. Finally, as it is the "Lord's Supper," it must not be transformed into a brunch or breakfast!

NOTE: The traditional practice in many churches of observing the Lord's Supper in the morning worship service derives from Romish tradition and the mass with its sacerdotalism. Among some denominations and churches, it has become customary because of low attendance at the evening meeting. To observe the Supper at any other time would seem to be only in order in cases of persecution or extremity when the assembly was prohibited from the regular evening meeting.

THE PARTAKERS

Who should partake of the Lord's Supper? Some churches practice an "open communion," i.e., anyone who happens to be in attendance at the time of the observance is served the elements (i.e., open communion). Others restrict the participation. Some hold that the rite is only for believers; others, that it is for all believers of like faith and practice who are members in good standing of sister churches (i.e., closed communion). Still others admit only those in good standing who are members of that local assembly (i.e., close communion). Consider the following four biblical principles: First, the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, given the church as an institution in the Great Commission Matt. 28:18–20). The New Testament reveals that it was only observed in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:17). Thus, any other institution (i.e., para-church organization, family or informal fellowship of believers) is precluded from administering this ordinance. Second, this ordinance is for the gathered church or the church assembled together, not for those apart from the assembled believers (i.e., the sick and bed ridden or family members who are non-members; see 1 Cor. 11:17–34). Third, this rite is under the discipline of the local assembly. No person, therefore, is to be admitted who is not a member in good standing with the church (See Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 10:16; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Tit. 3:10–11). To do otherwise would be to disregard and disobey the Word of God. Without proper church discipline the proper observance of this ordinance is impossible. Fourth, according to the command of the Lord and the pattern of the apostolic churches, the Lord's Supper was observed in the context of the local assembly (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42). There are thus four prerequisites for partaking of the ordinance:

- Conversion. As this rite is a gospel ordinance, it has no significance to an unsaved person. The New Testament teaches salvation before the Lord's Supper. Thus, infant church membership, family relationships or mere attendance do not qualify anyone to partake.
- Baptism. This ordinance is always antecedent to the Lord's Supper. It is unscriptural to admit to the Lord's Table anyone who has not been scripturally immersed as a believer. This excludes on the basis of Scripture Romanists, Protestants and any others who have been baptized or sprinkled in infancy, before their conversion, or baptized for any other purpose than as a believer in obedience to the Word of God.
- Church membership. As the Supper is to be observed in the context of the local assembly, it is within its fellowship and under its discipline. To admit those from other assemblies would be to make an exception unknown in the New Testament.
- An orderly walk. The Lord's Table is co-extensive with church discipline. It is impossible properly and Scripturally to observe the Lord's Supper in the assembly if there is no scriptural discipline. (See Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13, 10:16; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Tit. 3:10–11). The local assembly is to be unified

in the truth or it cannot properly observe the rite. If divisions or schisms exist, true participation is precluded. (See 1 Cor. 10:16–18; 11:17–20). Thus, an orderly walk is a necessary prerequisite.

ERRORS AND HERESIES

The tendency of religion is to substitute the symbol for the reality. This is markedly true in both baptism (i.e., baptismal regeneration, baptism essential for salvation and the forgiveness of sins) and the Lord's Supper. There are four great errors concerning the Lord's Supper:

First, transubstantiation and the Romish mass. This is the very essence of sacerdotalism (i.e., the mystic manipulation of the sacraments by the priest). According to this doctrine, the bread and wine are literally transformed into the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the priest. Romish dogma teaches that at each mass the Lord is re-crucified, hence the “unbloody sacrifice” of the mass. Such teaching is absolutely blasphemous against the Word of God, which teaches that the Lord, having died once (the Greek technical term is emphatic, ἀπαξ, i.e., one time, never to be repeated; see Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 3:18), is alive forevermore. (See Heb. 7:21–28). The participants, according to the dogma, actually partake of Christ by eating the wafer. This teaching originated in ancient Babylonian cult worship (note the “Queen of heaven,” the “cakes” and “drink offerings” of Jer. 44:17–19). There is nothing of New Testament truth remaining in the Romish rite.

Second, the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. In Martin Luther's debate with Swingli over the Lord's Supper, Zwingli contended that the elements were merely symbolic. Luther, however, was emphatic that when the Lord said, “This is *My* body,” He pointed to Himself rather than referring to the bread. Thus developed the doctrine of consubstantiation (i.e., two existing at the same time) or that the bread and wine were at the same time bread and wine, yet mystically the Lord's body and blood. This reaction of Luther led to the doctrine of *Ubiquitarianism* (i.e., to be everywhere or present at all times) or the peculiar dogma of the *communicatio idiomatum* (i.e., the permeation of the Lord's Deity and humanity into each other so the presence of the Lord's humanity—body and blood—could be present in every observance of communion.

Third, the sacramental concept of the Lord's Supper as a visible means of grace. Protestantism holds that the Lord's Supper (as baptism) is more than symbol, that it contains a mystical element of grace. It is in some mystical sense a partaking of Christ by faith. This tendency is noted in the historical use of the term “sacrament,” which has the connotation of some mystic element. (The Greek μυστήριον, or “mystery,” became the Latin sacramentum, inherently giving a mysterious or mystical element to the rite.) For New Testament believers, who truthfully hold to the symbolism of the bread and wine, there is no sacrament!

Fourth, the error of open or unrestricted communion. This is a grievous offense to the Lord and to His church, It is inherently derived from a sacralist concept of the church, i.e., that all in a given locality or geographical area are both members of the community and members of the church. Historically, most denominations would not accept even a believer

to “communion” without some type of “baptism.” Among Baptists, open or unrestricted communion was not commonly practiced until recent times. Dr. Cathcart states:

This practice is of comparatively recent origin, and its history presents little to recommend it. It seems to have been a natural outgrowth of persecuting times, when the people of God were few in number and were compelled to worship in secret places; and when the preservation of the fundamentals of divine truth made men blind to grave errors that were regarded as not soul destroying. In the first half of the seventeenth century, it made its appearance in England. John Bunyan was its ablest defender, and the church of which he was the honored pastor illustrates the natural tendencies of the system by its progress backward, in adopting infant sprinkling and the Congregational denomination.⁵⁷

Historically, Baptists have practiced a “restricted communion” to a given extent, to those who have been converted and scripturally baptized (i.e., immersed), to those who are members in good standing in sister churches, or to those of the local assembly who are “walking orderly.”⁵⁸ There are four reasons why an unrestricted communion is unscriptural: First, “open communion” allows unsaved persons to participate in the Lord’s Supper, which is decidedly unscriptural. Second, it allows those sprinkled in infancy and other unbaptized persons to partake, which is definitely wrong according to the New Testament. Third, this practice denies the scriptural authority of the church as God’s ordained institution. The ordinance ceases to be a church ordinance and becomes an unscriptural ecumenical rite. Fourth, “open communion” is a denial and repudiation of any and all church discipline, which is absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

Those who practice an “open communion” usually give the following objections:

Objection: “It is the Lord’s Table, not the church’s. Therefore, the church has no right to restrict it.”

Answer: The Scriptures plainly state that the ordinance is to be observed in the context of the local assembly and that the local assembly is the God–ordained custodian of the rite and custodian of the truth. (see Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42; 1 Cor. 11:17–34; 1 Tim. 3:14–15). Further, proper church discipline and an unrestricted communion cannot possibly co–exist. People of open sinful character and behavior would be admitted without restraint, or the church’s discipline, if enacted, would become meaningless with respect to the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 5:1–13). If the church is true to her Lord and practices scriptural discipline, she will adhere to a restricted communion; if she practices an open communion, she will be unfaithful to her Lord.

Objection: “The Lord’s Supper is a Gospel ordinance, and thus ought to be open to all and any who name the name of Christ as professing Christians.”

Answer: Although both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper portray Gospel and Christological truth in their symbolism, the Scriptures situate both these ordinances within the context of the institution of the local church (Matt. 28:18–20). Neither are public ordinances for the general public.

Each church has a specific authority and responsibility with regard to each ordinance. Not any Christian can baptize, or baptize apart from the authority of a

⁵⁷ William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, I, p. 257.

⁵⁸ See Appendix IV, “The Practice of Early Baptists on Restricted Communion.”

given church, either through the person performing the rite being called by God and recognized by the church as an administrator, or by a vote of the church, or both. The church, not any given individual, has the authority to administer the Lord's Supper. If the power, authority or responsibility to administer the Lord's Supper rested inherently within any particular individual, then it would be a priestly authority foreign to the New Testament. The authority, then, scripturally and logically, rests with the church and those whom she designates to administer the ordinances. These are, therefore, not only Gospel ordinances, they are, scripturally, Church ordinances, and thus are under the authority, responsibility and discipline of the church.

Objection: "Each person is communing with Christ, so it is an intensely personal matter between the individual and God."

Answer: The ordinance is a church observance wherein the assembly corporately communes with her Lord. That is why it is observed only when the church is assembled and the elements are not taken to those who are sick or bed ridden (1 Cor. 11:17–20, 33–34). If the rite were an intensely personal matter according to the Scriptures, then there would most certainly be a record of the elements being taken into various homes for those unable to attend.⁵⁹

Objection: "We are all members of the true church, the universal, invisible body of Christ, and so have a full right to partake."

Answer: The New Testament has put restrictions upon the observance—it is a church ordinance, not an ecumenical ordinance; it is for baptized believers, not all Christians indiscriminately; it is for those who are members of that local assembly, not for members of other churches; it is for members who are walking orderly, not for those who have been excluded for overt or known sin. The theory of a "universal, invisible" church permeates and perverts nearly every aspect of church doctrine with its leaven.

NOTE: Those who view the observance of "communion" in an ecumenical sense as a show of religious or spiritual unity at ecumenical religious gatherings, must consider that *the three places it would have been appropriate and greatly advantageous as such* would have been (1) at the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, (2) the meeting between Paul with his Gentile representatives and the leaders of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 21:17–26), and (3) at the meeting at Antioch, which lead to the confrontation between Paul and Peter (Gal. 2). But in these important meetings, *in which a demonstration of spiritual and doctrinal unity was paramount*, the observance of "communion" played no part whatsoever. The biblical teaching is clear and unmistakable—and sadly irrelevant to modern religious pragmatism and innovation.

Objection: "A man is to examine himself to see whether he is worthy to partake. It is not the church's task to police the table."

⁵⁹ The practice of individual communion derived from the *sacralist* concept of society and the elevation of the elements into a sacramental significance.

Answer: The context of self-examination (1 Cor. 11:27–29) does not lend itself to such an interpretation. The meaning is that a person is to examine himself to see if he is properly discerning the Lord's body, i.e., that he is properly prepared in heart and mind to partake, conscious of the true significance of the ordinance. To some of the Corinthians the ordinance was just another piece of bread, just another drink of wine, and so had lost its true significance. Then follows a statement about this self-judgment which the Lord Himself undertook because the church was too lax to do so. The issue of partaking or not does not depend upon self-introspection, but upon church discipline (Cf. 1 Cor. 11:30–34).

Objection: The Apostle Paul evidently observed the Lord's Supper with the assembly at Troas (Acts 20:76–11).

Answer: If this was true, then it was the single recorded instance in the New Testament of such a practice. Assuming that it did occur, it may be answered that Paul, as an inspired Apostle, had in a unique sense an authority over and a relationship to all churches which none other than the original apostles had. Thus, such an instance would not provide support for an "open communion." However, it may have simply denoted a common meal or simply the *agape*, or "love feast," i.e., the common fellowship-meal of believers on the first day of the week.

Objection: We will offend family members, relatives and visitors, especially those who are Christians themselves, if we do not admit them to the Lord's Supper. This seems unchristian in both principle and practice.

Answer: We must be obedient and faithful to, and consistent with, the Scriptures. Much about the truth of the Gospel is offensive to the natural man, such as the necessity of repentance, the realities of hell and eternal damnation, etc. At times, even scriptural truth is offensive to professing Christians who may be ignorant, mistaught, or even wholly irrational. We, even as believers, all have to a given degree, an inward level of rebellion in relation to the mandates of Scripture as to either faith or practice!

Although the truth itself may prove offensive to some, we must not hold or observe the truth in an offensive manner. The Lord's Supper may be administered in an inoffensive way by observing it at a separate meeting for members only.

Objection: "Is not the only restriction of admittance to the Lord's Table—if such admittance should be restricted at all—only in the case of someone who is under the first stage of church discipline?"

Answer: Such a practice as forbidding a person to partake of the Lord's Table as the first step in disciplinary action is a practice inherited and imported from Romanism and Protestantism. Some Protestant bodies do forbid participation in communion as the first step in church disciplinary action. Such action derives from the alleged sacramental nature of the elements and observance. The church leadership—priest, ministers, eldership—has the power and prerogative to withhold the means of grace from the one under disapprobation.

The New Testament, which is our inspired pattern, makes church discipline a decisive, inclusive action, i.e., one is either within the fellowship of the local assembly or is excluded from it altogether. Although there may be warnings and

admonitions, there are no stages or phases of church discipline. One is either considered worthy to partake, or is completely excluded from the church membership and its privileges. Such a person is viewed as an object of evangelism, but is altogether excluded from participation and even church attendance. Those who would posit an open or unrestricted communion, must, if consistent, admit to their communion even those who have been excluded under discipline—or act contrary to their own general principles.

Objection: “The Lord himself served Judas at the ‘Last Supper’ when he instituted the rite of communion. This must mean that anyone can partake without any restriction whatsoever. Doesn’t this mean that everyone, regardless of his or her spiritual state, ought to be admitted? Surely we are not more righteous or knowledgeable than our Lord! The burden is upon the individual, not the church or the minister.”

Answer: The spiritual condition of Judas was secret, known only to our Lord. It would be utterly inconsistent with the very nature of the rite to serve or admit to the Lord’s Supper anyone whose life was scandalous (1 Cor. 5:1–13). The biblical record, however, does not state that Judas was present when our Lord instituted the ordinance. The biblical evidence is to the contrary. The following observations must be made:

First, *Judas and his situation remain unique*. Our Lord Himself chose Judas as a disciple “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” in the inscrutable purpose of God, knowing he was not only unregenerate, but an instrument of Satan (John 6:64, 6:70–71, 17:12). None but our Lord knew the mind and heart of Judas, and outwardly he was evidently above reproach as one of their number and their treasurer. None suspected him of being either a thief or the betrayer (John 12:6, Matt. 26:22). Now it is possible that someone may be admitted to the Lord’s Table who is a secret sinner, unregenerate, or even criminal—if no one knows of his state and he is numbered outwardly with the people of God and included within that local group as was Judas—But such cannot be the cognizant practice of a church! Our Lord alone knew and had to keep Judas until the appointed time “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” then removed him immediately (John 13:21–31).

Second, *as the situation of Judas remains unique, he cannot be used as an example of admitting knowingly an unregenerate or open sinner to the Lord’s Table*. Our Lord not only chose this man and called him as His disciple (“that the Scriptures might be fulfilled”), but empowered him to preach the Gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 9:1–2). Now, if it be argued that we must admit any or everyone without exception because Judas was allegedly there, then we must also allow an unregenerate ministry and countenance those who allegedly possess certain “gifts” without any regard to their doctrinal, ethical, or spiritual state and condition—as Judas demonstrated these also!

Third, *Judas was not present at the institution of the Lord’s Supper*. It is evident that he had already left the upper room prior to its observance (Matt. 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–24; John 13:1–30, 18:1). The following should be noted for necessary clarification: First, Matthew, Mark and John all place the announcement of betrayal at the beginning or during the Passover meal, which preceded the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Second, Luke alone allegedly puts the announcement of betrayal after the meal (Luke 22:21–23). It must be noted that Luke was not an eyewitness—the others were. Further.

Luke's chronology is often at variance with the other Gospel records. The information and data are present in Luke's account, but the sequence is not. In each case the institution of the Lord's Supper begins a new paragraph, denoting a change of subject and time. It is, however, quite possible that Luke refers to the first cup of red wine during the Passover meal, rather than the final cup with which our Lord probably instituted the ordinance; Third, John states that Judas left during the Passover meal immediately after receiving the sop (Note: John 13:1–2 should read, "supper having begun," "during supper," or "supper beginning," *not* "supper having ended." Cf. vv. 4, 12 and 26).⁶⁰ Thus, the testimony of Scripture is that Judas was not present at the institution of this ordinance.

CHAPTER XIII THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH: TO GLORIFY GOD

The principle governing these studies is: To the extent that a church conforms to the abiding principles of the New Testament, to that extent it is a New Testament church; to the extent that a church ceases to conform to these principles, it ceases to be a New Testament church. This is particularly vital when considering the purpose of the church, which is to glorify God. The church does not exist for the sake, interest or convenience of either its members or society at large. Rather its existence is for the glory of God in all things. God created all things for His own glory, including His church. (See Rev. 4:11; Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 4:11; Eph. 3:21). Thus, the church is corporately to seek the glory of God in its worship, obedience, evangelism, fellowship ministry and love of the truth.

GLORIFYING GOD BY MANIFESTING HIS WISDOM

It is through the New Testament church that God has designed to reveal His infinite wisdom to the powers of the universe (Eph. 3:8–11). In this sinful, rebellious, blinded world of humanity, God's ordained order has been maintained in the New Testament church alone. (See 1 Cor. 11:1–16, especially vv. 2–10; Eph. 3:8–11). The eternal redemptive purpose of God centering in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed through the institution of His church.

GLORIFYING GOD BY UPHOLDING HIS TRUTH

The New Testament church exists as the upholder of the truth of God (see 1 Tim. 3:15). Thus, the New Testament church must be faithful to the doctrine vouchsafed to her Lord and so must "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The church is not at liberty to change, modify, neglect, substitute, retreat from or deny this truth, but to defend it! On the basis of a false, sentimental love (as contrasted with a scriptural love that reflects the righteous, moral character of God; Rom. 13:8–10, an ecumenical spirit or denominational compromise), some disdain and void doctrinal controversy. But God is not glorified in either a passive Christianity or a false peace; He is glorified in the truth! The Spirit of God that indwells and empowers the church is the Spirit of truth (see Jn. 14:16–17; 15:26; 16:13). The Word of God that is the substance and sole

⁶⁰ The reading "supper having begun" [TR, δείπνου γενομένου, aor. ptc.] or "during supper" [BNT, δείπνου γινομένου, pres. ptc.] places the time during the Passover meal, at which time our Lord gave Judas the sop, and he immediately left.

authority for the church is the Word of truth (see Jn. 17:17; Eph. 1:13; Jas. 1:18). The Very Head and Lord of the church, Jesus Christ, is Himself truth (see 3n. 14:6). The message of the Gospel is the very message of truth (see Gal. 2:55; Eph. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:13). The worship acceptable to God is that which is in truth (see Jn. 4:24). Even the attitude of Christian love that believers are to emulate and manifest is not a sentimental love (guided and governed by the emotions), but rather a love characterized by the truth (see 1 Cor. 13:6; Phil. 1:9–11; 2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Jn. 1,3; Jn. 1,4). A church cannot glorify God if it does not do so in, by, through and because of the truth.

GLORIFYING GOD IN EVANGELISM

It is a scriptural principle that the church glorifies God by obedience to His Word; disobedience brings dishonor (see 1 Cor. 10:31). The Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His church to be evangelistic by nature (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:4–8). Thus, any church dishonors the Lord when it modifies, neglects or repudiates this commission. Some, however, do dishonor the Lord by changing the sequence of this commission and placing baptism before conversion (paedobaptism). Others dishonor God by neglecting His commission in giving all emphasis to programs, promotions or social work. God did not intend for His church to be one of many social agencies, but a spiritually vitalizing element in society for the conversion of men and women! The New Testament church as an institution in society does have social ministries, but they are inherently within and never divorced from the essence of the gospel. Some dishonor God by repudiating this commission, considering it to be outdated, useless or needless in modern society (modernism with its social gospel). When the church loses its spiritual distinctives, it ceases to be a New Testament church.

Evangelism with the proper motive—the glory of God—is to express itself in every aspect of the church’s life. This is true not only of the primary ordinance of preaching, but also in the proclamation of truth through all means of communication, all true Christian hospitality and the relationships of the individual members in their respective social environments. A gospel witness for the glory of God is to be found in every aspect of individual and corporate life.

GLORIFYING GOD IN EDIFICATION

The word “edify” means to instruct or improve spiritually. It is derived from the Latin *aedificare*. from the word *aedes*, “temple or house” (Cf. the English “edifice,” or “building”). Thus, it connotes to build up or strengthen. The New Testament teaches that God is glorified when His Word is obeyed in the edification of the church. (See Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:42, 46–47; 1 Cor. 10:31; 12:12–17; Eph. 4:7–16). The preaching and teaching ministry of the church is for edification, but so is the fellowship within the assembly! The basis of church fellowship is not merely social, but spiritual, doctrinal. It is to be the Word of God (i.e., doctrinal truth) that binds the assembly together. True fellowship, therefore, should be edifying; True fellowship should bring glory to God.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PART III

THE PERPETUITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“...upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

“...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
Matthew 28:20

“Unto Him be glory in the church throughout all ages”
Eph. 3:21

The declaration of Scripture, the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and the witness of history are that New Testament believers and churches have existed in every age from the apostolic era to the present time. The evidence is thus scriptural, historical and unquestionable, even from those opposed to this truth. Church perpetuity has been misunderstood, misrepresented and maligned. This part of the study on the New Testament church is an attempt to present a biblical, historical and consistent view of the perpetuity of the New Testament church.

“All that Baptists mean by church “succession,” or Church Perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.”
W. A. Jarrell

“I never could understand why some Baptists rejoice to say there is no church succession.”
B. H. Carroll

We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves.

C. H. Spurgeon

CHAPTER XIV THE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

Every aspect of the doctrine of the church has been and remains controversial. The most controversial issue, however, centers on the perpetuity of the New Testament church. Rome claims such perpetuity for itself in the form of “Apostolic Succession.” Protestant bodies disclaim any such principle, as it too closely associates them with the Roman apostasy. Traditional Protestantism maintains only that Christendom had become so corrupt as to necessitate the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Among Baptists this issue has been largely and conveniently sidestepped in this generation. The declaration of Scripture, the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and the facts of history, however, remain unchanged. The perpetuity of the New Testament church is a vital, and necessary subject for investigation.

THE DEFINITION OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

What is meant by “church perpetuity”? A definition of perpetuity (Lat: *perpetuitas*, “the state or quality of being perpetual”) may be derived from any standard reference work: “The quality or state of being perpetual continuing indefinitely without interruption; unceasing.”⁶¹ Thus, perpetuity denotes being perpetual, existing continually without interruption, being unceasing in nature. When this term is applied to the institution of the New Testament church, it means that from the time the Lord Jesus Christ established his New Testament church during His earthly ministry, until the present time, there have always existed believers and churches apart from both Romanism and Protestantism that have held to the essentials of New Testament truth.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR THE STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY?

A study of church history must proceed upon certain assumptions or presuppositions. Consider the following questions: Is God fully and intimately involved in the history of Christianity, or has He simply left Christianity to itself to develop according to some “natural law” or religious evolution? Is church history self-interpreting, i.e., is it the natural development of the religion found in the New Testament? Was scriptural, historic Christianity represented in the Church of Rome until the Protestant Reformation, when the “church” was then “reformed?” Were all pre-Reformation groups apart from Rome heretical? The answers to these questions are determined by one’s presuppositions and are essential to any consistent historiography.

TIME AND ETERNITY

The first presupposition is that church history is the out-working in time of the Divine, eternal purpose with reference to Christianity. This asserts that God is intimately involved in the totality of church history.

This presupposition is a denial of the pagan and atheistic concept of natural selection and the modern concept of social and religious evolution. Church history is not a study of the evolution or natural development of the Christian religion, nor is it a study in comparative religions. As the one and only religion derived from Divine revelation, Biblical Christianity is “incomparable.” It cannot be placed on a level with other religions without inherently denying its supernatural origin, unique character, and totalitarian claims.

The key to understanding the work of God in church history is found in two realities: first, Divine predestination and second, the moral character of God. God has eternally and sovereignly ordained all events and agents as to their significance, sequence and interrelationships.

NOTE: The past is not to be found in a primeval void, nor the future in a nebulous, undefined, foreboding abyss, but in the context of the eternal, transcendent, sovereign, Triune God, whose purpose will infallibly be fulfilled in the context of His wisdom and moral character.

Divine sovereignty with reference to time and history is predestination. God has from eternity predetermined everything that occurs in time and history (Eph. 1:11; Acts

⁶¹ Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1966, pp. 1090–1091.

15:18), including the rise and fall of succeeding civilizations and all the affairs and circumstances of men, (Job. 12:23; Dan. 2:21; Acts 17:26; Rom. 9:6–23).

Divine predestination is necessarily inclusive. Thus, there is no such thing as *trivia* in God's created universe or eternal purpose (Cf. Psalms 139:1–4; Matthew 6:26; 10:29–30; Romans 11:33–36).

Further, Divine predestination is the key to a proper understanding of history. History is not cyclical (i.e., history does not repeat itself) as some ancient and modern thinkers suggest. The flow of time is from the future into the present, and from the present into the past. History is the progressive realization or unfolding in time of the Divine, eternal purpose.

"The movement of time, according to the Bible, is from eternity, since it is created by God and moves out of and in terms of His eternal decree. Because time moves in terms of the eternal decree, when its function is finished there shall be time no more (Rev. 10:6). Because time is predestined, and because its beginning and end are already established, time does not develop in evolutionary fashion from past to present to future. Instead, it unfolds from future to present to past."⁶²

The moral character of God—His absolute holiness and righteousness, or moral self-consistency—provides the key to understanding the issues of good and evil events and agents in history. God is absolutely sovereign over both good (faith, faithfulness, orthodoxy, etc.) and evil (error, heresy, persecution of true believers, etc.), and thus works in and through both to fulfill His all-wise, most-holy and righteous will. Only if God is absolutely sovereign over evil can He use evil and wicked men, as well as righteous and godly men, to fulfill His infinite, righteous, and glorious purpose.

CHURCH HISTORY IS NOT SELF-INTERPRETING

The second presupposition is that church history is not self-interpreting, i.e., it is not the natural development of the Christianity found in the New Testament. The Scriptures, and specifically, the New Testament Scriptures, form the standard by which church history is to be interpreted. The pattern for the historical church is that of the New Testament church. The pattern for historic Christianity is New Testament Christianity. This has important implications for both Romanism and Protestantism.

Romanism and Protestantism consider the Church to be coextensive and synonymous with the Kingdom of God, rather than an entity within the Kingdom of God. Thus, they perceive the Church to be all-embracing and universal, including all religious agencies (i.e., para-church organizations).

Romanism developed from apostate Christianity (Gnosticism), Old Testament Judaism and paganism (the ancient Babylonian mystery cult). Its concept of the church rests partly on Scripture and partly on tradition and paganism. From its inception in the fourth century, the Church of Rome has never possessed the essential elements of a New Testament church.

Protestantism exists essentially as a Reformation or modification of the Romish church, not a full return or conformity to the New Testament standard and pattern.

⁶² Nathan R. Wood, *The Secret of the Universe*, p. 44, quoted in R. J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History*, p 11.

Historic, traditional Protestantism possesses an “Old Testament mentality,” i.e., it is patterned more after the Old Testament than the New. This is markedly evident in the monolithic state–church concept, a Reformed “covenant theology,” the almost universal practice of *paedorhantism* (i.e., infant sprinkling, from ῥαντίζειν, “to sprinkle.” Infant sprinkling allegedly replacing the Old Covenant rite of circumcision), an ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the tendency in some denominations toward a priestly concept of the ministry.

Thus, church history is not the record of the natural development of New Testament Christianity, but rather largely a record of apostasy from the New Testament pattern in doctrine and practice by both Romanism and Protestantism.

THE PERPETUITY OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

The third and final presupposition is that New Testament Christians and churches existed from the apostolic era to the Protestant Reformation apart from the Church of Rome. There are several considerations:

THE PROMISE OF CHRIST

First, the Lord Jesus Christ promised that His church would continue to exist as an institution, that it would not be obliterated and that He would be with it until the close of this Gospel economy or age (Cf. Matt. 16:18; 28:18–20).

Such promises were not fulfilled in or by the Romish state–church system, as alleged by Rome. Some scoff at these promises referring to a continuation of New Testament churches, and seek to render them null and void by ridicule. If the Lord did not mean that New Testament churches would continue throughout history, what did He mean? The conclusion is unavoidable and the witness of history confirms its validity. It is only Romish opposition and a Protestant mentality or prejudice that strive to negate the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and the witness of history.

THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE

The basis for the perpetuity of the church rests in Scripture. The following passages either explicitly or implicitly teach the continued existence of New Testament churches.

First, Ephesians 3:10–11, 21. This is an implicit statement for the perpetuity of the institution of Christ’s church. The terms “generation,” age,” and “era” are brought into juxtaposition in v. 21: ...εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων... The former denotes amore limited, the latter a more undefined, duration of time. The focus of this verse is not only on eternity, but also on the “eras” and “generations” of time in history in which the New Testament church is to bring glory to God. The church is historical and perpetual before it is everlasting in glory. If New Testament churches ceased to exist, or became corrupted and indistinct with Romanism or later Protestantism, then God ceased to receive that glory. This statement would then be false.

The second statement is Ephesians 5:25–27. The institution of the New Testament church has been, is and will be throughout the process of this economy, prepared for the consummation. The reality and actuality of the church has not been spasmodic or periodic in history, but rather constant, perpetual, from its inception to its final, glorious consummation.

The third statement is Matthew 16:18. This is an explicit declaration, prophetic in nature, that Christ's church would continue to exist and "the gates of hell" would never prevail against it. This may be taken in an aggressive sense, i.e., that the spiritual victories of the New Testament church could not be foiled by the forces of hell, or in a more passive sense, that the church would never die out, or cease to exist. At the very least, the latter is true by the nature of the statement.

The fourth text is Matthew 28:18–20. This "Great Commission" of the Lord Jesus Christ was given to His church, assembled in representative fashion on that occasion (certainly not given to the Apostles as individuals, for it would have ended when they died, nor to any other institution, or to believers as mere individuals. The Lord instituted the principles of organization, and that, in and through His church). Thus, that promise of Christ that "...Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." was made to His church. Mark that the word "alway" (καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος) is literally "all the days," or, idiomatically, "every day," or "the whole of the day." The language necessitates a constant or continuous presence. The words "the world" (τοῦ αἰῶνος) refer to this gospel economy or "age." Such language could not refer to any persons as individuals, but necessarily must have been addressed to the church.

These statements and promises must not be taken lightly or considered inconsequential, as the alternatives would necessitate conclusions quite apart from Scripture and contrary to the facts of history.

THE WITNESS OF HISTORY

Second, the witness of history is that New Testament Christians and churches had a continuous existence from the Apostolic era to the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

These groups were considered heretical by the papists and were both slandered and rigorously persecuted. It was against such that the Romish Inquisition was first established and several crusades were raised. Their names varied: Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Vaudois, Paterines, Albigenses, Berengarians, Bogomili, Cathari, Gezari, Arnoldists, Petrobrusians, Poor Men of Lyons, or Leonists, Henricians, Waldenses, Lollards, Wycliffites, Bohemian Brethren, Hussites, etc. They were inclusively derided from the fourth to the sixteenth century by the generic term "Anabaptist" because they baptized believers who had been baptized as infants in the Romish state-church system.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Third, the history of these pre-Reformation groups is not that of a "chain-link" succession of churches which "neo-Landmarkism" supposes.

NOTE: "Old Landmarkism" is a Baptist movement which began in the mid-nineteenth century, although its principles go far back into Baptist history. (The issue respecting the major tenets was not new, but had been raised by William Kiffin in England in the 1640s, causing the formation of a separate church over this issue). Its primary principle was that paedobaptist ministers should not preach in Baptist pulpits ("pulpit affiliation"), as they were not true Gospel ministers. From this first principle eventually derived the subsequent teachings of the "Baptist Bride" position and the idea of a succession of Baptist churches linked by a succession of churches to the New Testament—tenets of "neo-Landmarkism." Perpetuity is not ecclesiastical, but doctrinal, which would necessarily call into question the orthodoxy of some of the alleged churches in the alleged chain of succession who have

espoused Arminianism and other heresies. It must be assumed that, as Christians practicing believer's baptism have existed throughout history, there is a continuity of baptisms, but this means little without doctrinal continuity.

Old Landmarkism practiced "pulpit affiliation," i.e., not allowing paedobaptist ministers into Baptist pulpits. Neo-Landmarkism views pulpit affiliation as not allowing any non-Landmark Baptist into their pulpits, or anyone who is not from a church which has been duly constituted from a mother church. Some Old Landmarkers also repudiated "alien immersion," i.e., immersion performed by paedobaptist and non-Baptist ministers. Other Old Landmarkers did not.⁶³ Neo-Landmarkism narrowed this to any immersion not performed by a Landmark Baptist Church which had a "pedigree" derived from a duly-constituted "mother church," i.e., a "chain-link succession" of churches and baptisms joined in an "unbroken chain" from the New Testament to modern times.

Such an organic succession is not traceable. It is rather a study in and continuance of New Testament principles and practice. It is historically demonstrable that among these groups were those who held to the New Testament essentials of salvation by grace, a regenerate church membership, believer's baptism by immersion and liberty of conscience.

The aforementioned groups often numbered in the many thousands throughout Europe and the Mediterranean world. They had many common interests: their names were often used interchangeably; they often used the same catechisms; an extensive correspondence circulated among them; refugees from one group were usually assimilated into another; and they made common use of itinerant preachers. Some of these groups, such as the Waldenses,⁶⁴ manifest a history of evangelical Christianity back to or before the fourth century AD, before the state-church alliance under Constantine (313 AD), and continued into the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth century.

THE ISSUE OF ORTHODOXY

Fourth, no inclusive claim of orthodoxy is made for these groups. What is maintained is that *among* these peoples there existed New Testament believers and churches. No church in the New Testament was entirely without error, neither is any present-day denomination, religious group completely orthodox, although orthodox believers and churches may exist within it.

There is an essential principle that remains constant: to the extent that any given church conforms to the New Testament, it is to that extent a New Testament church, and, conversely, to the extent that a church departs from the New Testament, to that extent, it ceases to be a New Testament church. Further, every church which conforms to the New

⁶³ See Douglas A. Moore, *Old Landmarkism and the "Pedigree Pushers,"* pp. 13–14.

⁶⁴ The Waldenses were not named after Peter Waldo. Such names as Waldense, Vallense, Vaudois, etc., derived from the valleys where they were secreted from the persecutors of Rome for centuries. They were the Vallenses, or "people of the valleys" of the Piedmont, or the Italian and French Alps and of the Pyrennes. Some derived their names from various leaders, e.g., Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Petrobruscians, Arnoldists, etc.; others from their locality, e.g., Albigenses, Waldenses, Vaudois; still others from their life-style, e.g., Cathari, Gezari (from the Gk. *Καθαρί*, or pure, i.e., "Puritans."), Bogomili (ancient Bulgarian for "friends of God"); and some from their doctrine, e.g., Paulicians, and "Anabaptist," the generic name given to all these groups for their practice of [re] baptizing all who came into their ranks from the state church.

Testament in principle and practice has an immediate relation to the churches of the New Testament.

NOTE: This principle does not imply that any church may evolve into a New Testament church, but rather that a New Testament church, regardless of its name or designation, may deteriorate to such an extent that it ceases to be a true, New Testament church. There are, perhaps varying degrees of departure from the truth, but departing from either salvation by grace or believer's baptism by immersion would definitely be an abandonment of the essential New Testament pattern for the church.

THE QUESTION OF NAME OR CHARACTER

Perpetuity must rest in either name or character (i.e., doctrine and practice). An individual might change his name legally, but he would remain the same person with his own individual characteristics. This same principle applies to any church. Perpetuity stands or falls in relation to New Testament doctrine and practice. The name is incidental.

Two considerations are in order: first, all groups in history that remained apart from Rome and the later Reformed churches were not necessarily New Testament churches. Among the various peoples of church history have been those who held tenaciously to New Testament truth and those who did not. The Manicheans were "Anabaptist" in that they required a "rebaptism" of all and any who entered their *cultus*, but they certainly could not be classified as New Testament Christians. Further, among the various groups which held to New Testament truth, some were closer and others further removed. Among the Waldenses were those who were radical and completely separate from Rome; there were also the moderates who would accommodate Romish infant baptism and attendance at mass to avoid persecution. The moderates eventually were amalgamated into the Protestant Reformation and from that time became paedobaptists in practice. These were known as the Huguenots. Some of the "Anabaptists" of the Reformation era practiced infant baptism and some sprinkled. Therefore, it is not contended that all these groups or everyone within these groups possessed New Testament characteristics.

Second, there is no attempt to prove the perpetuity of the name "Baptist." A shortened form of "Anabaptist" it has only been in common use since the early seventeenth century. The name is incidental; the doctrine and practice are essential. New Testament Christians and churches have been known under a wide variety of names. Further, there is no attempt to identify all "Baptist" churches as true New Testament churches, for many have departed from the faith and are "Baptist" in name only.

PREJUDICE

Fifth, what is known about these groups is largely from the writings of their Romish enemies, thus great prejudice exists against them in the minds of some historians who hold to Romish and Protestant presuppositions. Thus, the charges made against these "Anabaptists" by the papists has been echoed by some Protestant writers. Historical research in recent times, however, has proven many of these accusations to be false and often merely guilt by association.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

Why be concerned with such a subject? Is the issue of church perpetuity vital, necessary, or even important?

First, we ought to be knowledgeable concerning the promise of our Lord, that He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). Was this promise of our Lord fulfilled in the Church of Rome? History witnesses to the faithfulness of our Lord through multitudes of New Testament believers and churches that never aligned with Rome.

Second, as New Testament or New Covenant Christians, we should be interested in our own history and our relationship to other believers of the past. A proper view of so-called “Church History” is a great incentive to faithfulness as we call to remembrance the great and glorious army of noble martyrs who “loved not their lives unto death” for the very truth we espouse—salvation by free and sovereign grace, believer’s baptism by immersion, the autonomy of the local assembly, and soul-liberty or freedom of conscience—truth often held ignorantly or viewed with relative disdain.

Third, we as New Testament Christians are *not* Protestants. Protestantism came from the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century, and was a reformation of the Romish Church. Our spiritual roots reach into the New Testament scripturally, doctrinally and practically, and to those pre-Reformation groups who were and are yet regarded by many as “heretical.”

Fourth, The answer to this question may be seen in the alternatives. The Scriptures teach that the institution of the New Testament church would continue throughout this age or economy, that it would not “die out” (i.e., the gates of hell would not overcome it), and that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself would constantly be with His church to the consummation. The alternatives, are as follows: first, that during the first centuries the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ departed from the New Testament pattern and through the principles of ecclesiasticism and Constantinianism finally developed into the Church of Rome. Thus, the ecclesiastical system of Romanism is identified with the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although a church is New Testament only as long and to the extent that it holds to New Testament, doctrine and practice; and though the Romish church bears no characteristics of New Testament church, yet many historians and theologians naively suggest that Roman Catholicism is but the natural and historical development of Christianity. This principle is more or less inherent in traditional Protestant thinking.

The second alternative would be that the promise of the Lord failed, and true churches ceased to exist during the “Dark Ages” until they were re-instituted at the Protestant Reformation. This alternative, however, fails to consider that there were many groups in those eras that held strongly to New Testament truth and that the churches of the Protestant Reformation were not established as New Testament churches at all, but as rival, neo-Constantinian institutions to Rome. Others hold that the true churches of the New Testament did “die out” and become absorbed into Rome until the apostolic vision and principles were renewed in the “Restoration Movement” of “Campbellism” or the peculiarities of Mormonism. Thus, the alternatives to New Testament church perpetuity are not acceptable scripturally, doctrinally, prophetically or historically. It remains that the Scriptures teach, the Lord’s promise ensures and the witness of history confirms the continued existence of New Testament churches from the apostolic era to the present time.

Finally, we should not be susceptible to the religious traditions and “historical arguments” of various denominations concerning their peculiar doctrines and practices, as the witness of history answers to the testimony of Scripture. Arguments from antiquity for

such practices as infant sprinkling, ecclesiastical hierarchy, religio–political relationships, and other church practices, all presuppose that the Church of Rome was the true church, and that by the sixteenth century, it had to be “reformed.”

THE VARIOUS THEORIES OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

The idea of church perpetuity is either believed, denied or avoided, but it remains a viable issue for any church with historic roots. There are essentially four major theories of perpetuity:

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

This is the view of Rome, the Greek or Eastern Orthodox and High Anglicanism (i.e., Anglo–Catholicism). According to this theory and tradition, the apostolic office has continued from the New Testament era to the present by the succession of bishops. This system professes that the Holy Spirit is conferred to each succeeding generation of bishops or prelates in the ceremony of ordination, or the symbolic laying on of hands from one bishop to another. The Greek or Eastern Orthodox Church assumes that it is the true Church of Christ because it antedated Rome. Rome assumes that Peter was the first “pope” and traditionally traces her authority and perpetuity on this basis. The Anglo–Catholic system traces its origins back to Henry VIII and from thence back to Peter through the Church of Rome. Such a theory rests solely upon tradition, not upon Scripture. The apostolic office ceased with the original Apostles of the New Testament era. Peter was certainly not the first “pope;” neither was he ever bishop in Rome in any sense. Indeed, only tradition ever places him in Rome. Rome claims antiquity from the New Testament era, but history reveals that Romanism is the product of a gradually developed ecclesiasticism and an assimilation into the Babylonian mystic cults under Constantine, with elements of Judaism and apostate Christianity.

ECCLESIASTICAL OR BAPTISMAL SUCCESSION

This concept of church succession necessitates the idea of a “mother church” or “proper church authority” for subsequent churches, i.e., a church must have been started and have derived its authority and baptism from a proper New Testament church or its own authority and baptism are invalid. This is essentially the theory of neo–Landmarkism in its present form. According to this theory one church logically “succeeds” another as links in a chain. It is common to hear of a “chain–link succession” of certain churches or historical groups forming “links in the succession chain” back to the New Testament era. Such thinking is at variance with New Testament church, polity and cannot be proven from history. It is one thing to prove historically that New Testament churches have existed in every age since the apostles; it is altogether different to seek to prove a linked succession of such churches. This is what distinguishes historic Baptists from those who are ardent neo–Landmarkers or “Baptist Briders.” This also has resulted in making necessary distinctions between the terms “perpetuity” and “succession” or “continuity.” Although older Baptist considered the terms to be synonymous, the words have been modified by more recent writers to advocate a “chain–link” succession theory. A succession of churches or baptisms in accordance with this concept would be impossible to trace.

NOTE: The term “Landmark” with reference to Baptists and the church issue has undergone modification. The term was first used in a series of articles, “An Old Landmark Reset,” written by J. M. Pendleton and published by J. R. Graves in the

Tennessee Baptist in 1854. The question was, "Ought Baptists to recognize paedobaptist preachers as gospel ministers?" It centered on a recent trend toward "pulpit affiliation," i.e., inviting paedobaptist ministers to preach in Baptist pulpits. This issue was not new, but had been raised by William Kiffin in England in the 1640s, causing the formation of a separate church over this issue. It actually and eventually reached to church authority, baptism and membership, preceding the preaching of the gospel. The term "Old Landmarkism" became established.

Over time, considering paedobaptist churches as not being gospel churches and identifying the church as the "Bride of Christ," the concept arose of the "Baptist Bride" position, i.e., that only "true" [neo-Landmark] Baptist churches which have retained certain distinctives form the "Bride of Christ," and all others will be saved, but only "friends of the Bridegroom," and so excluded from the Bride.

Before he died, Graves wrote a book entitled, *The Parables and Prophecies of Christ Explained*, in which he further narrowed the "Bride" to only those within the true churches who were faithful, taking his basis from such parables as "The Wise and Foolish Virgins," "the Parable of the Pounds," etc. This formed the beginning, it is believed, of the present "New Light" position that only a select few will compose the "Bride" and have the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Spirit resides in the church. Those outside the "Bride" are to be cast into "outer darkness," excluded from the New Jerusalem, and must enter into eternity unglorified, having to "eat the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations"! Such has been the trend of this type of thinking.⁶⁵

The following quotations from W. A. Jarrell is an attempt to set the issue of church perpetuity in the proper perspective, and give the true view of Old Landmarkism:

The late and lamented scholar, J. R. Graves, LL.D., wrote: "Wherever there are three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches covenanted together to hold and teach, and are governed by the New Testament, etc., there is a Church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers in a thousand miles of them to organize them into a church. There is not the slightest need of a council of presbyters to organize a Baptist church."

And the scholarly S. H. Ford, LL.D., says: "Succession among Baptists is not a linked chain of churches or ministers, uninterrupted and traceable at this distant day....The true and defensible doctrine is, that baptized believers have existed in every age since John baptized in Jordan, and have met as a baptized congregation in covenant and fellowship where an opportunity permitted."

Every Baptist church being, in organization, a church complete in itself, and, in no way organically connected with any other church, such a thing as one church succeeding another, as the second link of a chain is added to and succeeds the first, or as one Romish or Episcopal church succeeds another, is utterly foreign to and incompatible with Baptist church polity. Therefore, the talk about every link "jingling in the succession chain from the banks of the Jordan to the present," is ignorance or dust-throwing. All that Baptists mean by church "Succession," or perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ For a further discussion of Landmarkism, see William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, pp. 867–868; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 460–461; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 271; J. R. Graves, *The Parables and Prophecies of Christ Explained*, p. 12; Roy Mason, *The Church—that Jesus Built*, pp. 110–111; J. R. Graves, *Old Landmarkism What is It?*; Bob L. Ross, *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*.

⁶⁶ W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 1–3.

DENOMINATIONAL SUCCESSION

This would necessitate the perpetuity of a given name, such as “Baptist” or “Roman Catholic,” “Lutheran” or “Presbyterian,” etc. History reveals that New Testament believers have been designated by various names throughout history. The name or designation does not guarantee the nature, invalidity or validity of any given church; this is found rather in the doctrine and practice of that church.

DESIGNATION BY DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

The fourth and final theory is that the validity of any church is founded upon its doctrine and subsequent practice, its faith and life. Many churches have historic names, even biblical names, but do not possess biblical or historic doctrine and practice. Neither can an unscriptural name (i.e., one that is only historical and derogatory, such as “Baptist,” or as originally and erroneously given, “Anabaptist,” or re-baptizer) negate scriptural doctrine and practice. It remains that a New Testament church is a church that holds to the doctrine and practice of the New Testament. This is the only valid, consistent theory of church perpetuity.

THE CONSISTENCY OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

What are the viable principles that determine perpetuity? The governing principle must be that a church that conforms to the abiding principles of the New Testament is to that extent a New Testament church and a church which does not conform to the principles of the New Testament ceases to that extent to be a New Testament church. To this all must logically agree.

Is full and absolute conformity to New Testament doctrine and practice essential to church perpetuity? No, for the following reasons:

First, in the New Testament era itself churches deviated to a given extent in either doctrine or practice or both, yet were still considered as New Testament churches. The church at Corinth was beset by both doctrinal and practical errors, yet addressed as a true church (1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Cor. 1:1). The Colossian assembly was struggling with doctrinal and practical error, evidently stemming from an incipient Gnostic influence. The church at Jerusalem had some who were strongly Judaistic and held that a Gentile must become a Jew in order to become a Christian, completely obscuring grace: (see Acts 15:1; note, however, that this error was neither general nor permanent) The Ephesian and Pergamos churches were infected with Nicolaitanism and the doctrine of Balaam (see Rev. 2–3). Yet these churches were counted as New Testament assemblies. Almost every church in the New Testament was beset with some type of error or difficulty in either, doctrine or practice, yet these were still New Testament churches.

Second, few, if any, churches in history could claim absolute and complete conformity to the New Testament in every aspect of doctrine and practice. Every church, it must be admitted, has its imperfections and inconsistencies in the light of New Testament truth. There are three integrated principles that must be maintained to retain the essence of New Testament truth:

- Salvation by grace. This is an essential New Testament doctrine (see Eph. 2:4–10). This would exclude any church that taught or practiced sacerdotalism and salvation by works (i.e., baptismal regeneration, sacramental justification, etc.). It

must also exclude any who hold a view of the “sacraments” [baptism and the Lord’s Supper] that would obscure the truth of grace through a family or “covenant relationship” rather than personal faith (i.e., infant baptism, which necessarily obscures the reality and necessity of personal, saving faith to a given extent).

- Believer’s baptism by immersion. This implies a voluntary act of obedience, identification and submission on the part of a believer. It also implies a regenerate church membership, all according to the New Testament pattern. It further precludes infant sprinkling, a practice utterly unknown in and foreign to the teaching of the New Testament.
- Soul-liberty or freedom of conscience. This truth would exclude infant baptism as an involuntary and unscriptural rite. It would preclude compulsory church membership and the entire Constantinian principle as historically practiced by both Romanism and Protestantism. These three essential principles of truth are utterly necessary to retain the basic character of a New Testament church; the absence or denial of these would destroy the nature of the church in essence.

A final principle is the principle of exclusion. At what point would a church cease to be a true, New Testament church? All New Testament churches began as true Gospel churches. All had imperfections and inconsistencies; most had errors in both doctrine and practice; some had serious doctrinal and practical, problems that threatened their very existence. The consistent principle would be that only when such errors became characteristic, fundamental and permanent would the identity of the church be lost (see Rev. 1:4–6; 2:1, 5–6; 3:14–22).

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD CHURCH PERPETUITY

The attitude of some toward New Testament church perpetuity has caused this truth to be disdained and held in contempt. Sadly, some have been filled with pride and have manifested an arrogant or exclusivist spirit toward those who are either ignorant of or prejudiced against this truth. Such a spirit is contrary to the New Testament. That New Testament believers and churches have had a perpetual existence has been and is due solely to the free and sovereign grace of our faithful and loving God. Such faithfulness should not lead to pride but rather to a humble and thankful spirit. Those who remain prejudiced against such truth because of tradition or ignorance should humble themselves to personally investigate the teaching of Scripture and the witness of history. God is never honored by pride, ignorance or prejudice.

NOTE: For further study, see W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 1–48; Edward H. Overby, *A History of the Baptists*, pp. 1–23; J. B. Moody, *My Church*, pp. 132–206; Cross, I. K., *The Battle for Baptist History*. Columbus, GA: Brentwood Christian Press, 1990. 202 pp.; Ford, S. H., *The Origin of the Baptists*. Texarkana: Baptist Sunday School Committee, 1950. 105 pp.; Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*. Clarksville, TN: Bible Baptist Church Publications, n.d. 135 pp. J. C. Settlemyer, *Landmarkism Under Fire*. Lizton, IN. Published by the author. 2005. 218 pp.; John Stanley, *The Church in the Hop Garden*. London: The Kingsgate Press, n.d. 261 pp.

CHAPTER XV

THE CLAIM TO NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PERPETUITY

The subject of church perpetuity has been shunned either because of ignorance, prejudice or the traditional Protestant mentality that could consider perpetuity only through the Church of Rome. A New Testament perpetuity through various dissident groups would be precluded altogether because both Romanists and Protestants considered these peoples to be heretics and a threat to their own existence and power. Is there any valid claim to antiquity and New Testament perpetuity other than that of Rome or the Greek Orthodox Church? This chapter is concerned with two questions: First, what church or religious group can scripturally and historically lay claim to New Testament perpetuity? Second, what is the witness of reliable historians to this issue?

DENOMINATIONS AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Several churches or religious groups make the claim to be the only true church. This claim usually rests either upon antiquity or the theory that the truth had been lost for generations until they revived and re-established it. What are the facts?

The Greek or Eastern Orthodox Church claims to be the true Apostolic Church because it antedated the Romish Church. It remains the Greek “Catholic” Church. Her claims run parallel to those of Rome.

The Church of Rome claims to be the only true and Apostolic Church, founded upon Peter by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 16: 18–19). Rome further claims in her antiquity that all and any churches existing throughout history have departed from her and consequently are apostate. The facts of Scripture and history, however, are quite to the contrary. Peter laid no claim whatsoever to Papal authority (Matt. 16:18–19, 21–23; Acts 15; 1 Pet. 5:1). He was not infallible (Gal. 2:1 ff; Matt. 16: 22–23). He was married (Matt. 8:14; 1 Cor. 9: 5). He was never Bishop in Rome. (Note the absence of any mention of Peter in Rom. 1:7; 16:3–16. Yet Rome claims that at that very time Peter was Bishop of Rome). Only tradition ever places him in Rome at all. The truth of history is that Roman Catholicism was gradually built as an ecclesiastical system during the first six centuries as a mixture of ecclesiastical hierarchy, Judaism, paganism (i.e., Babylonian mystic religion), and apostate Christianity. This amalgamation was finalized by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century in an unholy union of Church and State to form a sacralist society with Roman Catholicism as the State church. Papal power reached its apex from about the sixth through the tenth centuries.

Romanism bears no resemblance to New Testament Christianity, and only a faint resemblance to the Old Testament priesthood and religious system. Its roots are pagan and mystic. The three essentials of New Testament truth are completely lacking. Rome utterly denies salvation by grace, having substituted the epitome of sacerdotalism and a system of salvation by works under the guidance of a priest-cult. She retains no concept of believer’s baptism by immersion, but a baptismal regeneration of infants at the laver. Rome theoretically denies all and any freedom of conscience or soul-liberty, and her bloody hands are a horrible historic witness to this fact. The Church of Rome is not, nor has it ever been, the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Anglican or Episcopal Church (originally the Church of England), derived from Rome, was founded by King Henry VIII about 1536 as a separate body when the parliament

made Henry the Supreme Head of the national church. This church also claims apostolic succession through Rome and Peter (hence “high” Anglicanism is called “Anglo-Catholicism”). Although there are many evangelicals in the Anglican Church, the essentials of the New Testament, either in practice or theory, are denied. Salvation by grace is obscured through either the ritual of baptismal regeneration or at the very least a sacramental approach that includes baptism. Believer’s baptism by immersion is foreign to the modern expression of this system, which necessitates infant baptism and thus, infant church membership, and a denial of the New Testament teaching of a regenerated church membership. (Immersion is contained in the rubric, but rarely, if ever, practiced; it is not practiced upon believers exercising personal faith). Historically and theoretically, the Church of England, as the State Church, has denied liberty of conscience in religious matters. (See *The Book of Common Prayer*, with the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* of the Anglican and Episcopal churches).

The Lutheran Church was established through the leadership of Martin Luther about 1530 as a reform of the Roman Church and a reaction against her excesses and scheme of salvation by works. Lutheranism as a religious system retained some of the Romish mysticism in the Lord’s Supper with its doctrine of consubstantiation. Although maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, efficacy is given to infant baptism. Hence, in practice a regenerated church membership is denied and the doctrine of salvation by grace obscured. Believer’s baptism by immersion is not practiced, as the whole Lutheran concept of the “visible church” (a *corpus mixtum* of saved and unsaved) is alien to the New Testament. Freedom of conscience or soul-liberty has been historically denied when Lutheranism has been the state church in a sacralist society.

The Reformed Churches, including the Presbyterian and various Dutch churches, derived largely from John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation. These in many aspects came the furthest from Rome in their reforming and the closest to the New Testament in their doctrine and practice. However, these churches were never founded in theory or practice as New Testament churches, but as churches rival to Rome with their own Constantinian bias. Salvation by grace, although championed by Calvinism, is to a given degree obscured in Reformed “covenant theology” and infant baptism, exchanging a gospel, New Testament distinctive for an Old Testament mentality. Believer’s baptism by immersion is wholly denied, first in the practice of infant baptism, and second in the practice of sprinkling. Historically and in theory, Reformed Churches have denied the liberty of conscience and soul when they have had the Constantinian power of a state church.

The Methodist Church was founded after Whitefield’s death by the organizing abilities of John Wesley in the late Eighteenth century. From its leaders, it derived originally from the Church of England. Although Whitefield was a preacher of the free and sovereign grace of God, Wesley took Methodism by and large into the Arminian camp with its defective concept of salvation and Christian experience (a modified perfectionism). The Methodists, therefore, did not commence as New Testament churches, but as a break away from the Church of England. The practice of infant baptism obscures the doctrine of salvation by grace with its inherent sacramentalism and the denial of a regenerated church membership. Believer’s baptism by immersion is contrary to Methodist thinking (although John Wesley himself, being a strongly disciplined Anglican, was adamantly for immersion as the mode, but infants for subjects). Methodism was born into an age of increasing

tolerance and the question of soul-liberty is not relevant. Most of the subsequent holiness groups such as the Nazarene and Christian Missionary Alliance Churches derived from the Methodists.

Congregationalism began as a distinct movement when the “Separatists” broke with the Church of England and the Presbyterians about 1584. The leader of this movement was Robert Browne, who came under strong Baptist influence in his formative years at his first pastorate. Baptist principles led him into a mediating position which became the essence of Congregationalism (i.e., support of local church autonomy, as opposed to the ecclesiasticism of the English Church). This group practices infant sprinkling, which obscures the truth of salvation by grace by the principle of sacramentalism and the inherent denial of a regenerated church membership. Where Congregationalism did assume power in the American colonies, a sacralist mentality developed that caused the persecution of religious dissidents. (See Chapter XXI, “The Origin of the English Baptists,” for a discussion of the Baptist influence upon Browne).

Brethrenism originated in Dublin, Ireland, as a movement back to the simplicity of the New Testament in order and worship. It was a reaction against the established church, formalism, sectarianism and lack of spirituality. The first congregation was formed at Plymouth in 1831, hence the designation “Plymouth Brethren.” This group, as most evangelical Christian churches, holds to basic New Testament principles. Some (Open Brethren) practice believer’s baptism; others (Exclusive Brethren) hold to infant (or household) baptism.⁶⁷

Pentecostal and Holiness churches began as reactions to the major denominations and their seeming lack of vital spirituality, holiness and Christian experience. Such movements as the Church of the Nazarene (organized in 1907 as the “Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene”) and the Christian and Missionary Alliance (founded about 1881 by A. B. Simpson took its present name in 1887) were the result of the Wesleyan holiness movement and perfectionist teachings within Methodism and the later Oberlin perfectionism. The Pentecostal churches (e.g., the Assemblies of God, founded about 1914–1918, is the largest denomination among this group) were founded in the early part of the twentieth century from the Pentecostal “revival” which emphasized tongues as a sign of the “second blessing.” All these groups are distinctly Arminian or Pelagian in doctrine, obscuring to a large degree the biblical concept of grace.⁶⁸

Campbellism, or the “Church of Christ” Church was founded by Alexander Campbell, a Presbyterian–turned–Baptist–turned–out, about the year 1827. The group took the name of “Reformers” or “Gospel Restorationists,” believing that the apostolic faith and practice had long since disappeared from the earth and that they were the true church. They teach that baptism is essential for salvation (i.e., in reality a baptismal regeneration, or in

⁶⁷ Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations*, pp. 65–67; J. D. Douglas, *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 789–790.

⁶⁸ See Frank S. Mead, *Op. cit.*; J. D. Douglas, *Op. cit.*; B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*; Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*.

their words, “one meets the blood in the water”). Thus, this religious system denies salvation by grace in principle and practice.⁶⁹

Mormonism is a cult founded about 1830 by Joseph Smith. This group claims apostolic office and authority, and so claims to be the only true church. Among their errors and heresies are: baptismal regeneration, Apostolic Succession, an unscriptural priesthood, baptism for the dead by proxy (a necessary doctrine for their baptismal regeneration), salvation by works and a denial of the sufficiency of Scripture (i.e., added revelation through the vision and writings of Joseph Smith).⁷⁰

Seventh-Day Adventism began as an “adventist” or millennial group with William Miller, a Baptist minister, about 1844. Further influence came from the Seventh-Day German Baptists. The group was distinctly formed and its doctrines formulated by Ellen G. White about 1863. The peculiar and unscriptural doctrines of this religious system include a legal salvation, “Saturday Sabbath” (Sunday worship is supposed to be the “mark of the Beast”), soul-sleep, annihilation of the wicked, Satan as the scapegoat or sin-bearer, and the Divine inspiration of Mrs. White in her visions and revelations.⁷¹

Russelism, or “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” were founded about 1884 by Charles Taze Russel; this group first was known as “Millennial Dawnists. Some of their doctrines were derived from Seventh-Day Adventism. In doctrine and practice, this cult denies, among other truths: the Trinity, the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, salvation by grace (substituting a system openly teaching salvation by works of self-effort), annihilation of the wicked, and the literal return or advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷²

Christian Science as a religious system was established about 1879 under the influence of Mary Baker Eddy. It is more distinctives and is filled with error concerning every fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.⁷³

All of the aforementioned groups possess the following characteristics: first, none can be traced historically to the New Testament or apostolic era in either doctrine or practice. Second, their origin can be historically dated in time and their human founders named. Third, in almost every case there is a definite departure from New Testament doctrine and practice in the three essential matters of salvation by grace, believer’s baptism by immersion and soul-liberty or freedom of conscience. These necessary characteristics are either missing or to a given extent obscured. Hence, none of these groups or systems can claim New Testament perpetuity as revealed in Scripture, promised by the Lord Himself and witnessed by the facts of history. Is there any body of people who might make such a claim?

⁶⁹ For a discussion on the history, principles and practices of the Campbellite system, see Bob L. Ross, *Campbellism, Its History and Heresies* and J. H. Milburn, *Origin of Campbellism*.

⁷⁰ See Walter Martin, *The Maze of Mormonism*; J. K. Van Baalen, *The Chaos of the Cults*; Herman Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*; Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*

⁷¹ See J.K. Van Baalen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 228–256.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 257–276.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85–103.

The Baptists can be traced to no human founder or any historical date subsequent to the New Testament (i.e., those assemblies that are scriptural and historical in their doctrine and practice), possess the New Testament characteristics of salvation by grace, believer's baptism by immersion and soul-liberty or freedom of conscience according to the New Testament pattern. Baptists have always maintained a distinct separation of church and state, being adamantly anti-Constantinian in both doctrine and practice. Two observations are essential: first, not all or every so-called "Baptist Church" is a true New Testament church. There is no inclusive denominational claim to perpetuity. The principle yet remains that if a church conforms to the abiding principles of the New Testament, it is a New Testament church; if a given church does not conform to these principles, it ceases to be a New Testament church. So-called "Baptist Churches" that receive into their membership those who have only been sprinkled in infancy, those who have no credible profession of faith or those who have been baptized in unscriptural churches (e.g., Campbellite baptism), cannot be identified as New Testament churches. Second, there is no claim for the perpetuity of the name "Baptist." The name itself has historically been one of derision, used by the enemies of New Testament believers, a shortened form of "Anabaptist" or "re-baptizer." The term is a misnomer, as the Romish and Protestant writers did not recognize the baptism of the "Anabaptists" as valid, neither did the "Anabaptists" recognize the infant baptism or sprinkling of the others to be true or valid. Believers and assemblies holding to New Testament truth have been known by many different names throughout history. These names often reflected their geographic localities (e.g., Waldenses, Vaudois, Bohemian Brethren, Picards, Albigenses), their leaders (e.g., Novatians, Montanists, Donatists, Paulicians, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists), their characteristics (e.g., Paterines, Bogomili, Brethren), or their doctrine (e.g., Anabaptist—this was used as a general or generic term from the fourth to the seventeenth century).

THE STATEMENTS OF HISTORIANS

Is it balanced and factual to make such a claim for the perpetuity of New Testament churches? Is this a figment of Baptist historians and their ignorance or prejudice? The following quotations are from Romish and Protestant historians, many of whom were avowed enemies of "Anabaptists" or New Testament believers, churches and principles.

The King of Holland in 1819 appointed J. J. Dermout, his personal chaplain, and Dr. Ypeij, professor of theology at Groningen, to write a history of the Dutch Reformed Church and to investigate the claims of the Dutch Baptists. These two authors were highly regarded as great Christians, able historians and astute theologians in their church. They wrote:

We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists...were the original Waldenses, and who have long in history received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the Gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation about in the 16th century was in the highest

degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their denomination is the most ancient.⁷⁴

The *Edinburg Cyclopedia*, in the article on the “New Testament Church,” has the following: “It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-baptists. Indeed this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time.”⁷⁵

Sir Isaac Newton, the famed British philosopher, historian and student of the Scriptures, stated: “The modern Baptists, formerly called Anabaptists, are the only people who have never symbolized with the Papacy.”⁷⁶

Alexander Campbell, the founder of the religious system known as Campbellism, or the “Church of Christ” Church, in his debate with McCalla, declared that: “From the apostolic age to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists have had a continued chain of advocates, and public documents of their existence in every century can be produced.”⁷⁷

Robert Barclay, a Quaker historian (1648–1690), in his work on British history wrote:

...the rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists have existed from the time of the Apostles.⁷⁸

John Clark Ridpath, a Methodist, Professor at De Pauw University and author of a famed world history, wrote in a personal letter to Dr. W. A. Jarrell: “I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist church as far back as 100 AD, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists.”⁷⁹

John Lawrence Von Mosheim (1694–1755), a Lutheran and the “Father of Modern Church History,” wrote:

...the origin of . . . the Anabaptists . . . is lost in the remote depths of antiquity. . . . Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists.⁸⁰

Ulreich Zwingli, the Swiss Protestant Reformer and ardent persecutor of the Baptists, wrote: “The institution of the Anabaptists is no novelty, but for 1300 years has

⁷⁴ A. Ypeij, and J. J. Dermout, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*, I, p. 148, as quoted by John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

⁷⁵ Quoted by J. M. Carroll, *Trail of Blood*, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Quoted by Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 107.

⁷⁷ McCalla–Campbell Debate, pp. 378–379, as quoted by Mason, *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Inner Life of the Societies the Commonwealth*, pp. 11–12, quoted by Mason, *loc cit.*

⁷⁹ W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 59.

⁸⁰ John Lawrence Von Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, II, pp. 119–120. Also see the explanation of Jarrell on this quote, *Ibid.*, pp. 310–311.

caused great disturbance in the Church, and has acquired such strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appears futile for a time.”⁸¹

Cardinal Hosius, the President of the Council of Trent (1554), a Romish prelate and an avowed enemy of the Baptists, wrote:

Were it not for the fact that the Anabaptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past 1200 years, they would swarm greater than all the reformers. ...If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man or any sect shows in suffering, then the opinions and persuasions of no sect can be truer and surer than those of the Anabaptists, since there have been none for the 1200 years past that have been more generally punished or that have been more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and have offered themselves to the most cruel sort of punishment than these people.⁸²

Hosius wrote again, “The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which the Waldensian brethren seem to have been. Nor is this heresy a modern thing, for it existed in the time of Austin.”⁸³

Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711), a Dutch Reformed pastor and theologian, in answer to the question concerning church perpetuity, wrote:

Where was the Reformed [Calvinistic or Evangelical] church prior to Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin?

Answer: First of all, the true church remains steadfast by reason of her durability—a durability which does not fluctuate. True doctrine is an infallible distinguishing mark of the church...Wherever true doctrine resides...there also is the church...prior to Luther this church existed wherever this true doctrine, which never ceased to be, was to be found.

...The church existed in several independent churches which maintained separation from popery...Such churches existed since early times in the southern parts of France, as well as in some parts of England, Scotland, Bohemia, and also in Piedmont. Against these churches popes have initiated many persecutions, but they continue to exist until this day....prior to the time of Zwingli and Luther there had been very many who adhered to the same doctrine...and that Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin had by renewal brought this doctrine to light...

Reynerius, one of the leaders of the Inquisition, who did some writing prior to the year 1400, writes concerning the Waldenses:

Among all sects that either are or have been, there is none more detrimental to the Roman Catholic Church than that of the Leonists (that is, the poor men of Lyons—the Waldenses)...it is the sect that is of the longest standing of any; for some say it has existed since the time of the apostles...it is the most general of all sects; for scarcely is there any country to be found where this sect has not been embraced...this sect has a great appearance of godliness, since they live righteously before all men, believe all that God has said, and maintain all the articles contained in the *sybolum* (the twelve articles of faith)...

⁸¹ Quoted by John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 86. Note that although Christian gives the time as 300 years, all other historians give 1300 years. This latter date coincides with all other historical data.

⁸² Hosius, *Letters Apud Opera*, 112–113, as quoted by John T. Christian, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 85–86.

⁸³ Hosius, *Works of the Heresies of Our Times*, Book I 431. ed. 1584, as quoted by John T. Christian, *Ibid*; W. A. Jarrell, *Op. cit.*,—p. 30.

Archbishop Sessellius writes in his book against the Waldenses:

“The Waldenses originate from a religious man named Leo, who lived during the time of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great [313 AD].”

Such is the witness of these parties. Do you yet ask whether the Reformed [Calvinistic or Evangelical] Church existed prior to Luther? To this I reply that she was to be found among those whom we have just mentioned; that is, those residing in Piedmont among the Waldenses.⁸⁴

Pierre Allix (1641–1717) was a French Reformed pastor and then a historian in the Church of England who became an apologist for the Albigenses and Waldenses. He wrote that their origin could be traced to the fourth century, not to Peter Waldo, and that these were evangelical Christians.⁸⁵

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), the New England Puritan Divine wrote concerning the testimony of the truth during the Middle Ages when Western Civilization was under the power of the papacy:

In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of Rome. . . ecclesiastical historians mention many by name who manifested an abhorrence of the pope, and his idolatrous worship, and pleaded for the ancient purity of doctrine and worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of witnesses through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries; private persons and ministers, some magistrates and persons of great distinction. And there were numbers in every age who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

....Besides these particular persons dispersed, there was a certain people called the Waldenses, who lived separate from all the rest of the world, and constantly bore a testimony against the church of Rome through all this dark time...⁸⁶

A. C. Lewis, a Presbyterian and professor of Church History in the Presbyterian Seminary of Chicago, wrote the following in a letter to Dr. Jarrell: “The first Baptist church was not formed or organized, but evolved out of out of Anabaptist antecedents.”⁸⁷

In another letter, Dr. Williston Walker, the great Congregationalist historian and Professor of Church History at Harvard University, wrote:

Some men of weight in church history...would find a continuous relation between the Anabaptists of the Reformation period and individual sects like the Waldenses, and through them a line of free and possibly evangelical churches, back to the early days of Christianity.⁸⁸

L. Burnett, a Campbellite and editor of the “Christian Messenger,” wrote in the December 8, 1886, edition:

⁸⁴ Wilhelmus à Brakel, *De Redelijke Godsdeinst*, [The Christian’s Reasonable Service], II, pp. 37–39.

⁸⁵ See Pierre Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and of the Albigenses*. See also Jean Paul Perrin, a Waldensian pastor and historian, *History of the Ancient Christians*, a volume on the Waldenses, Albigenses and Vaudois.

⁸⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, I, p. 596.

⁸⁷ W. A. Jarrell, *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁸ W. A. Jarrell, *Ibid.*, p. 61.

The Baptists have connection with the Apostles through their line of succession, which extends back 350 years, where it connects with the Waldensian line, and that reaches to the Apostolic day....Baptists also have connection with the Apostles in what they teach and practice...⁸⁹

W. C. King, editor of the historical work entitled *Crossing the Centuries* (with associate editors from Harvard and Yale, including President Woodrow Wilson), wrote the following:

Of the Baptists it may be said that they are not Reformers. These people, comprising bodies of Christian believers known under various names in different countries, are entirely distinct and independent of the Roman and Greek Churches, and have an unbroken continuity of existence from the Apostolic days down through the centuries. Throughout this long period, they were bitterly persecuted for heresy, driven from country to country, disenfranchised, deprived of their property, imprisoned, tortured, and slain by the thousands, yet they swerved not from their New Testament faith, doctrine and adherence.⁹⁰

There exists more than sufficient historical evidence, even from Romish and Protestant historians, for the perpetuity of New Testament churches which have held the truths known today as Baptist distinctives. There is further proof from these same witnesses that Baptists have sufficient historical evidence to claim the declaration of Scripture and the promise of the Lord Jesus that the “gates of hell” would not prevail against his church. The words of C. H. Spurgeon, a Baptist, and yet a brother of broad fellowship and gracious spirit, are quite appropriate to close this chapter:

We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the Apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect, yet there has never existed a government holding Baptist principles which persecuted others; nor, I believe, any body of Baptists ever held it to be right to put the consciences of others under the control of man. We have ever been ready to suffer, as our martyrologies will prove, but we are not ready to accept any help from the State, to prostitute the purity of the Bride of Christ to any alliance with Government, and we will never make the Church, although the Queen, the despot over the consciences of men.⁹¹

We care very little for the “historical church” argument, but if there be anything in it at all, *it ought not to be filched by the clients of Rome*, but should be left to that community, which all along held by “one Lord, one faith and one baptism....The afflicted Anabaptists, in their past history, have borne such pure testimony, both to truth and freedom, that they need in nothing be ashamed....It would not be *impossible* to show that the first Christians who dwelt in the land were of the same faith and order as the churches now called Baptists.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Quoted by W. A. Jarrell, *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁹⁰ Quoted by Mason, *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1861, p. 225.

⁹² C. H. Spurgeon, in *Ford's Christian Repository*, as quoted by W. A. Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 330.

...when any say to us, "You as a denomination, what great names can you mention? What fathers can you speak of?" We may reply, "More than any other under heaven, for we are of the old apostolic church that have never bowed to the yoke of princes yet; we, known among men, in all ages, by various names, such as Donatists, Novatians, Paulicians, Petrobrussians, Cathari, Arnoldists, Hussites, Waldenses, Lollards, and Anabaptists, have always contended for the purity of the Church, and her distinctness and separation from human government. Our fathers were men inured to hardships, and unused to ease. They present to us, their children, an unbroken line which comes legitimately from the apostles, not through the filth of Rome, not by the manipulations of prelates, but by the Divine life, the Spirit's anointing, the fellowship of the Son in suffering and of the Father in truth."⁹³

THE MATERIAL AND EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

It is common for some church historians to consider church history as the providential and natural development of Christianity, presupposing that the Church of Rome was the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ and that it gradually became so corrupt and traditional that the Protestant Reformation was necessary to bring back biblical truth. These historians either completely ignore or disregard the dissident groups in church history or equate them with heretics and disturbers of true Christianity. Such mentality arises from a Romish or Protestant bias, a traditional acceptance of misinformation and a general unwillingness to emphasize the New Testament distinctives of these groups.

The materials for historical investigation include all the documents of general church history: the various historical records and writings of all and any religious bodies that can be obtained, confessions of faith, creeds, the writings of the Church fathers, the contemporary pagan writers and historians, secular histories, archaeological relics, inscriptions, catechisms, decrees, government or state records, etc. In short, besides the Scriptures, all available evidence must be carefully weighed. All former historians must be scrutinized as to their own personal and denominational bias, lack of information or access to information no longer available, etc. A historical work is much more than an accumulation of facts; it is a proper and unbiased presentation of the facts with a further attempt to properly emphasize, correlate and interpret those facts as objectively as possible. It must be noted, however, that all facts are necessarily interpreted by one's presuppositions. Thus, a given degree of bias necessarily exists in human thinking in general and in historical matters in particular.

In the interpretation of the historical facts concerning alleged New Testament groups and churches, the following six considerations are essential: first, the early churches of primitive Christianity were autonomous, with no ecclesiastical hierarchy and centralization to preserve records or documents. Thus, much information is simply not available except from Roman government documents, various "epistles" of the Apostolic Fathers and the works of ancient pagan historians and officials. The remainder has been filled in with later traditions which must remain questionable.

Second, primitive Christianity of the first three centuries, or before Constantine, endured many severe persecutions by the government of pagan Rome. Many believers were killed or dispersed, their meeting places destroyed and almost all of their records and writings burned.

⁹³ C. H. Spurgeon, *Op. cit.*, 1861, p. 613.

Dioclesian's strict orders were, to burn up every Christian, every meeting-house, and every scrap of written paper belonging to the Christians, or that gave any account of their rise and progress; and, no doubt, many valuable documents were burnt that would have been very interesting to the present generation; and it is a wonder that any of them were preserved from the flames.⁹⁴

After Constantine, the State Church with its new-found political, civil and military power, began a principle of persecution of its own. Under the Constantinian principle of a sacralist or monolithic society, the emerging Church of Rome sought to force all separatist churches into her ecclesiastical system by the threat and use of the civil power. This meant migrations of individuals and churches throughout Europe, Asia Minor and Britain. New Testament believers were forced to meet in secret, commit much to memory and little to writing. Although their presence was universally acknowledged as permeating all of Western society, even by their enemies, yet their writings remained few, for many perished in the flames kindled by their enemies.

Third, most of the historical information concerning ancient believers and churches from the time of Constantine to the Protestant Reformation has been derived from the writings of their Romish enemies. Such writings naturally manifest the great bias of State religion and cannot be considered as completely valid or trustworthy.

NOTE: Some early leaders of these dissident groups were charged with claiming an immediate, Divine inspiration by the Holy Spirit. It is to be remembered that their accusers would accuse believers today of the very same thing if they claimed the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves by the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit apart from the right of the Church of Rome to be the sole interpreter of Scripture (See 2 Pet. 1:20; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

It is naive, to say the least, on the part of some historians, when they generally condemn ancient Christians as heretics because they were condemned by the followers of Rome and remained separate from her religious system.

Fourth, as all apart from the State church were considered to be heretical, they were often classed together in a most general fashion. There was a most prominent use of the principle of "guilt by association" to discredit these "heretics" and aid in their extermination. Everything possible was done to discredit these people doctrinally, practically, morally and ethically.

NOTE: The Paulicians, being from Asia Minor and the Syrian area, were often classed with the Manicheans (an ancient sect akin to the Gnostics who held to various heresies). The Manicheans rebaptized all who came to them and so were classed as "Anabaptists." They also rejected the Old Testament in their dualistic philosophy, believing it to be the work of the Evil Principle. The Paulicians also baptized all who came to them out of the State church. They further did not hold to the Old Testament in the same way as did Rome. They did not reject the Old Testament, but did not hold it equal to the New, for it was from the Old Testament that Rome found its basis for religious wars and the persecution of heretics. These things, however, led to the association of the Paulicians with the Manicheans, a false accusation that continued to the Protestant Reformation! The loose use of such terms is seen in the instance of Luther. His Roman enemies charged him with being a Manichaeist to his discredit.

⁹⁴ J. Davis, *History of the Welsh Baptists*, pp. 9–10.

The Albigenses were New Testament believers in southern France. They were accused of being demon worshippers. Albi is a geographical district or area, and so would include ultimately everyone within that boundary. Some historians state that there were in that part of France the worshippers of the Goat of Mendes, a Satanic symbol, but nothing in the history of these believers would ever associate them with such demon-worshippers. The truth is that Satanism was rampant in medieval times and the Church of Rome used this as a reason for putting to death thousands of innocent men and women.

Some ancient believers were called "Arians" (those who denied the Deity and pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ) and identified with the party and doctrines of Arius because they did not acknowledge the pope as the vicar of Christ on earth or the actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Almost every nick-name for Baptists, or those who historically have held to Baptist distinctives, has been derogatory. The Table of Contents to Dr. Verduin's Book, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, is almost completely composed of such names. He further reveals that the British term for homosexual, "bugger," was originally a derisive term for Baptists to discredit them by accusing them of shameful practices! It began as a derogatory term for "Bogomil" (the term is Slavic for "friends of God," or those who pray to God) or "Bulgar," i.e., from Bulgaria or the Bulkan area. The word became "Bougres" in French and became "bugger" in English. Such immoral accusations, according to Verduin, have lasted into very recent times.⁹⁵

As these New Testament groups are considered individually in the following historical section, each charge is considered and answered. It is untrue to the principles of historical investigation and interpretation, and unworthy of a historian to further traditional slanders without a full investigation of the facts.

Fifth, the extant writings, views and doctrinal statements of these New Testament groups have been interpolated by pagan and Romish writers to conform the history of the early churches with later traditions or discredit dissidents. Such interpolations and forgeries were common in the medieval era.⁹⁶

Finally, historical data is constantly being added to the accumulation of religious knowledge. Many documents and historical investigations have revealed hitherto undocumented evidence for the orthodoxy of some of these groups. Older historical works lacked evidence which would have caused a much different evaluation of these New Testament believers.

NOTE: This is especially true of the Paulicians, perhaps the most maligned and slandered of the New Testament historical groups. The charges of Manicheism, immorality, rejection of Scripture, dualistic tendencies, etc., have been proven false by recent historical investigations and the discovery of their ancient doctrinal Confession or manual of doctrine, *The Key of Truth*, discovered in 1891 and translated by F. C. Coneybeare.

⁹⁵ See Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, pp. 99–100; by the same author, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, p. 133; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 55, 62; Paul Christian [Jean Baptiste], *The History and Practice of Magic*; W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 52–54.

⁹⁶ See W. A. Jarrell, *loc. cit.*; John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

THE BURDEN OF PROOF

In spite of all the foregoing obstacles, documentation can be produced revealing the nature, character, doctrine and practice of these New Testament Christians and churches. It is presupposed that a careful and unbiased investigation, true to the legitimate principles of historical research and mindful of the existing obstacles, will correctly discern the facts of New Testament perpetuity.

From the truth of Scripture, the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, the witness of history and the laws of historical research and investigation, the validity of New Testament church perpetuity is alleged as a well-documented fact. By demonstrating the existence of New Testament believers and churches in every age from the earthly ministry of Christ to the present day, the burden of proof then rests upon those who would deny church perpetuity. It is their duty to prove from Scriptural truth and historical facts that such perpetuity does, in fact, not exist. It is thus presupposed that a New Testament perpetuity does exist and that the burden of proof rests with those who deny it to disprove it in accordance with the Scriptures, the promise of the Lord and the witness of history.

CHAPTER XVII THE APOSTOLIC AGE 26–100 AD

The following historical studies are intended to provide the following: first, a chronological structure⁹⁷ to facilitate a corrolation of dates, facts and eras; second, an introduction to the major historical groups that held tenaciously to New Testament principles; third, to document the historical facts largely from the witness and writings of Romish and Protestant historians (i.e., those who in theory and practice would oppose these peoples), and so remove any charge of any supposed Baptist prejudice or claims.

CHRONOLOGY

EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVENTS
AND PERSONS

BIBLICAL EVENTS AND
PERSONS

BOOKS OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

THE ERA OF TRANSITION (30–48)⁹⁸

Pentecost and the Credentialing or Empowering of the
Jerusalem Church (30)⁹⁹

⁹⁷ The chronological data has been abbreviated from the author's larger work, *A Chronology of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History*. Morgan Hill, CA: PIRS Press, revised ed., 2006. 391 pp.

⁹⁸ Peter was the prominent person and Jerusalem was the central place. The transition began from predominantly Jewish to Gentile Christianity. It extended from Pentecost to the first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul (Acts 1–12).

⁹⁹ The feast of Pentecost had a six-fold significance: religious (Cf. Ex. 23:16, 19; 34:22; Lev. 23:10–12; Numb. 28:26), typical as both the first-fruits and the credentialing by the Spirit (Ex. 25:1–9; 40:33–35; 1 Kgs. 7:51–8:11), prophetic (Acts 2:14–21, 32–33; Joel 2:28–30), ecclesiastical (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4–8), providential and evangelical.

Martyrdom of Stephen (c. 33–35)¹⁰⁰
 Conversion of Saul of Tarsus [Paul] (c. 34–37)¹⁰¹
 The Conversion of Cornelius (35–38)¹⁰²
 Gaius [Caligula], Roman Emperor (37–41)
 Herod Agrippa I, King over Judea, Samaria and Galilee (37–44)¹⁰³
 Marcellus, Roman Procurator of Judea (38)
 Maryllus, Roman Procurator of Judea (39–44)
 The Martyrdom of James (44)¹⁰⁴
JAMES (c. 44–46)¹⁰⁵
 Claudius Caesar, Roman Emperor (41–54)
 Cuspius Fadus, Roman Procurator of Judea (44–46)
 Plutarch, Greek historian (47–120)

¹⁰⁰ John the Baptist was the first martyr of the Christian dispensation; Stephen the first of the Apostolic Church and era. His preaching and prayers were blessed by God to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 6:5–8:2).

¹⁰¹ The conversion of Saul of Tarsus [Apostle Paul] was pivotal in the Book of Acts (Acts 9:1–18). His conversion prepared the way for the great transition from Jewish to Gentile Christianity. Paul was the great intellectual and theologian of the First Century, the great missionary, the inspired writer of most of the New Testament Scriptures.

¹⁰² It was on this occasion that the door of Christianity was opened to the Gentiles by Peter (Acts 10:1–11:18; 15:1–12). God had to supernaturally and providentially overcome the extreme religious, racial and cultural prejudice of both Peter and the Jewish Christians. The issue of uncircumcised Gentiles becoming Christians without first becoming Jews through circumcision and proselytism was a controversy that led to the conference at Jerusalem (Acts 15). This was the beginning of the Judaizing party in Jerusalem.

¹⁰³ Herod Agrippa I was made “King” by Claudius Caesar and the Jews for a short time (41–44) had the power of capital punishment. Cf. Acts 12:1ff.

¹⁰⁴ This was James the Greater, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21). He became the first of the original disciples to be killed for the testimony of the Gospel (44). Peter was also taken prisoner at this time, but was supernaturally delivered (Acts 12:1–24).

¹⁰⁵ The Epistle of James was the first New Testament Scripture. This was written by James “the Just,” the half-brother of Christ who was converted after his resurrection. He became a leading elder in the Jerusalem church.

THE ERA OF EXPANSION (48–64)¹⁰⁶

The First Missionary Journey of Paul (48–49)¹⁰⁷

Tiberius Alexander, Roman Procurator of Judea (46–48)

GALATIANS

(c. 48–49)¹⁰⁸

Ventidius Cumanus, Roman Procurator of Judea (49–52)

The Jerusalem Conference (51)¹⁰⁹

The Second Missionary Journey of Paul (51–52)¹¹⁰

King Herod Agrippa II (50–93 or 100?)

I & II

THESSALONIANS

(c. 52–53)

M. Antonius Felix, Roman Procurator of Judea (53–59)

Martyrdom of Philip and “James the Just” (c. 54–61)¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Paul was the prominent person in the Era of Expansion, and the center of focus moved from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and a predominantly Gentile church. The transition was complete from Jewish Christianity to Gentile Christianity and the great missionary impetus throughout the Roman world and beyond.

¹⁰⁷ Paul and Barnabas were sent on this mission by the Syrian Antioch church after being separated to that ministry by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1–4). This missionary excursion extended into Cyprus and Asia Minor: Perga and Atalia in Pamphylia and the Galatian cities of Pisidia: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:4–26).

¹⁰⁸ This was the second writing in the New Testament. The Apostle wrote this letter to those he had evangelized on his first missionary journey in the southern area of the province of Galatia. The date of the Galatian epistle is determined by the usage of the term “Galatia.” If Paul was referring to the northern portion of the Roman province, then Galatians would have been written later, about 57–58 AD., forming both a logical and historical introduction to Romans (the “northern Galatian” theory), but if referring to the whole province, then the “Churches of Galatia” would refer to the area of his first missionary journey (the “Southern Galatian” theory). This latter view, which internal evidence seems to substantiate, would necessitate the earlier date.

¹⁰⁹ The conference in Jerusalem was concerned with the nature of the Gospel of grace and opposed to circumcision, and the relation of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Did one have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian? Was the rite of circumcision necessary for salvation? The legalistic controversy, however, would continue until the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Cf. Gal. 1:6–9; 2:1–3:14, 24; 4:4–5; 4:21–5:4, 12; 1 Cor. 11:13–15; Acts 22:18–22) (70–72).

¹¹⁰ Cf. Acts 15:36–18:32. The Gospel entered Europe for the very first time at Philippi. Paul and his company evangelized in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus.

¹¹¹ Early tradition states that Philip the Apostle was stoned to death at Hierapolis in Phrygia approximately 54. James “the Just,” the half-brother of the Lord was allegedly martyred approximately 61 in Jerusalem during the interregnum after the death of the Roman Procurator Festus. He was thrown from the Temple, stoned and finally beaten to death with a fuller’s club.

MARK (c. 50–55)¹¹²

The Third Missionary Journey of Paul (c. 53–57)¹¹³

**I & II
CORINTHIANS**¹¹⁴
(c. 54–56)¹¹⁵

ROMANS (58)¹¹⁶

LUKE (c. 57–61)

Paul Imprisoned at Caesarea (58–60)

Porcius Festus, Roman Procurator of Judea (60–61)

Paul: the Journey to and Imprisonment at Rome (61–63)¹¹⁷

The “Prison Epistles” and Acts (61–63)

COLOSSIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILEMON

PHILIPPIANS

ACTS¹¹⁸

¹¹² Tradition identifies the author as John Mark, a cousin to Barnabas and a younger companion to Paul and Peter (Acts 12:25; 13:1–5; 15:36–41; Col. 4:10; Phlm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13). This was the first written account of the Messianic era (c.50–55).

¹¹³ This trek began from the Syrian Antioch. Paul retraced his route to the cities of southern Galatia, then westward to Ephesus in Asia Minor where he spent some three years. He left Ephesus after the city-wide riot and made a circuitous route through Macedonia and Achaia, visiting previously-established churches. From Corinth, he retraced his route back through Macedonia and down the coast of Asia Minor, meeting with believers along his way toward Jerusalem (Acts 18:22–21:15).

¹¹⁴ The events described in 2 Cor. 11:23–28 had already occurred in Paul's ministry and experience.

¹¹⁵ These two letters by the Apostle Paul followed a first letter that has not been preserved (1 Cor. 5:9). They were written from Ephesus during the third missionary journey.

¹¹⁶ This Pauline epistle was written from Corinth (Rom. 1:1; 16:21–23). The purpose was two-fold: (1) to prepare the believers at Rome for his anticipated arrival (Acts 19:21; Rom. 1:9–13; 15:15–32). (2) Because of Judaistic error, opposition, imprisonment and possible martyrdom, and the need for a positive, didactic statement of truth, Paul set forth the major aspects of salvation in a comprehensive and systematic epistle with the righteousness of God as the major theme. The epistle was delivered to Rome by Phoebe (Rom. 16:1–2).

¹¹⁷ At Jerusalem, after meeting with the leaders of the church, Paul was arrested by the Roman authorities after a riot (Acts 21:16–22:29). He was imprisoned at Caesarea until taken to Rome about 61 (Acts 22:30–26:32). The Apostle Paul, having as a Roman citizen exercised his right to appeal to Caesar, was transported to Rome under guard. The record of the incidents and the two years of imprisonment are found in Acts 25:9–12, 21, 24–25; 27:1–28:31.

¹¹⁸ The book of Acts, “The first Church History,” was written by Luke from Rome during the final time of the Apostle Paul's imprisonment (Acts 28:16–31). It is vital for a proper comprehension of the implementation of New Testament truth in principle and practice.

MATTHEW (60–66)

Paul: Release from first Roman Imprisonment (63)¹¹⁹

**I TIMOTHY &
TITUS (63–64)**

THE ERA OF PERSECUTION (64–100)¹²⁰

Albinus, Roman Procurator, (62–65)

The Great Fire in Rome and first Roman State Persecution of Christians under Nero.¹²¹
Believers ravaged by Beasts, Crucified, used for Human Torches in Roman Celebrations
(64–68)

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman Statesman, Stoic
Philosopher (5 BC–65 AD)

I & II PETER

HEBREWS

JUDE (c. 64–68)

II TIMOTHY
(c. 67–68)

Gessius Florus, Roman Procurator of Judea (66–70)

Death of Nero (68) followed by Civil Wars and the Principates of
Galba (68–69), Otho (Jan.–Apr. 69) and Vitellius (Jul.–Dec. 69)

¹¹⁹ There are reasons for believing that the Apostle Paul was released from prison, and that he revisited many of the churches before the outbreak of the Neronian persecution which began in 64. The reasons put forth include: (1) The charges against him at the first were Jewish and he had an anticipation of an imminent release (Phil. 1:23–26; 2:23–24; Phlm. 1, 9, 22), whereas the persecution under Nero was directed specifically against Christians who were slaughtered unmercifully. (2) The first letter to Timothy mentioned nothing of imprisonment. (3) The first time he was not bound and was allowed relative freedom (Acts 28:30–31). The second letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:6–9) seems to describe a different situation (2 Tim. 1:8–9, 16–18; 2:9; 4:6–18).

¹²⁰ It is remarkable that the latter part of the first century AD is virtually unknown to historians except in the most general terms. Such lack of historical detail must be considered in the context of the political unrest in the Roman Empire, the frequent transitions in leadership, and destruction of records. This is especially true with regard to matters of Church History. Much information rests on early tradition. Records of the martyrs were preserved and later generations venerated them. Many church records were destroyed during the Imperial persecutions of 303–310.

It is most probable that all of the original Apostles with the exception of John were martyred during the Neronian persecution. For traditional stories concerning the Apostles and others martyred in the first century, Cf. Thieleman J. Van Braught, *Martyrs' Mirror* (1660) or John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (1563).

¹²¹ It is believed that Nero wanted to destroy Rome and rebuild it on a grander scale. Arson was responsible for destroying about a third of the city. The Christians were blamed. Thus began the long series of state persecutions against Christians which would not subside until 313 AD in the West under Constantine and from 319 to 323 AD in the East under Licinius. In 323 Constantine defeated Licinius and unified the Empire. Constantine himself, however, from 314–321 persecuted the Donatists and other independents who differed from the Catholic party. His interest was in unifying the Empire, not in embracing Christianity.

Final Revolt of the Zealots Brings about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Roman General Titus (70–72)

Vespasian, Roman Emperor (69–79)

Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius buries the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum (79)

Titus Flavius Vespasianus, Roman Emperor (79–81)

Domitian, Roman Emperor (81–96)

Flavius Josephus writes his *History of the Jewish Wars* (81–96)

General persecution of both Jews and Christians under Domitian (93–96)

The Johannine writings (95–98?)¹²²

JOHN (90–95?)

I, II & III JOHN (95?)

John exiled to Patmos (96–98?)

REVELATION

(95–98?)

Nerva, Roman Emperor (96–98)

Trajan, Roman Emperor (98–117)

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SWEEP OF CHRISTIANITY

By the end of the first century, Christianity had reached beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Converts and churches were established in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Spain, France and Britain. The Gospel had been planted in Persia and extended to the border of India to the east. To the south, Christianity had extended itself into Egypt and across Northern Africa. The sweep of Christianity in the primary fulfillment of Acts 1:8 was carried on by the labors of the inspired Apostles, New Testament preachers (e.g., Barnabas, Philip, Timothy, Titus, etc.) and believers who were evangelists in their callings as merchants, tradesmen, soldiers and slaves. Through the avenues of commerce and the Roman army, Christianity spread to the frontiers and beyond. Christianity entered the British Isles with the Roman army and was established in Wales as early as 63 AD. Roman roads and commercial trade routes became providential avenues for the power of the Gospel.

THE PREDOMINANT ERRORS AND HERESIES

Two prominent errors or heresies deserve attention for their influence upon Christianity: first, Judaism. A faction in the Jerusalem Church retained a Judaistic

¹²² There is alleged evidence that the Gospel of John was written after the other Gospel Records. The Epistles seem to have been written later in the First Century when Gnosticism had gained a foothold in the primitive churches. The Book of Revelation was written either while or after John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos. Traditionally, this was allegedly during the persecution under Nerva or Trajan. However, it can be argued from a moderate Preterist position that this was during the Neronian persecution, and that the canon of Scripture, including the Johannine writings, was complete before 70 AD.

framework that was contrary to the gospel (See Acts 15:1). The essential teaching was that a Gentile must become a Jew before he could become a Christian, making Christianity a cultural, legalistic and ritualistic religion. Such teaching completely obscured the doctrine of grace. These “Judaizers” plagued the efforts of the Apostle Paul throughout his ministry (See 2 Cor. 3; 11:12–15; Galatians; Phil. 3:1–7). This error ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70–72 AD. The only remaining Jewish influence upon or interference within Christianity was, perhaps, the Ebionites, a Jewish sect that denied the Deity of Christ because of a strict and misguided monotheism.

The second major heresy was Gnosticism. This philosophical system was an admixture of Christianity, Judaism, Eastern mysticism and Greek Neoplatonic philosophy. It appeared in several incipient forms in the New Testament and the inspired writers warned against it (e.g., Col. 1:15–20; 2:1–9, 16–23; 1 Tim. 1:3–4; Jn. 1:1–18; 2 Pet. 3; 1 Jn.; Jude). Gnosticism became an ever-increasing threat to the vitality of Christianity during the first three centuries as it sought to reduce the truth to philosophical speculation and life to a Neoplatonic unreality. The lasting effects of this tendency yet remain within the traditional Christian framework, in the theory of a “universal, invisible church,” monasticism, asceticism, humanism and trends toward both legalism and antinomianism.

THE PERPETUITY OF FIRST CENTURY CHURCHES

New Testament assemblies existed throughout the Roman Empire and beyond by the end of the first century AD. Many of these churches, even according to the inspired record of the New Testament, were beset with doctrinal, practical, moral and ethical problems. Yet these assemblies were still considered by the inspired writers to be New Testament churches. It was only when essential errors became fundamental, characteristic and permanent, that such churches ceased to be New Testament assemblies. Some of these churches would continue on, planting other churches of like faith and practice; some would lose their identity by eventually succumbing to baptismal regeneration or an increasing ecclesiasticalism; others would be dispersed through persecution and become providentially evangelistic in their dispersion, founding other assemblies. As various churches were founded in subsequent generations, many would be driven underground by intense persecution, only to re-surface later under other names—but always holding to the same New Testament principles.

NOTE: At the end of each historical section, a brief survey of suggested readings from Baptist historians is given for additional source materials. A complete historical bibliography is given at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER XVIII THE ERA OF TRANSITION 100–313 AD

This era of transition began with severe persecutions of Christians by the government of pagan Rome and ended with Christianity becoming the prominent and official religion of the Empire. During the ten great Roman persecutions of the first three centuries, Christianity began to prove its historic principle that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” This era ended when Constantine issued the Edict of Milan (313 AD), which made Christianity a recognized religion [*religio licita*].

CHRONOLOGY

This era extends from the death of the Apostle John to the Edict of Milan and the general end to Roman state persecution. This era was a transition from primitive New Testament Christianity to a sacerdotal state religion.

THE SIX MAJOR ISSUES

1. The New Testament concept of the church was transformed by the rise of an ecclesiastical hierarchical system which rapidly became *Catholic* or universal in nature and character.
2. A sacerdotal system arose to largely replace the spirituality and simplicity of New Testament faith and Christian experience.
3. A gradual division developed among the churches. Those assemblies that sought to retain primitive doctrine, piety and purity began to separate themselves from those that became lax and innovative. These would be generically termed *Anabaptists* from the late second century to the time of the Protestant Reformation. The major groups in this era were the Montanists, Novatians and Donatists.
4. The Early Church Fathers of the first seven centuries are classified according to their historical relation to the first great Ecumenical Council at Nice. There are three designations: The Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers.
5. The first Christian writers subsequent to the inspired Apostles are classified as the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, or those who wrote prior to the first great Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 AD. There are two distinct groups: The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists.
6. This was the age of Roman State persecution. The State sought to systematically obliterate Christianity, but ultimately failed.

OUTLINE

I. THE PERIOD OF SPORADIC PERSECUTIONS (98–248)

II. THE FIRST GENERAL PERSECUTION (249–260)

III. THE PERIOD OF RELATIVE PEACE (260–303)

IV. THE SECOND GENERAL PERSECUTION (303–310)

V. THE EDICT OF MILAN AND PEACE (313)

100—200 AD

Emperor Trajan (98—117)

Clement of Rome (Apostolic Father) (c.30–100)¹²³

Barnabas of Alexandria (Apostolic Father) (c.100)

¹²³ The Apostolic Fathers were an early group of Christian writers believed to have had direct contact with the Apostles themselves. This groups includes: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas, Barnabas of Alexandria, Papias and Polycarp.

	Rise of Ebionism (A Jewish cult formed by a merger of a Qumran remnant with Jewish Christianity [“Judaizers”] (1st—2nd cent)
	Pliny persecutes Christians in Bithynia (112)
	Publius (pastor at Athens), Barsimaeus, Barbelius & Barba martyred (112)
	Justus & Pastor martyred at Complutum in Spain (116)
Tacitus (Roman historian, 55—117)	
Emperor Hadrian (117—138)	
	Ignatius (Apostolic Father & pastor at Rome) martyred (eaten by beasts) (117)
	Phocus (pastor at Pontus) martyred (boiled) (118)
	Rise of Ecclesiasticism: Elders and Monarchical Bishops differentiated (c.120) ¹²⁴
	Papias (Apostolic Father) (c.60—130)
	A time of severe persecution of Christians at this time under Hadrian: multitudes slain (c.130)
	The rise of Montanism (c.135—230) ¹²⁵
	Gnosticism (a mixture of Judaism, Christianity, Eastern mysticism & Greek philosophy): The internal threat to

¹²⁴ The rise of ecclesiasticism. The era from 100—313 AD. was one of transition from NT simplicity to the Romish hierarchy and Papal system. The first step was a distinction made between bishops and elders, then parochial bishops, then diocesan or monarchical bishops, then the Metropolitan bishops by the early fourth century. The transition was also from the NT simplicity of Gospel preaching and ordinances to sacerdotalism and an ecclesiastical priesthood.

¹²⁵ The beginnings of the various groups eventually designated generically as “Anabaptists.” As the more liberal churches took back into fellowship members who had apostatized under threat of persecution and death, conservative churches opposed such action and separated themselves. The rise of ecclesiasticism took place among the same liberal churches. During the era of transition (100—313 AD.) these influences resulted in several schisms, eg., Montanism, Novatianism, etc. The movement was essentially the same, but was named after its prominent leader. After the State—Church system in 313 AD., these groups continued under various names until the time of the Protestant Reformation. Some were heretical in areas; others were more orthodox in doctrine and Biblical in principle; and some were very orthodox and evangelical. Note the chronology of the Middle ages for a listing of these groups.

Christianity from within for first 3 centuries.¹²⁶

Emperor Antoninus Pius (138—161)

Hermas (Apostolic Father) (c.90—140)

Quadratus (Apologist) (c.117—138)¹²⁷

Jewish uprising under Bar Kokhba. The last of Jewish nationalism (122—135)

Marcionism (a heretical Gnostic system) (c.140)

Beginning of doctrine of and controversy over baptismal regeneration (c.150)¹²⁸

Polycarp (Apostolic Father & pastor at Smyrna) martyred (burned & thrust through with a sword) with 12 others (c.69—160)

Emperor Marcus Aurelius: A great era of persecution for Christians. 19,000 martyred at Lyons (161—180)

Aristides (Apologist) (c.138—161)

Justin Martyr (Apologist) martyred (beaten & beheaded) (c.100—165)

Tatian (Apologist) (110—172)

Great Plague in Roman Empire (160—180)

Emperor Commodus (180—192)

Athenagorus (Apologist) (c.161—180)

Theophilus (Apologist) (d. 181)

Hegesippus (Apologist) (c.117—189)

Melito (Apologist) (d. 190)

Emperor Septimius Severus (193—211)

¹²⁶ Gnosticism was a major threat to Christianity during the first three centuries. It was a mixture of Platonic philosophy, Oriental mysticism and apostate Judaism. Gnosticism manifest itself in a variety of forms, eg., Cerinthianism, Doceticism, Marcionism, etc.

¹²⁷ The Apologists were a group of early Christian writers who defended Christianity against the ever-increasing opposition of pagan philosophy, politics and religion. This group includes: Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagorus, Theophilus, Minucius Felix, Melito, Hegesippus and Tertullian.

¹²⁸ Patristic developments concerning baptism. By the mid-second century, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was being debated. Until the sixth century, however, believer's baptism (i.e., faith and instruction or catechizing were necessary prerequisites for baptism) was the general practice (which would preclude infant baptism), until changed by Imperial decree. Immersion was the usual mode (and continued to be, even in the Romish church until the 12th century), but affusion was considered valid in cases of sickness or extreme circumstances. Infant baptism logically followed.

Irenaeus (Ante—Nicene Father) bishop of church at Lyons (c.175—195)

Rise of Ecclesiasticism: Diocesan or monarchical Bishops and Apostolic succession (c.180)

Carthage again becomes a world metropolis (c.200)

Period of the Neo—Platonic philosophers (c.200)

Rise of Ecclesiasticism: the Bishop of Rome begins to gain predominant position as pope.¹²⁹

200—300 AD

Tertullian writes opposing the baptism of young children as they had not been instructed sufficiently as disciples (first possible mention of infant baptism) (204)

Emperor Caracalla (211—217)

Clement of Alexandria (c.150—215)

Tertullian (Apologist) (c.160—215)

Minucius Felix (Apologist) (c.180—220?)

Emperor Heliogabalus (218—222)

Emperor Severus Alexander: Resumes the persecution of Christians which had ceased from 213 to 223. (222—235)

Henricus (bishop of church at Lyons), Narcissus (a patriarch at Jerusalem), Julius & Eusebius martyred (223)

Hyppolytus (Ante—Nicene Father) (c.170—236)

Emperor Maximin (235—238)

¹²⁹ The rise of Ecclesiasticism and the rise of the Papal system: From the earliest times, the Bishop of Rome became central. This prominence derived from: the supposed principle of Apostolic succession from Peter, the Imperial capital being located at Rome, the Latin—speaking western part of the Empire holding preeminence over the Greek—speaking eastern part, the removal of the Roman capital to Constantinople under Constantine in 331 AD., and the final division of the Empire into East and West in 395 AD. This left the Pope in virtual control of the Western Empire as the prominent person. The first Pope with ecclesiastical, political and military power was Gregory the Great (590—604) who may be properly called the first pope. The Papal system reached its zenith with Gregory VI (Hildebrand) (1073). By the eleventh century the Pope ruled over an alleged spiritual empire that controlled most of the kingdoms of western civilization. Papal decline began with Boniface VIII (1303) and ended with the “Babylonian Captivity of the Church” in Avignon, France (1309—1377).

	Multitudes of Christians martyred (237)
Emperors Gordian I, Gordian II, Balbinus, Pupienus and Gordian III (238—244)	Julius Africanus (Ante-Nicene Father) (c.160—240) ¹³⁰
Emperor Philip the Arabian (244—249)	Alexander of Jerusalem (Bishop of church at Jerusalem & martyr) (d. 247)
The 1000th anniversary of Rome (248)	
Emperor Decius (249—251)	Manichaeism (c.250—) Crucifixion of Mani (c.251) Rise of Ecclesiasticism: a change begins toward sacerdotalism (c.250) Rise of Novatianism: Partly a reaction against the developing ecclesiasticism & laxness in discipline (c.250—) First general persecution of Christians (248—251) ¹³¹
Emperor Gallus (251—253)	
Emperor Vallerian (253—260)	Origen (Ante-Nicene Father) (c. 185—254) Cyprian (Ante-Nicene Father) (c. 200—258) Baptismal controversy re baptism performed by heretics (c.255)
Emperor Gallienus (260—268)	First Edict of Toleration for Christians (260) Sabellian Controversy (Trinitarian) (c.262)
Emperor Claudius (268—270)	

¹³⁰ The Church Fathers are classified according to their historical relation to the Council of Nicea (325): Ante-Nicene Fathers—those who wrote before 325; Nicene Fathers—those who lived and wrote in the immediate context of 325; and Post-Nicene Fathers—those who lived and wrote after 325. The Apostolic Fathers and Apologists are classified with the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

¹³¹ A record of the Christian martyrs and their sufferings down to the 16th century can be read in Theileman J. Van Braught, *Martyrs' Mirror* and John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

Monarchian controversy (Trinitarian)
(c.269)

Emperor Aurelian (270—275)

Gregory Thaumaturgos (Ante-Nicene
Father) (c.213—270)

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Probus (276—282)

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Carus (282—283)

Emperor Diocletian (284—305)

First partition of Roman Empire into East and West (285). Period of relative peace for Christians (260—303). During this time the first church buildings were erected.¹³²

300—313 AD

Arnobius in his writings cites the almost universal practice of faith & instruction before baptism (300)

Second great general persecution of Christianity (c.302—310)

Pancratius martyred (beheaded) at Rome

Emperor Constantius Chlorus assumes reign over eastern and western divisions of the Empire (306)

Donatist schism in North Africa (312)

Constantine defeats Maxentius and with Licinius jointly issues two edicts of toleration for Christians, the Edicts of Rome (312) and Milan (313)¹³³

THE PROMINENT ERRORS AND HERESIES

There were three errors or heresies that developed during this era: first, the error of ecclesiasticism. The New Testament pattern for the church (noting that the Apostolic office ended with the original Apostles) was contained within the local assembly. Any office beyond the local church was quite unknown. During this period (100–313), a gradual ecclesiastical hierarchy developed in some churches and geographical areas. From local bishops to parochial bishops (i.e., those who trained other ministers or had schools) to monarchical bishops (i.e., ruling bishops who exercised authority over several churches) to the Metropolitan Bishops, the system of unscriptural religious hierarchy grew until it united

¹³² The church was originally the ἐκκλησία, or assembly, congregation of the Lord's people. The first church buildings were designated as κύριακου or κυρίανκον, that which belongs to the Lord (Κύριος). This eventually became the word "church."

¹³³ The Edict of Toleration issued by Constantine in 313 stopped the persecution of Christians in the western portion of the Empire, but Licinius in the eastern portion still persecuted Christians from 319—323. He may have thought they supported Constantine and therefore were unloyal.

with the State under Constantine.¹³⁴ Because of such unscriptural ecclesiasticism, many churches withdrew fellowship from this apostate system and continued to maintain New Testament church government. There is a marked trend in the division of churches over such issues during this transitory period.

The second great heresy was baptismal regeneration. Traces of this fatal departure—from the New Testament are noted in the second century. As the symbol replaced the reality, many churches became more worldly and departed more from the New Testament pattern as they were increasingly filled with unsaved members. Up to this time, however, baptism was still by immersion (and the common mode continued to be immersion until the thirteenth century) and limited almost exclusively to adults.

The third heresy was infant baptism, which began in a few isolated cases toward the end of this time. Tertullian wrote against the practice, but it was rare, according to all historians. Infant baptism was the logical result of baptismal regeneration and was historically inevitable.

Thus, during this era of transition, history witnessed a gradual division among the churches of primitive Christianity. This division was the result of an increasing departure from the New Testament in doctrine and practice. Apostate churches, increasingly filled with unregenerate members, were lax in discipline, worldly, politically oriented and increasingly pragmatic in nature. These established a structured government increasingly patterned after the State and substituted the symbols for the realities of the Gospel. Other churches separated from them, holding faithfully to the principles of the New Testament.

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

Despite great and varied opposition, Christianity spread across the Empire and gained converts from every class of society. Tertullian, the early Church Father (c.160–215) could write about Christians:

We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum. We leave you your temples only. We can count your armies; our numbers in a single province will be greater.¹³⁵

This permeation of every class of society in the Empire by Christianity may be accounted for by the following:

First, the eternal, redemptive purpose and sovereign grace of God. Wherever the truth of the Gospel went, it was accompanied with saving power, and, as at Antioch in Pisidia, "... and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48). God predetermined the spread and success of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

Second, the means used was preaching or the declaration of truth through preachers, evangelists and ordinary believers. It is remarkable that without any organized missionary

¹³⁴ Although the term "Metropolitan" Bishop was not legally used until the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, the system had been formulated beforehand. It was gradually prepared to assume its role as the religious counterpart of the Roman State.

¹³⁵ Tertullian, *Apology*, chapter xxxvii. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, p. 45.

endeavor or outstanding evangelists since the Apostles, Christianity rapidly and firmly entrenched itself in every part of the Empire and beyond.

Third, Christian doctrinal truth produced a moral influence and earnestness that enabled men and women to willingly die for that truth. Paganism produced no martyrs. It was during this era that a Church Father, Tertullian, wrote that “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” While it is true that many apostatized to avoid persecution and death, the glorious influence of those who were martyred was a moving force within and without Christianity.

Fourth, paganism was in an irreversible state of decay. Only Christian truth answered the deepest desires and needs of the human soul. While pagan religion and philosophy might contend for this life, only Christianity pointed clearly and authoritatively beyond to life eternal.

Fifth, the insistence of Christianity that it was the only true religion. Further, Christianity transcended all racial and national boundaries; it was universal rather than national or racial in nature.

Sixth, the Christian truth—claims of Divine origin that derived from the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies was a deciding factor to many.

Seventh, the life and witness of the churches in practically reflecting the truth of the Gospel in love, concern, sympathy and brotherhood made an indelible impression.

THE NEW TESTAMENT GROUPS OF THIS PERIOD

New Testament believers and churches were long established throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. The British Christians continued after the New Testament pattern until the arrival of Austin in 597 AD and then were forced to submit to Roman power at the Synod of Whitby in 664 AD. In the far reaches of Asia Minor and the Taurus Mountains (south and east of the Black Sea), New Testament Christianity flourished unmolested by the State church until the seventh century. In Northern Africa many assemblies remained true to the faith. In all the mountains and forested regions of Europe where believers and assemblies had fled to avoid the persecution of pagan Rome, New Testament Christianity continued to exist with tenacity.

THE MONTANISTS (2ND–8TH CENTURIES)

The first distinct sect that arose to confront this departure from New Testament practice were the Montanists (c.156–172). Montanus was a native of Phrygia and the protest took his name.

Montanists only represented the maintenance of primitive Christianity and a strong reaction in discipline, morals and separatism as opposed to the corrupt and worldly churches of that time. They, therefore, did not actually originate with Montanus, but the contemporary movement of protest in the second century was identified with his name. This principle of identifying a group, and often an already-existing group, with the name of a prominent leader, has been often repeated in history (e.g., Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Waldenses, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Lollards, Hussites, etc.

The Montanist movement was orthodox in its doctrine; it was distinct in its protest against the laxity in discipline, worldliness and lack of vital godliness. It was an attempt to

restore (albeit with a rigorous and legalistic tendency) primitive Christianity in practice. Moller states:

But Montanism, was, nevertheless, not a new form of Christianity; nor were the Montanists a new sect. On the contrary, Montanism was simply a reaction of the old, primitive church, against the obvious tendency of the day, to strike a bargain with the world and arrange herself comfortably in it.¹³⁶

The Montanists contended that any who had renounced their faith and their Lord under Roman persecution must be “rebaptized” before being re-admitted to church membership because they had renounced Christ. In this they consistently contended for a regenerate church membership and strong church discipline. They further baptized all who entered their fellowship, stating that baptism was meaningless without personal faith (hence, they were the first group to be known as “Anabaptist”). Historical evidence reveals that they held tenaciously to salvation by grace, and believer’s baptism by immersion and were strongly opposed to any alliance with the world (including, therefore, the State).

These people have been charged with various errors. As to their supposed rejection of the Old Testament, they objected to the principle of ecclesiastical hierarchy that was prevalent in some churches and defended by an Old Testament mentality and principle. The accusation that Montanus believed himself to be the Holy Spirit is most probably a great exaggeration.

Mosheim took up these charges and credited Montanus, their great leader, with calling himself the Comforter. But his translator, in a footnote, corrects him and says: “Those are undoubtedly mistaken who have asserted that Montanus gave himself out that he was the Holy Ghost.”¹³⁷

There were either attempts to continue some of the Apostolic gifts, or some of them had not completely died out at the beginning of the second century. It must be remembered that the Apostolic gifts had begun to decline at the most less than a generation before toward the end of the first century.¹³⁸ Montanism was hardly a generation removed from the Apostolic age (c. 135) and there was no inherent reason for any to believe that such gifts had completely ceased. Women could exercise the prophetic gift, but the Montanists did not allow them to teach or perform any spiritual ministries in the churches.

¹³⁶ Moller, *Schaff–Herzog Encyclopedia*, II, p. 1562, as quoted by W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 76.

¹³⁷ McLean, as quoted by Jarrell, *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.

¹³⁸ It must be noted that both Catholics and Montanists held to the continuance of the Apostolic gifts, especially prophecy, or inspired preaching. Alleged reports of such would continue into the second and even into the early third century. Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8–13. With reference to the charismatic gifts, the terminology used (καταργηθήσονται...παύσονται...καταργηθήσεται) seems to indicate a gradual inactivity and cessation. Further, the reference to that which is perfect (τὸ τέλειον, neut.) refers, not to the completion of Scripture, but to the maturity of Christianity, as necessitated by the context. The modern idea that “that which is perfect” refers to the completion of the canon of Scripture has doubtless given rise to idea that the Montanists sought to revive the prophetic gift which had allegedly already ceased.

The Montanists, although believing in the Apostolic gift of prophecy or inspired preaching, denied the Apostolic office and were opposed to the ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism of the Catholic party. They affirmed the universal priesthood of all believers.

They were designated “Anabaptists,” as they denied the efficacy of Catholic baptism and “re-baptized” those who became their adherents or those who had denied the faith under persecution. They opposed infant baptism. Tertullian, the first Church Father to write about the subject, condemned it.

The Montanists were *Chiliastic* or Premillennarians, proclaiming the imminent return of the Lord. They held to three dispensations: That of the Father (or Old Testament dispensation), the Son (or New Testament era), and the Holy Spirit (i.e., in their day). The dispensation of the Spirit to them meant a continuation of the supernatural gifts and the imminent end of the world with the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This movement drew many adherents from among the great and learned who contended for a “Pure” church after the New Testament pattern. Tertullian, one of the greatest figures of that era, joined himself to them.

With this party the famous Tertullian united, about AD. 200, and wrote many books in the defense of their sentiments. It is proper here to remark that heresies in abundance were attributed to this people, relative both to their faith and practice; but when we consider that such a man as Tertullian, with many other eminent characters, became their associates and defenders, it seems to relive in a measure the gloomy picture which many have drawn of their ignorance and fanaticism.¹³⁹

Thus, it may be historically proven that the Montanists were numbered among the New Testament believers and churches of that era in contrast to the spreading apostasy. The name “Montanist” and so-called Montanist churches continued down to the eighth century, extending into Northern Africa, Asia Minor and Europe.¹⁴⁰

THE NOVATIANS (3RD–8TH CENTURIES)

The second distinct movement or sect during this era were the Novatians. They received their name from either Novatian, a leader in the church at Rome, or Novatus, a dissident from Cyprian’s church at Carthage in North Africa, who joined forces with Novatian in Rome. The impetus for this movement was the same as the Montanists in the preceding century—laxness in discipline concerning the *lapsi*, or those who had compromised their faith under persecution, worldliness and the re-admission of those who had apostatized under persecution.¹⁴¹ The Novatians contended for the identical issues which the Montanists had before them: discipline, separation, and a regenerate church

¹³⁹ David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ See Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 174–177; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, p. 43–44; G. H. Orchard, *A Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 6, 113; W. A. Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 69–76.

¹⁴¹ The occasion of this movement was the election of Cornelius as bishop of Rome after the death of Fabian (c. 250). The majority of the church sided with Cornelius, who advocated re-admitting to fellowship and communion those who had apostatized under the persecution ordered by Emperor Decius. The minority, against his will, elected Novatian and withdrew fellowship from the majority, causing the assembly to split. Cornelius in Rome and Cyprian in Carthage wrote many damaging things against Novatian to discredit him.

membership. Novatian objected to apostates being welcomed back into communion and so the churches of the Novatian movement were “strict communionists” in accordance with their discipline. Because of this distinctive as “pure” churches, they were called the “Cathari” (from the Greek καθαρίζειν, “to purify”), or “Puritans.” The name would continue down to the Protestant Reformation to characterize such groups, especially the Paulicians, of later centuries (i.e., Cathari, Cathars, Gazari, etc.).

The Novatian churches were strong throughout the Empire and prospered even during great persecution. In 331, Constantine, after failing to reconcile them to the Catholic Church, turned against them and they came under the baneful hand of the State church.

The doctrines of the Novatians were identical with the New Testament pattern. According to Crispin, a French Romanist historian, they held tenaciously to four things: the purity of church members, i.e., a regenerated church membership; for the purity of church discipline; for the independence of each local congregation; and the baptism of those whose first baptism they had reason to doubt, hence their being labeled as “Anabaptists.”¹⁴² The learned Mosheim, while opposed to their rending the visible church, wrote:

This sect cannot be charged with having corrupted the doctrine of Christianity by their opinions. There was no difference, in point of doctrine, between the Novatians and other Christians. What peculiarity distinguished them was, their refusing to re-admit to the communion of the church, those who, after baptism, had fallen into the commission of heinous crimes, though they did not pretend, that even such were excluded from all possibility or hopes of salvation. They considered the Christian church as a society where virtue and innocence reigned universally...and, of consequence, they looked upon every society which re-admitted heinous offenders to its communion, as unworthy of the title of a true Christian church. It was from hence, also, that they assumed the title of Cathari, i.e., the pure...they obliged such as came over to them from the general body of Christians, to submit to be baptized a second time, as a necessary preparation for entering into their society.¹⁴³

Thus, the Novatian churches were New Testament in doctrine and practice, holding strongly to the essential principles of gospel truth and church distinctives.

Two slanders have been attached to Novatian to his discredit: first, that he had clinic baptism (i.e., affusion rather than-immersion). If the record is true, it was an attempt at least to cover the body with water as close to immersion as possible, as he was on a sickbed. He, may have been re-baptized. It has no bearing on the Novatian churches, as they did not receive their baptism from him nor were they organically connected to his church in any way. Second, he has been caricatured as a self-seeker in his election as a bishop in the church division at Rome. Schaff, the Protestant historian, affirms, “Novatian, against his will, was chosen bishop by the opposition.”¹⁴⁴ These slanders were evidently raised by Cyprian, who sought at great lengths to discredit him and Novatus, his former associate. Robinson remarks:

The history of Novatian is long, and like that of all others in his condition, beclouded with fables and slander. The character of the man ought no more to be taken

¹⁴² See Orchard Op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁴³ J. L. Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, I, p. 84.

¹⁴⁴ Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, pp. 196–197.

from Cyprian than his ought to be taken from the Pagans, who, by punning on his name, called him Coprian, or the Scavenger.¹⁴⁵

A further quote from W. A. Jarrell should end the search for heresy concerning the Novatian churches:

Hippolytus has been quoted as a Novatian and as proving the Novatians, believed in baptismal salvation. But Armitage says Hippolytus is supposed to have suffered martyrdom by drowning in the Tiber, AD 235–239. Hase says: “Hippolytus could hardly have lived to witness the Novatian schism.”¹⁴⁶

The Novatian churches and the preceding Montanists were the same in doctrine, practice and protest. The name “Novatian” continued to the eighth century to describe primitive churches, synonymous with the name “Montanist.” Dr. J. M. Cramp summarized their historic position as it centered on the nature of the church:

Novatianism and infant baptism were diametrically opposed to each other. It was impossible to preserve the purity for which the Novatians contended in any church which had admitted the novel institution. We may safely infer that they abstained from compliance with the innovation, and that the Novatian churches were what are now called Baptist churches, adhering to the apostolic and primitive practice.¹⁴⁷

NOTE: For further study, see David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denominations*, pp. 4–8; Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 177–181; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 44–45; Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, pp. 34–36; J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, pp. 55–59; S. H. Ford, *The Origin of Baptists*, pp. 86–89; W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 77–88; G. H. Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, pp. 53–62, 87, 123.

CHAPTER XIX

THE IMPERIAL AGE 313–476 AD

The Imperial Age began in 313 with the Edict of Milan that recognized Christianity as a legitimate religion (actually, a favored religion under Constantine), and extended to 476 and the Fall of the Roman Empire. During the previous era, Christianity leapt from the Coliseum to the throne; now it grew stronger as the throne weakened. Yet this Christianity was not that of the New Testament; rather, it was a religious system patterned after the state and devoid of any New Testament characteristic or spiritual vitality. With their Constantinian power, the persecuted had now become the persecutors; sacrificing and exchanging the sword of the Spirit for the sword of the State!

CHRONOLOGY

This era extended from the Edict of Milan and the end of state persecution to the final fall of the Latin-speaking or Western Roman Empire. The Eastern, Greek-speaking, or Byzantine Empire continued to exist until the middle of the fifteenth century.

This was the golden age of the Imperial Catholic State Church which would shape the doctrine and direction of state Christianity for over a millennium.

¹⁴⁵ Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 126, as quoted by D. B. Ray, *Baptist Succession*, p. 190.

¹⁴⁶ W. A. Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 81–82; Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁴⁷ J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, pp. 58–59.

SEVEN MAJOR ISSUES, MOVEMENTS OR INCIDENTS

1. Great theological controversies: Arianism, Macedonianism, Apollinarianism, Pelagianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Eutychianism.
2. The Greatest of the Ecumenical Councils: Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon.
3. The formulation of dogmas that largely determine orthodoxy to the present day.
4. The lives and writings of the greatest Nicæan and Post-Nicæan Fathers.
5. The beginnings of monasticism and mysticism as the state church became increasingly secularized.
6. The Barbarian invasions from the north began to change the course and character of Christendom.
7. The Separatist groups apart from Rome: Donatists and Paulicians.

OUTLINE

- I. THE COUNCIL OF NICAËA (325)
- II. THE IMPERIAL CAPITOL MOVED TO CONSTANTINOPLE (330)
- III. THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (381)
- IV THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS (431)
- V. THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON (451)
- VI. THE EMPIRE DIVIDED INTO EAST AND WEST (395)
- VII. THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS (378–476)

313–350 AD

The Western Emperor Constantine issues the Edict of Toleration (Edict of Milan)
Licinius as Eastern Emperor still persecutes Christians (313–323)
Council of Arles, Constantine resides as a
“Christian Emperor” (314)¹⁴⁸
Arian controversy (Christological) (314–)
Lactantius (Nicene Father) (c.240–320)
Pope Sylvester I (314–336)
Donatus (a bishop at Carthage) rejects all
infant baptism, the authority of the pope &
stresses liberty of conscience (317)

¹⁴⁸ Constantine as the first “Christian Emperor” introduced the “Constantinian Change” to the “Church.” This was the concept of a State Church in which every New Testament and Gospel principle would be modified to suit a monolithic system and the “Church” would receive the protection and power of the State. This State Church system existed until the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century when it was rivaled by the “Neo-Constantinian” system of the Reformers and their State Churches.

Council of Nicaea: Arianism condemned,
formulation of Nicæan Creed (325)¹⁴⁹

Capital of Roman Empire moved to Constantinople (331)

Pope Mark (336)

Arius: denied the absolute Deity & Eternal
Sonship of Christ (256–336)

Emperor Constantine II (337–340)

Eusebius of Caesarea (Nicene Father,
“Father of Church History”) (c.265–339)

Pope Julius I (337–352)

Council at Antioch (341)

Empire divides into East (Emperor Constantius II, 337–361) and West (Emperor
Constans, 337–350)

351–400 AD

Pope Liberius (352–366)

Antony (first hermit, ascetic, c.251–356)

Macedonianism [Pneumatomachism] (Trinitarian controversy concerning the Deity of
Holy Spirit) (c.360)

Persecution of Christians in Persia under
Shapur II (343–378)

Books begin to replace scrolls (c.360)

Emperor Julian the Apostate attempts to revive paganism in Roman Empire: Revives
persecution of Christians (360–363)

Emperor Jovian (363–364)

Hilary (Nicene Father) (c.291–371)

Pope Damascus I (366–384)

Emperor Valentinian I (Valens): Christians martyred during this time as pacifists (364–
375, West)

Athanasius (Nicene Father): greatest
opponent of Arianism (c.296–373)

¹⁴⁹ The Council of Nicaea was the first of the four great General or Ecumenical Councils of the Imperial age: Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

The Church Fathers or Christian writers of the first five centuries are categorized according to their historical position to this first Ecumenical Council: The Ante-Nicene Fathers (eg, the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, Origen, Cyprian, Gregory Thaumaturgos, etc.) and the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (eg., Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Eusebius, Augustine, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, etc.).

Emperor Gratian (375–383, West)

Basil the Great (Post–Nicene Father):
Taught believer's baptism (c.329–379)

Pope Siricius (384–399). Enjoined chastity
on priests.

Council of Constantinople. The Apollinarian
controversy (Christological) (381)

Gregory of Nazianzus (Post–Nicene Father)
(c.330–389)

Emperor Valentinian II (375–392, West)

Council of Hippo: Final canonization of
Scriptures (381)

Emperor Theodosius the Great (378–395, East) (392–395, West)

Gregory of Nyssa (Post–Nicene Father)
(c.330–395)

Ambrose of Milan (Post–Nicene Father)
(c.339–397)

Visigoths invade Greece and Balkan Peninsula (398)

Emperor Arcadius (395–408, East)

Emperor Honorius (395–423, West)

Pope Anastasius I (399–401)

401–476 AD

Visigoths invade Italy (401–403)

Church & State: The Persecuted Church in this century becomes the Persecuting Church:
The Constantinian system (State Church) begins to condemn to death those who “re–
baptize” (“Anabaptism”) (c.400)

Augustine advocates infant baptism (first
champion of infant baptism): opposed by
Vincent Victor (a bishop) (401)

Isdigerdis & his son Geroranes (Kings of Persia) torture & kill Christians (Many eaten
alive by rats) (c.401)

Pope Innocent I (402–417)

The Latin version of the Bible by Jerome
(404)

Council at Carthage against the Donatists.
Faith & examination before baptism upheld
(405)

	John Chrysostom (Post–Nicene Father, c.354–407)
Emperor Constantine III (407–411, West)	
Emperor Theodosius II (408–450, East)	
Visigoths plunder Rome (410)	
	Donatist controversy, Augustinian debates (411–415)
Emperor Theodosius issues an edict commanding the death penalty for “Anabaptists” (413)	
	Pelagian controversy (Soteriological) (415– 416)
	Pope Zosimus (417–418)
	Jerome (Post–Nicene Father) (c.345–419)
Western Emperor Constantius III: re–enforces the edict against “Anabaptists” (421)	
	Pope Boniface I (418–422)
Emperor John (423–425, West)	
Emperor Valentinian III (425–455)	
Vandals take last Roman possessions in Northern Africa (443)	
	Cyril (Bishop of Alexandria) teaches instruction before baptism (429)
	Augustine of Hippo (Post–Nicene Father): opposer of Pelagius (354–430)
	Pope Celestine I (422–432)
	Pope Sixtus III (432–440)
Emperor Marcian (450–457, East)	
	Nestorian controversy (Christological) (428–444)
	Council of Ephesus: Nestorianism condemned (431)
	Cyril (Post–Nicene Father) (c.376–444)
	Monophysite controversy (Christological) (444–451)
	Eutychian controversy (Christological) (444–451)
Anglo–Saxon invasion of Britain (449)	

	A trend away from instruction before baptism in the case of those who were incapacitated or weak (c.450)
	Council of Chalcedon: Christological Controversies. The Definition of Chalcedon (451)
	Pope Leo I (Great)(440–461)
Attila the Hun (d.453)	
Emperor Petronius Maximus (455, West)	
Vandals plunder Rome (455)	
Emperor Avitus (455–456, West)	
	Simeon Stylitus (ascetic, “pillar saint” c.390–459)
	Patrick of Ireland: A preacher of New Testament Christianity whose ministry ended a century before Romish religion entered Britain (389–461)
Emperor Majorian (457–461)	
	Pope Hilary (461–468)
Emperor Severus III (461–465)	
Emperor Leo I (457–474, East)	
Emperor Anthemius (467–472, West)	
	Pope Simplicius (468–483)
	Council at Rome condemns “Anabaptism” (470)
Emperor Olybrius (472, West)	
Emperor Glycerius (473, West)	
Emperor Leo II (474, East)	
Emperor Zeno (474–491, East)	
Emperor Julius Nepos (473–480, West)	
Emperor Romulus Augustulus (475–476, West)	
End of the Western Roman Empire as Barbarians (Vandals & Goths) invade & conquer Italy (476)	

THE “CONSTANTINIAN CHANGE” OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY

After the abdication of Diocletian (305), there were three rivals for the Throne: Maxentius, Licinius and Constantine. Maxentius had already sought to propitiate the old

Roman gods, and Constantine could not hope to gather any support from them or the people, so he turned to the God of Christianity to inspire his troops with confidence and harness the sympathy and power of Christianity to his support. He claimed to have seen a vision of a cross in the sky with the motto, *Hoc signo vinces* (i.e., “By this sign, conquer”). This was, as evidenced in later life and subsequent actions, a political ploy intended to unite and further his drive for power and supremacy. Maxentius was defeated and Constantine, with Licinius, became co-emperor of the Empire. In 323 Constantine defeated Licinius and was sole ruler.

As a politician, Constantine realized that he needed a vital religion to unify the Empire, which was a sacralist society. To assure this, he made Christianity, in its then apostate or Catholic form, the State religion in agreement with Sylvester I, the Bishop of Rome. Yet he still continued as *Pontifex Maximus*, or the Great High Priest, of the Roman religion (a title retained by every Roman emperor as the personification of the State). He immediately sought to exercise power in both civil and religious realms, presiding over the council at Arles and later at Nicaea.

The Catholic party (i.e., the apostate ecclesiastical system that had been gradually developed in the second or third centuries through ecclesiasticism, baptismal regeneration, lax discipline, worldliness and an increasing tendency to pattern its structure after the state) was then subsidized by the Roman State. Constantine sought by political, and then by civil, means to ensure compliance with the State church. This was the establishment of the “Constantinian principle” or the union of church and State, a “hybrid,” sterile, devoid of life and spirituality, a system that was given power to coerce men for the good of their souls. This principle would forever change the character of established “Christianity” and church history. Those believers and churches that held tenaciously to the New Testament pattern would be persecuted by the civil magistrate under the Church of Rome and the later Protestant bodies.

THE PROMINENT ERRORS AND HERESIES

Before the time of Constantine and the Edict of Milan (313), the errors of ecclesiasticism, baptismal regeneration and the first attempts at infant-baptism had characterized the apostate churches. With the establishment of a State church, these already-existing heresies became more pronounced and further developed, with more elements of old Roman religion and paganism assimilated into the Catholic system.

First, the gradually developed ecclesiasticism ultimately centered in the person of the Roman bishop, who now became the “Pope,” or “Father” of the Church. The bishops of Rome increasingly assumed the title of “Universal Bishop,” a position that made the pope a religious counterpart of the Emperor. When Constantine moved the capital to the East (330), the prominence and glory that once characterized Rome were slowly transferred, in thought and then in actuality, to the Church of Rome. As pagan Rome declined and finally ceased to exist, ecclesiastical Rome rose to assume its place. The Church of Rome became pagan Rome “baptized.”

Second, the “Constantine change” caused “Christianity” to regress into a pre-Christian mentality, a “Christian sacralism,” a monolithic society unified by a common and civilly enforced religion. Any sect that remained distinct was considered a threat not only to “the Church,” but also to the State. “The Church” now had the power of coercion.

Third, in this period the worship of images and the veneration of supposed religious relics developed, the result of the assimilation of pagan principles into the already apostate religious system.

Fourth, the principle of sacerdotalism was completed. The New Testament concept of the pastor gave way to the pagan, pre-Christian principle of a priesthood. Salvation was purely sacramental in nature. Wherever there was a priest to manipulate the sacraments, there was “the Church.”

With salvation by sacrament or ritual, with a sacralist society wherein every member or citizen was also a member of “the Church,” all New Testament distinctions were completely lost. The New Testament principles of a regenerated membership [*corpus Christi*] had been replaced by a church whose members composed all of society, whatever their spiritual state [a *corpus christianum* or *corpus mixtum*]. New Testament discipline was impossible and the whole system grew increasingly corrupt and debauched. However, there were thousands who would not associate with this apostate system, but chose to endure bitter persecution and hold to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

THE NEW TESTAMENT GROUPS OF THIS PERIOD

NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Extending throughout and beyond the borders of Western Civilization (i.e., to the borders of India, into Africa and into northeastern Europe), primitive Christianity continued to exist apart from the Romish system. Believers and churches that had fled in the times of pagan Roman persecutions still maintained the truth in the secluded valleys and mountainous regions of Europe. Within the borders of the expanding Byzantine Empire (i.e., the Eastern Empire with its capital in Constantinople), there were situated great strongholds of New Testament Christianity in the Taurus Mountains to the southeast of the Black Sea and into Syria. New Testament Christians who continued the primitive claims of Christianity were to be numbered in many thousands.

PRIMITIVE BRITISH CHRISTIANITY

Believers and churches true to the principles of the New Testament existed throughout Western Civilization. Romish “Christianity” did not put ashore in Britain until 597, with Austin under the power of Pope Gregory I Britain was the home of many true believers and churches in the first six centuries. The great labors of Patrick were performed well over a century before the first elements of Romish religion were known in the British Isles. Historical evidence portrays Patrick as a New Testament Christian who held tenaciously to New Testament principles.

Patrick was seized by pirates as a lad and sold as a slave in Ireland. After six years he escaped back to Britain, but later returned as a missionary. His ministry was greatly blessed of God. He personally baptized some 12,000 converts and established 365 churches, ordaining one bishop or pastor for each assembly. Patrick was not a Roman Catholic, but a primitive, New Testament Christian. This is evident from the following: (1) Rome had not yet sent its priests or emissaries into Britain. They did not arrive until 136 years after Patrick’s death. Hosts of British believers denied and defied them when they did seek to turn them from the faith of the New Testament. They were forced to submit, at least in part, by the Synod of Whitby in 664. (2) Patrick only baptized (immersed) believers. (3) He held to a

simple New Testament form of church government, one pastor for each church, with no ecclesiastical hierarchy. (4) He taught the New Testament simplicity of the Lord's Supper.¹⁵⁰

Primitive Christianity flourished in Wales and throughout Britain in the first six centuries. Archbishop Ussher (1581–1656), Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, wrote: “We have the strongest reason to conclude that these islands enjoyed the blessings of a pure enlightened piety, such as our Savior Himself taught, unembarrassed by any of the idle tenets of the Romish Church.”¹⁵¹

The Venerable Bede (c. 673–735), known as the “Father of English Church History,” wrote: “The Britons preserved the faith which they had received uncorrupted and entire in peace and tranquility until the time of the Emperor Diocletian.”¹⁵²

Francis Thackeray wrote concerning the establishment of Christianity in Britain:

We have reason to believe that Christianity was preached in both countries, Gaul and Britain, before the close of the first century. The result of my investigations on my own mind has been the conviction that about 60 AD., in the time of St. Paul, a church existed in Britain.¹⁵³

Evans, a Baptist historian, stated concerning primitive Christianity in Wales:

Writers on both sides of the Atlantic claim for Wales the honor of retaining primitive ordinances and church polity beyond any other nation of Europe. Removed from the influence of Rome, the authority of the ambitious and worldly-minded Pontiffs who ruled in the city was not acknowledged in Wales till about 600 AD., and the growing corruptions of the Western Church had not penetrated the fastness of that country.¹⁵⁴

Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian and philosopher, wrote: “A great part of the churches in England, Scotland and France, retained the ancient purity of doctrine and worship much longer than any others.”¹⁵⁵

THE MONTANISTS AND NOVATIANS

These two protesting sects (these were really only designations of elements within the ranks of primitive Christianity that still retained New Testament principles) continued by name until at least the eighth century, established by name in Asia Minor, Northern Africa and Europe.

THE DONATISTS (4TH–7TH CENTURIES)

The center of the Donatist Controversy was Carthage in North Africa in the fourth and early fifth centuries (although elements had existed since the end of the Diocletian

¹⁵⁰ See W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 472–479; W. J. Burgess, *Baptist Faith and Martyrs' Fire*, pp. 358–365.

¹⁵¹ Quoted by J. Davis, *History of the Welsh Baptists*, p. 18.

¹⁵² Quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, 318. At the time of the Diocletian persecution, many fled into the mountains of Wales for refuge.

¹⁵³ Quoted by Jarrell, *Ibid.*, 317.

¹⁵⁴ Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, p. 2–3; also see Davis, *Op. cit.*, pp. 1–21.

¹⁵⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, I, p. 596.

persecution in 305). The issue was essentially the same as the Montanist and Novatian Controversies that preceded it. The ultimate issue was the nature of the church and a regenerated membership. When Mensurius, a questionable bishop, was ordained, a division took place in the church at Carthage. Mensurius and Caecilian had delivered up to the pagan authorities heretical books, rather than the sacred books demanded by them, but as it was an outward act of compromise, they were denounced as *traditores*. The issue spread across North Africa. At one dispute, there were in attendance over four hundred Donatist pastors or bishops. Donatus, whose name was given to the movement, became the prominent leader in 311.

It must be remembered that these men were leaders in movements that antedated them. These protests were the apologetic manifestations of primitive, New Testament Christianity, not simply rival sects that originated from leading personalities. Hence, there were “Novatians” before Novatian and Novatus, “Montanists” before Montanus and “Donatists” before Donatus.¹⁵⁶

Although the Donatists were located in Northern Africa, their influence spread to the Atlantic, throughout Europe and across the Empire, with that of the Montanists. and Novatians before them. The names were incidental; the issue was ever the same. The Donatist Controversy came to a climax in 411–415 in a great confrontation with Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. Before Augustine, no one had successfully challenged the Donatists. Augustine, a thoroughgoing Constantinian and sacralist, maintained the supremacy of the Catholic party and sought to unify “The Church” by force, if necessary. He took principles of coercion from the Old Testament and from the Parables of the Seed in the Field (Matt. 13:24–30) and The Supper and Servant (Lk. 14:16–24). He stated that “compel” (Lk. 14:23) meant coercion. (See the exact words and commentary in Chapter IX, “The Constantinian Change”) The Civil magistrate, of course, ruled in favor of Augustine in the debate. The Donatists were subjected to rigorous restrictions. Kurtz gives an account of the debate and its results:

In AD. 400 Augustine, bishop of Hippo Regius, began his unwearied attacks against this sect....Augustine, who at first maintained that force should not be used in matters of faith, was moved by the persistent stiffneckedness and senseless fanaticism of his opponents to change his opinion, and to confess that in order to restore such heretics to the church, to salvation, recourse must be had to violent compulsion (*cogentrare*, Lk. xiv.23). A synod at Carthage in AD. 405 called upon the Emperor Honorius to take proceedings against this stiffnecked sect. He did so by imposing fines, banishing their clergy, and taking their churches. Augustine renewed the challenge to a public disputation. The Donatists were at last compelled by the emperor to enter the lists. Thus came about the three days *Collatio cum Donatists* of AD 411 at Carthage. There appeared 279 Donatists and 286 Catholic bishops. Petilian and Primian were the chief speakers on the side of the Donatists, Augustine and Aurelian of Carthage on the other. The Imperial commissioner assigned the victory to the Catholics. In vain the Donatists appealed. In AD 414 the Emperor declared that they had forfeited all civil rights and in AD 415 he threatened all who attended their meetings with death.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ See this principle as given by D. B. Ray, *Baptist Succession*, pp. 189–197; 154–156.

¹⁵⁷ J. H. Kurtz, *Church History*, I, pp. 395–396; also see Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, pp. 65–66.

The distinctive doctrines of the Donatists were identical with the Montanists and Novatians before them, the doctrines of primitive Christianity. Crespín, a French Romish historian, stated that they held:

First, for the purity of church members, by asserting that none ought to be admitted into the church but such as are visibly true believers and true saints. Secondly, for purity of church discipline. Thirdly, for the independency of each church. Fourthly, they baptized again those whose first baptism they had reason to doubt. They were consequently termed rebaptizers and Anabaptists.¹⁵⁸

The Donatists were the first sect or distinct New Testament group to receive openly and fully the baneful effects of the “Constantinian” principle of the State Church and so were the first to declare freedom of conscience or soul liberty. Donatus himself declared to the imperial commissioners: “*Quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?*” [“What has the emperor to do with the Church?”]

That which distinguishes the present case is, the reaction, proceeding out of the essence of the Christian church....against the confounding of ecclesiastical and political elements; on which occasion, for the first time, the ideas which Christianity, as opposed to the papal religion of the state, had first made men distinctly conscious of, became an object of contention within the Christian church itself—the ideas concerning universal, inalienable human rights; concerning liberty of conscience; concerning the rights of free religious conviction.¹⁵⁹

Concerning church polity, Long, an Episcopal historian wrote: “The Donatists rejected the Catholic liturgy and set up for themselves a more congregational way.”¹⁶⁰ Long stated again that the Donatists “refused infant baptism.”¹⁶¹ Thus, the Donatists are historically proven to be New Testament believers and churches.

What was their resemblance or relationship to other ancient and more modern groups? Merivale stated: “They represented the broad principle of the Montanists and Novatians.”¹⁶² Osiander wrote that “Our modern Anabaptists are the same as the Donatists of old.”¹⁶³ Fuller, the Episcopal historian, declared that “The Anabaptists are the Donatists new dipt.”¹⁶⁴ Heinrich Bullinger, the Reformer, wrote that “The Donatists and the Anabaptists held the same opinion.”¹⁶⁵ Heman Lincoln, professor of Church History at Newton Theological Seminary, wrote that:

The Donatists held....many of the principles which are regarded as axioms by modern Baptists. They maintained absolute freedom of conscience, the divorce of church

¹⁵⁸ As quoted by John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 45; Note that it was stated both re the Novatians and the Donatists by Crespín, G. H. Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, pp. 87.

¹⁵⁹ Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, III, p. 258.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

(and state) and a regenerate church membership. These principles, coupled with their uniform practice of immersion, bring them into close affinity with Baptists.¹⁶⁶

NOTE: For further study, see Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 200–203, 213–214; William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, I, pp. 341–342; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 45–47; J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, pp. 55, 59–62; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denominations*, pp. 8–11; S. H. Ford, *The Origin of the Baptists*, pp. 76–85; W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 89–106.

CHAPTER XX

THE MIDDLE AGES 476–1453 AD

The era spanned by the Middle Ages varies according to the view of the historian. The most inclusive and consistent approach is from the Fall of Rome (476) to the Fall of Constantinople (1453). These two temporal pivots heralded great and significant changes in Christianity and the history of Western civilization. The removal of the capital to the east and the Fall of Rome prepared the way for the rise and ultimate power of ecclesiastical Rome. This power and glory, centered in papal authority, would reach its culmination in the papal coronation of kings over “The Holy Roman Empire.” The decline of Western civilization and the “Dark Ages” left the Church of Rome as the sole uniting factor of the West, the one cohesive power in the midst of feudal isolationism. The crusades heralded an incipient nationalism and a thirst for knowledge that resulted in the establishment of the university system, a system governed by ecclesiastical Rome. The Renaissance Era was in full bloom at the Fall of Constantinople. Both the humanism of the Renaissance (with its Greek literature) and the rationalism of Scholasticism (with its Greek philosophy and logic) had prepared the minds of the thinkers and scholars for the influx of Byzantine scholars (and Greek literature) who fled from the East. These factors all converged to bring the Greek Testament to the forefront of Western study and thus prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation.

During this long and dark time, New Testament Christians and churches continued to exist, persecuted by both the “Holy Roman Empire” and the Byzantine Empire. The adherents to primitive Christianity in the Middle Ages were not small or insignificant societies, but existed by the thousands, and were at times killed in like numbers. A “trail of blood” traced the truth of New Testament Christianity throughout medieval history.

CHRONOLOGY

This period of time began with the Fall of Rome to the Barbarians and ended with the Fall of Constantinople to the Seljuk Turks in 1453.

TWELVE MAJOR ISSUES OR MOVEMENTS THAT DISTINGUISH THIS AGE

1. Fall of Rome (476).
2. The rise and development of the Romish Papal system.
3. The rise of Islam as a religion and world power.
4. The development of monasticism into a hierarchical system.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

5. The development of the “Holy Roman Empire.”
6. Feudalism and the fragmentation of Western society.
7. The Institution of the Romish “Holy Inquisition” to seek out and destroy “heretical” sects and persons.
8. The “Holy Land” Crusades and the Crusades against “heretics.”
9. Medieval Scholasticism and the beginning of the universities.
10. The existence of various alleged “heretical” religious groups apart from the Romish state system. These groups existed under the generic name of *Anabaptist*: E.g., Paulicians, Vaudois, Waldenses, Peterines, Albigenses, Berengarians, Bogomili, Arnoldists, Cathari, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Lollards, Wycliffites, Bohemian Brethren, Hussites.
11. The Southern or Italian Renaissance.
12. The Fall of Constantinople (1453).

OUTLINE

- I. THE FALL OF ROME (476).
- II. THE RISE OF PAPAL POWER (476–1216).
- III. THE RISE OF MONASTICISM (529–).
- IV. THE RISE OF ISLAM (610–).
- V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE (800–).
- VI. FEUDALISM (800–1200).
- VII. THE GREAT SCHISM BETWEEN EAST AND WEST (1054).
- VIII. THE “HOLY LAND” CRUSADES (1054–1291).
- IX. THE RISE OF SCHOLASTICISM AND UNIVERSITIES (1050–).
- X. THE SOUTHERN OR ITALIAN RENAISSANCE (1300–).
- XI. THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1453)

476–500 AD

Emperor Romulus Augustus (475–476, West)¹⁶⁷

Emperor Zeno (474–491, East)

Pope Simplicius (468–483)¹⁶⁸

Fall of the Western Roman Empire (476)

First Shinto shrines in Japan (478)

Pope Felix III (483–492)

¹⁶⁷ Romulus Augustus (475–476) was the last Western Roman Emperor. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire continued to exist and exercise power until Constantine XI Palaeologus (1448–1453) and the fall of Constantinople (1453).

¹⁶⁸ The list of popes in this chronology does not include the antipopes or rival Popes except as significant. There were at least 31 antipopes or rival Popes from 355 to 1449.

Roman Church Council at Rome to oppose “Anabaptism” (487)

Nestorian Church breaks with orthodox Christianity (483)

Pope Felix III excommunicates Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, leading to first schism between Western and Eastern Churches (484–519)

Pope Gelasius I (492–496)

Theodoric of the Ostrogoths made King of Italy (493)

Roman Church passes edicts against the Donatists: excommunication for “anabaptism.” “Anabaptism” to be punished by military force (495)

Pope Anastasius II (496–498)

Pope Symmachus (498–514)

Roman Church persecutes & kills many who profess “anabaptism” (i.e., believer’s baptism) (498)

500–600 AD

The beginning of this century marks the transition from believer’s baptism (faith & instruction before baptism) to the general practice in the Roman Church to infant baptism (c.500–)

Cassiodorus writes a work teaching believer’s baptism (508)

Pope Hormisdas (514–523)

Fortunatus writes against infant baptism & for believer’s baptism (515)

Buddhism introduced into central China (517)

Aryabhata compiles manual of astronomy (517)¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ The Arabian civilization and culture was highly advanced in technology, science, medicine and philosophy from the 6th through the 14th centuries. The Romish Church during the so-called “Dark Ages” suppressed much scientific and cultural advancement in Europe. It sought to suppress heresy, all Eastern influences and thought independent from Church Dogma. It was largely the Arabian and the Byzantine influences that brought Europe out of the “Dark Ages” and into the era of the Renaissance. These influences were: the Moorish conquest of southern Europe (The Arabs renewed the interest in Greek philosophy and paved the way in advancing technology and medical research), the trade with the East, the returning crusaders and the migration of Byzantine scholars to the West after the fall of Constantinople.

	Pope John I (523–526)
Boethius (Roman scholar, philosopher & theologian, 480–524)	
	Roman Church Council at Ilerda, Spain, to oppose “Anabaptism” (525)
	Pope Felix IV (526–530)
Justinian I (Byzantine) frees Italy from Ostrogoths and re-establishes Papal power (527–565)	
	Founding of the Order of St. Benedict (529)
	Pope Boniface II (530–532)
	Pope John II (532–535)
Overthrow of Vandal Empire (533)	
	Pope Agapitus I (535–536)
	Pope Silverius (536–538)
	Pope Vigilius (538–555)
	Byzantine Emperors Justin & Justinian prevent the overthrow of infant baptism by decree (538)
Plague spreads from Constantinople throughout Europe (542–547)	
	550 AD
	The Christianization of Wales (550) ¹⁷⁰
Byzantine Empire annexes Rome and Naples (553)	
	Fifth Council of Constantinople: Three Chapters controversy (553–555) ¹⁷¹
Lombard Kingdom in Italy (568–774)	
	Pope Pelagius I (555–561)
	Pope John III (561–574)
War between Persia and Byzantine Empire (572–591)	
Buddhism established in Japan (575)	

¹⁷⁰ The era of primitive Christianity in the British Isles extended to the year 597, when Pope Gregory I sent his emessary, Austin, to “convert” them to Romanism.

¹⁷¹ This controversy arose over three subjects condemned by Emperor Justinian in seeking to retain the allegiance of the Monophysite faction: The writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the writings of Theodoret of Cyrrhus against Cyril and the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Persian Bishop of Hardascir. This resulted in a schism which divided the Eastern and Western Churches for over half a century.

Pope Benedict I (575–579)
Pope Pelagius II (579–590)
Pope Gregory I (the Great) (590–604)
6th century evangelical groups existing apart
from Romanism: Montanists, Novatians,
Donatists, Waldenses.

600–700 AD

Book printing in China (600)

Pope Gregory I seeks the peaceful
conversion of the Jews to Romanism (600–)
Gregorian chants and founding of *Schola
Cantorum* in Rome (600)
Lombards converted to Romanism (603)
Pope Sabinian (604–606)
Bishop Adrian rejects infant baptism & is
punished by order of the pope (606)
Pope Boniface III (607)
Pope Boniface IV (608–615)

Mohammed’s vision and Rise of Islam (610–)

Roman Church Council at Bracerensia:
Infants must be baptized (610)

Persian conquest of Near East (614–628)

Christians martyred by Longobards (“long–
beards,” at this time descriptive of heathen
devil–worshippers in Italy, 614)¹⁷²
Pope Deusdedit I (615–618)
Pope Boniface V (619–625)

Norse invasion of Ireland (620)

Monothelite controversy (Christological)
(622–680)

Mohammed’s flight from Mecca: year 1 in the Islamic calendar (622)

Pope Honorius I (625–638)

Mohammed, founder of Islam (570–632)

¹⁷² The term “longobards” would later be descriptive of preachers among the Waldenses, Albigenses and others of the Medeival era.

Buddhism state religion of Tibet (632)

Islamic war of conquest begins in Persia, spreading to Syria and across northern Africa (633–)

Chinese Emperor T'ai-Tsung receives Romish missionaries (635)

Differentiation between German and French languages appear in Frankish Empire (636)

Pope Severinus (640)

Arabs conquer Egypt. End of Alexandrian School, center of Western culture (640–641)

Many Christians martyred during the Islamic conquest in Syria, Palestine, Egypt & Northern Africa (622–)

Pope John IV (640–642)

Pope Theodore I (642–649)

Islamic conquest of Tripoli (643)

Chinese invade Korea (644)

Nestorians settle in China (645)

650 AD

Pope Martin I (649–655)

Islamic conquest of Cyprus (649)

Lateran Synod condemns Monothelism (649)

Pope Eugenius I (655–657)

Byzantine fleet destroyed by Islamic forces at Lycia (656)

Pope Vitalian (657–672)

Synod of Whitby: England adopts Romish faith (664)

Paulician persecution (668–685)

“Greek fire” (Chemical warfare) used against Arabs at siege of Constantinople (671–678)

Pope Deusdedit II (672–676)

Synod of Hertford: First English Church Synod (673)

Pope Donus (676–678)

Pope Agatho (678–681)

	Sixth Council of Constantinople: Monothelitism condemned (680–681) Pope Leo II (682–683) Pope Leo II: decrees the confirmation of infant baptism & the mass (682) Pope Benedict II (684–685) Pope John V (685–686) Pope Conon (686–687) Pope Sergius I (687–701) Quinisext Council at Constantinople: final canonization of Scripture for Eastern Church (not recognized by Rome) (692)
Persecution of Jews in Spain (695)	
Islamic destruction of Carthage (697)	
	Primitive Irish Christians forced to submit to Romanism (697) 7th century evangelical groups existing apart from Romanism: Donatists, Vaudois, Paulicians and Waldenses.
700–800 AD	
Islamic conquest of Northern Africa completed (700)	
	Pope John VI (701–706) Pope John VII (705–707) Pope Sisinius (708) Pope Constantine (708–715)
Walid I, greatest of the Islamic Caliphs (710)	
Emperor Julian II, first to kiss the Pope's foot (710)	
Islamic conquest of Spain (711)	
Cultural development of Spanish Jews (711–)	
	Pope Gregory II (715–731) Romish missionary work among the Germanic peoples (715) Islamic persecution of Christians under Haumar, King of the Saracens (718)
Islamic invasion of France (720)	

Iconoclastic movement in Byzantine Church
(720–)

The height of the Islamic Empire, extending from France to China (720–732)

Pope Gregory III (731–741)

Charles Martel (c.688–741). Victory in the Battle of Tours and Poitiers
stops the Islamic advance (732)

Venerable Bede (English Historian &
theologian “Father of English History”).
Wrote against infant baptism c.673–735)

Prince Elvelid (Mohammedan) slaughters
many Christians (739)

Pope Zacharias (741–752)

Derthuin, Bertherius, Hunored & others in
Germany & France deposed from the
ministry for not accepting Romish
superstitions (748)

Albert of Gaul & Clement of Scotland
martyred for refusing Romish superstitions
(750)

750 AD

John of Damascus (Theologian, c.700–750)

Pepin I crowned King of Franks by Boniface
on the order of Pope Zacharias (751)

Pope Stephen II (752)

Pope Stephen III (752–757)

The Donation of Pepin I establishes
temporal power of the Popes (756)

Pope Paul I (757–767)

Founding of Turkish Empire by Tartars (760)

Rule of Charlemagne over Frankish kingdom (771–814)

Pope Stephen IV (768–772)

Pope Hadrian I (772–795)

Charlemagne and Saxon wars (778–804)

Byzantine Empress Irene restores image
worship (780)

Thesias Zelotes (under command of Mady, King of the Arabians) tortures & slaughters many Christians (780)

Seventh Council of Nicaea regulates image worship (787)

Reign of Harun al-Rashid. The height of Arabic learning (c.790)

Albinus teaches “baptism is to be received with faith,” i.e., believer’s baptism (792)

Pope Leo III (795–816)

King Offa of Mercia, king of all England (d.796)

The beginning of the development of feudalism (c.790–)¹⁷³

Eighth century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Paulicians, Vaudois, Waldenses, Valdeci, Valenses.

800–900 AD

Charlemagne crowned first “Holy Roman Emperor” by Pope Leo III at Rome (800)¹⁷⁴

Synod of Aix-la-Chapelle. Charlemagne seeks to reform the Romish Church. Adoptionism condemned (800)

Viking domination of Ireland (802)

Death of Charlemagne and retrogression of Western Empire (814–)

Pope Stephen V (816–817)

Pope Paschal I (817–824)

Reformation of monastic orders (817)

Regnerus (King of the Danes) persecutes the Christians in his kingdom (818)

Pope Eugenius II (824–827)

¹⁷³ Feudalism characterized the disintegration of European government and society from the 8th to the twelfth centuries. The only unifying power was the Church and the idea of “The Holy Roman Empire.” This system had a demoralizing effect upon religion and a secularizing influence upon the Church.

¹⁷⁴ The “Holy Roman Empire” was established by the Franks and then the Teutonic peoples as an attempt to continue the “Glory that once was Rome” and perpetuate the unity of Europe. (The precise term “Holy” was first used in 1157). It was part of the struggle between Popes and Emperors for control of the Western World. It was formally dissolved in 1806 in response to the expansionist policies of Napoleon.

	Pope Valentine (827)
	Pope Gregory IV (828–844)
Arabian conquest of Crete, Sicily and Sardinia begins (826–)	
	Romish Christianity spreads into Scandinavia (826)
	Theodore of Studium (Opponent of the Iconoclasts, 759–826)
Astronomical system of Ptolemy translated into Arabic (828)	
	Rabanus Maurus (Archbishop) in Articles of Faith teaches believer's baptism (830)
	Persecution of image worshippers in Eastern Empire (832)
	King of Bulgaria apostatizes from Christianity: decrees persecution of Christians (842)
	Romish persecution of true believers in the Frankish kingdom (842)
Decline of Frankish Empire begins (843)	
	Pope Sergius II (844–847)
	The Vivian Bible (845) ¹⁷⁵
Arabs plunder Rome (846)	
	Pope Leo IV (847–855)
	Synod of Mainz: Gottschalk condemned in predestinarian controversy (848)
850 AD	
Jews settle in Germany, develop the Yiddish language (850)	
	Many Christians martyred by the Saracens at Cordova, Spain (850–856)
	Johannes Scotus Erigena writes <i>De divina praedestinatione</i> (851)
Danes invade England (851)	
	Pope Benedict III (855–858)
	Rabanus Maurus (Scholar & Archbishop, c.776–856)

¹⁷⁵ One of the earliest illustrated mss. Written in Tours, France.

Pope Nicholas I (858–867)

Huldricus (Bishop of Augsburg) maintains the fallibility of the pope: It is lawful to admonish him for error & reject his bad decrees (859)

The *False Decretals* forged to further Papal power (c.860)

Hincmar (Bishop of Laudun) rejects & preaches against infant baptism (860)

Paschasius Radbertus, Father of transubstantiation (c.785–860)¹⁷⁶

Byzantine missionaries invited to Moravia (862)

Pope Hadrian II (867–872)

Hincmar (Bishop of Rheims) opposes the pope on several accounts, including infant baptism (867)

Ratramnus (Medieval theologian, d.c.868)

Council of Constantinople IV: controversy re Ignatius and Photius: Rejected by the Greeks (869)

Gottschalk (Monastic theologian, taught predestination, c.805–869)

Basil the Macedonian breaks Paulician power. Many Paulicians dispersed throughout Syria & Palestine (871)

Pope John VIII (872–882)

Council of Constantinople: rejected by the Latins (879)

Pope and Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate each other (879)

Emperor Basil reconquers Italy from the Arabs (880)

Paschasius writes against infant baptism (880)

Pope Marinus I (882–884)

¹⁷⁶ Radbertus wrote *De corpore et Sanguine Domini* in 831 and revised it in 844. He contended for the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. This doctrine was eventually accepted as Roman Dogma at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

Pope Hadrian III (884–885)
Johannes Erigena Scotus writes against
transubstantiation & infant baptism:
martyred by his students and Romish monks
(884)

Pope Stephen VI (885–891)

Final separation of Germany and France (887)

Pope Formosus (891–896)

Pope Boniface VI (896)

Pope Stephen VII (896–897)

Pope Romanus (897)

Pope Theodore II (897)

Pope John IX (898–900)

Ninth century evangelical groups existing
apart from Rome: Paulicians, Waldenses,
Vaudois, Valenses, Valdeci

900–1000 AD

Catholic reconquest of Spain begins (900)

Pope Benedict IV (900–903)

Tergandus (Bishop of Treves) calls the pope
of Rome “antichrist” & Rome
“Babylon”(900)

Pope Leo V (903)

Pope Sergius III. The “Era of Pornocracy”
begins (904–911)¹⁷⁷

Russians attack Constantinople (904)

Pope Anastasius III (911–913)

Pope Lando (913–914)¹⁷⁸

Pope John X (914–928)

Fatimid armies begin conquest in Northern Africa (915–)

¹⁷⁷ The pornocracy era. “The darkest period of Papal history.” Marozia, the mistress of Sergius III became the mother of Pope John IX, the aunt of Pope John XIII and the grandmother of Pope Benedict VI.

¹⁷⁸ The last Pope with a new name. All subsequent Popes assumed the names of previous pontiffs.

Bulgarian Church separates from both Rome
& Constantinople (917)

Byzantine Empire extended to Euphrates
& Tigris rivers (919)

The Arabian King Habdarrhaghman IV
begins an era of persecution against
Christians in the area of Cordova, Spain
(923–925)

Worm (King of the Danes) persecutes
Christians (926)

Pope Leo VI (928)

Pope Stephen VIII (929–931)

Pope John XI (931–935)

Henry I (German King) conquers Bohemia,
Slavic peoples, and Hungarians (928–933)

Pope Leo VII (936–939)

Pope Stephen IX (939–942)

Pope Marinus II (942–946)

Pope Agapitus II (946–955)

950 AD

Udo (Prince of the Slavs) persecutes the
Christians (950)

Otto I becomes king of the Franks and Lombards (951)

Theophilact (a Greek) writes in favor of
believer's baptism (952)

Pope John XII (955–964)

Otto I crowned Holy Roman Emperor (962)¹⁷⁹

Founding of Hospice of St. Bernard (962)

Pope Leo VIII (963–965)

Pope Benedict V (964–966)

Poles converted to Romish Christianity
(966)

Pope John XIII (966–972)

¹⁷⁹ The "Holy Roman Empire" was founded with Pope Leo III and Charlemagne in 800. With the decline of the Frankish Empire and the Carolinian dynasty, the headship was moved to the German peoples in 962 with Otto I, becoming the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation."

	Migration of the Paulicians into Thrace (970)
Founding of Cairo University (972)	
Death of Otto I (973)	
	Pope Benedict VI (973–974)
	Pope Benedict VII (974–983)
Present arithmetical system brought into Europe by the Arabs (975)	
End of the rule by nobles in Rome (980)	
Viking raids on Britain (982)	
	Pope John XIV (983–984)
	Mistavus (King of the Vandals) revenges himself by a religious persecution of Christians & Romanists in Germany (984)
	Pope John XV (985–996)
	Vladimir of Kiev “Christianizes” Russia with the Eastern form of Catholicism (988)
	Dunstan (Archbishop & Scholar, c.909–988)
Development of systematic musical notation (990)	
	First canonization of saints (993)
	Pope Gregory V (996–999)
Civil war in Rome (996)	
	Pope Sylvester II (999–1003)
	10th century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Paulicians, Vaudois, Valenses, Valdeci, Waldenses, Bogomili, Albigenses, Paterines.

1000–1100 AD

Spiritual center of Judaism moves from Mesopotamia to Spain (1000)	
	Pope John XVII (1003)
	Pope John XVIII (1004–1009)
	Islamic capture of Jerusalem (1009). This would lead to the “Holy Land Crusades to liberate Jerusalem from the Mohammedans.
	Pope Sergius IV (1009–1012)
Danish conquest of England (1011–1013)	

Pope Benedict VIII (1012–1024)

Jaroslav, Prince of Kiev codifies Russian law (1020)

Synod of Pavia: celibacy of higher clergy (1022)

Several publically burned as heretics by Romanists for opposing infant baptism & mass: Orleans, France (1022)

Pope John XIX (1024–1032)

Beginning of decline of Byzantine power (1025)

Pope Benedict IX (1032–1044)

Avicenna (Ibn Sina, Islamic philosopher, commentator on Aristotle. His influence paved the way for Greek philosophy to enter Europe (980–1037)

Lombards and Normans defeat Greeks at Montemaggiore (1041)

Rise of the Seljuk Turks (1042)¹⁸⁰

Pope Sylvester III (1045)

Pope Benedict IX (1045)

Pope Gregory VI (1045–1046)

Synod of Rome deposes both Popes and elects Clement II (1046)

Pope Clement II (1046–1047)

Pope Benedict IX (1047–1048)

Pope Damascus II (1048)

Pope Leo IX (1049–1054)

1050 AD

Normans invade England (1050)

Polyphonic singing replaces Gregorian chants (1050)

Rise of Scholasticism (1050–)¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Seljuk Turks. The name of the ruling family of the Oghuz Turks, named for their first leader, Seljuk. They embraced the Islamic religion and sought to unify the Muslim world. They fought both internal and external wars, initiated state-administered colleges and largely replaced the Arabian influence in Islam with Persian in the areas of Asia Minor and Syria.

¹⁸¹ Medieval Scholasticism (c.1050–1350) produced a philosophic approach to Christian Theology. It was a synthesis of classic Greek philosophy and Roman dogma. Scholasticism sought to discover the foundations of theology in the dictates of reason. The Medieval Scholastics were divided into several schools of thought: Realists, Moderate Realists or Conceptualists and Nominalists.

A group of Believers hanged as heretics (Manichaeans) by Romish authorities (under Emperor Henry III) for opposing infant baptism & the mass (1052)¹⁸²

Norman conquest of southern Italy (1053)

The Great Schism between the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) State Churches. Each Church excommunicates the other (1054)

The Papal Chair remains empty for one year (1054)

Pope Victor II (1055–1057)

Pope Stephen X (1057–1058)

Pope Nicholas II (1059–1061)

Papal decree establishing Papal elections by Cardinals only (1059)

Pope Alexander II (1061–1073)

Berengar of Tours opposes doctrine of transubstantiation (1062)

Seljuk Turks conquer Armenia (1064)

Norman invasion of England: Battle of Hastings (1066)

Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) (1073–1085)

Excommunication of married priests (1074)

Syria & Palestine conquered by Seljuk Turks (1075)

Papal Decree against lay investiture (1075)

Gregory VII dethrones & excommunicates Emperor Henry IV at Synod of Worms (1076)

Henry IV absolved by Gregory VII (1077)

Bruno (Bishop of Angiers) & Berengarius (his deacon) condemned by councils & pope for opposing infant baptism, rejecting transubstantiation (1059–1079)

¹⁸² “Manichaeism” (a pagan dualistic religious system) was the common charge against all “heretics” or those who disagreed with Rome. This same charge was made against Martin Luther, when he left the Romish Church to generally discredit him. It is a classic case of guilt by association.

Carthusian Order founded by Bruno
(c.1082)

Henry IV again excommunicated. Marches
to Rome & imprisons Gregory VII (1080–
1084). Pope freed by Robert Guiscard, Duke
of Apulia (1084)

Pope Victor III (1086–1087)

Islamic rule revived in Spain under Almoravid dynasty (1086)

Pope Urban II (1088–1099)

First Crusade proclaimed by Urban II (1096)

Crusaders defeat Turks at Dorylaeum,
Nicaea, Antioch & Jerusalem. Latin
Kingdom of Jerusalem.(1097–1099)

Cistercian Order founded by Robert
Molesme (1098)

Pope Paschal II (1099–1118)

El Cid (Rodrigo Diaz) (1045–1099)

Eleventh century evangelical groups existing
apart from Rome: Paulicians, Waldenses,
Bogomili, Albigenses, Paterines &
Berengarians.

1100–1200 AD

Middle English replaces Old English (1100)

Beginnings of secular music (1100)

Evangelical Christians (called
“Berengarians”) condemned by order of the
pope in 1095: many burned as martyrs
(1100)

In the early part of this century several
among the Waldenses & Albigenses write
against infant baptism & evils of the Romish
system & its doctrines (1100–)

Bruno (Founder of Carthusian Order,
c.1030–1101)

Archbishop of Treves banishes persons for
rejecting infant baptism & transubstantiation
(1105)

Anselm of Canterbury (Scholar & Theologian): Evidently at length rejected infant baptism & wrote advocating believer's baptism (c.1033–1109)

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (Greatest Islamic Theologian, 1058–1111)

Henry V excommunicated by Synod of Vienne (1112)

Order of Knights Hospitalers of St. John founded at Jerusalem (1113)

Founding of Clairvaux under Bernard (1115)

Peter the Hermit (Preacher of the first Crusade, c.1050–1115)

Pope Gelasius II (1118–1119)

Order of Templars founded (c.1118)

Basil, a Bogomili leader martyred (1118)

Premonstrant Order founded by Norbert (1119)

Pope Calixtus II (1119–1124)

University of Bologna founded (1119)

The full development of Scholastic philosophy (c.1120)

Wurzburg meeting of German Princes to seek a compromise between Pope Gelasius II and Henry V (1121)

Synod of Soissons: condemnation of Peter Abelard's Trinitarian views (1121)

Concordat of Worms: investiture issue settled (1122)

First Lateran Council: suppresses marriage of priests and Simony (1123)

Pope Honorarius II (1124–1130)

Rupert Tuicinsis writes against infant baptism & for believer's baptism (1124)

Peter of Bruys martyred (1126)

Pope Innocent II (1130–1143)

Hilbert (Bishop of Mayence) writes & preaches against the power & authority of the pope (1131)

Several persons (Berengarians or “Anabaptists”) burned at Treves & Utrecht by order of Emperor Lotharius (1135)

Emperor Lothar III conquers southern Italy (1136)

Second Lateran Council: Church reform, end of Schism with adherents of antipope, condemnation of Petrobrusians and Arnoldists (“Anabaptists”) (1139)

Council of Sens: heresies of Peter Abelard condemned (1140)

Hugh of St. Victor (Scholastic & mystic, c.1096–1141)

Peter Abelard (Scholastic theologian): taught against infant baptism. Died in prison (1097–1142)

Pope Celestine II (1143–1144)

Republic government established in Rome under Arnold of Brescia (1144–1155)

Pope Lucius II (1144–1145)

Pope Eugenius III (1145–1153)

Second Crusade proclaimed by Eugenius III (1145)

Arnold of Brescia (“Anabaptist.” Followers called “Arnoldists” or “Lombards”) burned at Rome (1155)

Peter Bruis (“Anabaptist.” Followers called “Petrobrusians”) & others burned at St. Giles (St. Aegidius) (1145–1147)

Crusaders perish in Asia Minor: Crusade fails (1147)

Henry of Toulouse (Lausanne) attacks infant baptism (1147) Dies (1149)

1150 AD

University of Paris founded (1150)

Pope Anastasius IV (1153–1154)

Pope Hadrian IV (Nicholas Breakspear, only English Pope) (1154–1159)

Carmelite Order founded (c.1154?)

Henry II. Plantagenet House rules England (1154–1485)

Carmelite Order founded (1155)

Certain peasants (“Apostolics” or “Anabaptists,” as they opposed infant baptism) opposed by Bernard of Clairvaux for their anti-Romish faith & martyred in Toulouse, France (1155)

Pope Alexander III (1159–1181)

Conversion of Peter Waldo & rise of the “poor Men of Lyons,” (“Anabaptists”) who preached the Gospel & rejected infant baptism & Romish religion (1160)¹⁸³

Gerard & 30 others (“Anabaptists” from Germany) burned at Oxford for rejecting infant baptism & Romish religion (1161)

Council of Tours: Inquisition for heretics (1163)

Arnold, Marsilius & Theodoric with 7 others (“Cathari,” or “Anabaptists”) burned at Cologne & Bonn (1163)

Oxford University founded (1167)

Peter Lombard (Scholastic, c.1095–1169)

Pope Alexander III: rules established for canonization of Saints (1170)

Albigense persecution under Cardinal Henry (1180)

Pope Lucius III (1181–1185)

Jews banished from France (1182)

Many Waldenses & Albigenses (“Anabaptists”) put to death for the faith in France & England (1182–1183)

Peace of Constance: Recognition of Lombard League (1183)

Cyprus revolts against Byzantine power (1184)

Diet of Mainz (1184)

Pope Lucius III decrees the condemnation of the “Anabaptists” or Waldenses under

¹⁸³ Peter Waldo was *not* the founder of the Waldenses. The name derived from the valleys where these people lived in the piedmont valleys of the Alps. The ancient Waldenses date back to the third century.

various names: *Catharists* (Pure ones), *Patarini* (Sufferers), *Humiliati* (Humiliated ones), *Poor Men of Lyons*, *Passaginians*, *Josephists*, *Arnoldists*, *Consolati* (Comforted), *Credentes* (Believers), and *Perfecti* (Perfect, i.e., converted) (1184)

Second Bulgarian Empire founded (1185)

Pope Urban III (1185–1187)

Saladin conquers Jerusalem (1187)

Pope Gregory VIII (1187)

Pope Clement III (1187–1191)

Albigense controversy (1187)

Massacre of Jews at coronation of Richard I (1189)

Third Crusade (1189–1193)

Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1167–1190)

Order of German Hospitalers (Teutonic Order) (1190)

Pope Celestine III (1191–1198)

Alfonsus (King of Aaragon) issues a decree of banishment or plunder & torture for the Waldenses (1194)

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) “The Commentator.” Wrote commentaries on Aristotle. Father of Averroism (1126–1198)

Pope Innocent III (1198–1216)

Pope Innocent begins the Inquisition: originally applied against the Waldsenses & Albigenses (1198)

Richard I of England (Coeur-de-Leon) killed in France (1199)

The Kulin Ban (Bosnian king) becomes a Bogomile (1199)¹⁸⁴

Declaration of Speyer: German princes confirm right to elect a king (1199)

Twelfth century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Paulicians, Waldenses, Albigenses, Bogomili, Paterines,

¹⁸⁴ The names “Bogomili” and “Paterines” were used synonymously by their enemies. When the Kulin Ban and his family joined with the Bogomili, Pope Innocent III, the Bishop of Bosnia (Yugoslavia) and Minoslav, Prince of the Herzegovina threatened to raise a crusade against them. The Kulin Ban capitulated to Rome, but his people still kept to their faith and practice.

Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists,
Berengarians, Cathari.

1200–1300 AD

Peace of Le Goulet (between England and France, 1220)

Founding of Cambridge University (1200)

Jewish kabalistic philosophy develops in southern Europe (1200)

8 Waldenses (5 men, 3 women) burned for
their faith at Troyes & others expelled
(1200)

Decretal Venerabilem asserts authority of
Papacy over the Empire (1202)

Fourth Crusade: against the Byzantine
Empire (1202)

Siena University founded (1203)

Vicenza University founded (1204)

Crusaders conquer Constantinople and establish a Latin Empire (1204)

Genghis Khan, Chief Prince of the Mongols (1206–1227)

Pope Innocent III places England under
Interdict (1208)

Franciscan Order founded (1209)

Albigensian Crusade: Various crusades were
led against the Albigenses or Waldenses
("Anabaptists") during this century (1209–
1229)¹⁸⁵

Otto IV crowned Emperor in Rome; excommunicated by Pope (1209–1210)

Latin translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* introduced to the West (c.1210)

180 Albigenses ("Anabaptists") burned near
the Castle Minerve by papists (1210)¹⁸⁶

A Waldense burned for his faith in London
by papists (1210)

24 Waldenses burned for their faith in Paris
(1210)

¹⁸⁵ The Albigensian Crusade was proclaimed by Pope Innocent III and led by Philip II of France with an army of 500,000 men. In the crusades and Inquisition against the Albigenses at least a million were martyred.

¹⁸⁶ The martyrs listed in this chronology are those whose deaths were recorded. Multitudes of others were simply killed without record (Rom. 8:36).

60 Albigenses burned for their faith at
Casser by the Count of Monfort under
orders from the pope (1211)
100 Abligenses burned for their faith at
Cassas, France by papists (1211)
50 Abligenses burned for their faith at
Chastelnau D'Ari (1211)
over 400 Abligenses burned for their faith at
Lavaur by papists (1211)
Children's Crusade (1212)
157 Waldenses burned for their faith in
Germany by papists (1212)

King John of England submits to Pope Innocent III: England & Ireland become Papal
fiefs (1213)

Conrad of Marpurg (Dominican friar)
appointed grand inquisitor over all Germany
by Pope Innocent III: trial by ordeal (red-
hot iron, boiling water, etc.). Many
Waldenses or Albigenses martyred (1214-)

Magna Carta (1215)

Inquisition established in the Netherlands:
trial by ordeal: Many Albigenses or
Waldenses martyred (1215)

80 Waldenses burned for their faith at
Strasburg (1215)

Several Waldenses burned for their faith in
Toulouse (1215)

Fourth Lateran Council: Trial by ordeal
prohibited, assertion of Papal authority
(1215)

Dominican Order founded: Order of
Preachers or Black Friars (1215)

Pope Honorius III (1216-1227)

Fifth Crusade (1217)

Salamanca University founded (1217)

Paterine Crusade and Inquisition (1220)¹⁸⁷

The theologian Almaricus burned at Paris by papists for denying & reproving Romish dogma (1220)

Dominic (Founder of Dominican Order (1170–1221)

Council of Oxford (1222)

Naples University founded (1224)

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226)

Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241)

Sixth Crusade (1228)

Establishment of the Inquisition (1227)

Inquisition forbids Bible-reading by all laymen (1229)

University of Toulouse founded (1229)

Leprosy brought back to Europe by returning crusaders (1230)

Peace of San Germano: settlement between Pope and Emperor Frederick II (1230)

A general persecution of the Waldenses throughout Germany by the Inquisition: Many martyred for their faith (1230)

First Decree by Emperor Frederick II at the request of Pope Gregory IX against Waldenses & Albigenses (Patarini): banishment & confiscation of property, including the nobles on whose land they dwell (1230). Second Decree: death sentence for “heretics” (1230). Third Decree: torture & death by burning (1230)

Anthony of Padua (Augustinian canon, 1195–1231)

Waldenses greatly multiplied in Germany, France & Italy (1230)

Great persecution of the Waldenses in Germany: multitudes burned for their faith by papists (1231–1233)

¹⁸⁷ The Paterines were mainly established in the region of Milan and Turin. In the area of Milan alone they had 16 associations of churches. Pope Honorius III proclaimed this crusade and Inquisition which resulted in the suppression and dispersion of the Paterines throughout Europe.

	19 Waldenses burned for their faith in Toulouse by the Romish bishop (1232)
	Penitential movement in northern Italy (1233)
	Dominicans entrusted with the Inquisition against the Waldenses (1233)
	Robert Boulgre (a Dominican monk) sent as Inquisitor to Flanders: many Waldenses put to death (1238–1239)
Border established between England and Scotland (1240)	
Battle of Liegnitz: Mongols defeat Germans & invade Poland & Hungary (1241)	
	Pope Celestine IV (1241)
	200 Waldenses imprisoned & martyred in Toulouse, France, for their faith (1242)
	Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254)
	224 Waldenses burned for their faith in Toulouse by papists (1243)
Egyptian Khwarazmi conquers Jerusalem (1244)	
	First Council of Lyons: Church reform, loss of Jerusalem, Byzantine problem, threats by Mongols & Emperor Frederick II (1245)
	Seventh Crusade (1248)
	1250 AD
	A general persecution of Waldenses & Albigenses in the area of Toulouse (1251–1252)
	The Inquisition uses instruments of torture in examination of heretics (1252)
	Robert (Bishop of Lincoln, England) deposed by Pope Innocent IV for reproving the arrogance & vices of the papacy (1253)
	Pope Alexander IV (1254–1261)
	Paris School of Theology (Sorbonne) founded (1254)
	Order of Augustine Hermits founded (1256)
English House of Commons established (1258)	

General Dominican Inquisition against Waldenses & Albigenses in the area of Cambray: many burned for their faith (1258)

First Flagellant movements in Europe (1260)

Pope Urban IV (1261–1264)

Michael VIII Palaeologus retakes Constantinople from the Latin forces (1261)

Pope Urban IV issues edicts against the Waldenses & Albigenses in Lombardy & Genoa (1262)

Pope Clement IV (1265–1268)

Papal Chair vacant for 3 years (1268–1271)

Eighth Crusade (1270–)

The Dominicans Peter Caderita & William Colonicus persecute the Waldenses in the kingdom of Aragon (1270)

Marco Polo travels to China (1271–1295)

Pope Gregory X (1271–1276)

Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* (1273)

Thomas Aquinas (Scholastic Theologian, 1225–1274)

Second Council of Lyons: plans to organize new crusade, reunion of Eastern and Western Churches, new rules for election of future popes, suppression of certain orders (1274)

Pope Innocent V (1276)

Pope Hadrian V (1276)

Pope John XXI (1276–1277)

Waldenses multiply & spread throughout Italy down to Sicily (c. 1280)

General persecution of the Waldenses in France: Many martyred for their faith. Many Waldenses flee into regions of Bohemia, Poland, Germany & the Netherlands (1280–1284)

Pope Martin IV (1281–1285)

The Sicilian Vespers: Massacre of French

	in Sicily (1282)
	Pope Honorius IV (1285–1287)
	Gerard Sagarellus burned in Parma by the papists for adopting the doctrines of the Waldenses (1285)
	Probus (Bishop of Tullo) opposes Pope Honorius & exposes errors of papists (1287)
Osman I, founder of Ottoman Empire (1288–1326)	
	Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292)
Montpellier (France) University founded (1289)	
University of Lisbon founded (1290)	
	End of the crusades (1291)
Edward I annexes Scotland to England (1291)	
	Pope Celestine V (1294)
	Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303)
	Herman, Andrew & Guillemette (Fratricelli, or “Little Brothers”), notable Albi–Waldenses: Their bodies exhumed & burned by papists (1299)
	Thirteenth century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Paulicians, Waldenses, Paterines, Albigenses, Bogomili, Gezari or Cathari ¹⁸⁸
1300–1400 AD	
	First Papal Year of Jubilee proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII (1300) ¹⁸⁹
First attempt to end slave trade in Europe (1300)	
Osmon (Ottoman) defeats Byzantines at Baphaion (1301)	
	Papal Bull <i>Unam Sanctam</i> asserts Papal claims to supremacy (1302)

¹⁸⁸ The Gezari (German) or Cathari were synonymous with the Bogomili, Paterines, Albigenses, etc. The name derived from the Greek (καθαρίζειν) “Pure,” and so was equivalent to “Puritan.”

¹⁸⁹ The Year of Jubilee was only indirectly based upon the OT Levitical Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25). Its main impetus was the pilgrimage movement (i.e., pilgrimages to Rome) and the system of indulgences. It was originally intended to be celebrated each century, but reduced to every 33 years, then ultimately to every 25 years.

University of Rome founded (1303)

Pope Boniface VIII imprisoned by Philip IV of France in Vatican (1303)

Pope Benedict XI (1303–1304)

Pope Clement V (1305–1314)

Philip IV expels Jews from France (1306)

John Duns Scotus (Theologian, 1266–1308)

Waldensians Dulcinus & Margaret (his wife) torn to pieces & 140 others burned for their faith at Novara in Lombardy (1308)

Pope Clement V establishes the Papal residence at Avignon, France. Beginning of the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church."¹⁹⁰ (1309–1377)

Orleans University founded (1309)

Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, burned at the stake in Paris for alleged heresy (1314)

Papal Chair vacant for two years (1314–1316)

Many true Christians burned for their faith as heretics by the Romish inquisitors at Crema, Austria (1315)

Many Waldenses martyred at Steyer in Austria & Zuidenitz in Poland for their faith by the Romish inquisition (1315)

Pope John XXII (1316–1334)

Papal decree against several "Anabaptist" (Waldense) sects that reject Romish dogma (1315)

4 Waldenses burned for their faith at Marseilles, France by papists (1317)

Truce between Swiss League & Hapsburgs (Austrians) (1318)

Renewed inquisition against the Waldenses by Pope John XXII (1319)

¹⁹⁰ The "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" a derogatory term for the time the Papal Chair was located in Avignon, France (1309–1377), intimating that the Popes were prisoners of the French monarchy. The major reason was that Rome was unsafe because of internal political strife.

Walter Lollard martyred (1320)

Statute of York: House of Commons recognized as essential part of Parliament (1322)

Marco Polo (1254–1324)

Ottomans conquer Nicaea (1329)

The inquisition is established in Bohemia & Poland against the Waldenses (1330)

Zenith of Arabic civilization in Granada under Caliph Yusuf I (1333–1354)

Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342)

Reform of Monastic Orders (1335–1339)

Beginning of the 100 years' War between England & France (1337–1453)

Pisa University founded (1338)

The Electors' Declaration at Rense. The German Diet by *Licet iuris* declares the independence of the Empire from the Papacy (1338)

Grenoble University (France) founded (1339)

Pope Clement VI (1342–1352)

The Black Death devastates Europe: approx. 75 million die in Europe. A third of the population of England dies (1347–1351)

University of Prague founded by Charles V (1348)

Persecution & massacres of Jews in Germany: many flee to Poland (1349)

William of Ockham (Scholastic: father of Nominalism, 1280–c.1349)

1350 AD

Beginnings of the Renaissance era (c.1350–1650)

Pope Innocent VI (1352–1362)

Cardinal Albornoz restores order to the Papal State in the absence of Pope (1353–1363)

Ottomans take Gallipoli (1354)

Charles IV issues Golden Bull, settling election of German kings (1356)

Black Death reappears in England (1361)

Pope Urban V (1362–1370)

University of Vienna founded (1365)

Renewed inquisition against Beghards & Beguines (Waldenses) in France: papal bull for their extermination (1365)

Pope Gregory XI (1370–1378)

John Wyclif begins to teach the Gospel, reject infant baptism & oppose Romanism in England (c. 1370)

Accession of the House of Stewart in Scotland (1371–)

Many Waldenses martyred in Flanders, Artois & Hainault by the papists (1373)

Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, Italian Scholar, “Father of Humanism,” 1304–1374)

Pope Gregory IX returns from Avignon, teaching of John Wyclif condemned (1377)

The “Great Schism” begins with rival Popes in Rome & Avignon (1378–1417)¹⁹¹

Lollard version of the Bible (c.1380)

Wat Tyler: Peasants’ revolt in England (1381)

Wyclif expelled from Oxford. Teachings condemned by Synod at London (1382)

John Wyclif (“Morning Star of the Reformation,” c.1329–1384)

Gerard Groote (Founder of the Brethren of the Common Life, 1340–1384)

University of Heidelberg founded (1386)

University of Cologne founded (1388)

Pope Boniface IX (1389–1404)

Truce between England, Scotland & France (1389)

36 Waldenses burned for their faith at Bingen, Germany by the papists (1390)

Teachings of Wyclif reach Bohemia (1390)

Several hundred Waldenses martyred by papists in the Baltic States (1390)

Turks take Asia Minor from Byzantines (1390)

¹⁹¹ The “Great Schism” was caused by differing allegiances to two, then three Popes who each excommunicated the others simultaneously after the return of the Papacy from Avignon in 1377. The schism was not healed until the rival Popes had been deposed at the General Council of Constance (1414–1418).

Massacres of Jews leads to existence of crypto-Judaism in Spain (1391)

Beyazit (Ottoman) defeats crusaders at Nicopolis (1395)

Manuel Chrysoloras: Greek classes in Florence. Beginning of revival of Greek literature in West (1396)

Jan Hus: lectures in theology to University of Prague (1398)

14th century evangelical groups existing part from Rome: Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, Wycliffites, Bohemian Brethren

1400–1453 AD

Ascent of the Medici in Florence & Tuscany (1400–1743)

King Henry IV of England issues the decree *Statutum ex Officio* against the Wycliffites (includes a condemnation of 15 articles of the Wycliffites, including rejection of infant baptism) (1401)

William Swinderby (a former priest) imprisoned for his faith & rejection of infant baptism: burned at Smithfield (1401)

Jan Hus begins preaching at Bethlehem Chapel, Prague (1402)

Pope Innocent VII (1404–1406)

Pope Gregory XII (1406–1409)

Cardinals of Rome & Avignon meet to end the “Great Schism” (1408)

Council of Pisa: failed to end “Great Schism,” & to deal with Wyclifism and Bohemian Brethren (1409)

Pope Alexander V (1409–1410)

University of Leipzig founded by refugees from Prague (1409)

Pope John XXIII (1410–1415)

Several persons of note in France begin to write against the abuses of the Romish system & its vices (1412)

Jan Hus & followers excommunicated by both Archbishop of Prague & by Pope

Pope John XXIII (1410–1411)

St. Andrews University, Edinburgh, founded (1411)

General Council of Constance: end of
“Great Schism,” church reform &
suppression of heresy: Jan Hus condemned
(1414–1418)

Pope John XXIII deposed (1415)

Jan Hus burned for heresy (1415)

Jerome of Prague burned for heresy (1416)

Pope Benedict XIII deposed (1417)

Pope Martin V (1417–1431)

Medici of Florence: bankers to the Papacy (1414)

Guarino of Verona teaches Classics in northern Italy (1414–1460)

War between Empire & Bohemian Hussites
(1419–1436)

Hussite Wars (1420–1436)

Hussites defeat Sigismund at Vysehrad
(1420)

Many Waldenses burned for their faith in
Flanders by Romish inquisitors (1421)

Blind Hussite general Jan Ziska defeats
Imperial army near Prague (1422)

Louvain University founded (1426)

Joan of Arc raises siege of Orleans (1429)

Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447)

Joan of Arc burned at Rouen (1431)

First German Peasant revolt at Worms (1431)

Universities of Caen & Poitiers founded (1431)

General Council of Basle: church reform,
suppression of heresy, union of Latin &
Greek churches (1431–1449)

Paul Craus burned for his faith in Scotland
by Bishop Henry for rejecting Romish
dogma (1431)

Revolt in Rome: Pope Eugenius IV flees to
Florence (1434)

Compact of Iglau ends Hussite wars:
Emperor Sigismund King of Bohemia
(1436)

European invention of printing (1436)

Thomas Rhedonensis (a Frenchman) travels to Rome to preach the Gospel: reproves the Romish clergy for their ungodliness & is burned for his faith (1436)

Council at Basle deposes Pope Eugenius IV (1439)

Council at Ferrera–Florence: Union of Latin & Greek Churches (1439)

Jean Charlier de Gerson (Theologian & Church leader, 1363–1439)

Platonic Academy at Florence founded (1440)

Donation of Constantine proved a forgery by Lorenzo Valla (1440)

Portuguese navigators exploring West Africa restart slave trade (1441)

University of Palermo founded (1447)

Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455)

Constantine XI Palaeologus, the last Byzantine Emperor (1448–1453)

Vatican Library founded (1450)

Alanus Chartetius, Peter de Luna & other intellectuals begin to write criticisms of the Papal system, its abuses & vices (1450)

University of Glasgow founded (1451)

End of 100 Years' War between England & France (1453)

Gutenberg & Johannes Fust print first Bible at Mainz (1453)

Seljuk Turks conquer Constantinople, kill Emperor Constantine XI. End of Eastern (Byzantine) Roman Empire (1453)

Fifteenth century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Waldenses, Albigenses, Wycliffites, Hussites, Bohemian Brethren and Lollards.

THE PROMINENT TRENDS OF THE STATE CHURCH

There were four prominent trends during these centuries in the development and power of Rome: first, the full and ultimate development of papal power and authority. The removal of the capital from Rome to Constantinople (330), the fall of Rome (476), the subsequent fragmentation of the Empire and feudalism (9th–11th centuries), the rise of Scholasticism and the university system (11th–12th centuries) all furthered the rise of papal

power. Under the cunning and able leadership of several popes (e.g., Gregory I, or “The Great,” who reigned from 590–604 and was the first true pope as “Universal Bishop,” and Innocent III, 1198–1215, under whom the papal power reached its apex), the power of ecclesiastical Rome was set over the temporal powers of kings and states). During the last two centuries of this Medieval Era, with the rise of nationalism in Europe and the call for various reforms, began the decay power of the papacy. The era of the Renaissance also began a gradual separation of culture and learning from the control and framework of the church.

The second development was the completed evolution of the Romish mass. Variations in worship and liturgy were unified. The Latin language, read and spoken as the international language of both religion and culture, became the sole language of the liturgy. The principle of sacerdotalism was completed and the mass developed to its present form.

The third trend was the founding of various Monastic or ecclesiastical orders (e.g., Franciscan, Dominican, Benedictine, etc.). These orders grew and achieved much local power in their respective areas of influence. As they grew gradually more corrupt and caused great scandal to the Church, they were reformed and brought under the centralized authority of papal power in Rome.

The final trend was toward a unified, concentrated effort on the part of Rome to deal with “heretics,” i.e., groups of New Testament believers who remained distinct from the Romish system. This principle of power manifested itself in the Crusades against these peoples and the infamous Inquisition, established fully by Pope Gregory IX in 1227. This work of terror continued, at least intermittently, to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and beyond.

THE NEW TESTAMENT GROUPS OF THIS PERIOD

New Testament Christianity not only remained firmly entrenched, but even expanded greatly during these centuries through its missionary nature and evangelistic spirit, in spite of great and increasing persecution on the part of Romish power. The ancient names of “Montanist,” “Novatian” and “Donatist” continued through history until the seventh and eighth centuries, only to fade away and be replaced by others, then to be revived again during the Protestant Reformation. Primitive Christianity remained intact in Britain, in spite of the persistent efforts of the Romish religion to extricate it. Great religious movements arose in the East, within the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire, and moved throughout Europe and into Britain (e.g., the Paulicians, Cathari). Indigenous churches continued, often underground and in secret, to propagate New Testament Christianity in almost every country in Western Civilization. The following groups are only the most well-known representatives documented by historical witness and do not account for all the multiplied thousands throughout this dark time that remained true to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

THE PAULICIANS (7TH–16TH CENTURIES)

This most important and misunderstood people represented in many ways the very mainstream of primitive Christianity for centuries. They suffered more from the slanders of Rome than almost any other New Testament group.

Their origin has been variously explained. The term “Paulician” did not occur until the seventh century (c. 660). It was derived either from the name of the Apostle Paul, whose writings the Paulicians considered central, or from one of their leaders. This group represented an element of apostolic and primitive Christianity that had remained in the Taurus Mountains since the days of the New Testament. It was only brought to the light of history by its conflict with the Byzantine powers. Edward Gibbon, the author of the unequalled *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, wrote concerning these people:

Through Antioch and Palmyra the faith must have spread into Mesopotamia and Persia; and in those regions became the basis of the faith as it spread in the Taurus Mountains as far as Ararat. This was the primitive form of Christianity. The churches in the Taurus range of mountains formed a high recess or circular dam into which flowed the early Paulician faith to be caught and maintained for centuries, as it were, a backwater from the main for centuries.¹⁹²

Adeny, another historian, wrote that the Paulicians were the survival of primitive Christianity and were Baptist in nature:

Therefore, it is quite arguable that they should be regarded as representing the survival of a most primitive type of Christianity....Ancient Oriental Baptists, these people were in many respects Protestants before Protestantism.¹⁹³

The great Lutheran historian, Mosheim, allowed their antiquity before the seventh century, stating that the movement was “revived” during that time: “A certain person, whose name was Constantine, revived, under the reign of Constans, the drooping faction of the Paulicians, which was now ready to expire; and propagated with great success its pestilential doctrines.”¹⁹⁴

Robert Baker, a Baptist historian, points to the Paulicians as antedating by far the seventh century:

The origins of this group are obscure. Its central doctrinal position suggests that it grew out of primitive Armenian Christianity. Its name came either from veneration for Paul the apostle or from Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch until about 272. It is generally admitted that in the seventh century Constantine introduced a reform to a much older movement and was not the founder.¹⁹⁵

Broadbent, the Brethren historian who traced their history from the Apostolic Era to the Protestant Reformation, stated:

...there were in those wide regions of Asia Minor and Armenia, around Mount Ararat and beyond the Euphrates, churches of baptized believers, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who kept the teaching of the Apostles received from Christ and contained in the Scriptures, in an unbroken testimony from the first.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, VI, p. 543, as quoted by John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 49.

¹⁹³ Adeny, *The Greek and Roman Churches*, pp. 217, 219, as quoted by Christian, *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁴ Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, I, pp. 164–165.

¹⁹⁵ Robert Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, p. 109.

¹⁹⁶ E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, p. 44.

The church historian, Guericke, declared that this “remarkable sect” arose “out of old elements of a preceding time”¹⁹⁷ Thus, it is historically valid to maintain that these Paulicians were representatives of the primitive faith from earliest Christianity.

The Paulician history extends from the New Testament era to modern times. Their origin dates back to the Apostolic Era, perhaps even from the labors of the Apostle Paul in Asia Minor. There seems to have been some affiliation with Montanist and Novatian elements. The movement experienced a revival in the seventh century and increasingly came into conflict with the constant encroachment of the Eastern Church [Byzantine]. The Emperor Constantine V transplanted colonies of Paulicians into the Balkans (752). Theodora the Empress of the Byzantine Empire initiated a great persecution of the Paulicians in 842, martyring over 100,000. Emperor John Tzimiske transplanted many of them into Thrace and granted them religious liberty (970). Also during the ninth century they established in Armenia the free state of Teprice and granted freedom of conscience to all inhabitants. This condition lasted for 150 years until overcome by the Saracens. From these strongholds the Paulicians sent out missionaries into all of Eastern Europe to preach the gospel. Encroaching Western [Roman Catholic] and Eastern powers forced them into the Islamic areas of Syro-Babylonia and Palestine, where they were known as “Sabians” or “Baptists” (the name *Saboan* being roughly equivalent to “Baptist”). There the European Crusaders met them scattered throughout the entire Middle East. Paulicians are mentioned by name in the historical records of the Latin conquest of Constantinople (1204). A colony of Paulicians were settled in Russian Armenia as late as 1828, and still retained some of their ancient writings.

The evangelistic labors of the Paulicians were phenomenal. Their missionaries reached all points of Europe and established themselves in Italy, the Piedmont, southern France and Holland. There were Paulician missionaries burned in England under the decree of Henry II in 1145.¹⁹⁸

The persecution and slander against the Paulicians was almost unequalled by any ancient people. Driven by persecution, they migrated into and throughout Europe, identifying with other groups and churches in Italy, Switzerland, Southern France, Holland, England and to the East. In some areas, their converts outnumbered the adherents of Rome! The main slander against the Paulicians was that they were Manichaeans (i.e., dualistic in their concept of the universe, etc.; the Manichae held that the Old Testament was the work of The Evil Principle, or the devil, and contrary to the New Testament). In answer to these charges, note the following: first, they did not receive the Old Testament as equal to the New or as the rule of life for the Christian. They were adverse, as all New Testament groups were in medieval times, to the Catholic use of the Old Testament to advocate a sacralist society and wage religious wars against heretics.¹⁹⁹ Second, as to their being Manichae, they were centrally located in the general areas of Manichaean strength, but they rejected any association and had nothing in common with that cult except baptism. As the Manichae re-baptized all who came into their cultus, they and the Paulicians were classed together under

¹⁹⁷ Guericke, *Church History*, III, p. 76, as quoted by W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 224.

¹⁹⁸ See B. Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, pp. 10–12.

¹⁹⁹ See G. H. Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, pp. 131.

the general misnomer of “Anabaptist.” Reliable historians, however, refute the nature of this slander as groundless.

Mosheim, referring to the Greek historian Photius and his work on the Manichae, wrote: “...if we may credit the testimony of Photius, the Paulicians expressed the utmost abhorrence of Manes and his doctrine. Most evident it is that they were not altogether Manichaeans, though they embraced some opinions that resembled certain tenets of that abominable sect.”²⁰⁰

The “opinions that resembled certain tenets” no doubt centered on their concept of the old Testament, which Mosheim (a Lutheran Protestant living in a sacral society) could not comprehend, and their practice of baptizing all who left the Catholic communion for their own, which, again, would be beyond the grasp of that learned Protestant historian. Concerning their similarity in the matter of baptism, Pierre Allix, the French Protestant historian, stated: “They, with the Manichaeans, were Anabaptists, or rejectors of infant baptism, and were consequently often reproached with them.”²⁰¹

E. H. Broadbent, the Brethren historian, wrote that Rome practiced an inclusive classification of all who remained separate from her as Manichaeans:

From the time of Mani the churches of believers who called themselves Christians, thus distinguishing themselves from others whom they called “Romans,” had always been accused of being Manichaeans, though they declared that they were not and complained of the injustice of attributing to them doctrines they did not hold. The frequency with which anything is repeated is no proof that it is true, and since such writings as remain of these Christians contain no trace of Manichaeism, it is only reasonable to believe that they did not hold it.²⁰²

Professor Kurtz, the German Protestant historian, who, although ready to condemn these people, yet conceded that, “None of the distinctive marks of Manichaeism, however, are discoverable in them.”²⁰³

Augustus Neander, the great German Protestant historian, also added his testimony: “We find nothing at all in the doctrines of the Paulicians which would lead us to presume that they were an off-shoot from Manichaeism; on the other hand we find much which contradicts such a supposition.”²⁰⁴

Neander not only cleared the Paulicians from any identification with the Manichae heresies, but wrote that there was “much which contradicts such a supposition.” An ancient document called the *Key of Truth*, giving the doctrinal distinctives of the Paulicians, and often referred to in medieval history by them, was discovered in Armenia in 1891 by F. C. Coneybeare and subsequently published in 1898. This document has become final proof of their freeness from Manichaeism.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Mosheim, *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

²⁰¹ Allix, as quoted by *Orchard*, *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

²⁰² Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

²⁰³ Kurtz, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 423.

²⁰⁴ Neander, *Op. cit.*, III, p. 244.

²⁰⁵ See Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 48–49.

The Paulician doctrinal distinctives, according to their own writings and the testimonies of Romish and Protestant historians (except those Romish writers who sought to align them with the Manichaeans to their discredit) were as follows: They denied all ecclesiastical hierarchy and looked upon pastors only as equals with the other members of the assembly. Hence, they were called *acephali* (i.e., Greek for “headless”), without a religious head or ecclesiastical hierarchy.²⁰⁶ They utterly rejected infant baptism and baptized all who came into their fellowship. They practiced a restricted communion, repudiated all the externalities of the Romish and Greek churches and held to a regenerative church membership. Kurtz noted that, “Their worship was very simple, their church constitution (order of worship, government) moulded after the Apostolic pattern...”²⁰⁷

Their historical, doctrinal and logical relationship to other New Testament groups in history are as follows: first, there is evidence of doctrinal and historical links with the Montanists, Novatians and Donatists before them. Second, because of the missionary efforts and migrations, their fruit appears historically and doctrinally in the later *Paterines* of Italy (where these migrated in great numbers during the tenth century) and the *Gezari* of Germany. The generic term *Cathari*, *Cathar* and *Gezari*, revealed their kinship with other and later groups. It is interesting to note that all of these groups at one time possessed an identical catechism.²⁰⁸

Thus, the Paulicians, existing from primitive Christian times, prominent from the seventh century into and through the Protestant Reformation, were essentially and substantially New Testament in their doctrine and practice.

NOTE: for further study, see Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, pp. 234–240; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, pp. 11–16; W. J. Burgess, *Baptist Faith and Martyrs’ Fire*, pp. 317–321; William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, I, pp. 18–21; John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 48–60; J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, pp. 71–81; S. H. Ford, *The Origin of the Baptists*, pp. 59–64; W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 107–122, 238–257; Edward H. Overby, *A Brief History of the Baptists*, pp. 44–45.

THE WALDENSES (5TH–16TH CENTURIES)

The Waldenses formed the largest and most prominent group during both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance era. It is erroneously supposed by some historians that the name was derived from Peter Waldo (c. 1170). A close examination of both the history of the movement and the derivation of the name, however, lead to a contrary conclusion. The name “Waldense” was derived from the word “valleys,” and was used to designate those New Testament believers in the valleys of the Piedmont of Northwest Italy and the surrounding region. This type of designation was common in the early and later Middle Ages. As early as the fifth century, believers who stood apart from the Romish system were called the *Vaudois* (French for valleys). In Spain, those believers and groups that were the representatives of primitive Christianity were called the *Navarri* (Spanish for the valleys). These were located in the Pyrenees mountains between Spain and France. The Italians called these people *Valdes*, *Vallenses*, *Vallis* (Latin), or *Valdeci* [valleys]. The reason for the

²⁰⁶ See Orchard, *Loc. cit.*

²⁰⁷ Kurtz, *Loc. cit.*

²⁰⁸ Baker, *Op, cit.*, p. 177.

development of Waldense as a generic term is that during the pagan Roman persecution of Christians (64–311), many fled into the mountainous regions of Spain, France, Italy and even into Bohemia to escape the sword and propagate New Testament Christianity. During the Imperial Age (313–476), many more joined with these to escape the encroaching power of the State church. During the early Middle Ages and into the twelfth century, great migrations of these various peoples took place to avoid as much as possible the powers of both Rome and Constantinople, and especially the Catholic crusades and Inquisition sent to exterminate them. Although the major concentration of the Waldensean peoples was in the five valleys of the Piedmont, their representatives and influence so permeated all of Western Civilization that their name became the generic term for New Testament Christianity.

There is historical evidence that Peter Waldo derived his name from associating with the Waldenses and not the reverse. The origin and antiquity of the Waldenses (as the people of the valleys), therefore, antedated Peter Waldo by centuries. From the time of Constantine and Pope Sylvester (330), the valleys of the Piedmont had proven a haven for those who were dissidents from Romanism. These merged with indigenous churches that had existed there for generations. It is known that in the time of Montanus and Novatian, many found refuge in these valleys. The following testimony of reliable historians witnesses to the great antiquity of the Waldensean peoples and movement.

George Stanley Faber:

The evidence which I have now adduced distinctly proves, not only that the Waldenses and Albigenses existed anterior to Peter of Lyons; but likewise, that at the time of his appearance in the latter part of the twelfth century, they were already considered two communities of very high antiquity....The Valensic churches were so ancient, that the remote commencement was placed, by their inquisitive enemies themselves, far beyond the memory of man.²⁰⁹

D. B. Ray, a Baptist historian, in giving pertinent information about these people, associates them with the early Novatians and establishes their antiquity from Sacchoni, a traitor and Inquisitor of Rome:

Crantz, in his history, dates the origin of the Waldenses in the beginning of the fourth century, at which time some of the Novatians settled in the valleys. Again, it is said by Mr. Brown, the Editor of the Encyclopedia, that: "The Cathari, or Puritan churches of the Novatians, also had at that very period (about AD 325), been flourishing as a distinct communion for more than seventy years all over the empire....These Puritans...were compelled to shelter themselves from the desolating storm in retirement; and...they reappear...they are styled a new sect, and receive a new name, though in reality, they are the same people. *Religious Encyclopedia*, p. 1147. This shows that the same people called Novatians in Rome and Italy, were called Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont....Saccho, the inquisitor, admits that the Waldenses flourished five hundred years before the time of Waldo."²¹⁰

Dr. Pierre Allix, a French Protestant historian, after carefully researching the origin of the Waldenses, gave much documentation of historical data, and concluded with the testimony of Reinerius Sacchani (a Waldense-turned-traitor who had preached for them for

²⁰⁹ G. S. Faber, *The Vallenses and Albienses*, as quoted by John T. Christian *Op. cit.*, P. 74.

²¹⁰ D. B. Ray, *Baptist Succession*, p. 182.

about seventeen years before apostatizing to Rome. The Pope made him the Inquisitor of Lombardy). Allix wrote:

Wherefore, that I may, once for all, clear this matter, I say, first, that it is absolutely false, that these churches were ever founded by Peter Waldo. Let them show us any author of that time who asserts that Peter Waldo ever preached in the diocese of Italy, or that he founded any church there. Let them produce any sure tradition of that people referring the original of their churches to Peter Waldo. Those who wrote at that time do not tell us anything like this, no more than they who lived after. Wherefore, we must needs conclude it a pure forgery to look upon Waldo as the person who first brought the Reformation into Italy we now find there....I say, further, that by the acknowledgement of the enemies themselves of the Waldenses, it is absolutely false that these churches are of no older standing than Peter Waldo. For this we have the confession of Reinerius, an inquisitor, who lived before the middle of the thirteenth century. He ingenuously acknowledgeth "that the heresy he calls Vaudois, or poor people of Lyons, was of great antiquity, Among all sects," sayeth he (chap. 4), "that either are, or have been, there is none more dangerous than that of the Leonists, and that for two reasons: The first is, because it is the sect— that is of the longest standing of any; for same say it hath been continued down ever since the time of Pope Sylvester, and others, ever since that of the apostles. The second is, because it is the most general of all sects; for scarcely is there any country to be found where this sect hath not spread itself."²¹¹

Theodore Beza, successor to John Calvin at Geneva and intimately knowledgeable concerning these people, declared:

As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer church, since—they are those that have been upheld, as is abundantly manifest, by the wonderful providence of God, so that neither those endless storms and tempests by which the whole Christian world has been shaken for so many succeeding ages...nor those horrible persecutions which have been expressly raised against them, were ever able so far to prevail as to make them bend, or yield, a voluntary subjection to the Roman tyranny and idolatry.²¹²

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), the Lord Protector of England, was concerned about these people, whom he considered with highest regard. He commissioned Sir Samuel Morland to personally see about their welfare and stated himself that these were "the most ancient stock of pure religion."²¹³ Dr. Alex Muston speaks of these Christians of the Valleys in the following terms:

The Vaudois of the Alps are, in our view, primitive Christians, or inheritors of the primitive Church, who have been preserved in these valleys from the alternatives successively introduced by the Church of Rome....It is not they who separated from Catholicism; but Catholicism which separated from them, in modifying the primitive worship.²¹⁴

In the Reformation era, it was a common inquiry on the part of these people to their Protestant antagonists: "Where was your church before Luther or Calvin?" They believed

²¹¹ P. Allix, *Churches of the Piedmont*, as quoted by Ray, *Ibid.*, pp. 186–187.

²¹² As given by Samuel Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of the Piedmont*, p. 6; see John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 73–74, for a slight variation in translation from Morland's version.

²¹³ Quoted by Ray, *Op. cit.*, p. 179.

²¹⁴ Alex Muston, *The Israel of the Alps*, p. 1, as quoted by Ray, p. 184.

themselves to be the successors of Apostolic Christianity, and according to the great Protestant historian Neander, this claim was not groundless:

...it is not without some foundation of truth that the Waldenses of this period asserted the high antiquity of their sect, and maintained that from the time of the secularization of the Church—i.e., as they believed, from the time of Constantine's gift to the Roman Bishop Sylvester—such an opposition finally broke forth for them, had been existing all along.²¹⁵

The statement of Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711), a Dutch Reformed pastor and historian, previously quoted, is here repeated as pertaining specifically to the Waldenses:

Where was the Reformed [Calvinistic or Evangelical] church prior to Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin?

Answer: First of all, the true church remains steadfast by reason of her durability—a durability which does not fluctuate. True doctrine is an infallible distinguishing mark of the church...Wherever true doctrine resides...there also is the church...prior to Luther this church existed wherever this true doctrine, which never ceased to be, was to be found.

...The church existed in several independent churches which maintained separation from popery...Such churches existed since early times in the southern parts of France, as well as in some parts of England, Scotland, Bohemia, and also in Piedmont. Against these churches popes have initiated many persecutions, but they continue to exist until this day....prior to the time of Zwingli and Luther there had been very many who adhered to the same doctrine...and that Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin had by renewal brought this doctrine to light...

Reynerius, one of the leaders of the Inquisition, who did some writing prior to the year 1400, writes concerning the Waldenses:

Among all sects that either are or have been, there is none more detrimental to the Roman Catholic Church than that of the Leonists (that is, the poor men of Lyons—the Waldenses)...it is the sect that is of the longest standing of any; for some say it has existed since the time of the apostles...it is the most general of all sects; for scarcely is there any country to be found where this sect has not been embraced...this sect has a great appearance of godliness, since they live righteously before all men, believe all that God has said, and maintain all the articles contained in the *sybolum* (the twelve articles of faith)...

Archbishop Sessellius writes in his book against the Waldenses:

"The Waldenses originate from a religious man named Leo, who lived during the time of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great [313 AD]."

Such is the witness of these parties. Do you yet ask whether the Reformed [Calvinistic or Evangelical] Church existed prior to Luther? To this I reply that she was to be found among those whom we have just mentioned; that is, those residing in Piedmont among the Waldenses.²¹⁶

Jonathan Edwards, the great American Protestant theologian and philosopher, in his *History of Redemption*, carefully traced the witness of truth during the dark times under Romish tyranny and wrote:

In every age of this, dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the Church of

²¹⁵ Augustus Neander, *Op. cit.*, VIII, p. 352.

²¹⁶ Wilhelmus à Brakel, *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 37–39.

Rome...God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many witnesses through the whole time....

Besides these...there was a certain people called the Waldenses, who lived separately from the rest of the world and constantly bore a testimony against the Church of Rome through all this dark time...they served God in the ancient purity of His worship and never submitted to the church of Rome.²¹⁷

E. H. Broadbent, the Brethren historian, diligently traced the avenues of primitive Christianity and stated:

In the Alpine valleys of Piedmont there had been for centuries congregations of believers calling themselves brethren, who came later to be widely known as Waldenses, or Vaudois....They traced their origin in those parts back to Apostolic times. Like many of the so-called Cathar, Paulician and other churches, these were not "reformed," never having degenerated from the New Testament pattern as had the Roman, Greek and some others, but having always maintained, in varying degree, the Apostolic tradition. From the time of Constantine there had continued to be a succession of those who preached the gospel and founded churches, uninfluenced by the relations between Church and State existing at that time. This accounts for the large bodies of Christians, well-established in the Scriptures and free from idolatry and other evils prevailing in the dominant, professing Church, to be found in the Taurus Mountains and the Alpine valleys.²¹⁸

The history of the Waldenses and their relationship with other New Testament believers are enlightening. The following three observations should answer most historical questions: first, to correctly perceive the Waldensean history, a distinction must be made between the radical and moderate Waldenses. The radical groups were entirely separate from Rome and the later Protestant bodies. The more moderate groups would, under compulsion or to avoid detection, attend the Romish mass and even have their children baptized to avoid persecution. A further distinction must also be made between the ancient and more modern Waldenses. The older groups were strongly New Testament in their doctrine and practice and decidedly immersionist in their baptism. These had no ecclesiastical hierarchy. The history of the modern Waldenses began in 1533 when many of the moderates among them joined with the Genevan Reformation under Calvin to make a common stand against the Catholic Savoy powers which threatened the entire area with war and intense persecution. These moderate Waldenses were then amalgamated into the Protestant Reformation and many of their practices, and became known as the Huguenots. The modern Waldenses became paedobaptists and eventually established a national church structure patterned essentially after the Presbyterianism of Geneva. The radical Waldenses, however, remained separate from Protestant entanglement and were gradually assimilated into the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation era.

Second, as has been already noted, the Waldensean name became the generic term for most Christians who stood apart from Romish religion. It was thus common to apply the name to the Albigenses of southern France, the *Bogamili* of Bulgaria, the *Navarri* of Spain, and conversely, to call the Waldenses *Cathari*, *Cathars*, and even Donatists and Novatians. Although the names were incidental, they were not assigned incidentally, but to identify a

²¹⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, I, p. 596.

²¹⁸ E. H. Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, pp. 89–90.

common relationship and faithfulness to the New Testament pattern as opposed to the corrupt Romish system.

Third, a survey of Waldensean history reveals the interrelationships with other groups:

First–Third Centuries. Pagan Roman persecution drove many into the valleys of the Piedmont from populous areas to unite with the apostolic churches already existing there.

Fourth Century. Under the Constantinian principle of Church and State and the ascendancy of the Catholic party, many withdrew from the larger cities and found refuge with the churches of the valleys. At this time one entire Novatian congregation migrated into the Piedmont. “Claudius Seyssel, the popish Archbishop, traces the rise of the Waldensean heresy to a pastor named Leo, leaving Rome at this time for the valleys.”²¹⁹

Fifth–Eighth Centuries. The name *Vaudois* was given to New Testament believers who lived in the Piedmont. During the Moorish invasion of Spain and France (which ended with the defeat of the Islamic hordes at the Battle of Tours in 732 under Charles Martel), many of the Spanish *Navarri* and *Vaudois* migrated into the area of southern France and into the Piedmont.

Ninth–Eleventh Centuries. Waldensean influence through missionary labors extended into Poland to the East and Holland and Britain to the West. Paulicians from the borders of Thrace migrated into the Piedmont to escape persecution. There was also some association with the *Bogomili* and, of course, the Albigenses, as the migrating Paulicians became known in southern France.

Twelfth Century. The apex of Waldense influence and power. Great leaders in this era were Peter Waldo, Peter of Bruys (hence the name Petrobrusians), Arnold of Brescia (hence Arnoldists in Italy), Henry of Lausanne (hence Henricians in central Europe). Because of their itinerant ministries, these men were considered by their enemies as Waldenses, Albigenses, Paterines, Picards, Cathari, etc. It must be remembered that the various peoples of these groups throughout all of Europe had at that time the same catechism, revealing the intimate correspondence and fellowship that existed among them.

Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries. By this time the Waldenses had grown to such an extent that they posed a threat to papal power and the control of much of central Europe. Crusades were sent against both the Waldenses and Albigenses in 1210, 1400, 1484 and 1487 as part of the infamous Inquisition. The Waldenses at this time numbered into the hundreds of thousands. Their missionary efforts extended in this age into Britain with the ministry of Walter Lollard (1315–1320). His followers and converts became known as Lollards and later as Wyclifites. The Waldenses also maintained the closest ties with the Bohemian Brethren who were later to be known as Hussites (from John Huss, who was not their founder, but their name was derived from association with him and his followers). Indeed, the Bohemians applied to the Waldenses for the ordination of their ministers and held regular correspondence and mutual meetings for fellowship and instruction.²²⁰ There is

²¹⁹ D. Belthazar, *Baptist Magazine*, Vol. I, Ch. 2, as quoted by Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 256.

²²⁰ See Ray, *Op. cit.*, p. 185.

evidence that correspondence passed between the Continental Waldenses and the old Welsh Christians before the Protestant Reformation.

Sixteenth Century. The Waldenses welcomed the Protestant Reformation (as other New Testament groups did at first, until the neo-Constantinianism of the Reformers paid them back in suffering and blood). They were, however, disenchanted with Luther and his views. The radical groups of Waldenses remained separate, but the more moderate groups found a much closer affinity to Calvin and the Genevan doctrine. The moderates, as noted before, were merged into the Protestant Reformation and became part of the Protestant movement known as the Huguenots.²²¹ The radical groups were identified with the Anabaptists of the Reformation. Ypeij and Dermout, the official Netherlands Reformed Church historians, wrote (as noted previously): “The Baptists, who were in former times called Anabaptists....were the original Waldenses.”²²²

The doctrines of the Waldenses were after the New Testament and the slanders against them centered in their opposition to Romish religion and tradition. They denied the superstition of the Romish mass and held to the New Testament simplicity of believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper, believed in salvation by grace and Divine predestination. They possessed the Scriptures in their own tongue for centuries (at least since the time of Waldo),²²³ and were well-versed in the Word. Romish inquisitors, sent to convert them, returned saying that they had learned more about the Scriptures from the women and children among them than from their own learned Romish divines! Because as the Montanists, Novatians, Paulicians and others before them, they rejected infant baptism and baptized only believers who entered their fellowship, they were also called “Anabaptists.” The charge of Manichaeism was leveled against them because they refused to acknowledge the power and authority of the pope (who was presupposed to be the “Vicar of Christ” on earth). As the priests of Rome were usually clean-shaven, their pastors, as the common people, were bearded and so called *barbes* or *bartmanner* (i.e., beards, or bearded men, the common designations of these itinerant preachers and pastors). E. H. Broadbent gives a summary statement concerning their doctrine:

In matters of church order they practiced simplicity, and there was nothing among them corresponding to that which had grown up in the Church of Rome....In matters of discipline, appointment of elders, and other acts, the whole church took part in conjunction with its elders. The Lord’s Supper was in both kinds (i.e., they partook both of the bread and cup. Rome in the mass withheld the cup from the people) and for all believers, and was looked upon as a remembrance of the Lord’s body given for them....“As to baptism,” writes an opponent, Pseudo-Reimer (1260), “Some err, claiming that little children are not saved by baptism, for, they declare, the Lord says, ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,’ but a child does not yet believe.”²²⁴

John T. Christian adds that:

²²¹ See Orchard, *Op. cit.*, pp. 285–286.

²²² Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk, I, p. 148, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

²²³ The Waldensian Version was known as the *Romount Version*, and dates from about 1180.

²²⁴ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

The first distinguishing principle of the Waldenses bore on daily conduct, and was summed up in the words of the apostle: "we ought to obey God rather than man." This the Roman Catholics interpreted to mean a refusal to submit to the authority of the pope and prelates....This was a positive affirmation of the Scriptural grounds for religious independence, and it contained the principles of religious freedom avowed by the Anabaptists of the Reformation.

The second distinguishing principle was the authority and popular use of the Holy Scriptures....The Bible was a living Book, and there were those among them who could quote the entire book from memory.

The third principle was the importance of preaching and the right of laymen to exercise that function.²²⁵

Those Catholics who witnessed their deportment had to admit that their lives corresponded to their doctrine. Claudius Seisselius, the Arch-Bishop of Turin, declared:

...they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear except by compulsion and rarely take the name of God in vain. They fulfill their promises with punctuality; and live, for the most part, in poverty; they profess to observe the apostolic life and doctrine. They also profess it to be their desire to overcome only by the simplicity of faith, by purity of conscience, and integrity of life; not by philosophical niceties and theological subtleties....In their lives and morals they were perfect, irreprehensible, and without reproach to men, addicting themselves with all their might to observe the commands of God.²²⁶

NOTE: Some paedobaptists have charged the Waldenses with infant baptism and Baptist historians with misrepresenting the historical facts. Two Presbyterian scholars (Drs. Rice and Miller) alleged that William Jones, the eminent Baptist historian, misquoted and misrepresented Perrin's *History of the Waldenses*, in which Perrin quoted a document from a report of the commissioners of King Louis XII of France. Subsequent investigation proved that actually, Perrin misquoted the document and Dr. Jones, having access to the original Latin, quoted it correctly. Perrin's quote read: "caused their children to be baptized." The Latin original of *The Oration of Vesembicus*, the document in question, read: *hominess baptizari*, i.e., men were baptized, referring the baptism to men. In fact, the word *infantes* does not even occur in the report.²²⁷ This is noted because these debates are occasionally resurrected as a spectre to haunt and disquiet the unsuspecting and ignorant.

It may now be stated in closing this section on the Waldenses that, in the valleys of the Alps, the Piedmontes bore a long and continuous witness to New Testament truth in both doctrine and practice from the apostolic era to and through the Protestant Reformation.

For further study, see Samuel Morland, *Op. cit.*; Thieleman J. Van Braught, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror*; Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 283–312, 319, 407; Benedict *Op. cit.*, pp. 21–28, 30–44, 67–78; Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, pp. 85–101; Burgess *Op. cit.*, pp. 331–353, 365–375; Christian, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 69–82; Cramp, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98–109, 123–140, 145–148; Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 159–181; 258–316; Orchard, *Op. cit.*, pp. 107, 165, 183, 255–319; Overby, *Op. cit.*, pp. 45–48; Ray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 154–188.

²²⁵ Christian, *Loc. cit.*

²²⁶ As quoted by Christian, *Ibid.*, p. 75.

²²⁷ See Ray *Op. cit.*, pp. 159–164; Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, 171–172.

This people who dwelt in the Balkan peninsula in the areas of Bulgaria (hence the name Bulgars) and Bosnia (modern Yugoslavia) received their name either from one of their early leaders or from their character. *Bogomili* is a plural compound word denoting, roughly, “friends of God” (from *Bogu*, God, and *mili*, those who are dear or acceptable, or *moliti*, to pray, and so those who pray to God, or, yet again, from *Bogmiliu*, i.e., “Lord have mercy”).²²⁸

The Bogomili were from Paulician stock. The persecutions under Theodora (842) and the enforced migrations (970) transferred many Paulicians into the Balkan Peninsula in the ninth and tenth centuries. Their spiritual lineage and heritage, then, harkens back to the Paulicians.

Their history and association with other groups was due in part to their geographical location. They were situated on the frontier or borders of the two Empires, Roman and Greek. Thus, they were constantly being persecuted, first by the Byzantine power, then by the Western Romish Church. At one point, because of their Christian king (the Kulin Ban, c. 1199) by the papal army from Hungary to the north, calling for their subjugation under orders from Pope Innocent III (1203). An uneasy peace lasted until 1291, when Pope Nicolas IV called for the Inquisition to purge Bosnia. A later Inquisition in the fourteenth century intimidated some. After a long war with the Catholic Hungarian army, however, the Bogomili sided with the Turks and the whole area was for that time lost to the jurisdiction of Rome. The Paulicians and Bogomili were always better received and treated by Islam than by apostate Christendom!

Many Bogomili migrated into Western Europe, identifying with the Albigenses –of Southern France, the Waldenses, Paterines and the Bohemian Brethren. Conversely, when the Inquisition bore down heavily upon the Albigenses, many of them fled to Bosnia. The Bogomili held close fraternal ties with the other New Testament groups and their influence extended from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, according to Sacchoni, the Inquisitor. Concerning this relationship and influence. Broadbent states:

Their relations with the older churches in Armenia and Asia minor, with the Albigenses in France, Waldenses and others in Italy, and Hussites, in Bohemia, show that there was a common ground of faith and practice which united them all. They formed a link, connecting the primitive churches in the Taurus Mountains of Asia Minor with similar ones in the Alps of Italy and France.²²⁹

Their numbers were evidently great and thus account for their power and influence. Baker states that “The Bogomilis of the twelfth century may have numbered as many as two million.”²³⁰ Dr. L. P. Brockett, an authority on the Bogomili, stated that as early as the twelfth century these churches numbered a converted, believing membership as large as that of the Baptists throughout the world today.”²³¹ The doctrines of the Bogomili have been

²²⁸ See Neander, *Op. cit.*, VIII, p. 278; Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, pp. 57–58; Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

²²⁹ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

²³⁰ Robert Baker, *Op. cit.*, p. 178.

²³¹ As quoted by J. B. Moody, *My Church*, p. 205.

maligned, assailed and, evidently, to a large degree, misrepresented. As they were identical to the Paulicians, and also were in close fellowship with such groups as the Waldenses, Hussites, Bohemians, Paterines and others, the charges against them seem rather groundless. It is, indeed, possible that errors tainted some of these, and that, further, the bulk of the information obtainable has come through the writings of their enemies (charges perpetuated through older Protestant historians who followed faithfully the Roman line). The main charges have been considered under the Paulicians, but a further statement might be in order: First, the charge of Manichaeism came largely for two reasons: first, they denied the power of the pope as the supposed “Vicar of Christ” on earth, and so were charged with being dualistic and worshippers of Satan. Second, they were charged with being Arians because they denied the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist and called it the doctrine of demons. They, as other primitive groups, denied the prominence of the Old Testament, both as the rule for the believer’s life and as the basis for sacralism and religious persecution. They were further charged with being anarchist and opposed to civil government. This charge was also levied against the later Anabaptists because they, as all New Testament groups, opposed the civil magistrate as an arm of the church. They were further accused of unnatural vices. This has already been noted in the English term “bugger,” which was ultimately derived from “Bogomili,” “Bulgar,” the French “Bougres,” and finally, “bugger.” Such behavior is denied by association with respected were alike exemplary. Broadbent defends them from history:

There is no evidence to support the charge that these Christians, whether called Paulicians, Thonracks, Bulgarians, Bogomils, or otherwise, were guilty of wicked practices, and the accounts of their doctrines given by their enemies are unreliable. It was generally admitted even by these that their standard of life, their morals, their industry, were superior to those which prevailed around them; and it was largely this which attracted to them many who failed to find in the State Church that which satisfied them.²³²

The doctrines of the Bogomili, from the material and evidence of historical records, were essentially the following: they opposed paedobaptism, adhered tenaciously to the independence of each local assembly (their elders were highly regarded and venerated, but held no ecclesiastical authority beyond the local church), observed the Lord’s Supper simply as a remembrance, and denied all association of Church and State.

Dr. L. P. Brockett, a Baptist, who made these people the object of an intense and thorough study, based in part on the researches of an Anglican historian, Arthur J. Evans, was led to the following conclusions:

Among these (i.e., historians on the Bulgarians) I have found, often in unexpected quarters, the most conclusive evidence that these sects were all, during their earlier history, Baptists, not only in their views on the subjects of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but in their opposition to paedobaptism to a church hierarchy, and to any worship of the Virgin Mary or the Saints, and in their adherence to church independence and freedom of conscience in religious worship. In short, the conclusion has forced itself upon me that in these “Christians” of Bosnia, Bulgaria and Armenia we have [a]...succession of Christian churches, New Testament churches, and Baptist churches, and that as early as the

²³² Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, 60.

twelfth century these churches numbered a converted, believing membership as large as that of the Baptists throughout the world today.²³³

In spite of the varied slanders and accusations of Romish writers and copied charges by some Protestant historians, it is reasonably and historically verifiable that among this group of ancient Christians were many true believers and churches of the Lord Jesus Christ who were faithful to the New Testament pattern in doctrine and practice.

For further study, see Armitage, p. 278; Broadbent, pp. 57–66; Christian, I, pp. 58–59; Jarrell, pp. 113–122; J. B. Moody, *My Church*, pp. 203–205.

THE ALBIGENSES (10TH–16TH CENTURIES)

This people had the horrible distinction of suffering more than any other under the heavy, bloody hand of Rome during the Crusades and Inquisition.²³⁴ The name Albigenses does not occur historically until the twelfth century (the name itself is merely geographical, denoting the large province of Southern France, especially in the area of Toulouse and Albi). Before that time New Testament believers in that area were called *Vaudois*, *Cathari*, *Publicani* (this latter, most probably a corruption of the term Paulician), brought back into Europe by the Crusaders who had met the Paulicians with their identical doctrines in Syro-Palestina and *Boni Homines* [“Good Men”].

The origin and antiquity of the Albigenses, at least in part, dates back to Apostolic times. There were primitive churches in Gaul (France) that suffered during the pagan Roman persecutions (64–311) years prior to Constantine the Great (313–331). Novatian preachers had also established congregations in that area by the third century AD. During the Moorish invasion of Spain and Western France (ending in 732 with the Battle of Tours), many primitive *Navarri* and *Vaudois* from the Pyrenees region migrated into the Albi area and on into the Piedmont valleys of the Alps. Thus, the Albigenses had roots in primitive Christianity.

John T. Christian, the Baptist historian, after tracing the migration of the Paulicians into Southern France, yet states:

The descent of the Albigenses has been traced by some writers from the Paulicians (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, I. 454. 9th edition). Recent writers hold that the Albigenses had been in the valleys of France from the earliest days of Christianity. Prof. Bury says that “It lingered on in Southern France,” and was not a “mere Bogomilism, but an ancient, local survival...”²³⁵

G. H. Orchard traces these people back into earliest times and quotes Simondi to this effect:

...diverse churches existed in the second century in Narbonne, Gaul. Simondi says that, Toulouse had scarcely ever been free of this heresy from its first foundation, which

²³³ Brockett, *The Bogmils of Bulgaria and Bosnia*, pp. 11–12, and Preface, as quoted by Moody, *Loc. cit.*; Christian, *Loc. cit.* The difference between the quote as given by Christian and the one by Moody is that Moody quoted from the Preface and Christian from pp. 11–12.

²³⁴ See J. C. L. Simonde De Sismondi, *History of the Crusades Against The Albigenses in the Thirteenth Century*.

²³⁵ Bury, Ed. Gibbon, *History of Rome*, VI, 563, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

the fathers transmitted to their children from generation to generation, almost from the origin of Christianity.²³⁶

Concerning the relationship of Gaul to Spain and the common life of the *Navarri* with the *Vaudois* and later Albigenses, the French Protestant historian Allix stated: “At an early period the churches of the North of Spain were always united with those of the south of France.”²³⁷

Historically, there were six great influences upon the Albigensean Christians: Those who migrated into that area during Roman persecutions (64–311), the missionary efforts of the Novatians (250), the migrations of the *Navarri* and *Vaudois* during the Moorish invasion (711–732), the missionary activities of the Paulicians brought them to prominence as influence of the Waldenses and the era (Peter Waldo, Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lusanne, etc.) and the Great Inquisition, which devastated the whole land and caused many to flee into Bosnia, Bohemia and the Piedmont (1180, 1209–1229).

NOTE: The Moorish invasion (711–732) united many of the *Navarri* and *Vaudois* with the Albigenses and also sent many of both to the Alps in large numbers to find refuge among the Waldenses, thus forming a close and lasting association. With the migration and missionary efforts of the Paulicians and Bogomili, the unification of Europe from the Black Sea to the Atlantic was complete, in spite of the strong opposition and persecuting zeal of Rome. This accounts for the strong doctrinal identity and cohesiveness of all the varied groups and the ease with which their respective preachers moved in itinerant fashion among them. The Albigenses themselves had many preachers of note who have thus been variously identified with the *Vaudois*, Waldenses, Paterines, Gezari, etc. Peter of Bruys (and so, Petrobrusians, c. 1100), Henry of Lausanne (hence, Henricians, c. 1116–1148), a follower of Peter of Bruys, whose preaching emptied the Romish churches to the extent that whole congregations quit Catholicism to follow the “heretics”! Arnold of Brescia (c. 1148) was a preacher of great fame in Lombardy. His followers became known as Lombards or Arnoldists. Berengarius (c. 1035). His followers were known as Berengarians—and it is said that “they corrupted all of Italy.”²³⁸ Peter Waldo and the Poor Men of Lyons were variously, as these others, classified as Waldenses, Albigenses and Paterines. Waldo migrated into Bohemia and spent his remaining years preaching among the Bohemian Brethren. Again, it is to be remembered, but not wondered at, that all these groups had the same catechism and used the Scriptures in their vernacular. The closest relationship existed among them and necessarily presupposes the strongest unity in both faith and practice.

In 1180 a horrible time of persecution swept this area in a Crusade headed by Cardinal Henry to exterminate these “heretics.” This was followed by a general crusade and war decreed by Pope Innocent III, who summoned the king of France and promised both blessing and plunder for the extermination of the Albigenses. An army of 500,000 men was raised and marched on the Province of Albigeois. In less than twenty years, over 200,000 were put to death—60,000 in one city alone! In the Crusades and Inquisition, it has been estimated that at least 1,000,000 Albigenses died.²³⁹ Those who did escape, fled into the countries of Bosnia, Bohemia and the

²³⁶ Simondi, *History of the Crusades*, p. 6, as quoted by Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 163.

²³⁷ Allix, *The Albigensian Church*, Chap. 11, p. 109, as quoted by Orchard, *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²³⁸ See Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 178–179.

²³⁹ See Benedict, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

Alps; others were either driven into submission or went underground until the time of the Protestant Reformation.

As the Albigenses were essentially one with the Paulicians and Bogomili and closely associated with the Waldenses, they received the same slanders and charges of heresy. They were charged with being Manichaeans because they remained apart from and opposed to the papal authority of Rome. Manichaeism by the Synod of Sens.²⁴⁰ Orchard states concerning this charge against the Albigenses:

The reproach is allowed by Dr. Allix as not belonging to the Albigenses; which is conceded by Dr. Jorti, who asserts they had very little of the Manichaean system attached to them. It is very probable the Albigenses held same opinions in common with the Manichaeans, as they did in the discipline of believer's baptism, but these Vaudois were not heretical in their views. Baronius says, "They were confuted at a conference before the Bishop of Albi, from the New Testament, which alone they admitted; they professed the catholic faith, but would not swear, and were therefore condemned."²⁴¹

Archbishop Usher, Irish Protestant Prelate and member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, stated that the charge of "Manichaeism on the Albigensian sect is evidently false."²⁴²

Speaking of their strict morality and reception among the common people, Carl Schmidt wrote:

Their severe moral demands made impression because that example of their preachers corresponded with their words....In a short time the Albigenses had congregations with schools and charitable institutions of their own...the Roman Catholic Church, so far as it could be said to exist in the country, had become an object of contempt and derision. This state of affairs, of course, caused great alarm in Rome.²⁴³

Lord Macauley, the great British historian, in commenting upon the positive and beneficial effects of the Albigense influence, wrote: "The Albigensian heresy brought about the civilization, the literature, the national existence...of the most opulent and enlightened part of the great European family."²⁴⁴ Their schools taught the children of nobility and the social fabric reflected their influence.

The charge of Luciferianism against them [demon worship, Satanism] is quite contradictory to their demeanor, doctrine and close fellowship with groups such as the Waldenses. The basis for such charges must be found in the medieval preoccupation with demonism which reached its peak fervor at that particular time.²⁴⁵ Such charges were as common as that of Manichaeism.

The essential doctrines of the Albigenses were, of course, closely aligned to those of the other contemporary New Testament groups with whom they associated. According to William Jones, the author of an excellent church history, these people held to a regenerate

²⁴⁰ See Christian, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 62.

²⁴¹ Orchard, *Op. cit.*, pp. 174–175.

²⁴² Acland, *The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois*, lxvii, as quoted by Christian, *Loc. cit.*

²⁴³ Schmidt, *Schaff–Her zog Encyclopaedia*, I, p. 47, as quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

²⁴⁴ Macauley's *Works*, VI, p. 463, as quoted by Jarrell, *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ See Paul Christian, *The History and Practice of Magic*, pp. 298–300, 320–324.

church membership, were opposed to the interference of the civil magistrate into the affairs of the church (i.e., “a man ought not to be delivered up to the officers of justice to be converted”), held that a converted life must be evidenced by good works and that the church “ought not to persecute any, even the wicked.” They further held that “Moses was no rule for Christians” (i.e., no Old Testament mentality with its inherent sacralist mentality). They denied all sacraments, held a simple view of the Lord’s Supper and rejected infant baptism, baptizing only believers, and those by immersion.²⁴⁶ Thus, these Albigensian people were New Testament in doctrine and practice; the charges against them were rooted in slander, prejudice and guilt by association, and were attempts to discredit them.²⁴⁷

THE PATERINES (9TH–13TH CENTURIES)

These were established in Italy, and centered in the areas of Milan and Turin. The Paterine movement had its roots in primitive Christianity and came to prominence in the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, when it was dispersed or driven underground by a bloody Inquisition.

The name “Paterine” is of uncertain origin. It may be from the term meaning “vulgar,” “low-bred,” “illiterate,” as most of these people and their preachers were originally of the lower and artisan classes; or it may be derived from a term meaning “sufferers” or “Martyrs.” This group was known by its enemies variously as Cathari, Gezari, Chazars, Bogomili, Albigenses and Paulicians. Many of these terms had become generic because of their widespread and interrelated influence and missionary efforts.

Their history began in primitive Christianity. There is evidence that their roots were found in the Novatian movement (250). The New Testament believers and churches eventually became known toward the eighth or ninth centuries as Paterines. The French Protestant historian, Allix, stated: “It was by means of the Paterines that the truth was preserved in the dioceses of Milan and Turin.”²⁴⁸ During the great Paulician migrations of the ninth and tenth centuries, many found refuge in both the Milan area and the Piedmont within Italy. This influx brought renewed power and attention to these people. Allix again noted: “Here, then, very truly, we have found a body of men in Italy, before the year 1026, five hundred years before the Reformation, who believed contrary to the opinions of the Church of Rome and who highly condemned their errors.”²⁴⁹

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Paterines had a great missionary influence that spread throughout Europe, reaching to the coast of France on the West and even to Poland on the East and North. Arnold of Brescia, who had been in France among the Albigenses, returned (he was a native of this area), and preached with great effect in Italy. The Church of Rome suffered great losses and so retaliated with a vengeance after the Albigense Crusade, and in 1220, under orders from Pope Honorius III, began a crusade against the Paterines. Thus, the thirteenth century witnessed the suppression and dispersion

²⁴⁶ See Jones' *Church History*, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

²⁴⁷ See Armitage, pp. 278–279; Benedict, pp. 21–24, 28–38; Burgess, pp. 263–269; Broadbent, pp. 85–91; Cathcart, pp. 18–21; Christian, I, pp. 60–68; Cramp, pp. 99–100; Ford, pp. 48–58; Jarrell, pp. 123–128; Orchard, pp. 58, 161–192, 212–224.

²⁴⁸ *Rem. Pied. Ch.*, Ch. 19, p. 175, as quoted by Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

²⁴⁹ Quoted by Benedict, *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

of these people throughout all Europe. Mosheim said that, "Indeed, they passed out of Italy and spread like an inundation throughout the European provinces but Germany in particular afforded an asylum, where they were called Gazari instead of Cathari."²⁵⁰

Thus, either driven underground and suppressed or driven out, the Paterine influence was stifled until the Protestant Reformation.

Their association with the Novatians is peculiar. As the Novatian name passed from history in the eighth century, the Paterine name immediately replaced it, evidence that this was the same witness of primitive Christianity with an incidental name change. The migration of the Paulicians (842, 970, etc.) and the corruptions of the Romish church combined to make them the strongest force in Northcentral Italy. Many joined their ranks who had become disgusted with the immorality and corruption of Rome. At the height of their power, according to R. Sacchoni the Inquisitor, "The Paterines in 1250 had 4,000 members in the Perfect Class [preachers, missionaries], but those called disciples were an innumerable multitude."²⁵¹ These people had sixteen associations of churches in the area of Milan alone.

The slanders against the Paterines were identical to those against the other New Testament groups of that era: Manichaeism, unnatural vices, immorality, rejection of the Old Testament, dualism, etc. These charges have been answered in the treatment of the Paulicians, Bogomili and Albigenses. It need only be said that from the standpoint of the apostate Romish System, these were valid errors—with a large amount of freedom for guilt by association to discredit these believers! However, some historians, misguided by the concept of a universal church, and so thinking any schism heretical, and presupposing the validity of Rome, have furthered these slanders. Professor Kurtz, the German Protestant historian, stated that recent research, however, had brought to light a different attitude toward these people: "The liturgy lately discovered by Kunitz dates from the close of the thirteenth century and gives a more favorable opinion of them than has been formerly entertained."²⁵²

The close association the Paterines had with other contemporary groups such as the Waldenses discredits their accusers. They possessed the same catechism and religious writings as did these other New Testament peoples, and instituted schools for the training of their youth and preachers. Support for these schools came from all over Europe, even from brethren as distant as Poland. Certainly this speaks highly of these Christians.

The doctrinal distinctives of the Paterines were identical to those of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Paulicians and others who held to the essential truths of primitive Christianity. They strongly rejected infant baptism, held tenaciously to a regenerated church membership, rejected the Romish interpretation of the Old Testament (with its sacralism and religious persecution), possessed a simple church polity and denied all the traditions of Rome. They held the Scriptures alone as sole and sufficient authority. They were New Testament Christians.

²⁵⁰ Quoted by Benedict, *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁵¹ As quoted by Benedict, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁵² Kurtz, *Op. cit.*, p. 455.

For further study, see Benedict, pp. 16–20; Broadbent, pp. 61, 85, 97; Ford, pp. 62–64; Jarrell, pp. 129–139; Orchard, pp. 140–160).

MEDIEVAL BRITISH CHRISTIANITY (6TH–14TH CENTURIES)

Christianity entered Britain within thirty years after the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were churches established in England as early as 60 AD and in Wales from the year 63 AD. Britain contained churches, schools for ministers and the New Testament pattern of Christianity unhindered until the arrival of Austin in 597. This monk was sent under the authority of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) to “convert” the Britons. Romish religion was established officially at the Synod of Whitby in 664, but New Testament Christianity continued, often hidden, and always resistant, “...until the rise of the Lollards and Wyclifites, when it merged with these movements and saw the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. Not only did primitive Christianity survive longer in Britain than anywhere else in Western Civilization from the Romish system, but there is evidence that it continued to exist through the Dark Ages into the light of the Protestant Reformation. E. H. Broadbent wrote:

In 596 (597), Austin, with forty Benedictine monks, sent by Pope Gregory I, landed in Kent. The two forms of missionary activity in the country, the older British and the newer, Roman, soon came into conflict. The Pope appointed Austin Archbishop of Canterbury, giving him supremacy over all British bishops already in the land. The Church of Rome insisted that its form of church government should be the only one permitted in the country, but the British order continued its resistance, until in the thirteenth century its remaining elements were absorbed into the Lollard movement.²⁵³

Austin at first tried to persuade the primitive Christians to join forces with Rome, but they would not. He promised them concessions, but they would not hear. The Venerable Bede, himself a Romanist, stated that Austin said to them in their conference:

You act in many particulars contrary to our custom, or rather the custom of the universal church, and yet, if you will comply with me in these three points, viz., to keep Easter at the due time; to administer baptism, by which we are again born to God, according to the custom of the Holy Roman Apostolic Church; and jointly with us preach the word of God to the English nation; we will readily tolerate the other things you do, though contrary to our custom. They answered that they would do none of these things, nor receive him as their archbishop; for they alleged among themselves, “If he would not now rise up to us, how much more will he condemn us, as of no worth, if we begin to be under his subjection.”²⁵⁴

These ancient British Christians were decidedly different from the Roman Church and its traditions: They baptized only believers; Rome practiced infant baptism. They baptized believers; Rome practiced baptismal regeneration. They did not observe the paganism of Roman tradition, nor would they associate with Rome, even in preaching the word of God! Austin then threatened them with “warre and wretche,” and they were slaughtered and scattered by an army raised for religious persecution.²⁵⁵ As the persecution grew, many fled into the mountains of Wales. It was called by one of their own, “our Piedmont,” in reference to the Alpine valleys of the Waldenses.

²⁵³ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, pp.35–36.

²⁵⁴ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 71, as quoted by Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Jonathan Edwards maintained that these people kept, up a witness for true Christianity constantly throughout those Dark Ages in Britain:

...great part of the land and France, retained churches in England, Scotland and France retained the ancient purity of doctrine and worship much longer than many others. In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the Church of Rome...and pleaded for the ancient purity of doctrine and worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many witnesses through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain and other countries; private persons and ministers, some magistrates and persons of great distinction, and there were numbers in every age who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.²⁵⁶

J. Davis, translator of Thomas's *History of the Baptists in Wales* (issued, then, under Davis's name, this work by Thomas is considered as the best and most authoritative work on Welsh Baptists), wrote:

...we find that Theophilus Evans, in his *Drych y prif oesoedd*, or Looking-glass of the Ancient Ages, could see the remnant of the Welsh Baptists through the darkness of popery, to the year 1000, and Peter Williams, a Methodist preacher, who wrote an exposition on the Old and New Testaments in Welsh, has followed them through the thick clouds till they were buried out of his sight in the smoke, in the year of our Lord 1115. However, it is a fact that cannot be controverted, that from this time to the Reformation there were many individuals in Wales, like the seven thousand left in Israel, whose knees had never bowed to this Baal of Rome.²⁵⁷

Between the time of Austin and the Reformation, many New Testament believers sought refuge from the Continent on British soil, keeping the fires of truth burning (as well as the fires of Romish persecution). Benedict wrote:

...the succeeding centuries down to the Reformation...During that interval, many of the continental Baptists visited England, seeking refuge from the persecution which raged against them. During the reign of William the Conqueror, a considerable number came over from France, Germany and Holland; and so greatly did they prevail, that Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury (c. 1045–1089), wrote a book against them; for not only the poor, but some of the noble families adopted their sentiments...early in the 12th century, some of the Waldenses [came] into England to propagate the Gospel [and]...were apprehended...Baptists were afterward found in Herefordshire and South Wales, at the Reformation.²⁵⁸

Not only among these foreigners, but among the natives of the Isles, New Testament truth continued. Wrote Benedict:

Baptist historians in England, contend that the first British Christians were Baptists, and that they maintained Baptist principles until the coming of Austin....From the coming of Austin, the church in this island was divided into two parts, the old and the new. The old, or Baptist church, maintained the original principles.²⁵⁹

Davis continues, advancing that these “old Baptists” continued into the Reformation era:

²⁵⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, I, p. 596.

²⁵⁷ J. Davis, *History of the Welsh Baptists*, p. 15.

²⁵⁸ Benedict, *Op. cit.*, pp. 302–303.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, also quoted by Davis, *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

...the Welsh Baptists contend, that Baptist principles were maintained in the recesses of their mountainous Principality, all along through the dark reign of popery.

God had a regular chain of true and faithful witnesses in this country, in every age, from the first introduction of Christianity to the present time, who never received nor acknowledged the pope's supremacy: like the thousands and millions of the inhabitants of the vale of Piedmont, residing on green and fruitful meadows, surrounded by high and lofty mountains, separated from other nations as if the all-wise Creator had made them on purpose, as places of safety for his jewels that would not bow the knee to Baal.²⁶⁰

J. Davis again writes:

...The vale of Carlean is situated between England and the mountainous part of Wales, just at the foot of the mountains. It is our valley of Piedmont; the mountains of Merthyn Tydfyl, our Alps; and the crevices of the rocks, the hiding-places of the sheep of Christ, where the ordinances of the gospel, to this day, have been administered in their primitive mode, without being adulterated by the corrupt Church of Rome. It was no wonder that Penry, Wroth and Erbury, commonly called the first reformers of the Baptist denomination in Wales, should have so many followers at once, when we consider that the field of their labors was the vale of Carleon and its vicinity...this denomination has always existed in the country from the year 63....The vale of alchon, also, is situated between mountains almost inaccessible. How many years it had been inhabited by Baptists before William Erbury ever visited the place, we cannot tell....It is a fact that cannot be controverted, that there were Baptists here at the commencement of the Reformation; and no man upon earth can tell when the church was formed, and who began to baptize in this little Piedmont. Whence came these Baptists? It is universally believed that it is the oldest church, but how old none can tell. We know that at the Reformation, in the reign of Charles the First, they had a minister named Howell Vaughan, quite a different sort of a Baptist from Erbury, Wroth....and others, who were the great reformers, but had not reformed so far as they ought to have done, in the opinion of the Olchon Baptists. And that was not to be wondered at; for they had dissented from the Church of England, and probably brought some of her corruptions with them, but the mountain Baptists were not dissenters from that establishment. We know that the reformers were for mixed communion, but the Olchoin Baptists received no such practices. In short, these were plain, strict, apostolical Baptists. They would have order and no confusion—the word of God their only rule...they must have been a separate people, maintaining the order of the New Testament in every age and generation, from the year 63 to the present time.

...Notwithstanding the Baptists in Wales were very numerous in 1653, yet there were but six or seven churches of the old Baptist order.

NOTE: After quoting Thomas at length, above, Davis adds the names of thirteen noted Baptist ministers in Wales before the Protestant Reformation.²⁶¹

There exists evidence, then, from their own historians and others, that New Testament Christianity continued to exist in Britain throughout the Dark Ages into the light of the Protestant Reformation and modern history. It should be noted that in the years 950, 960 and 977 Romish church officials in Britain had to issue strong commands not to neglect infant baptism, betraying a continued opposition to this superstition and the probable continued influence of New Testament principles. Thus could Barclay, the Quaker historian,

²⁶⁰ Davis, *Ibid.* Note: this last paragraph is a quote by Davis from Jones' *Doctrine of Baptism*, p. 149 and a reference to Sir Samuel Morland.

²⁶¹ Davis, *Ibid.*, pp. 19–21.

declare: “The rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the foundation of the Church of England.”²⁶²

THE LOLLARDS AND WYCLIFFITES (14TH–15TH CENTURIES)

The Lollard movement (1315–1400s) received its name either from Walter Lollard, a Waldense barb who had migrated from Holland, or Walter received his name from the movement (note this principle with almost every leader, e.g., Montanus, Novatian, Donatus, Waldo). The term “Lollard” possesses several possibilities: a term of reproach of Belgic origin; a Latin term from *lolium*, “tare,” “Babler, mutterer, mumblor,” or a term from the Dutch, “lullen,” to sing in a low tone (hence, the ME, “lullaby,” to lull to sleep with a soft song).

NOTE: Many of these barbs, being peddlers, tradesmen, artisans, or traveling minstrels, would ply their trade and also preach, or witness in a quiet manner when opportunity permitted. Their wares often included tracts and portions of Scripture; their songs contained Divine and Gospel truth; and their conversations were pointed to evangelize.

Walter Lollard, an eloquent preacher, came into England declaring the gospel until he was burned in 1320. His influence was so great that the King, at war in Ireland, was immediately recalled and counter-measures taken according to the gentle ways of the Constaninian principle—sword and fire.

This was no false alarm, for one of their historians, a contemporary, declared that “more than half the people of England” had become followers of Lollard and Wycliffe before the end of the century! Evidently, the remnants of primitive Christianity, gaining boldness with the new movement, were encouraged to openly make a stand for truth. Also it must be remembered that among many of the foreigners in England were those who secretly maintained the New Testament pattern. These Lollards, being one with the Waldenses in doctrine and related through the preaching of Walter, were New Testament in principle.

After Walter Lollard, there arose the great British “Morning Star of the Reformation,” John Wycliffe (1319–1384). He was a priest and scholar in the Romish church, but advanced into much New Testament truth before he died. He began to maintain that the Scriptures were the only rule of faith and practice, a more primitive concept of the church; he denied that infants would be damned without baptism; he stated that baptism without personal faith signified nothing; finally, he denied the power of the pope. Some thirty years after his death, at the Council of Constance (1415–1418), he was condemned, his bones exhumed and burned and his ashes scattered into the river Swift. Wycliffe lived and died in the Romish Church, but his followers and those known formerly as Lollards took his name and doctrine. The latter lead them to the fullness of New Testament Christianity. The historian Neal, no friend of the Baptists, wrote:

If Wycliffe himself did not pursue the consequences of his own doctrine so far, yet many of his followers did, and were made Baptists, by it....All our historians agree in affirming that the doctrine of Wycliffe spread very extensively throughout

²⁶² Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 12, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

the country; inasmuch that according to Knighton, a contemporary historian, 'More than half of the people of England embraced them and became his followers.'²⁶³

The resurgence of New Testament Christianity into the open in Britain could no longer remain completely hidden, and continued until the Protestant Reformation. Acknowledges Mosheim: "The Wyclifites, though obliged to keep concealed, had not been exterminated by one hundred and fifty years of persecution."²⁶⁴ These Lollards denied infant baptism and all the other traditions of Rome and adhered to the principles of primitive Christianity after the New Testament pattern.

There is a recorded and documented history of a baptized congregation in the vicinity of Longworth, England, which antedated Wycliffe and had a continuous history until the 1930s.²⁶⁵

For further Study, see also: Armitage, pp. 226–231; Benedict, pp. 53, 3021 305–309, 343–346; Broadbent, pp. 43–46, 117–123; Christian, pp. 171–188; Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, II, pp. i–xlv; Cramp, pp. 116122, 142–144; Davis, pp. 1–21; B. Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, I, pp. 1–16; Jarrell, pp. 7–346, 360–371, 472–479; Orchard, pp. 332–333; J. Davis *History of the Welsh Baptists*.

THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN AND HUSSITES (15TH CENTURY)

Bohemia, now known as Czechoslovakia, is a part of the Black forest and mountainous region of East-central Europe. This vast, secluded region had afforded refuge for dissenters ever since the Boii fled from the Roman yoke in pre-Christian times, hence the name Bohemia.

The history of Christianity in Bohemia dates back to very early times. The Apostle Paul preached in the area of Llyricum i.e., on the borders of the slavic people of the first century. Evidence reveals that Christianity entered this area in the first and second centuries. In the first few centuries, there is little definite information concerning the advance of primitive Christianity in Bohemia, although some of the Vaudois, migrating from the Moorish invasion of Spain and France, evidently settled in this region (711–732). In the eighth and ninth centuries– the Paulicians or Bogomili came into this region under the Theadoric persecution (842) and later upheavals (i.e., the 970 migration into Thrace and into Europe and the later persecutions under both Byzantium and Rome, in the 11th–13th centuries). Gibbon, the historian, maintained that, "They affected an entrance into Europe by the German Caravans."²⁶⁶ Albigenses entered this region during their dispersions from France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

From the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, the Bohemian Brethren, as they were known, maintained close fellowship and fraternal ties with the other New Testament groups on the Continent, especially the Waldenses. Their country afforded a refuge and their nobility became their patrons and protectors because of their educational system and the

²⁶³ Neal's *History of the Puritans*, III, pp. 329–330.

²⁶⁴ Mosheim, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 187.

²⁶⁵ John Stanley, *The Church in the Hop Garden*. London: The Kingsgate Press, n.d. 261 pp.

²⁶⁶ Gibbon, *Fall and Decline of the Roman Empire*, c. 54, as quoted by Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

tutoring of the nobility's children. Thus, there must have been a constant stream of refugees into Bohemia during times of Inquisitorial trials. Peter Waldo spent his final years preaching among these Brethren. This antecedent influence must have had its strong effect upon the later thinking of Jerome and John Huss.

The influence of Wycliffe and Huss was great. The writings of Wycliffe were brought into Bohemia from various possible sources. Wycliffe was tutor and close friend of Richard II, King of England, whose wife was Anne of Bohemia. Through this relationship, many students from Bohemia came to study in England at the University of Oxford. Perhaps by personal influence through Anne, but very evidently through the expelled students (one of whom was Jerome of Prague, great leader and martyr in the movement), the writings and influence of Wycliffe reached Bohemia and John Huss at the University of Prague.

John Huss adopted many of Wycliffe's doctrines and New Testament principles, although actually he, like Wycliffe before him, never willfully left the Romish Church. Huss taught and preached these doctrines and was subsequently condemned at the Council of Constance in 1415 and burned for heresy. Jerome was later also burned. However, the "Hussite" movement grew until the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. There is evidence that the Bohemian Brethren (as the Lollards in England were identified with and joined to the Wyclifites) became identified with the Hussite movement until they were eventually one entity. This group applied to the Waldenses for ordination of their ministers and held a constant and close relationship, holding conferences and correspondence on a regular basis. Evidently, they, like the Wyclifites, went far beyond their leader, and became Baptists (and most probably under the influence of the Bohemian Brethren), as noted by Erasmus:

The Hussites renounce all rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church; they ridicule our doctrine and practice in both sacraments (i.e., they partook of both bread and wine, contrary to Romish practice, which excluded the laity from the cup); they deny orders and elect officers from among the laity; they receive no other rule than the Bible; they admit none into their communion until they are dipped in water, or baptized; and they reckon one another without distinction in rank to be called brothers and sisters.²⁶⁷

Thus, there existed in the region of Bohemia from the earliest times, a witness and testimony for New Testament truth. These churches were New Testament churches.

For further Study, see also Armitage, pp. 316–321; Benedict, pp. 53–55, 67; Broadbent, pp. 123–129; Christian, I, p. 94; Cramp; p. 122; Ford, pp. 32–35; Orchard, pp. 229–247.

SUMMARY

The witness of history, even on the part of Romish and Protestant writers, confirms the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ that His church would continue to exist. From the Apostolic days to the Protestant Reformation, there existed New Testament believers and churches. These were not a small and insignificant remnant, but could be numbered at any one time in the hundreds of thousands! The evidence is overwhelming that this promise was not fulfilled through apostate Romish religion, but through multitudes of believers and churches who had earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

²⁶⁷ Erasmus, as quoted by both Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 94, and Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 238.

Not only did these various groups hold to the essentials of New Testament truth (i.e., salvation by grace, believer's baptism by immersion and freedom of conscience or soul liberty), but also—in obedience to the New Testament—were very consistent in other areas of truth concerning the Lord's Supper and discipline, the Scriptures as the sole authority, and the simplicity of primitive church polity. Most of these groups (e.g., the Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses) held, to a certain extent, a predestinarian view. Mezeray, the French historian, declared, "However various their names, they may be reduced to two, that is the Albigenses and the Vaudois, and these two held almost the same opinions as those we call Calvinists."²⁶⁸

A. A. Hodge, the illustrious Princeton and Presbyterian theologian, wrote that: "The martyrology of Calvinism is preeminent in the history of the entire church."²⁶⁹ "The Waldenses, of whom were the slaughtered saints, whose "bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold...were all Calvinists."²⁷⁰ "The Lollards, another name for the Waldenses, the followers of Wycliffe, in the fourteenth century, were all of the general school of St. Augustine."²⁷¹

The ancient Waldensian Confessions contained statements favoring the scriptural truths of election and predestination. Thus is the lineage traced of New Testament truth, a trail of blood and suffering, of faithfulness to the Lord of the church and to the Word of God. New Testament Church perpetuity is a great and glorious monument to the free and sovereign grace of a faithful God!

CHAPTER XXI

THE AGE OF RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION 1453–1648

The age of Renaissance and Reformation extends from the Fall of Constantinople (1453) to the Peace of Westphalia (1648). "Renaissance" literally denotes "rebirth," and describes the rebirth of culture beginning in Italy and spreading throughout all Europe (1350–1650). It marked in many ways a departure from Medieval Scholasticism and assumed a world-and-life view apart from the theology of Rome. It marked the beginning of a secularized culture. At the Fall of Constantinople, many Byzantine scholars fled to the West from the tide of Islam and the Turks. These brought with them many Greek manuscripts and greatly furthered the literary progression in the study of Greek and Hebrew. (The Scholasticism of the Middle Ages with its foundation in the elements of Greek philosophy and Aristotelian logic had anticipated this trend). This ultimately brought the Greek Testament into prominence, gradually leading many to see some of the inherent distinctions between the Romish ecclesiastical system and the truth of Scriptures. The invention of printing likewise furthered the spread of literature and learning.

During the One Hundred Years War between England and France (1353–1453), there grew a spirit of nationalism throughout Europe, further eroding Roman power. Within the Romish system itself, there were attempts at reform. Thus, a religious, cultural and

²⁶⁸ Mezeray, *French History*, p. 278, quoted by Orchard, *Op. cit.* 192.

²⁶⁹ A. A. Hodge, *Johnson's Encyclopaedia*, I, 733, as quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

academic foment produced the necessary atmosphere for the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Throughout Europe in the early part of the sixteenth century, various Reformers began preaching a message that was essentially aimed at the corruptions of the Romish Church. Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenburg Cathedral in 1517 (written in Latin, not for the common people, but for scholars to consider and debate academically). These theses concerned corruptions and the sale of indulgences. Luther did not intend to leave the Romish system, and the process was slow and painful. After several years of debates, accusations and the publication of one hundred and fifty antitheses (by a rival university professor, Conrad Wimpina, who said Luther was against the pope himself and the whole Romish system), Luther finally arrived at a full perception of the enormity of the situation and began a distinct departure from Rome.²⁷² Other Reformers also began to preach against the corruptions of Rome and the Protestant Reformation moved throughout Europe. Some of the greatest of the Protestant Reformers were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Farel, Beza, Bullinger, Melancthon, Knox, Cramner and Latimer.

The greatest religious movement post-dating the early Protestant Reformation was the great Puritan era in England, where the principles of the Reformation were worked out in biblical exposition and subsequent application in the life of the people (c. 1560–1690).

After various wars, political maneuvers and intrigue, the lines were drawn in Europe between the Protestants and the Romanists at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

CHRONOLOGY

This relatively brief time-span of roughly two centuries witnessed the greatest transformation in Western Civilization and Christendom since the Apostolic Age.

SEVEN MAJOR ISSUES, INCIDENTS OR MOVEMENTS THAT CHARACTERIZE THIS AGE

1. The Northern Renaissance, or rebirth of classical learning, culture, science, Greek philosophy and a necessary change in the world-and-life view. The Northern Renaissance began over a century after the Southern or Italian Renaissance. The Northern was more conservative and religious, while the Southern was more secular, humanistic and pagan-oriented. The Northern Renaissance provided an intellectual and cultural climate that questioned Romish dogma, favored self-expression, religious independence and a study of the Scriptures in the original languages.
2. The Protestant Reformation, which revived the essential doctrines of the sufficiency of Scripture (*Sola Scriptura*) and salvation by grace, while rejecting the sacerdotal system and Papal hierarchy of Rome. Ecclesiastically, Protestantism did not fully return to the New Testament pattern, but eventually established in most instances a rival state-church system [a *neo-Constantinianism*]. One of the great positive influences of the Protestant

²⁷² See M. D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation at the Time of Martin Luther*, which carefully traces this transitional period of Luther's life; also see D'Aubigne, *The Life and Times of Martin Luther*.

Reformation was the formulation of the great Evangelical or Reformed Confessions of Faith.

3. The Counter-Reformation of the Romish Church sought to oppose and stop the Protestant Reformation.
4. The rise of Puritanism in Britain, which gave to the British Isles the most dynamic and practical form of Protestantism in Western Civilization.
5. The defeat of the Spanish Armada, which signaled the decline of the Spanish and Catholic mastery of the seas and marked the beginnings of the expansion of the British Empire with its Protestantism.
6. The Remonstrance or Arminian controversy of the early seventeenth century led to a definitive statement of Reformed doctrine at the Synod of Dort.
7. The Thirty Years' War ended with the Peace of Westphalia and determined the final boundaries of Catholic and Protestant Europe.

OUTLINE

I. THE RENAISSANCE (1300–1550)

A. THE SOUTHERN OR ITALIAN RENAISSANCE (1300–1450)

B. THE NORTHERN RENAISSANCE (1450–1550)

II. THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517–1648)

A. PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS AT RELIGIOUS REFORM (1350–)

B. BEGINNINGS OF REFORMATION IN EUROPE (1517–)

C. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC COUNTER-REFORMATION (1542–1563)

D. THE RISE OF PURITANISM IN BRITAIN (1560–1662)

E. THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA (1588)

F. THE REMONSTRANCE OR ARMINIAN CONTROVERSY (1609–1619)

G. THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR AND PEACE OF WESTPHALIA (1618–1648)

1453–1500 AD

The era of the Italian or the southern Renaissance (1300–1450)

The era of the northern Renaissance (1450–1550)²⁷³

The fall of Constantinople (1453)

End of 100 Years' War (1337–1453)

Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455)

²⁷³ The Renaissance or “re-birth” began in the thirteenth century in Italy (1300–1450). Note Chronological Chart IV for information of that era. The Southern or Italian Renaissance was not of a religious character, but the northern Renaissance (1450–1550) reflected more of a religious influence and became the precursor of the Protestant Reformation.

Pope Calixtus (1455–1458)

Many Waldenses (“Anabaptists”) put to death by papists at Eichstaedt in Germany (1457)

A church practicing Baptist principles established at Chesterton, England (1457)

Pope Pius II (1458–1464)

Renewal of civil war in England (1459)

Pope Paul II (1464–1471)

First printed music (1465)

Laurence Valla (Waldense) writes against Romish dogma & defends the faith of the Gospel: banished to Naples, Italy (1465)

Unity of the Brotherhood (Taborites) establishes a separate church in Bohemia and joins with the Waldenses (1467)

Johann Gutenberg (Printer, c.1396–1468)

George Morgenstern writes & teaches against the errors of popery (1470)

Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484)

A general persecution for the extermination of Bohemian Brethren or Waldenses: Stephen (A Waldensian elder) burned for his faith at Vienna (1471)

Stephen Brulifer (a theologian) maintains that justification by works is false (1471)

D.V.P. Groningensis exposes the errors of Rome (1474)

Union of Castile & Aragon: Beginning of Spanish State (1479)

University of Copenhagen founded (1479)

John de Wesalia teaches against Romish dogma & practice: burned as a heretic (1470–1479)

Spanish Inquisition against converted Jews (1480)

Renewal of the Spanish Inquisition under Church & State (1481)

Pope Innocent VIII (1484–1492)

Papal Bull *Summis desiderantes* against witchcraft (1484)

Battle of Bosworth: Start of the Tudor dynasty in England (1485–1603)

Spanish take Malaga from Arabs (1487)

Pope Innocent VIII appoints Albert Cataneo to exterminate the Waldenses (1488)

Waldensian Crusade follows (1488–1489)

Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503)

Columbus discovers the Western world (1492)

Spanish conquest of Granada: end of Moorish kingdom (1492)

English invade France: Peace of Etaples (1492)

Turks defeat Hungarian forces at the Save River (1492)

A new Inquisition in Spain against Waldenses, Albigenses, Jews, Saracens & Mohammedans (1492–1501)

Pope Alexander VI: Papal Bull *Inter cetera divina*, dividing the New World between Spain and Portugal (1493)

Columbus makes second voyage to New World (1493)

Treaty of Tordesillas: Spain & Portugal divide the New World (1494)

An aged widow burned at Smithfield for holding the doctrines of Wycliffe & rejecting infant baptism (1494)

Pope Alexander VI forms Holy League to defeat French in Italy: League defeated and disbanded (1495)

Savonarola (Bohemian Reformer) begins to preach the Gospel: Excommunicated from Romish Church (1497)

John Colet begins to teach the Scriptures in St. Paul's Cathedral, London (1497)

Savonarola burned for his faith (1452–1498)

Columbus makes third voyage to New World (1498)

Vasco da Gama discovers sea route to India (1498)

University of Alcala founded (1499)

Inquisition causes Moorish revolt in Granada (1499–1500)

Paul Scriptoris teaches against the errors of Rome & holds to the supremacy of the Scriptures. Banished by Minorite monks (1499)

15th century evangelical groups existing apart from Rome: Albigenses, Bohemian Brethren, Hussites, Waldenses, Wycliffites. All known generically as “Anabaptists.”

1500–1600 AD

University of Valencia founded (1500)

Pope Alexander VI proclaims a Year of Jubilee (1500)

Diet of Augsburg establishes Council of Regency for administration of Holy Roman Empire: Germany divided into 6 regions (1500)

Papal Bull ordering the burning of books against authority of the Church (1501)

University at Wittenberg founded (1502)

The final voyage of Columbus (1502–1504)

Pope Julius II (1503–1513)

Selling of indulgences by Johann Tetzel (Dominican) in Germany (1506–1519)

A general persecution of “Anabaptists” (Waldenses) in Hungary under Uladislaus (King of Bohemia) (1507)

Maximillian I assumes title of Emperor: Pope Julius II confirms that the German king becomes automatically Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1508)

A general persecution of “Anabaptists” (Waldenses) in the Principality of Meckleburg near Mooren (1509)

Bernhard Liblinensis (Waldense) teaches & writes against popery (1510)

Fifth Lateran Council: Immortality of the soul a dogma of the Romish Church (1512–1517)

Copernicus: Commentariolus: Earth & planets revolve about the sun (1512)

Amerigo Vespucci (orig. of name “America,” Explorer & geographer, 1451–1512)

Pope Leo X (1513–1521)

Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovers Pacific Ocean (1513)

William Budaeus (scholar) writes against the errors & abuses of popery (1513)

Fifth Lateran Council decree: *De impressione librorum* forbids printing books without Church permission (1515)

Concordat of Bologna between Francis I & Pope Leo X: France secures internal independence of church appointments (1516)

The Greek Testament of Erasmus (1516)

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION 1517 AD–

Martin Luther posts his 95 theses at Wittenberg to protest the selling of indulgences (1517)²⁷⁴

150 Antitheses against Luther by Conrad Wimpina (1517)²⁷⁵

Peace of London: between England, France & Spain devised by Cardinal Wolsey (1518)

Luther summoned to Diet of Augsburg: refuses to recant (1518)

Luther debates Johann Eck: questions the infallibility of the Pope (1519)

Swiss Reformation begins with preaching of Zwingli at Zurich (1519)

Birth of Theodore Beza (Reformer, 1519)

Leonardo da Vinci (Genius of Renaissance, 1452–1519)

Cortez begins conquest of Mexico & the Aztecs: Brings first horses (Spanish Arabians) to America (1519–1521)

Edict of the Church of Rome in the Netherlands against all Lutherans, Zwinglians & “Anabaptists” (1521)

Crew of Magellan circumnavigate the world (1519–1522)²⁷⁶

Munzerite rebellion in Germany (1520–1525)²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ For a list of the Theses, Cf. D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, I, pp. 97–98.

²⁷⁵ The *150 Antitheses* of Conrad Wimpina. Luther drew up his 95 theses to protest the sale of indulgences. The theses of Tetzel in reply and the reply of Wimpina revealed to Luther the true and ultimate nature of his protest and made him bold to oppose Papal authority . *Ibid.*, pp. 97–111.

²⁷⁶ Magellan himself was killed in the Philippines. His crew returned as the first men to circumnavigate the world.

²⁷⁷ It has been alleged that the Baptists began with Thomas Munzer and the Peasants' revolt. This is false for two reasons: First, the Anabaptists existed previously, and second, the

	Luther excommunicated & declared a heretic (<i>Bull Exsurge</i>). Luther publicly burns the bull (1520)
Plague in Europe (1520–)	
Turkish invasion of Hungary (1521)	
	Pope Leo X confers title “Defender of the Faith” on Henry VIII for his <i>Assertio septem sacramentorum</i> against Luther (1521)
	Luther, at the Diet of Worms, is banned from the Holy Roman Empire. Hidden at Wartburg, he translates the Bible into the German vernacular (1521–1522)
	Pope Hadrian VI (1522–1523)
	Polyglot Bible in Latin, Greek, Hebrew & Aramaic published by University of Alcalá (1522)
	Zwickau Prophets (“Anabaptists”) at Wittenburg (1521–1522)
	LeFevre’s French New Testament published (1522)
	Pope Clement VII (1523–1534)
	Hans Koch & Leonard Meyster (German “Anabaptists”) martyred at Augsburg (1524)
	Caspar Tauber (“Anabaptist”) martyred for his faith at Vienna (1524)
Peasant revolt in Germany (1524–1525)	
	Colloquy of Ratisbon: The effort of Charles V to reconcile Catholics & Lutherans (1524–1541)
	Martyrdom of Protestants in Germany (1524)
	King Christian orders the New Testament published in Danish (1524)
	First German hymnbook (1524)
Protestant Princes meet against Emperor Charles V at Ulm (1524)	

reasons are given in the 12 Articles or grievances of the Peasants. These, while containing some New Testament principles, were the culmination of a series of confrontations between the nobility and lower classes.

Decree of Reformed Church (Zwinglian) at Zurich: Persecution of the “Anabaptists” (1525)²⁷⁸

Tyndale’s English New Testament (1525)

Frederick III (The Wise, Elector of Saxony, protector of Luther, 1463–1525)

Peasant’s revolt in Germany suppressed (1525)

Execution of Thomas Munzer (1525)

Swiss pastors before the Council of 200 demand an end to the Mass & confessional (1525)

William Farel, Reformer, goes to Switzerland (1526)

Pastor Martin sent by Waldenses to Germany to inquire re the Reformation (1526)

“Anabaptists” settle in Moravia as “Moravian Brethren” (1526)

Zwingli & Council of Zurich: “Anabaptists” to be drowned (1526)

Conrad Grebel, Swiss “Anabaptist” leader. Imprisoned, dies (c.1495–1526)

Imperial troops plunder Rome, Pope Clement VII imprisoned, “The End of the Renaissance” (1527)

Michael Satler (German “Anabaptist” martyr, 1527)

Wolfgang Ulimann & 2 others (“Anabaptists”) burned at Constance (1527)

Conversion of John Calvin (1527)

²⁷⁸ Both Romanists and Protestants called the Baptists “Anabaptists.” The Baptists denied this designation for two reasons: First, they declared that infant-sprinkling was not a valid baptism, and the only true baptism was the immersion of believers. Thus, they were not “re-baptizing” anyone. Second, Anabaptism was also associated with anarchy (Cf. Thomas Munzer and the Peasants Revolt, 1520–1525; John Leyden and the rebellion at Munster, 1535). Baptists were included in this charge because they were opposed to the State–Church concept and held to liberty of conscience and freedom of worship.

Synod of Lenezyca: restoration of the
Inquisition in Poland (1527)

Felix Manz, first “Anabaptist” martyred by
Protestants. Drowned at Zurich (c.1498–
1527)

George Wagner German “Anabaptist”
martyr (1527)

First Protestant University founded at
Marburg (1527)

Thomas Hermann & 67 other “Anabaptists”
martyred at Kitzbuehl (1527)

Balthasar Hubmaier (“Anabaptist” leader &
theologian) burned in Vienna & his wife
drowned (1485–1528)

Leonard Schoener & 70 others (German
“Anabaptists”) Martyred, 1528)

Hans Schlaeffer & Leonard Frick
 (“Anbaptists”) executed at Schwatz (1528)

Hans Pretle, Hans of Stotzingen, Thomas,
Balthasar, Dominicus, Hans Feierer & 8
others (“Anabaptists”) martyred (1528)

Vilgard & Caspar of Schoeneck
 (“Anabaptists”) martyred (1528)

18 “Anabaptists” burned at Salzburg (1528)

Georg Blaurock, “Anabaptist” preacher
burned in Moravia (c.1492–1529)

Hans Langmantel & 2 servants
 (“Anabaptists”) executed (1529)

Ludwig Hezter, “Anabaptist” martyr
beheaded (1529)

350 “Anabaptists” slaughtered at Alzey,
Germany (1529)

Second Diet of Spiers: Lutheran Princes protest the Catholic majority: named
“Protestants” (1529)

Charles V crowned Emperor of Holy Roman Emperor & King of Italy. Last Imperial
coronation by a Pope (1530)

Conrad Winkler (“Anabaptist”) drowned at
Zurich (1530)

The Augsburg Confession signed by Protestant Princes: The Schmalkald League formed against the Catholic forces (1530)

5 “Anabaptists” drowned in Rhine River (1530)

George Morel of the Waldenses meets the Swiss Reformers (1530)

Schism between Henry VIII and Pope: Henry VIII named Supreme Head of the Church of England (1531)

War in Switzerland between Protestant Zurich & Catholic Cantons (1531)

11 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1531)²⁷⁹

Ulrich Zwingli killed in battle (1484–1531)

Thomas Bilney burned in England (c.1495–1531)

Sicke Snyder (“Anabaptist” martyr): tortured & executed at Leeuwaerden (1531)

Some Waldenses meet with Protestant Synod at Chamforans: Enter the Reformed Churches (1532)²⁸⁰

12 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs & many others (1532)

Thomas Cranmer becomes Archbishop of Canterbury: Gives Henry VIII a divorce from Katherine of Aragon & sanctions marriage with Anne Boleyn (1533)

Henry VIII excommunicated by Pope Clement VII (1533)

3 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs & others (1533)

Pizarro conquers the Inca of Peru (1533)

Pope Paul III (1534–1549)

Persecution of Protestants in France (1534)

²⁷⁹ The Baptist martyrs (so-called “Anabaptists” by their persecutors) were numerous and often left unnamed. The recorded martyrs from 1530 on are listed by years. The persecution of Baptists continued both in Europe and in Britain until the late seventeenth century, with many suffering banishment or imprisonment. Many Baptist ministers died under the harsh conditions of imprisonment by Protestant governments.

²⁸⁰ This was the division between the “Old Waldenses,” who were “Anabaptists,” and those who aligned with the French Calvinists and were later identified as the Huguenots.

Francis I of France calls a Council at Aragon, Spain with a proposal to unite Protestants & Catholics (1534)

Ignatius Loyola founds Jesuit Order (1534)

24 recorded burnings of “Anabaptists” in England (1535–1536)

Olivetan’s French Bible published for Waldenses. Preface by John Calvin (1535)

Munster rebellion quelled: John of Leiden tortured to death (1535)²⁸¹

An Act of Parliament declares the authority of the Pope void in England (1536)

The Coverdale Bible (English) (1536)

First issue of Calvin’s Institutes (1536)

Desiderius Erasmus (Humanist, 1465–1536)

First Helvic (second Basle) Confession (1536)

William Tyndale burned (1494–1536)

Articles of Schmalcald (Lutheran, 1537)

Waldensian persecution in Italy (1537)

7 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs & others (1537)

21 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs & others (1538)

Wolfgang Brand–Hueber (German “Anabaptist” preacher & martyr, 1539)

31 English “Anabaptists” martyred in Holland (1539)

Great “Anabaptist” persecution in Austria (1539)

Parliament of Aix: France seeks to exterminate the Waldenses (1540)

John Knox leads the Reformation in Scotland (1541)

Coronado leads expedition across southwestern and central North America (1541)

²⁸¹ Some allege that the Baptists originated with the Munster Rebellion. The Munsterites “re–baptized” (by sprinkling) everyone who came to them. They also practiced infant sprinkling. These were radical anarchists. The name “Anabaptist” was associated with them to discredit the Anabaptist movement.

13 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs & others (1541)

The Counter–Reformation 1542–

Pope Paul III establishes the Inquisition in Rome (1542)

Act of English Parliament to make Bible reading lawful (1543)

Scottish Parliament makes Bible reading lawful (1543)

Pope Paul III issues *Index librorum prohibitorum* (1543)

Many “Anabaptist” martyrs at Rotterdam (1544)

Waldensian crusade by Romish armies (1545)

Council of Trent: Reformation & Counter–Reformation (1545–1564)

Schmalcaldic League (Protestant Princes) (1546–1547). Civil war in Germany (Schmalcaldic War) between Charles V & Schmalcaldic League of Protestant Princes (1546)

Death of Martin Luther (1483–1546)

Henry VIII of England (1491–1547)

All images ordered removed from English Churches (1547)

12 “Anabaptists” burned in Holland (1549)

Calvin & Zwinglians: *Consensus Tigurinus* (agreement on Holy Communion, 1549)

47 “Anabaptists” martyred in Holland (1550)

Pope Julius III (1550–1555)

Joan of Kent (Boucher) (“Anabaptist”) burned by Latimer & Cranmer for denying that the humanity of Christ derived from Mary (1550)

19 “Anabaptists” martyred in Holland (1551)

University of Lima founded (1551)

21 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs in Holland (1552)

Sebastian Munzer (Biblical scholar & linguist, 1489–1552)

Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary”) Queen of England: Romanism restored (1553–1558)²⁸²

9 “Anabaptists” martyred in Holland (1553)

Latimer & Ridley (English Reformers) burned at Oxford (1554)

Peace of Augsburg: Lutherans & Catholics share equal rights (1555)

Bishop John Hooper (English Reformer) burned at Oxford (1555)

10 “Anabaptists” martyred in Holland (1555)

John Rogers (English Reformer) burned at Oxford (1555)

John Bradford (English Reformer) burned (1555)

Pope Marcellus II (1555)

Pope Paul IV (1555–1559)

Charles V abdicates: Ferdinand I, Emperor of Holy Roman Empire, Philip II, King of Spain (1556)

Thomas Cranmer (English Reformer) burned (1489–1556)

Edict of Philip II of Spain against the “Anabaptists” of the Netherlands: severe persecution (1556)

23 “Anabaptists” martyred in Netherlands (1557)

60 “Anabaptists” (& others) martyred in Netherlands (1558)

Queen Mary succeeded by Elizabeth I: Protestantism restored in England (1559–1603)
University of Geneva founded (1559)

59 “Anabaptists” martyred in Netherlands (1559)

²⁸² During the reign of “Bloody Mary” and the revival of popery in England, many were martyred for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Complete accounts may be found in Thieleman J. Van Braught, *Martyrs’ Mirror* and John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*.

Act of Uniformity in England demands one form of worship: Anglican (1559)

Church of Scotland founded (1560)

24 “Anabaptists” martyred in Netherlands (1560)

The rise of Puritanism in England: A system of Biblical theology, practical living & theocratic politics (1560–1660)

Persecution of the Waldenses in Calabria, Italy (1560)

Martyrdom of John Paschale (Waldensian pastor) by the Inquisition (1560)

Edict of Orleans ends persecution of the Huguenots. Some flee to England (1561)

Death of Menno Simons. Founder of the Mennonites (a sect of the “Anabaptists”) (1496–1561)

Belgic Confession of Faith (1561)

30 “Anabaptists” martyred in Netherlands (1561)

Peace of Cavour: Waldense victory over Duke of Savoy (1561)

Third session of the Council of Trent (1562–1563)

26 “Anabaptists” recorded martyred (1562)

Outbreak of plague in Europe (1562–1563)

Massacre of Huguenots (1562)

Peace of Ambrose: Ends First War of Religion in France: Huguenots granted limited toleration (1563)

John Fox (author): Acts & Monuments of the Martyrs (1563)

Heidelberg (Palatinate) Catechism (1563)

17 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1563)

Council of Trent ends (1545–1563)

19 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1564)

Death of John Calvin (1509–1564)

4 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1565)
Pope Pius V (1566–1572)

Nostradamus (Astrologer, 1503–1566)

28 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1567)
25 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1568)
Archbishop Parker: The Bishop’s Bible
printed & issued in England (1568)
54 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1569)
Huguenots gain amnesty (1570)
Consensus of Sendomir: Calvinists,
Lutherans & Moravian Brethren unite
against the Jesuits (1570)
44 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1570)
Reconciliation between Charles IX of
France & the Huguenots (1571)
61 recorded “Anabaptists” martyred (1571)
St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of the
Huguenots in Paris: Fourth War of Religion
begins in France (1572)
27 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1572)
Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585)
Death of John Knox (1572)
Fourth War of Religion ends: Huguenots
granted amnesty (1573)
16 (& others) recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs
(1573)
Fifth War of Religion: (1574–1576)
Hubert Languet: *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*,
the political theories of the Huguenots.
(With the later *Lex rex* by Samuel
Rutherford) One of the two most influential
political works of this era concerning human
government (1574)
George Major (Lutheran Theologian, 1502–
1574)

University of Berlin founded (1574)

60 recorded “Anabaptist” martyrs (1574)

University of Leiden founded by William of Orange (1575)

John Pieters & Henry Terwoort
("Anabaptists") burned at Smithfield: 27
other recorded martyrs (1575)

Death of Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575)

University of Warsaw founded (1576)

14 recorded ("...and others...")
"Anabaptist" martyrs (1576)

Sixth War of Religion in France: Ends with
Peace of Bergerac (1577)

Formula of Concord (Lutheran, 1577)

Seventh War of Religion (1580)

Francis Drake returns to England from circumnavigating the world (1580)

National Covenant: James VI of Scotland
signs the Second Scottish Confession of
Faith (1581)

Pope Gregory XIII attempts to reconcile
Roman Catholic & Greek Orthodox
Churches (1581)

University of Edinburgh founded (1582)

George Buchanan (Scottish Humanist,
theologian and tutor of James I of England,
& author of *De jure Regni apud Scotos*,
1506–1582)

Spanish (Throgmorton) plot for invasion of England discovered (1583)

Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590)

Mary, Queen of Scots (Catholic) executed by English Parliament (Protestant) (1542–
1587)

Spain plans to send an armada against England. Pope Sixtus V promises financial aid. He
proclaims a Catholic crusade for the invasion of England (1587)

Defeat of the first, or "Invincible" Spanish Armada (by the English (1588))²⁸³

²⁸³ The "Invincible Armada" of Spain was sent to conquer England, exterminate English Protestantism and return the country to the fold of Rome. The Armada was in two forces. The first was prepared in Spain under the supervision of King Philip II, with 130 ships and a total of over 30,000 men. The second force was prepared in the Netherlands under the Duke of Parma with 28 war ships, 270 smaller vessels and 209 regiments of various nationalities. The storms and English destroyed the first force; the Dutch cut off the second from access to the open channel. This defeat signaled the ultimate demise of Spanish sea superiority and the spread of Catholicism through Spanish missionaries, and the rise of British Protestantism through the spread of the British Empire.

William Morgan: The first Welsh translation of the Bible (1588)
 Pope Urban VII (1590)
 Pope Gregory XIV (1590–1591)
 Trinity College, Dublin, founded by Elizabeth I (1591)
 Pope Innocent IX (1591)
 Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605)
 Plague in London kills thousands (1592–1593)
 Second Edict of St. Germain–en–Laye grants Huguenots freedom of worship (1594)
 Warburton, pastor of “Anabaptist” church at Hill Cliffe, Cheshire, England (d. 1594)
 Second Catholic Spanish Armada sails for England: scattered by storms (1597)
 Counter–Reformation effected in Upper Austria by force (1597)
 Edict of Nantes: Huguenots granted freedom of worship (revoked in 1685) (1598)
 James VI of Scotland: *Basilikon doron*, or “Divine Right of Kings” (1599)
 “Anabaptist” church at Crowle, Lincolnshire, England (1599)

1600–1648 AD

Death of Elizabeth I, accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England (1603)
 Puritan ministers ejected from churches (1604)²⁸⁴
 Faustus Socinius (founder of Socinianism) (1539–1604)
 Arminian (semi–Pelagianism) Controversy (1604–1619)
 Pope Leo XI (1605)
 Pope Paul V (1605–1621)
 Founding of Jamestown: First English settlement in America (1607)

²⁸⁴ The State Church of England was Anglican, or Anglo–Catholic. With any change in politics, the religious climate was always changed. This ejection of Puritan ministers should *not* be confused with “The Great Ejection” of 1662 when 2,000 Puritan, Independent and Baptist ministers were ejected from their pulpits under the reign of Charles II.

Freedom of Religion in Bohemia under Emperor Rudolf II (1609)

Five Points of the Remonstrance
(Arminians) (1610)

Dissolution of English Parliament by James I (1611)

King James (Authorized) Version of the
Bible published (1611)

Last recorded burning of “heretics” in
England: Edward Wightman, a Baptist
(1612)

Thomas Helwys & first recorded General
(Arminian) Baptist church in England
(1612)

Thomas Helwys: *A Short Declaration of the
Mystery of Iniquity*, the first claim for
freedom of worship & religion in the
English language (1612)

Leonard Busher, a Baptist & member of
Helwys’ church, publishes two treatises on
religious freedom (1614, 1615)

University of Groningen, Holland, founded (1614)

Founding of the Rosicrucians (an occult sect) (1616)

Synod of Dordt: “The 5 points of
Calvinism” (Canons of Dordt) drawn up to
counter the Protestant Remonstrance (i.e.,
“The 5 points of Arminianism”) (1618–
1619)

Revolt at Prague: Beginning of 30 Years’ War between Catholics and Protestants (1618–
1648)

5 Articles of Perth: Episcopacy forced upon
Scotland by James VI: leads to National
Covenant of 1638 (1618)

Mayflower sails to America: Pilgrim Fathers (Separatists or Congregationalists) establish
Plymouth Colony, Mass. (1620)

Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623)

Society for the Propagation of the Faith &
the Extirpation of Heretics established by
Pope Gregory XV (1621)

Huguenot rebellion against Louis XIII: ends with Treaty of Montpellier (1622)

Papal Chancellery adopts Jan. 1 as beginning of year (until then the year began on March 25)

Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644)

Cardinal Richilieu attacks the Huguenots (1625)

Peace of La Rochelle between Huguenots & French Crown (1626)

Huguenot uprising defeated: Peace of Alais (1627–1629)

German Protestant Princes ally with Gustavus Adolphus against Catholic forces under Tilly: Tilly defeated (1631–1632)

John Spilsbury & first recorded Particular (Calvinistic) Baptist church in England (1633) (Some contend for the date of 1638)

Robert Browne (Founder of English Congregationalism, c.1553–1633)

Harvard College founded (1636)

Religious persecution in New England leads to founding of colonies of Rhode Island (Roger Williams) & Connecticut (1635–1636)

Torture abolished in England (1638)

Anne Hutchinson (Religious dissident, founds a colony in Rhode Island, 1638)

First Baptist church in America (Calvinistic): Newport, Rhode Island. Pastor: John Clarke (1638)²⁸⁵

Hanserd Knollys & (Calvinistic) Baptist church at Dover (Piscataway), new Hampshire (1638)

The church of Roger Williams (existed 4 months) (1639)

English civil war begins between Charles I & Puritans. 12 years of struggle (1641–1652)

Galileo Galilei (Scientist, 1564–1642)

²⁸⁵ The first Baptist Church in America was *not* founded by Roger Williams. His religious group originated about 1639 and dissolved within four months. Williams never joined another church, but became a “seeker,” although he was an acquaintance of Dr. John Clarke, pastor of the Baptist Church at Newport, R.I. The congregations ministered by Dr. Clarke and Hanserd Knollys both existed prior to the Williams’ attempt to plant a church.

Solemn League & Covenant (to secure a free Parliament & Church) signed in Scotland (1643)

Westminster Assembly of Divines meet (1643–1649)²⁸⁶

Pope Innocent X (1644–1655)

Samuel Rutherford: *Lex Rex* on the elective nature of the monarchy (1644)

Westminster Confession of Faith drawn up in England (1643–1647)

First London Baptist Confession of Faith (1644, 1646)²⁸⁷

Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms (1647)

First Ordinance of the Puritan (Long) Parliament forbidding any preaching by any but properly ordained Reformed ministers (against Independent Dissenters & Baptists, 1645)²⁸⁸

Second Ordinance of the Puritan Parliament forbidding Independent & Baptist ministries (1646)

²⁸⁶ The Westminster Assembly of Divines met from 1643 to 1649. The Assembly was composed of 121 divines (the best qualified ministers and theologians of Britain) and 30 lay-assessors (10 Lords and 20 commoners) who had an equal liberty of debating and voting with the Divines. Members included such notable Puritan Divines as Dr. William Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Assembly, William Bridge, Anthony Burgess, Jeremiah Burroughs, Edmund Calamy, Joseph Caryl, Thomas Goodwin, William Gouge, John Lightfoot, Dr. James Ussher and Samuel Rutherford.

²⁸⁷ The *First London Baptist Confession* was originally written in 1643 and signed by 16 Calvinistic Baptist ministers from 7 churches. (By 1643 The Particular—Regular or Calvinistic—Baptist churches in London numbered 7; the General—Arminian—Baptist churches numbered 39). The enlarged and revised editions were issued in 1644 and 1646. This Confession was written both for a defence of the Baptist position against slander and misrepresentation (“Anabaptists” were considered anarchists) and for a positive declaration of truth. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterians was first printed on December 7, 1646 and subsequently published in 1647. *The First London Baptist Confession* then antedated the *Westminster Confession* and was thus unaffected by it. The *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* was written in 1677 and published in 1689. It is a “Baptist” version of the Westminster Confession. The major and most well-known subsequent Baptist Confessions—the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession* (1742) and the *New Hampshire Baptist Confession* (1833)—were both affected to a significant degree by the Westminster Confession.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁸ The Puritan Parliament merely substituted Presbyterianism for Anglicanism and was hostile to all Independent and Baptist Dissenters. The Baptists suffered with heavy fines and imprisonment under the Puritan Parliament, the Commonwealth and Restoration (1643–1688). Some Baptist Divines debated and routed the leading Puritan Divines (eg., Baxter, Feately, etc.) for which they suffered at the hands of the civil authorities.

English Civil War: Charles I defeated & captured by Puritan forces under Oliver Cromwell (1648)

George Fox founds Society of Friends
(Quakers) (1648)

Third Ordinance by Puritan Parliament: Death penalty for heresy & blasphemy, Fines & imprisonment for Romish adherents, Independent & Baptist ministers (1648)

Peace of Westphalia: 30 Years' War ends: Protestant & Catholic regions fixed in Europe.
Peace condemned by Pope Innocent X in the bull *Zelo Domus Dei* (1648)

The various pre-Reformation groups apart from Rome either join with the Protestant Reformation, with the "Anabaptists" or the Baptists.

THE ANABAPTISTS OF THE REFORMATION ERA

At the dawn of the Protestant Reformation, thousands from the Black forest region welcomed Luther and the Protestant Reformers. These people, scattered over the whole of Europe, were known as "Anabaptists." They appeared in history developed, organized and in every country suddenly and simultaneously. Who were they? Whence was their origin? The answers to these questions concern four things: the significance of the name "Anabaptist," the doctrinal distinctives of these people, their origin and their relationship to the Protestant Reformers and Reformation.

First, what is the significance of the name "Anabaptist"? The name literally denotes "re-baptizer" (from the Greek ἀνά, up or again, and βαπτίζεῖν, to dip or immerse). It is noteworthy that this title had been used to designate every group holding to New Testament principles, apart from the Romish church, since the Montanists and Novatians. They were termed "Anabaptists" because they refused to acknowledge the infant baptism of the Romish system and the later Protestant Bodies as true baptism. As they adhered tenaciously to believer's baptism by immersion only, they could not recognize the infant rite. The name, of course, was a complete misnomer, as the "Anabaptists" did not recognize the baptism of infants and the Romanists and Protestants did not recognize the so-called "re-baptisms" of the "Anabaptists."

It is true that there were some classified as "Anabaptists" during the Reformation who practiced infant baptism, and some later practiced sprinkling, but the main body of the Anabaptists held tenaciously to the New Testament pattern. After the Munster Rebellion, which was erroneously charged to the Anabaptists, the term was associated with all that was evil: heresy, schisms, civil disobedience and anarchy, and all gross immorality. It is to be remembered, then, that the term was used very loosely, and as a term of derision.

Second, what were the doctrinal distinctives of these Anabaptists? Although there were some differences among them as to a community of goods, denial that any believer ought to hold a civil position or take an oath, the unlawfulness of war (i.e., "Peace witness" and refusal to bear arms), etc., they were generally agreed on the following points: (1) Salvation by grace as opposed to the ritualism (sacerdotalism) of Rome and the developing covenant theology of the Reformers, (2) Believers' baptism by immersion.

NOTE: The loose classification of many different groups and sects under the term “Anabaptist” has led to erroneous conclusions and a misrepresentation of the facts. The Manichae were classed as Anabaptists, although they bore no resemblance to these people except for a type of baptism. The Munsterites were also classed as Anabaptists, and they did re-baptize those within the city, but it was done by a paedobaptist minister who practiced the rite upon infants and all within that infamous “kingdom” attempt. Later Mennonites sprinkled in many churches, but the division between the Baptists and Anabaptists was even at that time in process.

(3) The Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. This was in contrast to Romish papal power and tradition, and also in contrast to the Protestant mentality that had been inherited from Rome. (4) A regenerate church membership. (5) The autonomy of each local assembly. They would not acknowledge the hierarchy of either Romish tradition or Protestant pragmatism. (6) Church discipline after the New Testament pattern for those whose lives were contrary to the gospel. This principle was impossible with any consistency in the sacralist societies of both Rome and the Protestants. (7) The obedience of all to proper state authority and civil government.

NOTE: On this Point, the Anabaptist were greatly misunderstood, for they would not acknowledge the Constantinian principle that the civil magistrate was an arm of the church. This led to serious and yet ridiculous charges of anarchism. This was reinforced as a result of the Munster rebellion for which the Anabaptists were erroneously held responsible.²⁸⁹

(8) Liberty of conscience in religious matters. These were New Testament distinctives that had characterized believers since Apostolic days.

Third, what was the origin of these people? How did they so quickly and mysteriously appear, developed and organized, so suddenly and simultaneously all over Europe and Britain at once, at the very dawn of the Protestant Reformation? Was there any relationship between these Anabaptists and former groups such as the Waldenses, Albigenes, Bohemian Brethren, Hussites, Wyclifites and others? There is great historical evidence that the Anabaptists of the Reformation era were but the continuation of these former groups, known at that time under a different, yet ancient generic name.

Henry C. Vedder, a Baptist (although himself very unfavorable to any scheme of church perpetuity), wrote:

...it is a curious and instructive fact that these Anabaptist churches were most numerous precisely where the Waldenses of a century or two previous had most flourished, and where their identity as Waldenses had been lost. That there was an intimate relation between the two movements, few doubt who have studied this period and its literature. The torch of truth was handed on from generation to generation, and though it often smouldered and was even apparently extinguished, it needed but a breath to blaze up again and give light to all mankind.²⁹⁰

...a moral certainly exists of a connection between the Swiss Anabaptists and their Waldensian and Petrobrusian predecessors, sustained by many significant facts. . . . Those who maintain that the Anabaptists originated with the Reformation have

²⁸⁹ For a complete discussion of this issue, see Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*.

²⁹⁰ Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists*, pp. 73–74.

difficult problems to solve; among others the rapidity with which the new leaven spread, and the wide territory that the Anabaptists so soon covered.

...abundant documentary proofs exist to show that they were numerous, widespread, and indefatigable; that their chief men were not inferior in learning and eloquence to any of the Reformers; that their teachings were scriptural, consistent and moderate....Another problem demanding solution is furnished by the fact that these Anabaptist churches were not gradually developed, but appear fully formed from the first—complete in polity, sound in doctrine, strict in discipline. It will be found impossible to account for these phenomena without an assumption of a long existing cause. Though the Anabaptist churches appear suddenly in the records of time...their roots are to be sought farther back.²⁹¹

Lest Baptists be charged with bias or lack of perception, the following quotes from Romish and Protestant historians (most of whom were opposed to the Baptists) should be considered. Note should be taken that several of these quotations are repeated from previous chapters.

John Lawrence von Mosheim, the “Father of Modern Church History,” and a Lutheran stated:

...the origin of...the Anabaptists...is lost in the remote depths of antiquity....Before the rise of Luther or Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists.²⁹²

Robert Barclay, a Quaker historian, declared:

...The rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that the Continent of Europe small, hidden societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the time of the Apostles.²⁹³

Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer (who, although at first associated with the Swiss Anabaptists and their leaders, afterward turned against them and shed their innocent blood with Constantinian fervor), declared: “The institution of the Anabaptists is no novelty, but for 1300 years has caused great trouble to the Church.”²⁹⁴ Broadbent, the Brethren Historian, comments on the historic transmission of doctrinal truth:

Those called Waldenses, or Anabaptists, and others of like character, were not reformers of the Roman Catholic Church, nor, afterwards, of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, Their origin was earlier and they carried on their primitive Bible teachings and practices from before, and then through the times of the rise and progress of those later-developed communions.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.

²⁹² Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, II, pp. 119–120. See also the note of Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 310–311.

²⁹³ Barclay, *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, pp. 11–12, as quoted by Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*, p.107.

²⁹⁴ As quoted by Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, p. 422.

²⁹⁵ E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, p. 283.

Dr. Ludwig Keller (Lutheran), the Royal Munster Archivist, and the greatest authority on the Munster Rebellion (having in his possession all documents and being well-studied in the Munster affair), wrote:

There were Baptists long before the Munster rebellion....A contemporary, who was not a Baptist has this testimony concerning the beginning of the movement: "The Anabaptist movement was so rapid that the presence of Baptist views was speedily discoverable in all parts of the land."....The more I examine the documents of that time, at my command, the more I am astonished at the extent of the diffusion of Anabaptist views, an extent of which no other investigator has any knowledge....Many Baptist Churches cannot be innumeraled for the reason that their existence was a profound secret....It is not to be doubted, also, that in the progress of scientific invention still further traces will be brought to light....Much rather can it be proved that in the lands mentioned Baptist churches existed for many decades and even centuries.²⁹⁶

Sebastian Frank, a contemporary historian (1531), noted the connection between the Bohemian Brethren and the Anabaptists: "The Picards in Bohemia are divided into two, or as some say, three parties, the large, the small, and very small, who hold in all things with the Anabaptists."²⁹⁷

Marsden, an English Puritan, wrote concerning the Baptists in England, that: "The Baptists were the most numerous, and for some time by far the most formidable opponents of the Church. They are said to have existed since the days of the Lollards, but their strength was more abroad."²⁹⁸

Goebel, a German Protestant historian, perceived the inherent connection between the Waldenses and the later Anabaptists: "Wherever in Germany before the Reformation, there were large bodies of Waldenses, there during the Reformation large bodies of Anabaptists sprang up."²⁹⁹

Cardinal Hosius, The Roman Catholic President of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), as previously noted in this work, admitted the presence, tenacity and perpetuity of New Testament believers as "Anabaptists" since the time of Constantine and their inherent connection with the Waldenses before them.³⁰⁰

As previously noted in this work, Dr. Ypeij, Professor of Theology at Groningen, and J. J. Dermout, personal chaplain to the King of Holland, testified to the antiquity of the Baptists, and placed them even before the Romish system.³⁰¹

Thus, there is abundant documented evidence that the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation era was but the contemporary expression of New Testament Christianity that

²⁹⁶ Keller, *Preussische Jahrbucher*, Sept., 1882, translated by Henry Burrage in *Bap. Quart. Rev.*, vol. 7, pp. 28–33, as quoted. by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 303–305.

²⁹⁷ Frank, as quoted by Armitage *Op. cit.*, p. 379.

²⁹⁸ Marsden, p. 144, as quoted by Christian *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

²⁹⁹ Goebel, *History of the Christian Life in the Rhine Provinces*, as quoted by Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

³⁰⁰ See p. 97.

³⁰¹ A. Ypeij and J. J. Dermout, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk.*, I, p. 148, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

had been so constantly manifested since the Apostolic era. Doctrine and faithfulness to the New Testament pattern are essential; names are incidental.

Fourth, what was the relation of the Anabaptists to the Protestant Reformers and Reformation? It remains only necessary to summarize and comment upon the following: (1) The Baptists antedated the Protestant Reformation and at first welcomed the Reformers. The Protestant Reformation, at least at first, provided an atmosphere for the more open diffusion of gospel truth. The Baptists anticipated a return to the New Testament pattern. (2) The Reformers at first found some common ground with the Baptists. Zwingli was identified with Conrad Grebel and others at Zurich until he received the backing of the City Council and civil power. He then turned upon his former friends and had them put to death! Luther at the first believed it contrary to the gospel to use constraint and civil intervention in religious matters, but was finally persuaded to advocate death for heresy (i.e., Anabaptism). Calvin followed suit. (3) The Reformers knew much concerning New Testament truth and the nature of a true Gospel church. The naive, mediating or indulgent attitude that “these Reformers must be judged according to their times,” and so absolved of their unChristian behavior and hateful treatment of the Anabaptists, is plainly not according to the historical facts.

NOTE: These men must not be made into unreal saints, but seen, as all must be seen, in the light of Divine Truth and the facts of history. The Protestant Reformers were early convinced of New Testament truth, but retreated into a “neo-Constantinianism” that precluded a New Testament approach to the church. See Verduin’s excellent work, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, in which he deals with this issue at length and quotes from these men themselves as to their “problem” with the church question.

(4) The “neo-Constantinianism” of the Protestant Reformers brought them into direct conflict with the Baptists. A retreat into a pre-Christian sacralist society meant great and sore persecution from the Protestants. The Reformers had no concept of one of the cardinal characteristics of the New Testament church liberty of conscience in religious matters. They had retreated and retrogressed into their Romish mentality at this point. (5) Because of the above differences, the Baptists have often been referred to as “the Radical Reformation,” “the Left Wing of the Reformation,” or “Protestants.” None of these epithets are correct—doctrinally or historically—for the Baptists antedated the Protestant Reformation and were but the contemporary expression of a continually existing New Testament witness.

THE ANABAPTISTS DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH THE PEASANT WAR

Some writers have alleged that the Anabaptists of the Reformation era originated with the Peasant War in Germany (1524–1525). Others have implied that, at the least, Anabaptist principles caused this revolt of the German lower classes. It has been supposed that Thomas Munzer, the leader of the revolt, was an Anabaptist. In answer, the following must be considered: first, the origin of the Anabaptist movement, as has been established beyond any reasonable doubt, was to be found in the antecedent New Testament groups that historically identified with primitive Christianity (i.e., Waldenses, Bohemian Brethren, Albigenses, etc.). The charge that Anabaptism arose with the Peasant War is based upon a supposed anarchist principle that manifested itself in a few radical individuals and groups and in the misunderstanding of the Anabaptist concept of civil government. The true

Baptists of the Reformation era were law-abiding and peaceful, differing only in that they would not concede that the civil magistrate was an arm of the church.

Second, it is manifestly evident that the Peasant War was but the culmination of a series of confrontations between the lower classes and the nobility of Germany. Uprisings had occurred before, with increasing regularity, in 1073, 1476, 1491, 1514 and 1515. In this final revolt, some 300,000 men took up arms. They set forth their grievances in Twelve Articles.

These Twelve Articles reveal the true cause of this rebellion against the German Nobility. They are: (1) Every congregation shall be free to elect its own pastor. (2) The tithes shall be applied, as far as is necessary, to the support of the pastor; the remainder shall be given to the poor and to the common interests. (3) Vassal service shall be entirely abolished. (4) All privileges of the nobles and princes relating to the exclusive ownership of hunting and fishing grounds shall cease. (5) Forests that have been taken away from the commune by ecclesiastical or secular lords shall be restored. (6)...(7)...(8) All arbitrary and multiplying and increasing duties and rents shall cease. (9) The laws and penalties attached to them, shall be executed justly and impartially, according to unchangeable principles. (10) All fields and meadows, which have been taken away from the commune shall be—restored. (11) The right of nobles to tax legacies at the unjust expense of widows and orphans shall be abolished. (12) They promised finally that they will willingly yield all these demands if it be proved to them that a single one of these articles is contrary to the Word of God.³⁰²

It will be readily seen that this was not essentially a religious uprising, but the reaction of an oppressed people who had never known redress for the exploitation of their rulers and had been put to the extreme. This was essentially a bid for human freedom on the part of men who had been crushed to serfdom under a feudal system, abused by their nobility and neglected by their religious system. The Catholics blamed the Lutherans, and they, in turn, blamed it on the “Anabaptists”! Some of the German princes acknowledged the culpability of the nobility and Luther was at first vehement in his attacks on the princes for their exploitation of the peasants, charging them with oppression, calling them “Blockheads, who wish to be called Christian Princes.” He also stated that:

My Lords, it is not the peasants who have risen against you, it is God himself who is opposing your madness...calm your irritation; grant reasonable terms to these poor people, appease these commotions by gentle methods, lest they give birth to a conflagration which shall set all Germany in a flame.³⁰³

Thus, the true reason was neither “Anabaptist” anarchism nor religious fanaticism.

Finally, the leader of the revolt, Thomas Munzer, was not an Anabaptist, but one of the . “Zwickau Prophets,” a radical group of Lutherans. Thomas Munzer lived and died a paedobaptist Lutheran.

Thus, the testimony of history is that the Baptists did not begin with, nor did they originate following testimony of historians and a contemporary Anabaptist leader give further witness. J. M. Cramp, a Baptist historian quotes a German Protestant historian as to

³⁰² As quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 154–155.

³⁰³ Luther, as quoted in Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 364–365.

the lack of Anabaptist influence in the uprising: “As for the Peasant War, Giesler justly remarks that ‘No traces of Anabaptist fanaticism were seen’ in it.”³⁰⁴

Dr. Ludwig Keller, Lutheran historian, is referred to by Armitage: “Keller in his late work on the Reformation (p. 370) says that Cornelius has shown that in the chief points Munzer was opposed to the Baptists.”³⁰⁵ Armitage continues:

...differing from the Baptists, he practiced infant baptism in form, twice a year christening all born in his congregation. In 1522 at Alsted he threw aside the Latin liturgy and prepared one in German, in which he retained the formula for infant baptism....The fact that he was a Roman Catholic priest and a Lutheran pastor shows that he had been christened as a babe; and there is no evidence that he was ever baptized upon his own faith or that he baptized others on their faith who had been christened as infants. It is, therefore, a singular perversity that so many writers should have attempted to palm him off as a Baptist and the father of them.³⁰⁶

George P. Fisher, the American Protestant church historian, commenting on the distinctives of the Anabaptists, although classifying Munzer incorrectly as among their number, nevertheless makes a distinction between Munzer and the true Anabaptists:

The church they insisted must be composed exclusively of the regenerate, and they insisted, it is not a matter to be regulated and managed by civil rulers. Under the name of Anabaptists are included different types of doctrine and Christian life. It is a gross injustice to impute to all of them the wild destructive fanaticism with which a portion of them are chargeable....This fanatical class are first heard of under Thomas Munzer, as a leader. Grebel and other Anabaptists were enthusiasts but not fanatics. They were peaceful in their spirit, and, as it would appear, sincerely devout.³⁰⁷

Fisher pointed to Munzer and this “fanatical class” as a different group, and that they were “first heard of under Thomas Munzer as a leader.” If Fisher had made the correct distinctions, he would have noted that Munzer was, indeed, never an Anabaptist! This failure has imputed to this peaceful and godly people the charge of anarchism and civil disobedience and has identified them with all the fanaticism that occurred during the Protestant Reformation. A closing witness is from Conrad Grebel, an Anabaptist leader from Switzerland, in a letter to Munzer, dated September 5, 1524: “Is it true, as we hear, that you have preached in favor of an attack on the princes? If you defend war or anything else not found in the clear Word of God, I admonish you by our common salvation to abstain from these things now and hereafter.”³⁰⁸

Thus, from the witness of historians, a contemporary Anabaptist leader and Munzer’s own doctrinal errors, it is conclusive that he was never a Baptist nor were the Baptists the instigators of the Peasant War.

³⁰⁴ Cramp, *Baptist History*, pp. 161–162.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

³⁰⁶ Armitage, *Op cit.*, pp. 367–368.

³⁰⁷ Fisher, *History of The Christian Church*, p. 425.

³⁰⁸ As quoted by Armitage, *Loc. cit.*,

THE ANABAPTISTS DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH THE MUNSTER REBELLION

The Peasant War occurred in the years 1524–1525. A decade later anarchism, millennialism, mysticism, polygamy and other radical political, social and religious tenets appeared in the Munster rebellion of the years 1534–1535. Some Romish and Protestant writers erroneously assume that this uprising gave birth to the Anabaptist movement, or at the very least, was instigated by Anabaptist principles.

Munster was the capital city of the German principality of Westphalia. It remained Catholic through the early Protestant Reformation until a Lutheran minister, Bernhardt Rothmann, arrived and began to preach Reform doctrine. The city increasingly became a refuge for all the oppressed in the province until they eventually became the powerful majority of the inhabitants. The Catholic party was then undone, and the Romish bishop was forced to vacate the city. However, he raised a popish army, besieged Munster, and sought to regain it. Rothmann had been joined by two Dutchmen, Jan Matthys and Jan Bockelson (known as John of Leyden). Matthys was given to visions and revelations. He declared that the millennium was to be ushered in at the City of Munster, which was to become the “New Jerusalem.” He further declared that this glorious age was to be brought about by the sword! During the siege and battles with the Romanists, Matthys was killed and Leyden assumed command. He changed the government and introduced polygamy on the pretext that the women far outnumbered the men. (Some historians believe that Jan Matthys’ widow, a very beautiful woman, was also an incentive for Leyden’s actions). Civil war and internal tumult broke out within the city because of these measures and other fanatical extremes (e.g., people given over to public nudity). Those in the city opposed to these derelictions were the same Baptists who were in the city as refugees when it was brought under siege. Leyden was victorious over the opposition and had himself proclaimed “King of the Earth” and the “New Zion.” During this time, all the inhabitants either willingly or forcibly underwent a “rebaptism.” This “rebaptism” was not the historical Anabaptist immersion, but a rite peculiar to Leyden’s “New Zion.” However, because of this practice and presence of some few Baptists in Munster, the term “Anabaptists” became most odious throughout Protestantism. From that point onward, anything that seemed immoral, fanatical, anarchist or questionable was saddled with that derogatory term. The rebellion was finally broken up by the Romish bishop, who retook the city.

To demonstrate that the Baptists did not originate with the Munster affair and that Baptist principles were not responsible for such fanaticism, two considerations are in order: first, evidence must be offered that the Anabaptists (or Baptists) existed prior to the Munster incident, and, second, it must be demonstrated that the Baptists were not responsible for this uprising or its excesses.

First, there is abundant historical evidence that the Anabaptists existed long prior to the Munster incident of 1534–35. The first division of this present chapter, “The Anabaptists of the Reformation Era,” documents this fact. However, it may be well to quote from Drs. Ypeij and Dermout, the official historians of the Netherlands Reformed Church, who studied the matter carefully and made a correct and necessary distinction between the radical or anarchist elements and the historical Baptists of the Reformation era:

The fanatical Anabaptists, of whom we now speak, were originally from Germany these rebels sought in the new religion an augmented power, and made the most

shameful misuse of it to the promotion of their harrassing disturbances. These ought by no means to be considered as the same as the Baptists. Let the reader keep this distinctly in mind in the statements which we are about to make.

“At much length,” states Christian, Ypeij and Dermout, then, “draw a distinction between the Baptists and turbulent Anabaptists of Munster. John of Leyden is described, as are the Munster men. They declare that the Baptists and these turbulent Anabaptists were not the same.” Ypeij and Dermout continue:

We shall now proceed more at length to notice the defense of the worthy Baptists. The Baptists are...entirely different from the Anabaptists in character. They were descendants from the ancient Waldenses, whose teachings were evangelical and tolerably pure, and who were scattered by severe persecutions in various lands, and long before the Reformation of the Church were existing in the Netherlands. In their flight they came thither in the latter part of the twelfth century....Their manner of life was simple and exemplary. No great crime was known among them. Their religious teaching was simple and pure, and was exemplified in their daily conduct.³⁰⁹

Again, Dr. Ludwig Keller, the official Munster Archivist and Lutheran, stated that Baptists had existed in those parts for, perhaps, centuries! “There were Baptists long before the Munster rebellion...much rather can it be proved that in the lands mentioned Baptist churches existed for many decades and even centuries.”³¹⁰

Thus, it is evident without reasonable contradiction that Baptists existed before not only the Munster affair, but even before the Protestant Reformation. Further, it is manifestly clear that there were two distinct groups: those who were in the historic and biblical pattern, and those who were fanatical and opportunist, developing out of Romish, Protestant and mystical elements. This latter group was only “Anabaptist” in that they practiced in some instances a “rebaptism,” but it was not associated in any way with the New Testament pattern of primitive Christianity.

Second, the Baptists (i.e., historic and primitive Christians after the New Testament pattern, at that time called “Anabaptists”) were neither responsible for the Munster rebellion nor its excesses. While it is true that there were some Baptists in Munster before and during the uprising, the leaders and radicals were mostly composed of Romanists and Lutherans who had either turned toward a mystical and fanatical bent, or cast off the reality of their religions altogether. Their leaders were “Anabaptist” only in the sense that they are said to have re-baptized all, including, evidently, those formerly baptized as adult believers in historic and primitive Baptist assemblies (hence, their “rebaptism” had no connection with the true Baptists of that era). The Baptists suffered within Munster for their resistance to the fanaticism, extremes and excesses. They were martyrs to the cause of true faithfulness within the walls of Munster as they sought to oppose the madness of Leyden and others. Armitage refers to a German Protestant historian as to the Baptist suffering within the city:

Goebel tells us (i, p. 189) that two hundred moral and moderate Baptists in Munster heroically withstood the iniquity, and it was not established until forty-eight of this number had been put to a bloody slaughter for their resistance. So that in the struggle

³⁰⁹ Ypeij and Dermout, *Op. cit.*, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 162–163.

³¹⁰ Keller, *Loc. cit.*, as quoted by Jarrell, *Loc. cit.*

nearly fifty Baptists fell martyrs to purity in that German Sodom; and at last, the ministers and most of the people yielded to the clamor for polygamy under this reign of terror.³¹¹

Because of the Munsterities' practice of rebaptizing all and everyone, including, evidently, the Baptists among them, they were termed "Anabaptists," no distinction being made between these radicals and the Baptists. Rather reminiscent of the Manichae stigma that had branded and discredited former groups such as the Paulicians, Bogomili and Albigenses! Dr. Ludwig Keller, the greatest authority on Munster stated that all were indiscriminately classed together:

The name 'Anabaptist,' which is used to designate alike all the South German societies, generally awakens the conception of a party homogeneous and of like religious views. The conception, however is an entirely erroneous one. It has been usual since the time of Luther to designate as Anabaptists, Catabaptists, or fanatics all those who renounced the Catholic Church, but would not become Lutherans.³¹²

NOTE: Great attention should be given to Dr. Keller's statement, for it reveals the principle that gave to "Anabaptism" its odious name. There were evidently many fanatics, anarchists, mystics and opportunists who emerged at the Protestant Reformation, as well-evidenced by history. These were, then, naturally (although not doctrinally or historically) classed among the Anabaptists.

Dr. Keller further stated that such Anabaptists as Menno Simon differed greatly from such men as John Leyden of Munster:

One of the commonest errors classes the Baptists of Holland with the Munster insurrection, chiefly because John of Leyden and others from that country took part in that outbreak. Keller corrects this error thus 'No one who impartially studies the history of Menno Simon and of John of Leyden can deny that the doctrines and the spirit of the two men were infinitely unlike, and much more unlike than, for example, the doctrines and spirit of the Lutheran and Catholic Churches.'³¹³

NOTE: Again, close attention must be made to the testimony of this authority on Munster. He declared that there was a greater difference between the historic Anabaptists and the Munsterites than between Lutheranism and Romanism! What oversight and prejudice must prevail, then, to class all these divergent groups together.

The following testimony of both Romish and Protestant historians confirms the innocence of the Baptists in the Munster insurrection. Carl Hase (Protestant) contrasted the two extremes, making distinctions absolutely essential: "These Anabaptists were a class of enthusiasts resembling each other, but very much unlike each other in moral and religious character....Some of them were persons who renounced the world, and others were slaves of their own lusts."³¹⁴ Broadbent, the Brethren historian, has written a rather astounding statement concerning this time and people: "In 1534 the Bishop of Munster, in writing to the Pope, bore testimony to the excellent lives of the Anabaptists."³¹⁵

³¹¹ Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 375.

³¹² Keller, *Loc. cit.*, as quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 217-218.

³¹³ As quoted by Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 409.

³¹⁴ Hase's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 431, as quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 216.)

³¹⁵ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

Mosheim, in his writings on this century and historical incident, noted the great difference between the primitive and historic Baptists and the “Madmen of Munster”:

It would betray, however, a strange ignorance, as an unjustifiable partiality, to maintain, that even all that professed, in general, this absurd doctrine, were chargeable with that furious and brutal extravagance, which has been mentioned (i.e. Munster....This was by no means the case....It is true, indeed, that many Anabaptists suffered death, not on account of their being considered rebellious subjects, but merely because they were judged to be incurable heretics....A handful of madmen who got into their heads the visionary notion of a new and spiritual kingdom....made themselves masters of the city of Munster.³¹⁶

Phillip Schaff, the great American Protestant historian, also was careful to make such necessary distinctions: “We must carefully distinguish the better class of Baptists and the Mennonites from the restless revolutionary radicals and fanatics, like Carlstadt, Munzer and the leaders of the Munster tragedy.”³¹⁷

But it is the greatest injustice to make the Anabaptists as such responsible for the extravagances that led to the tragedy at Munster. Their original and final tendencies were orderly and peaceful. They disowned the wild fanaticism of Thomas Munzer, John Bockelsohn and Knipperdalling. They were opposed to war and violence.³¹⁸

G. H. Orchard wrote, concerning a Romish contemporary, that he admitted the Anabaptists actually opposed the Munsterites: “Cassander, a papist, declares that many Anabaptists in Germany did resist and oppose the opinions and practices of those at Munster, and taught contrary doctrine.”³¹⁹

Gottfried Arnold, a Lutheran and professor of History at Giessen, stated that the Anabaptists openly and publicly repudiated the Munster incident:

It is true that these good testimonies (which had to be accorded to the Anabaptists for their doctrines and lives) do not refer to those who in the Munster sedition showed themselves so impious and seditious. Nevertheless it is manifestly evident that from many public acknowledgements that the remaining Catabaptists were not only different from these (and had no part in their seditious doings) but also very greatly abhorred and always in the highest degree condemned and rejected these; just as their adversaries themselves from their writings confess and testify that they...never agreed with the Munsterites.³²⁰

The Baptists, suffering unjustly because of their incorrect and unjust association with the “Madmen of Munster,” were constantly having to disassociate themselves from the Munster mentality among the Protestants. Armitage wrote concerning the defense of three Baptist martyrs:

One of the Baptist martyrs, Dryzinger, in 1538, only three years after the craze was examined as to whether he and his brethren approved of these vile proceedings. He answered that ‘They would not be Christians if they did.’ Hans, of Overdam, another martyr, complained of these false accusations of violence. He said: ‘We are daily belied by

³¹⁶ Mosheim, *Op. cit.*, pp. 122–123.

³¹⁷ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VII, p. 607.

³¹⁸ Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, I, p. 842.

³¹⁹ Orchard, *Op. cit.*, pp. 361–362.

³²⁰ Arnold, *Uparteischen Kirchen und Ketzer Historie*, II, p. 479, as quoted by Christian, *Loc.*

those who say that we would defend our faith with the sword as they of Munster did. The Almighty God defend us from such abominations.' Young Dosie...who was a prisoner to the Governor of Friesland, and endured cruel slaughter for his love to Christ, was asked by the governor's wife if he and his brethren were not of that disgraceful people who took up the sword against the magistrates....He replied, 'No, Madam, those persons greatly erred. We consider it a devilish doctrine to resist the magistrates by the outward sword and violence.' All this is no more than Erasmus said of them in 1529: 'The Anabaptists have seized no churches, have not conspired against the authorities, nor deprived any man of his estate or goods.'³²¹

Leading Baptists wrote against the Munster leaders and their fanaticism, immorality and anarchism, and sought largely in vain to free themselves from the erroneous association and injustice heaped upon them. Therefore, it is in the impartial light of history that one marks the words of Fusslin:

There was a great difference between Anabaptists and Anabaptists. There were those amongst them who held strange doctrines, but this cannot be said of the whole sect. If we should attribute to every sect whatever senseless doctrines two or three fanciful fellows have taught, there is no one in the world to whom we could not ascribe the most abominable errors.³²²

The Munster tragedy was, in reality, born out of the elements of Romish tradition, with its mysticism and doctrine of continuing revelation; from the inconsistencies of the Protestant Reformation, with its Romish parentage, neo-Constantinianism and Old Testament mentality; and from the socio-economic suppression that had previously led to the Peasant War.³²³ It should be clearly seen, therefore, that the Baptists of the Reformation era did not originate with the Munster rebellion, nor were historic, New Testament Christians responsible for this sad incident in history.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

There are some historians, even among modern Baptists, who believe that the Baptists of England found their origin in the Brownist or Separatist movement (i.e., Congregationalists) about 1582–1584, or with John Smyth (1609). To properly consider these allegations, the following must be noted: a New Testament witness existed in Britain from the earliest times, antedating Smyth, the Brownists and even the Protestant Reformation; the true connection between the Separatists and the Baptists; and the connection between John Smyth and the English Baptists.

First there is historic documentation that New Testament or primitive Christianity had existed in Britain from earliest times, antedating the Protestant Reformation, the Separatist movement and John Smyth. In two previous chapters, this subject is considered at length. (See "Primitive British Christianity;" and "Medieval British Christianity"). The following historical testimony is given for reiteration and added information. Jonathan Edwards stated, "God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many

³²¹ Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 374.

³²² Fusslin, as quoted by Armitage, *Loc. cit.*

³²³ Also see Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 375–378, for a detailed and able defense of this general thesis.

witnesses through the whole time in Germany, France, Britain.”³²⁴ E. H. Broadbent, writing of the New Testament Christians after the time of Austin and establishment of Romanism in England, said: “The British order continued its resistance, until in the thirteenth century its remaining elements were absorbed into the Lollard movement.”³²⁵ Barclay, the Quaker historian, conceded that, “The rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the foundation of the Church of England.”³²⁶ Daniel Neal, in his *History of the Puritans*, wrote: “If Wycliffe himself did not pursue the consequences of his own doctrine so far, yet many of his followers did, and were made Baptists by it.”³²⁷ Broadbent again observed that “The Lollard movement was outwardly suppressed, but there were always remains of it”³²⁸

Historical evidence is abundant that there were Baptists in England, not only among the foreigners (German and Dutch) that flocked into the country at the beginning of the Reformation, but also among the English themselves (elements of indigenous Christianity, Lollardism, Wyclifism). Henry VIII (1509–1547) issued several Royal Proclamations to suppress the Baptists. In the year 1534–1535 a Proclamation was issued against the Dutch Anabaptists, who: “...though they were baptized in their infancy, yet have, in contempt of the holy sacrament of baptism, rebaptized themselves. They are ordered to depart out of the realm in twelve days, under pain of death.”³²⁹ On November 16, 1538, Henry VIII issued a Royal Proclamation against the publications of heretics, especially the books of the Anabaptists.³³⁰ Records of correspondence during that time of such men as Erasmus, Bishop Hooper, Bullinger, Ridley and Phillip of Hesse, reveal that great concern was voiced by all because of the great and increasing numbers of “Anabaptists” in England.³³¹ Indeed, there were so many burnings of these “heretics” that some jested about the scarcity of wood for fuel! Christian refers to this in correspondence:

Ammonius, under date of November 8, 1531, writes to Erasmus of the great numbers of the Anabaptists in England. He says, “It is not astonishing that wood is so dear and scarce—the heretics cause so many holocausts, and yet their numbers grow.”³³²

Erasmus replied that Ammonius “has reason to be angry with the heretics for increasing the price of fuel for the coming winter”³³³ This was horrible jesting.

Not only were there Baptists at this time in Britain, but also Baptist churches or assemblies of baptized believers. Broadbent stated:

³²⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Loc. cit.*

³²⁵ Broadbent, *Loc. cit.*

³²⁶ Christian, *Loc. cit.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 235.

³²⁹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 779, as quoted by Christian *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

³³⁰ Also see *Titus Mss. B. I. 527*, Christian, *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³³¹ Also see Christian, *Ibid.*, pp. 192–197.)

³³² Brewer, *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, I. 285.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 297.

There was a church in London, founded on the ground of Scripture, in the reign of Edward VI, composed of French, Dutch and Italian Christians. There were also English churches of this character considerably earlier, stretching back indeed to Lollard times, for the Bishop of London in 1523. wrote that the great band of Wyclifite heretics were nothing new. There are records of 'Congregations' in England in 1555 and Baptist churches are known to have existed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, before 1589.³³⁴

Mention has already been made of "the church in the hop garden" in the vicinity of Longworth which antedated Wycliffe.³³⁵

There is historical evidence that Baptist churches existed in various parts of England during the years 1525–1558 in London, Kent, Essex, Lincolnshire and Bocking. A church practicing New Testament principles was established in Chesterton by 1457. Concerning the Hill Cliffe Church, J. M. Cramp wrote:

There is some reason to believe that a Baptist church existed in Cheshire at a much earlier period. If we may credit the traditions of the place, the church at Hill Cliffe is five hundred years old. A tombstone has been lately dug up in the burial ground belonging to that church, bearing the date 1357. The origin of the church is assigned, in the 'Baptist Manual', to the year 1523. This, however, is certain, that a Mr. Warburton, pastor of the church, died there in 1594. How long the church had been in existence, there are no written records to testify.³³⁶

C. H. Spurgeon, who, although he maintained the broadest spectrum of fellowship and Christian charity, was nevertheless a Baptist and a believer in New Testament perpetuity, declared:

We care very little for the "historical church" argument, but if there be anything in it at all, *it ought not to be filched by the clients of Rome*, but should be left to that community, which all along held by "one Lord, one faith and one baptism....The afflicted Anabaptists, in their past history, have borne such pure testimony, both to truth and freedom, that they need in nothing be ashamed....It would not be *impossible* to show that the first Christians who dwelt in the land were of the same faith and order as the churches now called Baptists.

....the rampant ritualist, W. J. E. Bennett, of Frome, in his book upon *The Unity of the Church Broken*, says: 'The historian Lingard tells us there was a sect of fanatics who infested the north of Germany, called Puritans; Usher calls them Waldenses; Spelman, Paulicians (The same as Waldenses). They gained ground and spread all over England; they rejected all Romish ceremonies, denied the authority of the Pope, and more particularly refused to baptize infants. Thirty of them were put to death....near Oxford; but the remainder still held on to their opinions in private until the time of Henry II....The historian, Collier, tells us that wherever the heresy prevailed, the churches were either scandalously neglected or pulled down and infants left unbaptized.' We are obliged to Mr. Bennett for this history, which is in all respects authentic, and we take the liberty to remark upon it, that the reign of Henry the II is a period far more worthy of being called remote than the reign of Henry VIII and if Baptists could trace their pedigree no further, the church of Thomas Cranmer could not afford to sneer at them as a modern sect....All along our history from Henry II to Henry VIII there are traces of the Anabaptists, who are usually mentioned in connection with the Lollards, or as coming from Holland. All along there must have been a great hive on the Continent of the 'Reformers before the Reformation.'

³³⁴ Broadbent, *Op. cit.*, p. 239.

³³⁵ John Stanley, *The Church in the Hop Garden*.

³³⁶ Cramp, *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

Latimer, who could not speak too badly of the Baptists, nevertheless bears witness to their numbers and intrepidity. Bishop Burnett says that in the time of Edward VI Baptists became very numerous and openly preached their doctrines....Among the 'Articles of Visitation' issued by Ridley in his own diocese in 1550, was the following: 'Whether any of the Anabaptist sect and others use notoriously any unlawful or private conventicles wherein they do use doctrines or administration of the sacraments, separating themselves from the rest of the parish.' It may be fairly gathered from the 'Articles of Visitation' that here were many Baptist churches in the Kingdom at that time.³³⁷

It is evident and historical beyond any reasonable contradiction, therefore, that Baptists and Baptist churches existed in Britain from the primitive days of Christianity, during the medieval era and into the dawn of the Reformation. Abundant evidence and documentation further portrays the Baptists (or New Testament Churches) down to the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries, before either the Separatists or John Smyth.

NOTE: For a further discussion of the early Baptists in England, see also Evans, *Early English Baptists*, 2 vols.; J. Davis, *Op. cit.*; Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 445–449; Benedict, *Op. cit.*, pp. 305–318; Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 191, 197–198, 226; Cramp, *Op. cit.*, pp. 231–248; Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 324–325, 351, 357–358.

The second area of investigation is the relationship between the Separatists and the Baptists. It has been alleged that the Baptists in England originated from the Separatists (or "Independent") movement begun by Robert Browne (c. 1553–1633). Browne was reared in the Church of England, graduated from Cambridge University and became a sort of preacher and schoolteacher. He was finally forbidden to preach in parish churches and he stated that bishops were unlawful and the parish churches were incapable of reform. He spent several years at Norwich, where existed a large colony of Dutch Baptists. About the year 1582, to avoid persecution, he and others left Britain to seek sanctuary in Zeeland. There his church was broken up because of inner schisms and he returned to England where he eventually made peace with the Church of England and was "ordained to a Northamptonshire living which we occupied for the next forty-three years. In 1633 he died in prison after a fit of aggression against the local constable."³³⁸

There is evidence that while at Norwich he came under Baptist influence and this molded his later thinking. A writer named Sheffer stated that, "Browne's new ideas concerning the nature of the church opened to him in the circle of the Dutch Baptists in Norwich."³³⁹ Dr. Williston Walker, Professor of history at Hartford Theological Seminary and outstanding American theologian (himself a Congregationalist), wrote concerning the English Congregationalists:

In many respects their likeness to those of the Radical Reformers of the Continent is so striking that some affiliation seems almost certain. Certainly the resemblance between the Anabaptist movement and English Congregationalism...are sufficiently manifest to make a denial of relationship exceedingly difficult.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *Ford's Christian Repository*, as quoted by Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 330–332.

³³⁸ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 158–159.

³³⁹ Quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

³⁴⁰ Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches of the United States*, p. 26, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 212–213.

Though no trace of a recognition of indebtedness to Anabaptist thought can be found in any of Browne's writings...the similarity of the system which he now worked out from that part of the Anabaptists is so great in many respects that the conclusion is hard to avoid that the resemblance is more than accidental.³⁴¹

Weingarten, a German historian, gives the most probable reason for Browne's lack of acknowledgement to the Baptists, when he wrote that:

The perfect agreement between the views of, Browne and those of the Baptists, as far as the nature of the church is concerned, is certainly proof enough that he borrowed this idea from them, though in this 'True Declarations' of 1584 he did not deem it advisable to acknowledge the fact, lest he should receive in addition to all the opprobrious names heaped upon him, that of Anabaptist. In 1571 there were no less than 3,925 Dutchmen in Norwich.³⁴²

There is evidence, more than coincidental, therefore, that Browne was not the originator of those principles identified with the Baptists, but rather that he derived those principles from them. One thing, however, is certain: Robert Browne and the Independents were not the source of English Baptists.

The third allegation is that John Smyth is the "Father of English Baptists." As it has previously been established that Baptists existed in England prior to Robert Browne and prior to the Protestant Reformation, what is the relationship of John Smyth to the English Baptists?

The essential facts concerning Smyth and his church are as follows: his exact date his birth is not known, but we do know that John Smyth was educated at Cambridge University, entering in 1586 and graduating M.A. in 1593. He was ordained as a clergyman in the Church of England in the year 1594, preaching as the vicar of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, from about 1600 to 1602 as an avowed enemy of the Separatists. After studying their system for nearly a year, however, he left the Established Church and joined himself with the Separatists. He became pastor of the Separatist (Brownist) church in Gainsborough. Smyth and his church removed to Amsterdam in Holland about 1606–1608 because of persecution. There they joined with another exiled Separatist group under the leadership of William Brewster, Clifton and Robinson. This amalgamated group soon divided, however, over the nature of the church and infant baptism. Smyth, having become convinced of believer's baptism was disfellowshipped. The larger group removed to Leyden and then later, in 1620, left for England and then New England aboard the Mayflower as the celebrated "Pilgrim Fathers." Smyth and thirty-six others, including Thomas Helwys, formed a new church. It is not clear whether Smyth baptized himself or whether Helwys baptized him, and then Smyth baptized the rest. He was accused, however, of being a "Se-Baptist" (i.e., a self-baptizer). This term, however, may have denoted only that they originated their own baptism as a church.

Soon Smyth became dissatisfied with his baptism and sought to join himself and his congregation to a Dutch "Waterlander" church pastored by Lubberts Gerrits. Part of the assembly, however, refused to take this step, and, under the leadership of Helwys, excluded Smyth from his own church! They warned the Dutch church not to receive Smyth into

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁴² Weingarten, *Revolutions Kirchen Englands*, p. 20, quoted by Christian, *Ibid.*, p. 30

membership. Smyth and the others who followed him sought membership in this “Waterlander” Mennonite church, which evidently practiced sprinkling or pouring for baptism. A confession was drawn up for the Smyth group to sign, in which they repented of their error of sebastism. The confession read in part as follows:

The names of the English who confess this error, and repent of it, viz., that they undertook to baptize themselves contrary to the order appointed by Christ, and who now desire, on this account, to be brought back to the true Church of Christ as quickly as may be suffered.³⁴³

NOTE: There were then appended the signatures of fifteen men and seventeen women, John Smyth's name appearing as the third among the men's signature.

Historians disagree whether Smyth was actually brought into the membership of this Mennonite church. It is certain, however, that his followers did unite with this church about 1615, so the church of Smyth became extinct. Thomas Helwys and the remaining church returned to London about 1612. This church, under the leadership of Helwys, became known as the first “General Baptist Church” of England (i.e., “General” referring to the Arminian doctrine of a general atonement, as opposed to the “Particular Baptists,” who held to a Calvinistic concept of particular redemption).

Thus, it is abundantly clear that John Smyth not only was not the founder of English Baptists, he was never a Baptist in England, or, for that matter, never a true Baptist at all.

Baptists had existed long before John Smyth, his “baptism” and “church,” and had no vital connection with them. How strange that such a man has been called the “Father of English Baptists”!

NOTE: The church record at Crowle, in its minutes, stated that John Smyth, vicar of Gainesborough, was baptized by Elder John Morton on the night of March 24, 1606, in the presence of witnesses. This has been generally denied. Even if it were true, the fact is that Smyth repudiated that baptism when he initiated his own. Smyth's problem was not with baptism *per se*, but with the question of proper church authority or succession for baptism.

Some who hold John Smyth to be the ‘Father of English Baptists’ also believe that the Particular Baptists originated from the Separatists. A group left, the Independent Church of Henry Jacob about 1633 and became Baptists. This group, under the leadership of John Spilsbury, became the first ‘Particular’ Baptist Church in England. However true these things might be, it does not necessarily follow that these two churches, Helwys of the General Baptists, and Spilsbury of the Particular Baptists, were the first Baptist churches in England. Baptists had existed long prior to this, to which history bears clear and abundant evidence. It must not be forgotten that these were only two churches among many that existed at that time and cannot account in any way for the complete history of the Baptists during that era in England. For a complete record of John Smyth and the beginning of the General and Particular Baptists in the Helwys and Spilsbury churches, see Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 453–461; Christian *op. cit.*, pp. 222–282; Evans *op. cit.*, pp. 210–232, 244–245; Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 345–359; Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–141.

³⁴³ Also see B. Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, pp. 208–211; 244–245.

THE BAPTISTS IN ENGLAND PRACTISED IMMERSION BEFORE 1641

Some opponents of the Baptists, and some within Baptist ranks who oppose perpetuity, have insinuated that Baptists in England and America did not practice immersion before the year 1641. These writers allege that until that time Baptists practiced sprinkling as the common mode. Four considerations are in order: the basis for such allegations and the history of the controversy; an investigation of the common mode of baptism; the influence of Calvin upon the common mode since the Protestant Reformation; and the mode practiced by Baptists before the year 1641.

First, what is the supposed basis for the allegation that Baptists practiced sprinkling before 1641, and what is the history of the controversy? The basis for assuming that Baptists in England (and, therefore, America) sprinkled and did not use immersion until 1641 is essentially from three presuppositions: the supposition that John Smyth was the founder of Baptists in England; the so-called “Kiffin Manuscript,” and a statement by Barbour in 1642 that he had been raised up by God to “divulge the true doctrine of dipping.” As to the first, it has been established beyond controversy (in spite of the ignorance or naivete of some) that John Smyth was never, in truth, a Baptist, and certainly not the “Father” or founder of English Baptists. This assumption has led to the presupposition that because the Baptists derived from the Separatists or Congregationalists, they must have used their method of baptism, viz., sprinkling. This is wholly without historical foundation. As to the second, the so-called “Kiffin Manuscript,” dated March 1640 (and 1641), states that the church assembled and were convinced of immersion as the proper mode of baptism. After conference and prayer about the matter, having understood that “none so practiced in England to professed believers, and hearing that some in the Netherlands had so practiced, they agreed and send Mr. Richard Blunt, “who understood Dutch,” to investigate the matter. After investigation and correspondence, in 1641 Blunt was sent to be baptized and he in turn baptized a Mr. Blacklock; then he and Blacklock baptized the rest of the assembly.³⁴⁴ This manuscript has been declared as false and contrary to the facts by most historians.

NOTE: For a full discussion of this controversy concerning the “Kiffin Manuscript”, see Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 437–441; Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 261–267. There is another possible foundation for this supposed incident, William Kiffin was the first in the Spilsbury Church to raise the question of baptism preceding preaching, i.e., that a minister should be properly baptized before he should minister in a Baptist pulpit. The Spilsbury Church had divided over the issue and Kiffin had taken some and begun a separate church. These two churches still had a cordial relationship, (See Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 270–271; Armitage *Op. cit.*, pp. 460–461.) Thus, Kiffin had anticipated the “Landmark” controversy of the middle 1800’s in America. The question centered on church authority, and it may be that if the incident did take place (although it is denied by most historians), it was for the purpose of obtaining a valid baptism from churches they supposed were in a line of perpetuity. Such an action would have been in accordance and consistent with their general view of the church. Indeed, this is the very view that Orchard has taken in his researches into the matter and so has written:

Hearing that regular descendent Waldensian ministers were to be found in the Netherlands, they deputed Mr. Blount, who understood the Dutch language, to visit Amsterdam. He was kindly received by the church in that city, and their

³⁴⁴ See the entire “Kiffin Manuscript” in Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 441.

pastor, Mr. John Batte. On his return he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and they baptized the rest of the company, fifty-three in number.³⁴⁵

The third assumption, concerning the statement of Barbour about “divulging the true doctrine of dipping,” is open to question. The term “divulge” as used at that time meant to “publish” and was synonymous with preaching or declaring, and was so used.³⁴⁶

The history of the controversy centered in Britain in the 1700s and entered America in the late 1800s through the statements and writings of two Baptists. (Paedobaptists had made use of such statements and supposed evidences for many years previous to this.) Norman Fox, a Baptist minister and Professor of Church History at William Jewel College in Missouri, published several articles in “The Central Baptist,” a denominational paper (1873), alleging that Baptists sprinkled prior to 1600. Seven years later (1880), Dr. William Whitsitt, professor of Church history and later President of the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, wrote several unsigned articles in a leading paedobaptist publication (*The New York Independent*, a Congregationalist paper), in which the theory was put forth that Baptists did not immerse until 1641. He later admitted writing the articles, and followed by writing an article for the *Johnson’s Cyclopedia* in which he stated that all Baptists used sprinkling or affusion before 1641, and that Roger Williams was sprinkled. Whitsitt finally published in 1896 a book with the title, *A Question in Baptist History: Whether the Anabaptists in England practiced Immersion Before the Year 1641?* As the facts of history they cited were quite questionable, and the majority of sound Baptists of that time held strongly to perpetuity, these two men had to resign their respective positions amid much controversy.

NOTE: Much harm, however, had been done by both Fox and Whitsitt. Both men, according to contemporary writers, were avowed opponents of Baptist perpetuity, and this caused them to attach this position, using the paedobaptists’ arguments which had then existed for many years, and had been disproven by earlier Baptist writers. These works and the influence of these men caused a decline in the strong position of Baptist perpetuity that had been held by such forebears as J. P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, B. H. Carroll, and others of first rank among Baptists in America.

The second consideration is that the common mode of baptism in Christendom for the first thirteen hundred years was immersion. Immersion continued as the common mode in England until the year 1600, and only then was gradually replaced by sprinkling. Both in the Church of Rome and the Church of England immersion was the common mode. Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth were all immersed as infants. All church buildings had baptistries for the “dipping” of infants and the *Rubric in Public Baptism* of the Anglican Church specified immersion as the mode except in cases where the child’s health might be endangered. In such cases sprinkling could be substituted, but it was not the common or ordinary mode. Erasmus, the Romish scholar, wrote in 1532: “We dip children all over in cold water, in a stone font.”³⁴⁷ The strong convictions concerning immersion on the part of the English in the national Church were revealed by William Tyndale:

³⁴⁵ Orchard, *Op. cit.*, p. 375.

³⁴⁶ See Armitage, *Loc. cit.*

³⁴⁷ Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

If aught be left out, or if the child be not altogether dipped in water, or if, because the child is sick, the priest dare not plunge it into the water, but pour water upon its head,—how tremble they. How quake they. ‘How say ye, Sir John,’ say they, ‘Is the child christened enough? Hath it full Christendom?’ They believe verily that the child is not christened.³⁴⁸

Dr. Watson, the Bishop of Lincoln, wrote in 1558, concerning the practice of the Church of England:

Though the old and ancient tradition of the Church hath been from the beginning to dip the child three times, etc., yet that is not such necessity; but if he be once dipped in water, it is sufficient. Yea, and in times of peril and necessity, if the water be poured on his head, it will suffice.³⁴⁹

Thomas Crosby, author of a Baptist history, who wrote in 1738 quoted Sir John Floyer, a strong advocate of cold bathing. This man argued for the practice by citing the practice of religious immersion.

...immersion continued in the Church of England till about the year 1600. And from thence I shall infer, that if God and the Church thought that practice innocent for 1600 years, it must be accounted an unreasonable nicety in this present age, to scruple either immersion or cold bathing as dangerous practices...by all the preceding quotations from Bede, It is clearly proved, that immersion was the general practice in the first planting of Christianity in England and...that it was continued in the English Church till the time of King James I.³⁵⁰

Thus, it is conclusive beyond any question, that immersion was the common mode of baptism until the year 1600 in England. The essential issue among Baptists, Protestants and Catholics was not the mode, but rather the proper subjects for baptism. It would be strange, indeed, if, while the Anglican and Romish churches practiced immersion, the English Baptists continued ignorant of this ancient and scriptural mode and practiced sprinkling! (For a further discussion on immersion, see “The Scriptural Mode for Baptism”).

The third consideration is the influence of John Calvin and the English Puritans. Calvin was the major Reformed writer to disregard immersion and favor sprinkling. While he well understood that scriptural baptism was only by immersion, he pragmatically and arbitrarily made the mode of little or no consequence.³⁵¹

The great influence of Calvin in Britain, especially among the Puritans, caused them to follow him in this matter as well as others. Many among the English Puritans (among the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Non-Conformist groups) became ardent practitioners of sprinkling. The Church of England strongly opposed this trend. In 1627 the Bishop of London made inquiries concerning the practice of immersion and the proper use of the baptistries used for immersion: “Whether your minister baptize any children in any basin or other vessel than in the ordinary font, being placed in the church or doth put any basin into it?...Whether you have in your church or chapel a font of stone set up in the ancient usual

³⁴⁸ Tyndale, *Works*, III, p. 289, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

³⁴⁹ Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke Doctrine Concernynge the Seven Sacraments*, 22, 23, London, 1558, as quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 245.

³⁵⁰ Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, II, xlvix–xlviii.

³⁵¹ Cf. Calvin’s statement in the section on the mode of baptism.

place?”³⁵² During this time (1627–1641) the same inquiries were made by the Bishops of Exeter, Winchester and Lincoln in their respective dioceses. Thus, the Anglican Church sought to stem the tide of Calvin’s influence among their ministers as to sprinkling.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines that met from 1643 to 1648 for the formation of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms held strongly to the doctrines of Calvin and were essentially Presbyterian in both doctrine and practice. Yet when the debate raged in the Assembly over the mode of baptism, there was a tie vote on the issue. The debate continued and the Assembly let the matter fall. After some discussion in another session, a vote was taken after discussing the influences of the Anabaptists, and the vote was for sprinkling by a number of one! Thus, even among some English Presbyterians, the force of the scriptural mode was so strong that it was over-ruled only by a single vote!³⁵³

Wall, in his famous *History of Infant Baptism*, stated that immersion was the common mode at the beginning of the seventeenth century and sprinkling became a trend in the “troublesome times” of 1645 and onward and was “used by very few” at that time.³⁵⁴ William Walker, a paedobaptist writer, commented toward the end of the seventeenth century that in that century the transition had taken place from immersion to sprinkling, “And truly as the general custom now in England is to sprinkle, so in the fore end of this century the general custom was to dip.”³⁵⁵

Thus, the trend toward sprinkling came with the Puritan movement in England, and only became pronounced after the early part of the seventeenth century. How strange that these English Baptists should forsake the scriptural mode over a millennium and a half, or be entirely ignorant of it, and practice sprinkling when even the Puritans themselves were almost equally divided over the novel practice! Such does not well suit the facts of history.

Finally, there is evidence that—the Baptists practiced immersion before 1641. Given the traditional practice of the Romish and English Churches, the teaching of the Scriptures and the well-known practice of the English and Dutch Anabaptists, one could well expect that the later Baptists practiced the scriptural mode. There is abundant evidence that the Anabaptists practiced “dipping” from their earliest times. Dr. Featly, an ardent paedobaptist who lived during the time in question (1582–1645) and author of a vehement attack on the Baptists in his *The Dippers Dipped*, “bears direct testimony to the practice of believer’s immersion among the Baptists at a much earlier period than 1641.” Featly stated that “for more than twenty years” previously (i.e., about 1624) they “dipped” in the rivers.³⁵⁶ Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts (Protestant) stated that Roger Williams was “immersed.” Governor Coddington of Rhode Island, after knowing Roger Williams for some fifty years, said that when Williams had held church convictions, he demanded that “men and women must be plunged under water.”³⁵⁷ As soon as the Independent church of

³⁵² Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 288.

³⁵³ See Dr. Lightfoot, Works, XIII, p. 299, London 1824, quoted by Christian, *Op. cit.*, p. 295.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

³⁵⁵ Walker, *The Doctrine of Baptisms*, p. 146.

³⁵⁶ Armitage, *Op. cit.*, p. 441.

³⁵⁷ Ray, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

Jacob divided over the subject of infant baptism and immersion (1633), Spilsbury and others left to form a Baptist church. This church was always immersionist in practice.³⁵⁸ Many more witnesses could be noted to document the historical fact that Baptists practiced immersion before 1641, but one final work is given by Professor David Masson of the University of Edinburgh, the greatest authority on English history in the period of 1640–1660. He was thoroughly acquainted with literally every piece of literature of that era. Regarding the British Museum’s documents concerning the years 1640–1643, he stated, “There is not a single document extant of those that used to be in the State Paper Office, which has not passed through my hands and been scrutinized.”³⁵⁹ This erudite historian of that era was asked if the Baptists of that era were in the practice of sprinkling before 1641 and changed about that time to immersion. Christian gave an account of his answer:

A look of surprise came over his face and he queried: ‘Does anyone believe anything like that? ...all my reading is in the direction that the Baptists in England were immersionists in practice. Of course, among the early Anabaptists, and the term covered all sorts of religious beliefs, there may have been some who were called Anabaptists who practiced sprinkling, but I know of no such in England. When a man puts forth a new opinion like this, no one is under the slightest obligation to believe it or to refute it, unless it is supported by the most powerful reasons. All the literature of the times is in favor of the dipping theory.’³⁶⁰

It may therefore be concluded that the Baptists in England did indeed practice immersion before 1641, yea, further, that they had always done so, and that the only reasons to the contrary would be based upon prejudice against the historically verifiable truth of church perpetuity.

NOTE: for a complete discussion of the 1641 theory, see Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, pp. 20, 42–43; Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 426–441, 457–461; Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 234–245, 252–254; Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 354–359; J. B. Moody, *My Church*, pp. 321–325; Ray *Op. cit.*, pp. 44–84.

THE ORIGIN OF BAPTISTS IN AMERICA

The first Baptists in America were evidently among the first English settlers in the New England Colonies (1620–1640). There is evidence that there were Baptists or at least those who held to Baptist convictions among the Pilgrims and Congregationalists who settled at Plymouth. Cotton Mather, the Puritan historian, stated that: “Some few of these people have been among the plant, ers of New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our churches, which they enjoyed, reserving their particular opinions unto themselves.”³⁶¹

The “Pilgrims” had been in Holland, and had complained there that some of their people had fallen in with Baptist convictions. It seems most probable, therefore, that either some among them had taken Baptist views, or that some became Baptists yet outwardly

³⁵⁸ Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 268–270.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ Mather, *Magnalia*, Book vii, Chapter 11, as quoted by Cramp, *Op. cit.*, p. 460.

conformed to the Congregational ways for a time to flee with the rest to the New World to avoid persecution.

Aside from some Englishmen, most of the Baptist ministers and people in the New England area were of Welsh extraction. Many Welsh pastors and entire congregations migrated from Britain throughout the seventeenth century.³⁶² There now arises a question of history. Although there were Baptists in America from the very first, who planted the first Baptist church on American soil? Many assume that the man was Roger Williams, Often called the “Father of American Baptists.” The historical evidence, however, decidedly points to either Dr. John Clarke or Hanserd Knollys. The facts of history are as follows:

First, the claim that Roger Williams is the “Father of American Baptists” is of comparatively recent origin. The records of the “Church” at Providence, Rhode Island, which he supposedly founded and pastored, do not exist with any regularity or trustworthiness until about the year 1770. What records do exist prior to that date contain many inaccuracies and misinformation concerning known facts. These have caused most historians to judge them as untrustworthy. The church likewise had no Confession of Faith and no meeting house for many years (meeting in the open air when weather permitted), leaving not a trace of anything but tradition for those first decades. These facts led the Baptist historian Benedict, in his ardent and thorough researches, to state, “The more I study on this subject, the more I am unsettled and confused.”³⁶³

Second, the historical record of Roger Williams and his “church” are decidedly unconvincing. Williams was born about the year 1600 of Welsh parentage in England. As a young man, his skill and potential attracted the attention of Sir Edward Coke, the great British lawyer. With the help and, patronage of Coke, Williams pursued an academic and legal career, graduating from Cambridge University, B.A., in 1627. His bent, however, was toward theology. He became a Church of England minister, taking a parish in Lincolnshire. Williams was strongly Puritan in his views, and, as he was opposed to the Anglican hierarchy and its “High” Church views, he decided to emigrate to New England. Sometime in this period of his life he came under the influence of a well-known Baptist minister in London, Samuel Howe, whose preaching seems to have left its mark on Williams’ later thinking. He removed to Boston in 1631 and by that time had become Separatist in his views of church polity. Beset with controversy, he left Boston for Salem, where he began a stormy ministry. The issues centered on church association and separation. A controversy then broke forth concerning the Oath of Loyalty that was required of every adult male citizen (the “Freeman’s Oath”), to aid the colony and maintain loyalty to the King. This he considered a matter of “liberty of conscience.” The whole incident was drawn out of proportion and Williams was threatened with banishment or his return to England as a criminal. He chose to flee the Colony and spent weeks in a freezing, howling wilderness for his convictions. He settled at Rhode Island and was followed by some stragglers who shared his principles and became his associates. There a colony was founded upon the principles of freedom of conscience in religious matters. In 1639 Roger Williams, and eleven others, having come to baptistic views concerning the nature of the church and baptism, formed a “church.” Williams was allegedly immersed by Ezekiel Holliman, who in turn was baptized

³⁶² See J. Davis, *History of the Welsh Baptists*.

³⁶³ Benedict, *Op. cit.*, p. 443.

by Williams, and then Williams baptized the rest. This “church” lasted only about four months, at which time Williams left and disassociated himself from it and all others. The “church” then dissolved. Williams had renounced his church and his baptism as invalid, believing that no true church existed anywhere. He then turned “Seeker,” and spent the rest of his life disassociated from any church fellowship.

Thomas Lechford, an Episcopalian, was traveling in New England during the years 1637–1641. He visited Providence about one and a half years after the founding of Williams’ former, so-called “church.” He wrote that “Williams and his company...hold there is no true, visible church in the bay, nor in the world, nor any true ministry.”³⁶⁴ George P. Fisher, the American Protestant church historian, wrote:

...he soon withdrew from the Baptists. He stood aloof, in the closing years of his life, from all church fellowship. He discarded the rite of baptism altogether, and waited for a revived spiritual apostolate....He became one of the “Seekers”....He had separated from the Massachusetts churches for recognizing in any way the parish churches of England; he had separated from his own church at Salem for not renouncing communion with the other Massachusetts churches; and at last he sundered fellowship with the Baptist church of his own formation and from all other organized Christian bodies.³⁶⁵

Some time (i.e., several years) after the dissolution of the Williams’ “church,” Thomas Olney, a man who had supposedly been baptized by Williams, gathered another assembly in Providence and became its pastor, but he did not succeed Williams as pastor of that same “church,” which had totally dissolved.

Roger Williams was a man of strong convictions—a great man in many respects: a religious reformer, a statesman, champion of civil and religious liberty—but he was never truly a Baptist, and it is exceedingly strange, if not ignorant and naive, to call him the “Father of American Baptists.”

NOTE: There was a great parallel between Roger Williams and John Smyth. Both of them began “churches” and both either left or were disfellowshipped from their own groups. Both initiated their own baptism and both became quickly dissatisfied with it. Both sought a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ that had perpetual roots. Smyth thought he found such in a sprinkling Mennonite church and Williams finally believed that none existed on the earth! The problem with these men was essentially the question of perpetuity, which is ever found in New Testament doctrine and practice, never in a given name or denomination. Had Smyth been consistent with his own presuppositions, he could have sought out a Baptist church in Holland, for many existed, and there he could have received baptism that would have been in a line of descentance from the Waldenses or other New Testament groups. He was inconsistent with his own presuppositions. Likewise with Roger Williams. Had he considered the matter thoroughly, he could have sought out a Baptist Church and applied for a consistent baptism. Hanserd Knollys was at that very time pastoring a Baptist Church in Dover, New Hampshire, and Dr. John Clarke was pastoring a Baptist church close by at Newport! In the following years that Williams spent in England to procure a charter for the colony, he could have received valid baptism from any number of regular Baptist churches. The truth of the matter is that neither of these men were ever Baptists at all, but retained a Protestant mentality and their

³⁶⁴ As quoted by Adlam, *The First Baptist Church in America*, p. 32.

³⁶⁵ Fisher, *The History of the Church*, p. 472.

whole concept of baptism and church identification was unique and subjective, rather than consistently scriptural and historical.

Third, at least a year before the Williams affair (1638), there were two Baptist churches in existence, one at Dover, New Hampshire, under the leadership of Hanserd Knollys, and the other in Newport, Rhode Island, pastored by Dr. John Clarke. There was also an attempt to plant a Baptist Church in late 1638 or early 1639 at Weymouth, Massachusetts, but it was broken up by the civil authorities and its members were arraigned in court in March of 1639, the very month that Roger Williams attempted to found his “church.”

Hanserd Knollys, a graduate of Cambridge University, was a scholar and clergyman in the Church of England. He published at least five grammatical works treating Greek, Hebrew and Latin. He came to Baptist views and had to leave the established Church. He was imprisoned and escaped to New England due to the cooperation of his wife and his jailer. He arrived in New England in 1638, planting a Baptist Church in Dover (Piscataway), New Hampshire. He remained in America until 1641, when he returned to England for, personal and family reasons. There he pastored a very large and influential Baptist Church. There have been some who have argued that Knollys was not a Baptist until his return to England, but the facts of history are that he came to Baptist convictions before he left England (and that those convictions were, indeed, the very cause of his fleeing the country), and that his church at Dover was Baptist; and that he held disputes with a paedobaptist, ultimately necessitating the removal of the church to Long Island and, finally, to New Jersey.³⁶⁶ Cotton Mather, who was well acquainted with Knollys personally and knew his baptistic convictions, stated:

I confess there were some of these persons whose names deserve to live in our book for their piety, although their particular opinions were such as to be disserviceable unto the declared and supposed interests of our churches. Of these were some godly Anabaptists; as namely Mr. Hanserd Knollys...of Dover.³⁶⁷

NOTE: Some have objected to Knollys being a Baptist at this time, in spite of this statement by Mather,³⁶⁸ but the reference to Dover and his personal acquaintance with Knollys must refer to the time Knollys spent in America. Further, the other facts do not coincide with the view that Knollys became a Baptist later in his life.

The Baptist church at Newport, Rhode Island, was first pastored by Dr. John Clarke. Clarke was a physician, born in Suffolk, England, and educated at the University of Leyden in Holland. He practiced medicine in London and was a Baptist before he came to New England. Clarke was well-studied in law, theology, Latin and Hebrew, and was strongly Calvinistic in his convictions. Because of civil and religious upheaval, he removed to Newport with a group of dissidents and established a Baptist Church in 1638. His tombstone reads, in part:

³⁶⁶ See C. B. Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 533; Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 366–367; Cramp, *Op. cit.*, p. 461.

³⁶⁷ Mather, *Op. cit.*, p. 243, as quoted by Christian, *Loc. cit.*

³⁶⁸ See Pope A. Duncan, *Hanserd Knollys: Seventeenth Century Baptist*, p. 10.

To the Memory of
DOCTOR JOHN CLARKE
One of the original purchasers and proprietors
of this island and one of the founders of the
First Baptist Church of Newport,
Its first pastor and munificent benefactor;
He was a native of Bedfordshire, England,
and a practitioner of physic in London,
He, with his associates, came to this island from Mass.,
in March, 1638, O.S. , and on the 24th
of the same month obtained a deed thereof from
the Indians. He shortly after gathered
the church aforesaid and became its pastor.³⁶⁹

Thus, there were two Baptist Churches in the New England area before the “church” of Roger Williams. Both John Clarke and Roger Williams continued to be friends and the leading citizens of the Rhode Island Colony for many years, gaining for the colony its charter and guiding it in the truths of religious freedom and civil liberty. In the minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, the following item is given: “When the first church in Newport Rhode Island was one hundred years old, in 1738, Mr. John Callender, their minister, delivered and published a sermon on the occasion.”³⁷⁰

NOTE: for a full discussion of the first Baptists and Baptist Church in America and the issues involved, see Armitage, *Op. cit.*, pp. 627–678; Adlam, *Op. cit.*, Christian, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 359–379, II, pp. 15–47; Cramp, *Op. cit.*, pp. 460–464; Hassell, *Op. cit.*, p. 533; Jarrell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 372–405; Ray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 104–129.

CHAPTER XXII THE MODERN OR POST–REFORMATION ERA 1649—

In the early seventeenth century, the term “Anabaptist” was shortened to “Baptist” and some of the disapprobation was lifted. Increasing religious tolerance and the gradual emergence of religious freedom began to erode the framework of the sacralist or monolithic societies of Europe and Britain. In the United States, the Constitution, in its First Amendment, precluded the establishment of a State Church. Thus, the dawn of a glorious and blessed day was shedding its beams across the expanse of Western Civilization. The modern era of worldwide missionary vision and zeal was soon to be born. God was soon to bring a “Great Awakening” to both continents. In this atmosphere of slow but gradual liberty, the Baptists, as the representatives of New Testament Christianity, inheriting and promulgating the primitive truths of Apostolic Christianity, would grow and develop into a major religious and evangelical force.

³⁶⁹ Adlam, *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁷⁰ A. D. Gillette, *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from AD .1707 to AD 1807*, p. 455, f.

CHRONOLOGY

1648–1700

30 Years' War & The Peace of Westphalia: Catholic & Protestant territories settled and borders drawn in Europe (1648)

Charles I of England tried & beheaded by Puritan Parliament: England declared a Commonwealth (1649)

Baptists John Clarke, Mr. Crandall & Obadiah Holmes imprisoned in Boston. Holmes publicly whipped (c.1650)

Harvard College granted charter (1650)

First General Baptist Confession of Faith (1651)

Oliver Cromwell becomes Lord Protector of England (1653)

London Polyglot Bible in 10 languages (1653–1657)

The True Gospel Faith (A Confession issued by English General Baptists in opposition to the Quakers, 1654)

Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667)

Cromwell dissolves Parliament: divides England into districts under major-generals as governors (1655)

Massacre of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont (1655)

The Midlands Baptist Association & Confession of Faith (1655)

Oliver Cromwell proclaims a National Fast for the Waldenses, writes to European powers for their preservation (1655–1658)

William Wickenden (Baptist preacher) banished from New York for preaching (1656)

The Somerset Particular Baptist Confession of Faith (1656)

New Haven, Conn. court passes Act of fines & public whipping for common persons associating with Quakers or Baptists (1658)

Henry Dunster (President of Harvard, whose Baptist convictions lead to his dismissal, c.1612–1659)

The Standard Confession of the General Baptists (1660)

The Restoration of the English Monarchy under Charles II (1660)

Parliament passes *The Corporation Act* which prohibits nonconformists (Dissenters) from public and military office (1661)

Henry Denne (Baptist Divine, Apologist & Author, d.1661)³⁷¹

John James (Baptist minister: hanged, drawn & quartered for treason without evidence, 1661)

Conventicle Act passed in New York against Dissenters (Baptists) (1662)

English Parliament passes the Act of Uniformity: over 2,000 Puritan, Independent and Baptist ministers forced from their pulpits in “The Great Ejection.” (1662)

Henry Jesse (Baptist Divine & apologist: died in prison, 1601–1663)

First Baptist church in Massachusetts (1663)

English Parliament passes the Conventicle Act which forbids Nonconformist religious meetings (1664)

Governor John Hutchinson of Nottingham (Baptist): Died in prison for Baptist convictions (1616–1664)

English Parliament passes The Five-Mile Act which prohibits any Nonconformist minister to come within 5 miles of any city, town or Parliamentary borough (1665)

Great Plague in London (1665). Spiritual awakening in London at the time of the plague (1665)

Thomas Gould (Baptist pastor) & several members fined, imprisoned & banished from Massachusetts (1665–1666)

Great Fire of London (1666)

³⁷¹ Baptists were very active in the years 1640–1688 (Reign of Charles I, the Puritan Parliament, Commonwealth and Restoration era of Charles II). A great number of names occur in historical records, but little biographical information is available. These Baptist preachers were persecuted by both the Anglicans and the Puritans. Most were imprisoned and many died incarcerated. Among these Baptists were educated men who were formerly Anglican clergymen and some who became apologists for Baptist principles. (Cf. Armitage, *History of the Baptists*; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*; John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. II; Benedict, *The History of the Baptists*, (1813 ed. & 1848 ed.); Goadby, *Byepaths in Baptist History*; Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*; Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*).

John Canne (Baptist Divine: Author of first marginal notes in the English Bible, 1590–1667)

Treaty of Dover between England & France (1670)

Vavasor Powell (Puritan preacher turned Baptist. Died in prison, 1617–1670)

John Gifford (Baptist pastor of Bedford church. Baptized John Bunyan, d.1671)

A Declaration of Indulgence issued by Charles II to favor Romanists & Dissenters (1672). The Test Act passed by Parliament revoked this Declaration and prohibited Catholics & Dissenters from public & military office (1673)

1675

John Tombes (Puritan–turned–Baptist minister & apologist. Debated Richard Baxter with success, 1603–1676)

The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith: A revision of the Westminster Presbyterian Confession. Re-issued in 1689 in a second edition (1677)³⁷²

Caffynism (Matthew Caffyn, a General Baptist with Socinian doctrine) divides General (Arminian) Baptists (1677 into the 1700's)

John Bunyan writes *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)

The Orthodox Creed of the Particular Baptists (1678)

John Myles (Calvinistic Baptist pioneer & organizer in Wales & New England, 1621–1683)

Francis Bampfield (Puritan–turned–Baptist preacher. Died in prison, 1615–1683)

Thomas Deluane (Baptist apologist: Answered Dr. Benjamin Calamy's challenge with a *Plea for the Nonconformists*, which

³⁷² Cf. footnotes referring to the 1644–46 *First London Baptist Confession of Faith* and to the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689) for information on the relation to and influence of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* to the Baptist confessions.

passed through 17 editions by 1739). For his writing he died in prison (1683)

During the reign of Charles II, 8,000 Dissenters died in prison (1660–1685)

Reign of James II of England (1685–1688)

Edict of Nantes revoked: thousands of Huguenots exiled from France (1685)

French & Italian forces seek to exterminate the Waldenses (1685–1686)

James II issues the *Declaration of Indulgence* for the liberty of Conscience to further the Romish cause: Dissenters providentially helped (1687)

Daniel Dyke (Puritan turned Baptist: co-pastor with William Kiffin, c.1617–1688)

The “Glorious Revolution.” English Lords invite the Protestant William of Orange to the English throne. James II in voluntary exile (1688)

Declaration of Rights in England, including the *Act of Toleration* passed by English Parliament effectively ending persecution of Nonconformists, Dissenters & Baptists (1689)

Waldensian refugees return from exile in Geneva to the valleys of the Piedmont (1689)

Particular Baptist Association formed in London: *Second London Confession* of 1677 issued (1689)

John Eliot (New England Puritan Nonconformist: Indian missionary & translator, 1604–1690)

Salem witch trials: 32 persons executed by Puritan authorities (1691–1692)

A Short Confession or a Brief Narrative of Faith (General Baptists) (1691)

William Milburne (Baptist Preacher) opposed the Salem Witch trials (1692)

Robert Calef (Baptist) writes against Cotton Mather & the Salem witch trials in *More Wonders from the Invisible World*, 1697, but not published until 1700. It was publicly burned by Increase Mather. Calef was driven out of Boston (1697)

1700–1800

William Kiffin (Merchant & minister: the most prominent & influential English Baptist of the 17th century, 1616–1701)

Elias Keach (Son of Benjamin Keach). New England Calvinistic Baptist minister (1667–1701)

First Baptist church organized in Delaware (1701)

Benjamin Keach (Baptist Pastor, apologist & author. Debated Baxter. Wrote 43 works, 1640–1704)

First Baptist church organized in Connecticut (1705)

Philadelphia Baptist Association (New England Calvinistic Baptists, 1707)

First Baptist church organized in New Jersey (1707)

First Baptist church organized in Pennsylvania (1711)

William Screven (Baptist preacher) forced to leave Maine after fines & imprisonment: settled in South Carolina & established a church (1629–1713)

Joseph Stennett (Baptist preacher, apologist & scholar, 1663–1713)

Pierre Allix (French Reformed pastor & apologist for the Albigenses, 1641–1717)

Dr. John Gale (Baptist preacher, scholar & apologist, 1680–1721)

Henri Arnaud (Waldense leader, d.1721)

Moravian Brethren (Church of the United Brethren: formed from remnants of the old Bohemian Brethren. Find refuge at Herrnhut, 1724)

1725

Organization of the Original Freewill Baptists in Virginia & N. Carolina (1727)

Organization of first Seventh–Day Baptist church in America (Germantown, PA, 1728)

Thomas Hollis (Calvinistic Baptist & philanthropist, 1658–1730)

The beginning of “The Great Awakening” in Northampton, Mass. under Jonathan Edwards: A series of revivals & spiritual awakenings between 1734–1758. (1734)³⁷³

The beginning of “The Great Evangelical Revival” in Britain with the preaching of George Whitefield (1735)

Alexander Mack (Organizer & leader of New Baptists or German Brethren, 1679–1735)

Division of American Baptists into Regular & Separate Baptists due to differences over the Great Awakening (c.1739)

Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith (1742)³⁷⁴

College of New Jersey founded (becomes Princeton University in 1896) (1746)

1750

Baptist churches in American Colonies number 58 (1750)

Number of Baptist churches in England & Wales estimated at about 5,000: a smaller number than in 1688 (1753)

Joseph Stennett (Calvinistic Baptist preacher & apologist, 1692–1758)

End of the “Great Awakening” era of revival (c.1760)

³⁷³ The great 18th century spiritual awakening occurred in both Britain and in America. In America it was referred to as “The Great Awakening” and in Britain as “The Great Evangelical Revival.” A phenomenon of the Great Awakening in America was that a great number of Baptist churches were formed by Presbyterian and Congregational churches which reconsidered their doctrines in light of the Scriptures, the revival and a now–regenerate membership. A great number of these “Separatist” (“New light”) Baptist churches were formed in Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia.

³⁷⁴ The Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith is *not* identical to the Second London Confession of 1689. Two articles and an appendix were added. For a full discussion, Cf. Lumpkin, *Op. cit.*, pp. 348–353; Cathcart, *Loc. cit.*

Rhode Island College (Brown University)
founded as a Baptist, non-discriminatory
institution (1764)

John Brine (Baptist minister & author: With
John Gill, the most prominent Baptist
leaders in 18th century England, 1703–
1765)

“New Connection” Free Grace General
Baptist Assembly organized in England
(1770) Monies collected in England to help
relieve the Waldenses in the valleys of
Piedmont (1770)

The founding of Bristol College: the first
solely Baptist institution for higher
education (1770)

The objectionable name “Anabaptist”
replaced by “Antipedobaptist” in
Massachusetts.

Estates of members of the Baptist church at
Ashfield, Mass., sold at public auction to
pay ministerial tax for the Presbyterian
minister (1770)³⁷⁵

John Gill (Baptist Divine, preacher &
commentator: most influential English
Baptist of mid-18th century, 1697–1771)

Shubael Stearns (Baptist pastor & evangelist
during the “Great Awakening” in VA.,
1706–1771)

1775

The American War for Independence (American Revolution) (1775–1783)

Articles of Faith of the Kehukee Baptist
Association (to merge the Calvinistic
Baptists with the “Separatist” Baptists who
left the Arminian or General Baptists during
the Great Awakening) (1777)

³⁷⁵ The Baptists of Ashfield, Mass. had their property confiscated by the Presbyterians for the ministerial tax in 1770. This law was not removed from the State Statutes until 1831. Cf. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, pp. 115–116; Cf. John T. Christian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 84–86 for further instances involving both Presbyterian and Congregationalist actions against the Baptists.

The Brethren in Christ Church (Anabaptist, Pietist & Wesleyan holiness in nature) organized (1778)

Organization of modern Freewill Baptists (New Hampshire (1780)

Andrew Gifford (Baptist preacher & assistant librarian of the British Museum, 1700–1784)

James Madison: Religious Freedom Act abolishes religious tests in Virginia (1785)

Abel Morgan (Baptist Divine, Apologist & patriot, 1713–1785)

Beginnings of the “Second Great Awakening:” A series of revivals & spiritual awakenings in New England, the Ohio Valley & Eastern seaboard (1787–1832)³⁷⁶

General Assembly of General Baptists in England send a petition to Parliament for the abolition of slavery (1787)

U.S. Constitution ratified (1788)³⁷⁷

Bill of Rights (First 10 Amendments) of U.S. Constitution ratified (1791)

James Manning (Baptist pastor, scholar & first president of the College of Rhode Island (Brown University) (1738–1791)

William Carey: Baptist Missionary Society founded at Kettering (1792)

Samuel Harriss (Baptist preacher, “The Apostle of Virginia,” 1724–1794)

Morgan Edwards (Baptist preacher & Divine: Founder of Rhode Island College (Brown University) & the only Tory [British sympathizer] among the Baptists (1722–1795)

Samuel Stennett (Baptist preacher, apologist & author, 1727–1795)

³⁷⁶ After some scattered awakenings, the “Second Great Awakening” began in full force about 1796.

³⁷⁷ The Baptists of New England were largely responsible for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution by their efforts for the Bill of Rights. Several Baptist leaders were foremost in this effort, including Isaac Backus and John Leland. Information can be found in the works of Armitage, Backus, Benedict, Cathcart, Cook, Cramp, Christian, etc.

Formation of English Baptist Home Mission Society (1797)

Formation of Baptist Union in Wales (1799)

Samuel Medley (English Baptist preacher & hymnwriter, 1738–1799)

1800–1900

The beginnings of the Camp Meeting revivals of the Second Great Awakening (1800)³⁷⁸

David Thomas (Baptist preacher, evangelist & patriot, 1732–c.1801)

John Waller (“Swearing Jack Waller,” an opponent of the Baptists converted & becomes a pioneer Baptist evangelist in VA, 1741–1802)

British & Foreign Bible Society founded in London (1804)

John Gano (Baptist preacher, chaplain & patriot, 1727–1804)

Isaac Backus (Baptist preacher, historian, evangelist, apologist for religious freedom & patriot, 1724–1806)

Abraham Booth (Baptist preacher, theologian & author, 1734–1806)

U.S. prohibits importation of African slaves (1808)

Elijah Craig (Pioneer Baptist preacher in VA & KY, c.1743–1808)

U.S. declares war on Britain (War of 1812)

Andrew Bryan. Pioneer Black Baptist evangelist & church planter. One of the earliest, if not first Black to be ordained to the Gospel ministry in America (1737–1812)

³⁷⁸ The “Great Revival of 1800” on the Kentucky and Ohio frontiers witnessed the first departures from Calvinistic theology and the beginnings of “revivalism” through the preaching of the Methodists and the ideas of Wesleyan perfectionism and emotionalism. Such a change later attracted the “New Haven Theology” and was systematized and popularized by Charles G. Finney in the 1820s.

Adonairam Judson and wife leave America as the first Congregational foreign missionaries. Convinced of Baptist principles, baptized by William Carey in India, and settle in Burma as pioneer Baptist Missionaries (1812).

Organization of General Union of Baptist Ministers & Churches in England (Forerunner of Baptist Union of Great Britain & Ireland) (1813)

Formation of the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia (Baptist general foreign missionary convention) (1814)³⁷⁹

Andrew Fuller (Baptist theologian, preacher, author & secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society in Britain, 1754–1815)

American Bible Society founded (1816)

Beginning of revival & spiritual awakening in Geneva under ministry of Robert Haldane, a Baptist evangelist (1816)³⁸⁰

Hamilton Literary & Theological Institute (Madison University & Hamilton Baptist Theological Seminary) (1818)

Reuben Ford (Baptist minister). Apologist for religious liberty & author (1742–1823)

Organization of the Baptist General Tract Society (American Baptist Publication Society) (1824)

American Sunday School Union formed (1824)

1825

The mid-1820's: beginnings of Finney's ministry & institution of the "new measures" (altar call, decisionism, etc.) that mark the transition from revival to "revivalism" in American evangelical religion (1820's)

³⁷⁹ This convention had its original start with the efforts of Luther Rice, who returned from India after becoming a Baptist with Adonairam Judson. He worked to form an organization for the support of foreign Baptist missionaries.

³⁸⁰ The revival under Haldane's ministry has been called the "Second Genevan Reformation," or "Haldane's Revival," and led to the conversion of such men as Louis Gaussen, author of *Theopneustia: The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, Merle D'Aubigne, the church historian, Frederic Monod, leader of the Evangelical French churches, Cesar Melan, the great preacher, and Bonifas, the theologian.

John Ryland (English Baptist preacher & president of Bristol College, 1753–1825)

The American Tract Society founded (1825)

Two–seed–in–the–Spirit Predestinarian Baptists (c.1826)

Alexander Crawford. Pioneer Canadian Baptist Preacher & evangelist (c.1785–1828)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (Mormons) organized (1830)

Robert Hall (English Arminian Baptist preacher & author, 1764–1831)

Plymouth Brethren organized (1831)

The Adventist Movement (Later Seventh Day Adventism under Ellen G. White) begins under William Miller, a Baptist (1831)

George Dana Boardman (Baptist). Pioneer missionary to Burma. His widow later married Adoniram Judson (1801–1831)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (Dialectic philosopher, 1770–1831)

Churches of Christ (Disciples or “Campbellites”) founded (1832)

New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith: written to counter the Arminianism of Freewill Baptists & further cooperation of Regular & General Baptists (1833)³⁸¹

Spanish Inquisition finally suppressed (1834)

William Carey (“Father of Modern Missions”) Baptist preacher, missionary to India & translator (1761–1834)

Joseph Ivimey (Baptist preacher & historian, 1773–1834)

³⁸¹ The *New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith* is the common Baptist confession for American Baptists, either in its original or an abbreviated form.

Organization of the Primitive (“Old School,” “Anti–Missionary”) Baptists in New York & Pennsylvania (1835)³⁸²

The Gospel Standard Magazine: or The Feeble Christian’s Support (British Baptist) published by John & William Gadsby (1835)

Luther Rice (Baptist missionary to India & promoter of missionary interest, 1783–1836)

John Rippon (Baptist preacher & editor of the Baptist Register: successor to John Gill & a predecessor of C.H. Spurgeon (1751–1836)

Joshua Marshman (Baptist missionary & linguist: co–laborer with Carey, 1768–1837)

Christmas Evans (Welsh Baptist preacher & pamphleteer, 1766–1838)

John Wilson, author: *Our Israelitish Origin* & beginning of modern British–Israelism (1840)

John Leland (Baptist preacher, evangelist & apologist for religious liberty, 1754–1841)

Robert Haldane (Scottish Baptist evangelist, author & philanthropist, 1764–1842)

American & Foreign Free Baptist Missionary Society organized by Abolitionists in Boston (1843)

Alexander Carson (Ulster Presbyterian minister–turned–Baptist): pastor, theologian, writer & apologist (1776–1844)

William Gadsby (English Baptist pastor, evangelist, author & hymnwriter: A strong apologist for Baptist distinctives & sovereign grace, 1773–1844)

Daniel Parker (Baptist Preacher). Founder of the Two–Seed–in–the–Spirit Predestinarian Baptists as a reaction against mission boards & denominationalism (1781–1844)

³⁸² The original fall–out between the Missionary and Primitive Baptists was over the use and support of para–church organizations such as Sunday schools and mission boards, not evangelism.

American Baptists divide over issue of slavery: Southern Baptist Convention organized in Atlanta, GA; The Triennial Convention renamed American Baptist Missionary Union (1845)

Stundists (Russian Pietists, “Stundo-Baptists”) (1845)

The Mormons under Brigham Young establish a colony at the Great Salt Lake (1846–1847)

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels publish *Das Capital*, the Communist Manifesto (1848)

Waldensian church recognized in Piedmont Constitution (1848)

1850

Sayyid Ali Muhammed (“the Bab,” forerunner of the “Prophet”): beginnings of Baha’ism (1819–1850)

Beginnings of “Old Landmarkism” among the Baptists: J. R. Graves & J. M. Pendleton (1850–1854)

Adoniram Judson (Baptist pioneer missionary to Burma, lexicographer, Bible translator & leader in founding the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1788–1850)

American Bible Union (Baptist) founded over the controversy concerning the translation of *baptizein* as “baptize” rather than “immerse.” (1850)

James Haldane (Baptist Scottish Evangelist, 1768–1851)

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter–Day Saints founded (monogamous) (1852)

A revival & spiritual awakening under the ministry of C. H. Spurgeon At New Park Street Chapel in London (1854)³⁸³

³⁸³ This revival was distinct and prior to the Evangelical Awakening which swept America and Great Britain in 1858–1859. See Eric Hayden, *Spurgeon on Revival*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962. 142 pp.

Soren Kierkegaard (Danish philosopher: Father of Existentialism, 1813–1855)

Auguste Comte (Positivist philosopher & social scientist, 1798–1857)

John Warburton (Calvinistic Baptist
Preacher, 1776–1857)

The Evangelical Revival of 1857–1859
(beginning in U.S. & reaching Britain in the
next year) (1857–1859)

Robert Flockhart (Baptist preacher): “The
Street Preacher of Edinburgh,” 1778–1857)

John Mason Peck (pioneer American Baptist
missionary, educator & editor, 1789–1858)

Southern Baptist Theological Baptist
Seminary at Louisville, KY founded (1858)

Charles Darwin: *On the Origin of the Species by Natural Selection* published (1859)

The American Civil War (1861–1865) A series of revivals & spiritual awakenings in the
Confederate armies (1861–1865)

Gospel Standard Baptist Churches
established in Britain. Separated from Strict
& Particular Baptists over Sonship
Controversy re the eternal Sonship of Christ
(1861)

Organization of the seventh–Day Adventists
(1863)

Sinclair Thomson (Pioneer Calvinistic
Baptist pastor & evangelist in Shetland
Islands, 1784–1864)

William Tiptaft (English Strict Baptist
minister, 1803–1864)

Francis Wayland (Baptist pastor, author &
educator: president of Brown University,
1796–1865)

North American Baptist General Conference
(German) organized (1865)

Alexander Campbell: Founder of the
Disciples of Christ & the Churches of Christ
(“Campbellites”) (1788–1866)

J. Newton Brown (Baptist pastor, theologian
& editor: author of the *New Hampshire
Confession of Faith* (1803–1868)

R. B. C. Howell (Baptist preacher, theologian, apologist & president of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1801–1868)

John Charles Philpot (Strict Baptist preacher & author, 1802–1869)

David Benedict (Baptist preacher & historian, 1779–1874)

1875

Horatio Balch Hackett (Baptist scholar, linguist & commentator, 1808–1875)

Rufus Babcock (Baptist minister). Pastor, educator, author, editor, President of the American Baptist Publication Society & corresponding secretary of the American Bible Union (1798–1875)

Sidney Rigdon. Baptist minister who became an associate with Alexander Campbell & then an early Mormon leader (1793–1876)

Henry Clay Fish (Baptist pastor, educator & author, 1820–1877)

The “Niagara” Conferences (Fundamentalist Bible studies & Conferences): Began c. 1875 as Bible studies & became public conferences from 1878–1900) (1878)³⁸⁴

Baptist General Conference (Swedish Arminian) (1879)

Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science), organized (1879)

Jehovah’s Witnesses (Russellites) formed as a departure from Seventh–Day Adventism (1879)

The Toy case (Crawford Howell Toy, Hebrew & OT professor forced to resign from S. Baptist Seminary, Louisville, for radical critical views. Two years later instated at Harvard (1879)

³⁸⁴ The Niagra Conference was the precursor to the Fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century.

Jeremiah Bell Jeter (Baptist preacher, apologist & editor, 1802–1880)

Church of God (Anderson) organized (1880)

John Mockett Cramp (Baptist pastor, scholar & historian, 1791–1881)

John L. Dagg (Baptist theologian, author & president of Mercer University, 1794–1884)

John Gerhard Oncken (German Baptist pastor, evangelist & leader, 1800–1884)

The Evangelical Covenant Church of America (Swedish) founded (1885)

Church of God (Pentecostal) organized (1886)

Thomas James Comber (Pioneer Baptist missionary to Africa, 1852–1887)

Christian Missionary & alliance Church movement begun under influence of A. B. Simpson (1887)

James Petigru Boyce (Baptist leader, theologian & educator: President of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY, 1827–1888)

Unity School of Christianity (derived from New Thought & Christian Science, 1890)

James Madison Pendleton (Baptist preacher, theologian, educator, author & apologist for Landmarkism, 1811–1891)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (English Baptist Preacher, philanthropist, author & educator). Pastored the then largest evangelical congregation in the world (Some 6,000), baptized over 14,600. Authored 83 works in addition to the 66 volumes of printed sermons. It has been estimated that during his life–time some 100 million copies of his printed sermons were distributed world–wide. Endured persecution for his Calvinism & Biblical position (1834–1892)

Basil Manly, Jr. (Baptist preacher & educator, 1825–1892)

John Robinson Graves (Baptist preacher, educator, author, editor, publisher & apologist for Landmarkism, 1820–1893)

John Albert Broadus (Baptist Preacher, educator & author, 1827–1894)

Niagara Bible Conference of 1895: beginnings of the term “Fundamentals.” (The Fundamentalist movement began in this century (c. 1878) & reached full development in the 1920’s) (1895)

Fire-Baptized Holiness Church organized (1895)

Thomas Armitage (Baptist minister & church historian, 1819–1896)

1900–1990

American Standard Version (American version of English revised Version of 1885) (1901)

Edward T. Hiscox (Baptist historian & author, 1814–1901)

John Jasper (Black Baptist preacher & evangelist, 1812–1901)

The beginnings of the modern Pentecostal movement (1901)

James M. Stifler (Baptist minister & educator, 1839–1902)

George C. Needham (Fundamentalist Baptist leader & writer): Founder of the Bible Conference movement in America. Co-founder of the “Niagara” Conferences (1840–1902)

Wright Brothers: first airplane flight (1903)

Alvah Hovey (Baptist educator, historian, theologian & NT scholar, 1820–1903)

Baptist World Alliance organized in London (1905)

American Baptist Association (Landmarkers) organized (1905)

National Primitive Baptist Convention
organized (1907)

Church of the Nazarene (merger of
Pentecostal & Wesleyan Holiness)
organized (1907)

Northern Baptist Convention organized
(1907)

Thomas Treadwell Eaton (Southern Baptist
minister). Pastor, editor & controversialist in
Whitsitt controversy (1845–1907)

1910

Alexander Maclaren (Baptist minister,
author & president of the British Baptist
Union, 1826–1910)

Second Congress of Baptist World Alliance
at Philadelphia (1911)

William Heth Whitsett (Baptist educator,
author & president of Southern Baptist
Seminary at Louisville: forced resignation in
1899 for arguing that Baptists did not
immerse before 1641) (1841–1911)

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
(Lombard, IL.) founded by Fundamentalists
in the Northern Baptist Convention reacting
to liberalism in Chicago Divinity School
(1913)

National Spiritual alliance of the U.S.A.
(Spiritists) founded (1913)

Apostolic (Oneness) Church organized
(1913)

Timothy Pietsch (Baptist minister).
Sovereign grace missionary to Japan (1913–
1991)

World War I (1914–1918)

Assemblies of God organized (1914)

Benajah Harvey Carroll (Baptist preacher,
scholar, educator, author & founder of
Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth,
TX, 1834–1914)

National Baptist Convention of America
(Black) organized (1915)

Walter Rauschenbusch (liberal Baptist
minister & educator: advocate of the “Social
Gospel,” 1861–1918)

William (Billy) Frank Graham (Baptist).
Neo–evangelical international evangelist &
ecumenical leader (b.1918–)

Henry Clay Mabie (Baptist minister).
Conservative denominational & missionary
leader & author (1847–1918)

1920

Height of the Modernist–Fundamentalist controversy in American Baptist & Protestant
bodies (c.1920)

Fundamental Baptist Fellowship organized
(schism from Northern Baptist Convention:
In 1947 formed into the Conservative
Baptist Association, or C.B.A., 1920)

James Bruton Gambrell (conservative
Southern Baptist pastor, educator & editor,
1841–1921)

Augustus Hopkins Strong (Baptist
Theologian, educator & author, 1836–1921)

Third Congress of Baptist World Alliance at
Stockholm (1923)

Bible Baptist Union formed (Fundamentalist
organization opposed to modernism in the
Northern Baptist Convention) (1923)³⁸⁵

International Church of the Foursquare
Gospel founded by Aimee Semple
McPherson (1923)

Scopes Trial & debate between evolution & creation (teaching evolution in public school
in TN, 1925)

United Church of Canada organized (1925)

Amzi Clarence Dixon: Baptist pastor
(Notably at Moody Memorial Church &

³⁸⁵ The Bible Baptist Union had as its confession a strengthened form of the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith*.

Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle) & author (1854–1925)

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary founded by conservatives in the NBC as a reaction to modernism at Crozer Theological Seminary (1925)

Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) first organized as an independent & conservative Baptist association for evangelism in the Orient (1927)

George White McDaniel (Southern Baptist minister). Preacher & President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Formulated the “McDaniel Statement” repudiating the idea & teaching of evolution (1875–1927)

Fourth Congress of Baptist World Alliance, Toronto, Canada (1928)

Edgar Young Mullins (Baptist theologian & educator: President of Louisville Seminary, Southern Baptist Convention & Baptist World Alliance, 1860–1928)

John Roach Straton (Fundamentalist Baptist preacher & leader): Prominent leader of the Bible Baptist Union (1875–1929)

1930

Rastafarians: A Jamaican religious mystical movement holding Emperor Haile Selassie (Ras Tafari) as a messiah (c.1930's)

Orthodox Baptists organized by conservatives from the S.B.C. opposed to liberalism (1931)

General Association of Regular Baptists (GARBC) organized by conservatives withdrawing from Northern Baptist Convention (1932)

Missionary Baptist Fellowship (later the World Baptist Fellowship) organized by conservatives withdrawing from Southern Baptist Convention (1932)

Albert Henry Newman (Baptist historian & educator, 1852–1933)

Isaac Massey Haldeman (dispensational Baptist preacher & writer: opponent of liberalism, 1845–1933)

Fifth Congress of Baptist World Alliance held in Berlin (1934)

Archibald Thomas Robertson (Baptist NT scholar, educator & author (1863–1934)

Wycliffe Bible Translators founded as a nondenominational agency for the scientific study of linguistics & the translation of the Bible (1934)

National Association of Freewill Baptists organized (1935)

Henry C. Vedder (Liberal Baptist scholar & historian, 1853–1935)

Annie Walker Armstrong (Southern Baptist). Early & influential leader in Southern Baptist home & foreign missionary work (1850–1938)

World War II begins with German invasion of Poland (1939)

Sixth Congress of World Alliance of Baptists, Atlanta, GA (1939)

Thomas Theodore Martin (Southern Baptist minister). A Fundamentalist, influential controversialist & evangelist (1862–1939)

1940

World War II: Germany, Italy & Japan form Axis powers (1940)

World War II: Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, U.S. enters war (1941)

Shailer Matthews (Baptist modernist leader, educator & dean of University of Chicago Divinity School: promoter of the Social Gospel, 1863–1941)

Roland Victor Bingham (Baptist minister). Canadian evangelical missionary, founder of the Sudan Interior Mission, religious editor & publisher (1872–1942)

William “Bible Bill” Aberhart (Canadian Baptist). School teacher, Bible teacher & radio pioneer. Founder of the Social Credit Party. Became Premier of Alberta (1878–1943)

George W. Truett (Southern Baptist preacher & leader: conservative, but fought Fundamentalism. Leader in Baptist World Alliance & Cooperative Program, 1867–1944)

The Manhattan Project: first detonation of atomic device: beginning of Atomic Age (1945)

John Birch (Baptist missionary to China & U.S. Army officer: Killed in China by Communists. John Birch Society used his name, 1918–1945)

Lee R. Scarborough (Southern Baptist pastor & educator: prof & president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Opposed fundamentalism, 1870–1945)

Curtis Lee Laws (Baptist minister). A conservative & influential religious editor who coined the term “Fundamentalist” (1868–1946)

John Richard Sampey (Southern Baptist). OT scholar, educator, author & president: Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville & Southern Baptist Convention (1863–1946)

Seventh Congress of the Baptist World Alliance, Copenhagen (1947)

Conservative Baptist Association (CBA) formed from conservatives leaving Northern Baptist Convention (& remnants of Bible Baptist Union of 1923) (1947)

William Bell Riley (Fundamental Baptist pastor, educator, author & leader: founder of Northwestern Schools, 1861–1947)

Henry Clarence Thiessen (Baptist). Evangelical dispensational Bible scholar, educator & author (1883–1947)

World Council of Churches (WCC) organized at Amsterdam (1948)

International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) organized as Fundamentalist alternative to WCC & in opposition to Communism (1948)

1950

Korean War: Communist North Korea invades South Korea (1950–1953)

The rise of “Liberation Theology:” Adapted from the Marxist philosophy of Maoism (1950’s)

The rise of the modern Christian Day School movement as a reaction to progressive (humanistic) education (1950’s)

Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) changes name to American Baptist Convention (ABC) (1950)

Eighth Congress of Baptist World Alliance at Cleveland (1950)

North American Baptist Association (NABA) (Landmarkers) leave American Baptist Association (ABA) & organize (1950)

Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) organizes from World Baptist Fellowship (WBF) (1950)

William L. Pettingill (Baptist pastor & Bible teacher, helped found Philadelphia School of the Bible, 1886–1950)

Ben M. Bogard (Landmark Missionary Baptist preacher, pastor, educator, author & debater, 1868–1951)

John Dewey (American pragmatist philosopher) A great molding influence on public education, morals & modern thought (1859–1952)

Walter Thomas Conner (conservative Southern Baptist theologian, educator & author, 1877–1952)

J. Frank Norris (fundamental Baptist preacher, evangelist & apologist: founder of World Baptist Fellowship & Bible Baptist Seminary, Ft. Worth, TX: simultaneously

pastored two of the largest Baptist churches in U.S., 1877–1952)

Arthur Walkington Pink (Baptist preacher & writer: His influence posthumously introduced the Puritans and the Calvinistic faith to the later 20th century, 1886–1952)

Baptist Mid–Missions (The name given to the pre–existing General Council of Cooperating Baptist Missions of North America) (1953)

Milledge Theron Rankin (Southern Baptist). Missionary to China & missions leader (1894–1953)

Keith L. Brooks (Baptist educator & editor, 1887–1954)

William Owen Carver (Southern Baptist minister). Educator, influential ecumenical missiologist & author (1868–1954)

Ninth Congress of Baptist World alliance, London (1955)

Reformed Baptist movement begins (c. mid–1950’s)

Thomas Todhunter Shields (fundamentalist Baptist preacher & leader): Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, president, Toronto Baptist Seminary, Toronto, Can., editor, 1873–1955)

Southwide Baptist Fellowship organized by conservatives from SBC (1956)

The rise and definitive development of Neo–evangelicalism as a departure from separatist Fundamentalism (c.1947–1957)

William Graham Scroggie (Baptist preacher, Bible expositor & author, 1877–1958)

San Francisco Baptist Theological Seminary founded as a fundamentalist institution (1958)

5 year Baptist Jubilee Advance through Evangelism launched by major Baptist bodies in U.S. (1959)

1960s marks the emergence of the “drug culture” and the widespread recreational use of controlled substances.

1960s mark the beginnings of postmodernism as a pervasive philosophy.³⁸⁶

Tenth Congress World Baptist Alliance, Rio de Janeiro (1960)

Progressive Baptist Convention of America (Black) organized in Cincinnati (1961)

United Church of Christ (UCC) formed (1961)³⁸⁷

Mordecai Ham (Fundamental Baptist pastor & evangelist, 1877–1961)

U.S. military advisers in Vietnam (1962)

Cuban missile crisis (1962)

Civil Rights riots in South (1962)

Fundamental Baptist Congress of North America, convened at Detroit (1963)

Eleventh Congress of Baptist World Alliance at Miami (1965)

Reformed Baptist Association organized in New England area (1967)

Kenneth Scott Latourette (Baptist church historian, missionary to China with Student Volunteer Movement, prof. at Yale, president of American Baptist Convention, American Historical Association & Association for Asian Studies, 1884–1968)

Neil Armstrong: first man on the moon (1969)

North American Baptist Association (NABA) (“Landmarkers”) change name to Missionary Baptist Association (BMA) (1969)

³⁸⁶ Postmodernism is characterized by the deconstruction and reconstruction of language, moral relativism, situation ethics, religious pluralism and existentialism.

³⁸⁷ The United Church of Christ was a merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. An ecumenical, socially-oriented, politically-correct contemporary body which espouses Liberal causes.

Rolfe Pickens Barnard (Calvinistic Baptist evangelist: helped revive truth of Sovereign Grace among Baptists, 1904–1969)

Peter Connolly (Calvinistic Baptist evangelist, missionary & theologian: preached in the 1920's revival in Britain: helped revive truth of Sovereign Grace among Baptists, 1900–1969)

Harry Emerson Fosdick (Modernist Baptist preacher, educator & writer, 1878–1969)

Harold Henry Rowley (British Baptist missionary, OT scholar & educator: chairman, Baptist Missionary Society & president, Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1890–1969)

1970

Nels S. F. Ferre (liberal Baptist theologian & educator): An avowed enemy of Fundamentalism (1908–1971)

Charles Harold Dodd (British liberal Congregational minister, NT scholar, educator, commentator & author, 1884–1973)

George L. Norris (Baptist pastor & educator, President & Director of Missions, WBF, 1916–1973)

Harold C. Slade (Fundamentalist Baptist preacher, educator & leader): Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada & president, Toronto Baptist Theological Seminary (1903–1974)

Noel Smith (Fundamentalist Baptist preacher, educator & Editor of *The Baptist Bible Tribune*, 1900–1974)

George Beauchamp Vick (Fundamentalist Baptist pastor & leader): Pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, MI., president, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO. Leading personality of BBFI (1901–1975)

Chester E. Tulga (Fundamentalist Baptist leader, editor & author): Prominent leader in the CBA (1896–1976)

Robert Thomas Ketchum (fundamental Baptist preacher & writer): a founder of the GARBC (1889–1978)

Robert G. Lee (Southern Baptist preacher & leader): President of SBC 3 times (1886–1978)

Russian Baptist pastor Georgi Vins released by Soviets (1979)

Battle in the Southern Baptist Convention begins over liberalism in seminaries: two groups known as Fundamentalists and Moderates (1979)

1980

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1980) Mount St. Helens erupts twice (1980)

The 1980's witness an increased move in religious groups toward ecumenism, social & environmental issues. There is also an increase in Satanism & Satanic cults.

The New Age Movement, an eclectic, diverse religio–psychological–spiritual phenomenon & world view (1980's)

The Progressive National Baptist Convention (Black) condemns the “Moral Majority” as “anti–poor & anti–Black.”(1981)

Federal court in Little Rock, ARK declares it unconstitutional to teach “creationism” equally with the “theory” of evolution (1982)

Ferrell Griswold (Calvinistic Baptist preacher & leader in the Baptist Sovereign Grace movement, 1929–1982)

G. Archer Winegar (Fundamentalist Baptist pastor, leader & editor, 1915–1982)

George Eldon Ladd (Baptist minister). Neo–Evangelical NT scholar, educator & author (1911–1982)

Year of the Bible proclaimed by President Reagan (1983)

Continental Baptist Churches (CBC)
(Sovereign Grace) organized (1983)

General Association of Regular Baptist
Churches (GARBC) denounce National &
World Councils of Churches & Billy
Graham (1983)

Georgi Vins, exiled Baptist Russian leader
charged that the KGB was infiltrating
western Christian organizations & the
Baptist World Alliance in particular (1985)

Reformed Baptist Missionary Service
(RBMS) founded in U.S. to further
cooperation in support of missionaries
(1985)

U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments over the place of “scientific creationism” in public
school curricula (1986)

Decade-long battle in the Southern Baptist
Convention between Fundamentalists &
Moderates (liberals): Moderates
acknowledge defeat in battle over inerrancy
(1990)

International Fellowship of Reformed
Baptists (IFRB) organized from a meeting at
the International Baptist Conference in
Toronto, Canada (1990)

WORLD RELIGIOUS STATISTICS IN 1990

“Christians”	1,758,778,000.
Roman Catholics	995,780,000.
Protestants	363,290,000.
Orthodox	166,942,000.
Anglican.....	72,980,300.
Other “Christians”	159,785,700.
Muslims	935,000,000.
Hindus	705,000,000.
Buddhists	303,000,000.
Atheists	233,000,000.
Chinese folk religionists	180,000,000.
New Religionists	138,000,000.
Tribal religionists	92,012,000.
Sikhs	18,100,000.
Jews	17,400,000.
Shamanists	10,100,000.
Confucians	5,800,000.

Baha'is	5,300,000.
Jains	3,650,000.
Shintoists	3,100,000.
Other religionists	17,938,000.

A SUMMARY STATEMENT

The declaration of the Scriptures, the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and the witness of history have all testified to the perpetuity of New Testament churches from the earthly ministry of the Lord to the present day. His church has not “died out.” His church has not been overcome by “the gates of hades.” His church has known His presence for these twenty centuries. The truth of the New Testament pattern has continued among many peoples: Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Bogomili, Vaudois, Navarri, Albigenses, Waldenses, Petrobrusians, Arnoldists, Henricians, Paterines, Lollards, Wycliffites, Bohemian Brethren, Hussites, Cathari, Brethren, Christians, Believers, Baptists, etc. The names are incidental; the doctrine and practice are essential. These believers—and churches did not derive from Rome or from the Protestant Reformation, but from the New Testament. Their history has not been written nor preserved in cathedrals and shrines, tradition and marble, but rather in the parchments of their enemies and in the earth itself, which has soaked up their blood and welcomed their tears and ashes. Their one monument, unseen by the naked eye, has ever been the faithfulness of their Sovereign God.

APPENDIX I

COVENANT THEOLOGY

I

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF “COVENANT”

The Hebrew term בְּרִית (*b^eriyth*), “covenant,” is of uncertain etymology and may have either the connotation of “to cut” or “to fetter or bind.” The Greek term διαθήκη, or “testament” was used in both the LXX and the Greek New Testament for בְּרִית.³⁸⁸ The exact significance of the idea must be determined by its usage in the Old and New Testaments. A covenant was a binding agreement between the parties involved. It was at times sealed with a solemn ceremony—an oath, sacrifice, meal, token or memorial.³⁸⁹ The covenants between God and men were either unilateral, i.e., “unconditional” or dependent upon God alone, or bilateral, i.e., “conditional” or partly dependent upon the faithfulness of men. The redemptive covenant in its progressive revelation, or reiteration and expansion, has ever been unilateral or unconditional as a “Covenant of Grace.”

II

THE ESSENCE OF A BIBLICAL COVENANT THEOLOGY

God has always dealt with man within a covenant relationship—from a principle of *representation* and *imputation*—and not merely on a personal basis. This was and is the Divine prerogative by right of both creation and redemption. Human beings have no say in this matter or right to complain against it as mere creatures of God (Rom. 9:19–24).³⁹⁰ Man was created to live in a covenant relationship with God (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:16–17; Jn. 17:1–2; Rom. 8:28–31; Eph. 1:3–14). There have been two covenants that determine the state of man before God—what are commonly called the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*.

³⁸⁸ This has been termed a “translation-compromise,” as it essentially denoted a disposition one made for himself rather than a binding agreement in the sense of בְּרִית. See Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 33. It may, however, emphasize the obligation or testament that one person takes upon himself, which would lend strength to the idea of an unconditional covenant.

³⁸⁹ E.g. (Gen. 15:1–21). The Covenant between God and Abraham was unilateral or unconditional, as Abraham was purposely indisposed by God. The animal parts in two heaps and God passing between them symbolically gives the idea of “cutting a covenant” by sacrifice and passing between the slain animals (Note: in a bilateral or conditional covenant, both parties would pass between the pieces). E.g., (1) The covenant-language God uses in Gen. 12:1–3; Psa. 50:5; Jer. 34:18–19 and Heb. 6:13–20. (2) The covenant with reference to Israel through Abraham and the land was solemnized by the token of circumcision (Gen. 17). (3) The covenant between Laban and Jacob was solemnized by a monument of stones, an oath, a sacrifice, and then a meal (Gen. 31:44–55). (4) Cf. also the covenants made between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:27–32), Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 18:1–4; 20:12–17) and David and the elders of Israel (1 Chron. 11:1–3).

³⁹⁰ The Scripture carefully maintains the Creator-creature relation. The Creator is absolute, sovereign and self-determining; the creature has no right to question the Creator (Rom. 9:20–21).

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

The Old Covenant was progressively revealed, beginning with Adam and the *protevangelium* (Gen. 3:15). It was further revealed and expanded to Noah (Gen. 6–9), Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–6; 17:1–5), Moses (Ex.–Dt.), David (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17) and through the prophets (e.g., Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 36:25–27). This covenant was centralized in and epitomized by the Mosaic institutions—the Tabernacle (and later Solomon’s temple), Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system—and the later offices of prophet and king. This entire system was an elementary, anticipatory and typical preparation for the New or Gospel Covenant that centered in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The “Old” and “New” “Covenants” should not be confused with the Old and New Testaments. Although often used interchangeably, these are neither identical nor coextensive. The Old Testament is the first major division of the Scriptures and contains that part of the “Covenant of Grace” that was preparatory for the Messiah or the “Old Covenant,” i.e., the Mosaic institutions. The New Testament is the second major division of the Scriptures and contains the fulfillment or finality of the “Covenant of Grace” in the Gospel economy, i.e., the “New Covenant” as it centers in the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III

COVENANT THEOLOGY

“Covenant Theology” presupposes that God has always dealt with man in a covenant-relationship. Traditionally, this approach finds two covenants in Scripture: (1) The “Covenant of Works” made with Adam, wherein he, as the federal head of the human race, was given certain commands and conditions which he broke through disobedience, plunging the whole human race, as constituted in him, into a sinful, condemned and alienated condition (Gen. 2:16–17; 3:1–24; Rom. 3:23; 5:12–18; 1 Cor. 15:20–22) and (2) the “Covenant of Grace,” which is the revelation of the eternal redemptive purpose of God [“Covenant of Redemption”] for the full and final redemption of the elect from among sinful mankind. Although progressively revealed through various “covenants” (Adamic or Edenic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the “New Covenant”), this covenant is essentially one. Both the Reformed and Baptists have historically held in principle to Covenant Theology.

NOTE: The great distinction between Reformed tradition and the historic Baptist position is that the Baptists have held that there are elements of diversity within the various covenants, while Reformed tradition has held that the Abrahamic covenant is *identical* with the “Covenant of Grace.”

Reformed tradition, denying the diversity and straining the unity of the covenant[s], makes no distinction between the promises made to Abraham and his physical descendants concerning their nation and land, and the spiritual promises made to Abraham concerning his spiritual seed and children. This peculiar “Covenant Theology” was developed by Zwingli and Bullinger in their disputations with the Anabaptists as they sought to defend infant sprinkling and the concept of covenant children against the clear Scriptural teaching of believer’s baptism by immersion by

“arguing from the covenant.” See M. E. Osterhaven, “Covenant Theology,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 279.

THREE VIEWS

Laying aside the older Rationalistic and more recent neoorthodox views as completely untenable, there are three major approaches to the Scriptures in the context of Biblical Theology: Reformed tradition, Dispensationalism and the historic Baptist position. It should be clearly seen that one’s concept of the covenant[s] determines his entire approach to the Scriptures—hermeneutically, theologically and practically.

REFORMED TRADITION

There are two basic perspectives or approaches to the Scriptures within evangelical and Reformed Christianity: An “Old Testament perspective” that positions itself in the Old Testament as the norm and views the New Testament through “Old Testament eyes.” There is likewise a “New Testament perspective” that positions itself in the New Testament as the fulfillment of progressive revelation and views the Old Testament through “New Testament eyes.” The given perspective largely determines the interpretation of Scripture and its subsequent application to the life; the nature and character of the church as to government, its role in society and politics, membership, ordinances or sacraments, discipline, worship and even its architecture; the very nature of salvation (i.e., whether it is strictly personal or includes the [“covenant”] children of believers) and Christian experience.

The Reformed tradition possesses an Old Testament perspective, or an “Old Testament mentality” in its approach to Scripture. The Abrahamic Covenant is held to be the “Covenant of Grace.” Thus, the unity of the covenant is held to such an extent that the New Testament is largely seen as a mere continuation of the Old Testament.

The Reformed concept of the church is largely that of the Old Testament covenant people of Israel—a *corpus mixtum* [mixed body] of saved and unsaved. The tendency has been toward state or national churches. There has historically (16th–early 19th century) been a reliance upon the civil authorities to enforce the discipline of the church with both corporal and capital punishment.³⁹¹ Congregations are comprised of both believers and their “covenant children.” The rites and rituals of the Old Testament are simply replaced by the rites and rituals of the New, e.g., circumcision by infant sprinkling, and the Passover by the Lord’s Supper. These are traditional ideas imported into Scripture from (1) Romish tradition and (2) a process of arguing “from the covenant” in the context of an “Old Testament

³⁹¹ It was this “Old Testament mentality” that formed the basis for the burning of Servetus in Geneva, for the drowning of Anabaptists by Zwingli and others, for the infamous “Salem Witch Trials” in this country (1691–1692) in which thirty-two people were executed for being “witches,” according to Ex. 22:18, rather than the church simply exercising ecclesiastical and spiritual discipline. Baptists in Massachusetts were disfranchised and driven from their homes and properties for refusing to support the local Presbyterian church and minister through a church tax in 1770. Such laws were on the books in both Massachusetts and Connecticut until 1833—despite the U. S. Constitution. For these last examples, see A. D. Gillette, Ed., *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 1707–1807*, pp. 115–116; Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, pp. 229–240. Baptists in Virginia suffered much through imprisonments and even public whippings for the simple preaching of the Gospel or seeking to baptize converts. Cf. Richard B. Cook, *Ibid.*, pp. 214–228; For the general state of the early American Baptists and their plight, see John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*, II.

mentality.” Reformed tradition, then, has historically and theologically lacked in its approach to the progressive principle of Divine revelation.

DISPENSATIONALISM

Dispensationalism emphasizes such terms as “dispensation” (οἰκονομία, Eng. “economy,” from οἶκος, “house,” and νόμος, “law,” hence the management of an household, a stewardship) and “age” (αἶων, “age,” “era”) in the Scriptures. Dispensationalism is an inclusive, literalistic hermeneutical approach that views the Scriptures as divided into various well-defined time-periods, “economies” or “dispensations.” In each dispensation God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished to which men respond in either faith or unbelief. These dispensations or time-periods are seen as the successive stages of progressive revelation. Although the number of ages varies from five to many dispensations [ultra-Dispensationalism], the common seven dispensations are: “Innocency” (the era of unfallen Adam), “Conscience” and “Human Government” (from Adam’s fall to Noah), “Promise” (from Abraham to Moses), “Law” (from Moses to Christ), “Grace” (from Pentecost to the Rapture) and a literal “Millennium” [1,000 year reign of Christ on Earth].³⁹²

The Dispensational approach to Scripture stands diametrically opposed to Reformed tradition. It views the diversity of the covenants to such an extent that it even denies their essential continuity. There is a sharp distinction between national Israel and “the Church.” The “Church Age” is seen as a “parenthesis” between God’s dealings with national Israel. Because it views the Moral Law [Decalogue] as given only to Israel and essentially limited to the Mosaic or “Legal Dispensation,” Dispensationalism is inherently antinomian.³⁹³

THE HISTORIC BAPTIST POSITION

The historic Baptist position is that of a New Testament perspective or a “New Testament mentality.” We stand in the New Testament and view the Old Testament through “New Testament eyes,” giving the proper place to the progressive principle in Divine revelation and making the necessary distinctions between the preparatory nature of the Old Covenant and the finality of the New. Baptists hold to both the necessary unity and diversity of the covenant[s] (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic and the “New” or Gospel Covenant), neither obliterating necessary distinctions (Reformed Tradition), nor unnecessarily separating the New Testament and Covenant from the Old (Dispensationalism). Theologically and historically, we have held to the eternal Covenant of Redemption and Grace, or the eternal redemptive purpose. By contrast Reformed Covenant Theology holds to the unity of the Abrahamic Covenant (singular, and so identifying it with

³⁹² The major Dispensational authors include: J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, James B. Gray, Henry C. Weston, A. T. Pierson, W. G. Moorehead, Arno C. Gaebelein, William L. Pettingill, E. W. Bullinger, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, and Charles C. Ryrie.

³⁹³ Consequently, Dispensationalism has been largely responsible, along with the modified Wesleyan perfectionism of Finney, for promoting an easy-believism Gospel, the “Carnal Christian” heresy, and a denial of “Lordship” salvation.

the “Covenant of Grace”) to such an extent that it largely denies the diversity of the covenant[s].³⁹⁴

While we are ready to maintain our biblical convictions and uphold our New Testament distinctives as Baptists, we recognize our Reformed and Dispensational Brethren as believers and fellow-heirs of the covenants of promise. We seek to possess a catholicity of spirit toward all true believers in the common bond of the Gospel and the glorious redemption that is in Christ Jesus, yet in church membership and fellowship, our convictions derive from the Scriptures after the New Testament pattern of our Lord and the inspired Apostles.

³⁹⁴ Baptists see salvation as strictly personal, wholly by free and sovereign grace alone, as the out-working of the Divine, eternal redemptive purpose (Rom. 8:28–31; Eph. 1:3–14). The church is viewed as a distinctly New Testament institution (Eph. 3:5–10), which is visible, local and autonomous in nature, comprised of individuals baptized upon a credible profession of faith. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are decidedly New Testament Gospel and church ordinances, neither sacraments nor continuation of Old Testament rites.

APPENDIX II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

I

A RECORD OF REVIVAL

The book of Acts has been called “The First Church History.” It is the history of the first decades of Apostolic Christianity and the Primitive Church. But it is more. It is the history of a great revival or spiritual awakening that began with the ministry of John the Baptist and then again at Pentecost and spread from the Jews to the Samaritans and then on to the Gentiles and across the Roman Empire and beyond. The history of the New Testament and primitive Church begins in revival.

II

PENTECOST: BOTH UNIQUE AND PROTOTYPE

THE UNIQUENESS OF PENTECOST

The yearly feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover, was the ingathering of the first-fruits of the wheat harvest, which was celebrated by a wave offering before the Lord of the first sheaves of wheat. This was the best-attended feast of the Jewish religious year at Jerusalem because the traveling conditions in the Mediterranean world were most favorable at that time. (Passover was too early for the sailing season and the Day of Atonement [*yom kippur*] and Feast of Tabernacles were too late for the sailing season).

This particular Pentecost was the antitype or fulfillment of the Jewish feast: It was the ingathering of the first-fruits of New Testament Christianity—3,000 converts under the Spirit-empowered preaching of the Apostle Peter—and the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel concerning the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon God’s people (Acts 2:16–21).

At Pentecost the already-existent and functional New Testament Church as an institution received its Divine credentials in a glorious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. This identified the New Testament Church as the God-ordained institution for this Gospel economy. This was true typically of the Tabernacle in the wilderness under the Mosaic economy (Ex. 40), and likewise true at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs. 8).³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ In each case the Divine institution was initiated and functional, then identified or marked out uniquely and distinctly with the Divine power and Presence. In both instances, the *shekinah* or glory of God came down upon the Tabernacle and Temple after the dedication was complete and both were functional with the first sacrifices having been offered. [At Pentecost the Spirit of God was sent to credential God’s final institution—the church (Eph. 3:20–21)].

This was the promised “Baptism in [or with] the Holy Spirit.”³⁹⁶

The presence of miraculous gifts such as tongues, healings, and other supernatural manifestations also belonged to the unique character of the Apostolic era. Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8–13, esp. v. 10 (τό τέλειον, “that which is perfect”—perfect, complete, of full age, mature). The Charismatic gifts were for the institutional church in its infancy or immature state. When Christianity became firmly established, the need for such revelatory gifts ceased. The permanent gifts are largely those of ministry—preaching, teaching, pastoring and evangelism.

PENTECOST AS A PROTOTYPE OF TRUE REVIVAL AND AWAKENING

Although Pentecost was unique as the credentialing of the New Testament Church and the Baptism in or with the Spirit, there are abiding characteristics or principles that pertain directly to revival and spiritual awakening. We believe that the great series of revivals that began on the Day of Pentecost and continued for some twenty-five years, spreading across the Roman world, are the biblical prototype for true gospel revival and spiritual awakening. Note carefully the following principles which are reflected in every biblical and historic out-pouring of the Spirit of God:

1. *Revival does not occur in a vacuum.* There is always a work of preparation or other necessary events—usually times of religious and spiritual decline giving rise to times of intense intercessory prayer for God to look upon his work with favor and blessing.
2. *There is always an out-pouring of the Spirit of God upon his people in answer to intercessory prayer.* This is a sovereign work of the Spirit of God, “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” upon both the converted and unconverted.
3. *There is always a marked return to the principles of biblical religion.* This points to the necessary relationship between reformation and revival. Sadly, revivals are not the general rule—they are the exception, the unusual. The usual state of religion tends toward spiritual decline. Revival is a return to truth and spiritual power to such an extent that it transforms the life of the individual, the church, and often society itself.
4. *There is always a return to biblical preaching.* God does not send true revival apart from the preaching of truth. The preaching of error may raise religious excitement, but any revival will be adversely affected and its purity marred.

³⁹⁶ Mark that this “Baptism in [or with] the Spirit” was and is *not* something that the Holy Spirit does with or to the individual believer at salvation, but rather the action of the Lord Jesus Christ with reference to his church, i.e., Christ baptizes with or in the Spirit (Cf. Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). These are the only passages that *teach* the baptism in or with the Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13 has been manipulated to teach such, as in Rom. 6:3–6, and so traditionally has reversed the Scriptural teaching. The text καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν should read, “for in one spirit into one body have we all been baptized” (aor. pass., referring to Pentecost as the event).

5. *There are always obstacles to revival.* These come from within the ranks of professing Christianity in the form of false converts, wrong motives, departures in doctrine and practice, and worldliness.
6. *There is always opposition to revival.* Every true work of God has necessarily faced spiritual, religious, social and oftentimes political opposition.
7. *There are necessary and unusual consequences to revival.* Such consequences may be positive, negative and unusual. Situations have occurred in times of revival that have not occurred in ordinary times, such as the conversion of notorious profligates or even the gospel's major enemies.

APPENDIX III

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

There are several great Baptist distinctives which characterize the biblical and historic Baptist position. These major distinctives include:

FIRST, *the Scriptures as the only and all-sufficient rule of both faith and practice*. This stands in contrast to other historic criteria such as religious tradition, ecclesiastical authority, creeds, church councils, rationalism and modern religious irrationalism which stresses subjective experience and emotionalism.

SECOND, *salvation by grace alone*. Salvation by grace implies: that salvation must be scripturally viewed in the context of the eternal, infallible redemptive purpose of God (Rom. 8:28–31; Eph. 1:3–14) and that grace is unmerited favor in the place or stead of merited wrath. Grace and works or human ability cannot be commingled (Rom. 9:6–24; 11:5–6; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10). Grace is more than a principle. It is at once *a principle*—as opposed to works or human ability, *a prerogative*—God freely and sovereignly bestows this grace on whom he will, according to his eternal, infallible purpose; and *a power*—which enables the sinner to freely and effectively lay hold of Christ by faith (Phil. 1:29); Regeneration or the “new birth” precedes faith and repentance (Jn. 3:3, 5–8; Acts 16:14; Jas. 1:18); Gospel holiness and righteousness are necessary characteristics of experimental salvation and Christian experience (Rom. 6:1–23; Eph. 1:3–6; 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10; 1 Thess. 1:3–5).

THIRD, *believer’s baptism by immersion*. This Baptist distinctive derives from the truth of the New Testament as to both mode—immersion, and subjects—believers. There is no record of the immersion or sprinkling of infants, or the intentional baptism of unbelievers in the New Testament. On this New Testament distinctive, the Baptists stand in opposition to both Western and Eastern Catholicism, and traditional Protestantism. We can change neither the mode nor the subjects without altogether changing the significance of the ordinance.

FOURTH, *a regenerate church membership*. This is distinctive of a true New Testament or Gospel church, and necessarily implies:

- That church membership is voluntary. A church that practices the immersion or sprinkling of infants and considers the church to be composed of both believers and their children is largely involuntary in membership and alien to the New Testament.
- That the membership is bound by a common personal faith and saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:41–42, 47).

FIFTH, *the priesthood of the individual believer*. In the context of the New Covenant and New Testament, there is no priest-cult or sacerdotal mediator between the individual believer and his Lord. Every believer is a “king-priest,” and has immediate access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1–3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 4:13–10:18; 1

Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6).³⁹⁷ The priesthood of the individual believer stands in the closest relationship to soul–liberty or freedom of conscience.

SIXTH, *the autonomy of the local assembly under the Lordship of Jesus Christ*. The autonomy, or self–governing nature of each local body of Christ, presupposes four realities:

- The terms *Pastor*, *Elder*, and *Bishop* all designate the same office in the local assembly. There is no ecclesiastical hierarchy, or church office that exists apart from or beyond that of the local assembly.
- The New Testament does not teach an “Apostolic Succession,” therefore Baptists do not recognize any authority above the local assembly, except that of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his inscripturated Word. Matthias replaced Judas to fulfill the prophetic Scripture (Acts 1:15–26), but no one ever succeeded the original Apostles of the New Testament era into that office.
- There is no extra–biblical authority that rules beyond the local assembly, such as presbyteries, councils, synods, denominational conventions, national churches or associations.
- The so–called “First Church Council” held at Jerusalem in Acts 15, although attended by the inspired Apostles, was actually a *conference* between two local churches and possessed no authority beyond the agreement of the Apostles who attended.

SEVENTH, *soul Liberty or freedom of conscience*. Only the Word of God can command the conscience of the Believer. It is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament to bind the conscience by religious tradition, ecclesiastical decree, denominational standards; or attempt to enforce religious convictions by means of the civil authorities. Church discipline, or exclusion from membership and its privileges, is the extremity of church action. Further, this is not done by degrees, but by a definitive act of the membership.

All Baptist distinctives derive from the Scriptures, predominantly the New Testament. Any given church is therefore a New Testament or Gospel church to the extent that it conforms to the New Testament; conversely, to the extent that any given church departs from the New Testament, to that extent it ceases to be a New Testament or Gospel church.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Heb. 5:5–6; 6:20; 7:1–25 for the perpetuity or everlasting nature of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. esp. 7:23–25. “unchangeable” is ἀπαράβατον, lit: “inviolable, untrespassable.” No Romish, Mormon, Jewish or Protestant priest can trespass upon the priesthood which our Lord holds.

APPENDIX IV

THE PRACTICE OF EARLY BAPTISTS ON RESTRICTED COMMUNION

For the first Baptist apologetic on restricted communion, see William Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church–Communion*, London: 1681. Reprinted by Baptist Standard–Bearer, Paris, ARK, 1995. This defense of restricted communion was written against the innovation of the practice of open communion begun by John Bunyan. Note should also be taken of pertinent articles in the *The Baptist Encyclopedia* by William Cathcart. Two other noteworthy works are: R. B. C Howell, *The Terms of Communion at the Lord’s Table* (1846), republished by Baptist Heritage Publications, (1987), and John T. Christian, *Close Communion*.

The *First* (1644–46) and *Second* (1677, 1688, 1689) *London Baptist Confessions of Faith*, as well as the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith* in America (1742), all reveal that the early British and American Baptists held to either a close or a closed [restricted] communion.³⁹⁸

The following quotations clearly reveal that these early Baptists held to consistent scriptural principles regarding the Lord’s Supper:

ARTICLE XXXIX of The First London Baptist Confession (1644–46)

BAPTISM is an ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith or that are made disciples; who upon profession of faith ought to be baptized, and after to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Matt. 28:18,19; John 4:1; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:37,38, 8:36,37, etc.

NOTE: The 1644–46 Confession holds decidedly to a closed communion, necessarily placing [scriptural] baptism as a requirement for the Lord’s Supper, after the New Testament pattern. By the time of the 1689 Confession, a very few Calvinistic Baptist Churches had followed an open communion practice under the influence of Protestantism. It should be noted also, that the Presbyterians were more acceptable than the Baptists to the state, and so the Baptists evidently found it favorable to confessionally parallel the Presbyterians in some matters. The great transition from closed to open communion, however, came in 1760–1820 as a result of the era of the great revivals in America and Britain with their tendency to break down doctrinal barriers. Some Baptists at that time disciplined

³⁹⁸ The first instance of an open communion, or admitting paedobaptists to the Lord’s Table was done under the ministry of John Bunyan, who, though personally a Baptist, had his children sprinkled in the local Anglican Church, and never consistently espoused Baptist principles in his church. Bunyan’s church in Bedford, England, true to this tendency, eventually became and continues as a Congregational Church, not a Baptist congregation. In the early 1960s, when renovating Bunyan’s home, the Anglican baptismal certificates for his children were uncovered behind some bricks in the fireplace. This information was personally given to the author in 1984 by the pastor of the Bedford Evangelical Church during a personal tour of the Bedford area and “Bunyan Country.”

members who took communion in mixed assemblies. See R. Phillip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820*. Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989, pp. 184–192.

ARTICLE XX
OF THE APPENDIX TO THE FIRST LONDON CONFESSION (1644–46)
BY BENJAMIN COX

Though a believer's right to the use of the Lord's Supper doth immediately flow from Jesus Christ apprehended and received by faith, yet in as much as all things ought to be done not only decently, but also in order, 1 Cor. 14:40; and the Word holds forth this order, that disciples should be baptized, Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, and then be taught to observe all things (that is to say, all other things) that Christ commanded the Apostles, Matt. 28:20, and accordingly the Apostles first baptized disciples, and then admitted them to the use of the Supper, Acts 2:41,42; we therefore do not admit any in the use of the Supper, nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples [having once been scripturally] baptized, lest we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order.

This Appendix, following the 1644–46 Confession, strictly teaches a closed or restricted communion after the New Testament pattern, which makes baptism a prerequisite for the Lord's Supper. There was no question concerning this until the mid-seventeenth century, because of the compromise of some who were Baptists personally, but not ecclesiastically, their churches being more on the order of Congregational or mixed assemblies. As previously stated, the ablest defender of this position was John Bunyan. William Kiffin answered Bunyan in a polemic published in favor of the scriptural and historical practice of closed communion, pointing out that until Bunyan's time open communion was unknown among the Baptists.³⁹⁹

THE SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION (1677, 1689)

The Protestant concept of the “universal” Church comprised of all the elect, absent from the 1644–46 Confession, was imported into the Baptist Confession of 1689 through the influence of the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646), and the desire of the Baptists during the latter part of the seventeenth century for a close unity with and acceptance by those of the Reformed Faith. In Chapter 26 of the *Second London Confession*, it is this desire for unity and acceptance, furthered by the doctrine of a “catholic or universal” church, that seems to further the idea of open communion, inter-church communion, and a departure from the inspired New Testament pattern in a variety of matters. The Confession itself was somewhat ambiguous for these reasons, necessitating an explanatory appendix.

CHAPTER 30
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
Of The Second London Baptist Confession (1677, 1689)

- 7 Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do them also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death, the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but

³⁹⁹ Kiffin, William, *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church–Communion*, London: 1681.

spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.¹¹

¹¹1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 23–26.

8 All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto;¹² yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.¹³

¹²2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. ¹³1 Cor. xi. 29, Matt. vii. 6.

It ought to be noted that this Confession differs from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* by calling both baptism and the Lord's Supper "ordinances" rather than "sacraments." If the statements of sections 1 and 2 are taken literally and consistently, then the observance of the Lord's Supper, being a remembrance and memorial, must be symbolic, and therefore cannot and should not be termed a "sacrament." The efficacy consists in the glorious spiritual realities remembered and symbolized, not in anything esoteric or mystical beyond the corporeal.⁴⁰⁰

If the statements of sections 7 and 8 are taken consistently as they stand, then they strongly imply that only believers are to partake, necessitating some kind of restriction, i.e., that the observance is to be under the church's authority and discipline. Further, the words "worthy receivers" in the Baptist sense ought to be those who have been obedient in scriptural baptism. Any contrary accommodation would be a compromise of scriptural truth and principles.

THE APPENDIX TO THE FIRST EDITION Of The *Second London Confession Of Faith* (1677, 1689)⁴⁰¹

Because the 1677, 1689 Baptist Confession was conciliatory toward the Protestant or Reformed bodies, and somewhat ambiguous concerning the matter of a restricted observance of the Lord's Supper, a lengthy appendix was attached to the first edition [1677, 1688] as a further polemic on Baptism and Lord's Supper.

Mark the following extracts from this Appendix:

....This may be also added, that if this birth-holiness do qualify all the children of every believer for the ordinance of baptism; why not for all other ordinances? for the Lord's supper, as was practiced for a long time together? For if

⁴⁰⁰ Despite this scriptural and historical Baptist [New Testament] stand, some modern Baptists, under Reformed influence, have begun to call both Baptism and the Lord's Supper "sacraments" rather than "Ordinances" [i.e., what has been commanded, Matt. 28:19].

⁴⁰¹ This Appendix on Baptism was added to the original in 1677, and was also in the 1688 first edition, but was not published with the 1689 edition, or any subsequent edition of this Confession. Some copies of the *Philadelphia Confession*, however, have this Appendix attached. Most Baptist churches holding to the 1689 Confession today practice an "Open Communion," evidently through ignorance, the influence of Reformed tradition, the inconsistent presupposition of a "universal church" theory, or a "universal, invisible" church idea inherited from the latent Dispensational background of the elders or members.

recourse be had to what the scriptures speak generally of this subject, it will be found that the same qualities which do entitle any person to baptism, do so also for the participation of all the ordinances and privileges of the house of God that are common to all believers.

Whosoever can and does interrogate his good conscience towards God, when he is baptized (as everyone must do that makes it to himself a sign of salvation), is capable of doing the same thing in every other act of worship that he performs....

....We are not insensible, that as to the order of God's house, and entire communion therein, there are some things wherein we (as well as others) are not at a full accord among ourselves; as for instance, the known principle and state of the consciences of divers of us, that have agreed in this confession is such, that we cannot hold church communion with any other than baptized believers, and churches constituted of such; yet some others of us have a greater liberty and freedom in our spirits that way; and therefore we have purposely omitted the mention of things of that nature, that we might concur in giving this evidence of our agreement, both among ourselves, and with other good Christians, in those important articles of the Christian religion, mainly insisted on by us; and this, notwithstanding we all esteem it our chief concern, both among ourselves and all others that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, and love him in sincerity to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and in order thereunto, to exercise all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Thus, the scriptural and consistent practice of a close or closed communion was gradually undercut by a desire for acceptance with the Reformed community, through compromise, and an increasing lack of conviction toward consistent scriptural and Baptist convictions.

It yet remains as the clear teaching of the New Testament that the Lord's Supper is to be observed within the context and under the discipline of the local assembly, and is to be reserved for those who have been converted, scripturally baptized, are members of that assembly, and are demonstrating an orderly walk (Matt. 28:18–20; 1 Cor. 5:1–13).

APPENDIX V CHART OF DENOMINATIONS

CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES: PRIMITIVE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

(26–100 AD)

The churches of the New Testament or Apostolic era were not entirely free from error, as demonstrated in the inspired apostolic writings. But these primitive churches were New Testament in nature and character, and held to the essentials of New Testament Truth.

THE ERA OF TRANSITION

(100–313 AD)

The era of transition from New Testament simplicity to the ecclesiastical hierarchy that became the Church of Rome took place between 100 and 313 AD. The Constantinian change and state church formed during the imperial age (313–476 AD) established the entity and power that have characterized institutional state religion throughout church history.

THE RISE OF THE EPISCOPACY⁴⁰²

Parochial Pastor
Monarchical Bishop
Metropolitan Bishop

STATE–CHURCH (313 AD)

THE RETENTION OF NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES⁴⁰³

Primitive British Christianity (1–6th cent.)

Montanists (2–8th cent.)

Novatians (3–8th cent.)

Donatists (4–7th cent.)

Paulicians (5–10th cent.)

⁴⁰² ἐπίσκοπος, overseer, superintend, bishop. In the New Testament, a term used synonymously with “pastor,” “elder,” and “minister.” Historically, rule by bishops, connoting an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

⁴⁰³ The witness of both Roman and Protestant historians is that New Testament Christians and churches had a continuous existence from the Apostolic era to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. These groups were considered heretical by the papists and were both slandered and rigorously persecuted. It was against such that the Romish Inquisition was first established and several crusades were raised. They were inclusively persecuted from the fourth to the sixteenth century as “Anabaptists” because they baptized believers who had been baptized as infants in the Romish State–Church system.

It is historically demonstrable that *among* these groups were those who held to the New Testament essentials of salvation by grace, a regenerate church membership, believer’s baptism by immersion and liberty of conscience. They numbered in the many thousands throughout Europe, the Mediterranean world, and into the Middle East. They had many common interests: their names were often used interchangeably; they often used the same catechisms; an extensive correspondence circulated among them; refugees from one group were usually assimilated into another; and they made common use of itinerant preachers. The Waldenses manifest a history of unquestionable evangelical Christianity back to or before the fourth century and continued into the sixteenth century, when they were assimilated into the Reformation.

Rise of Papal power (590AD)⁴⁰⁴

Vaudois (6th cent.)

DIVISION OF EASTERN AND WESTERN
STATE CHURCHES

Paterines (9–13th cent.)

(1054 AD)

Albigenses (10–16th cent.)

Roman Catholic (West) Greek Orthodox (East)

Berengarians (11–14th cent.)

Bogomili (11–14th cent.)

Russian Orthodox Church 988 AD.

Arnoldists (12–13th cent.)

Cathari or Gezari (12–14th cent.)

Zenith of Papal power 1073–1216 AD.

Petrobrusians (13–15th cent.)

Decline of Papal power 1303–1377 AD.

Henricians (13–15th cent.)

Waldenses (4–16th cent.)

Lollards (14–15th cent.)

Wycliffites (15th Cent.)

Bohemian Brethren (15th cent.)

Hussites (15th cent.)

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION⁴⁰⁵
(1517–1648 AD)

REFORMED ANGLICAN LUTHERAN

ANABAPTISTS (3–17TH CENT)

(1535)

(1534)

(1520)

Episcopal

“Anabaptist” was a generic term used by State religion for various heretics and schismatics from the third to the seventeenth centuries.⁴⁰⁶

Swiss Reformed (1525)

Mennonites (1530’s)

Huguenots (1540’s)

Hutterites (1533)

⁴⁰⁴ The first “pope” to actually wield the semblance of papal power was Pope Gregory I [the Great] (590–604).

⁴⁰⁵ The Protestant Reformation was *not* a return to the New Testament, but a reformation of the Church of Rome, and much of Romanism never left Protestantism. Paedobaptism was retained in Protestantism and modified. The concept of the church as a *corpus mixtum* or *corpus Christianum* was still retained. In the place of the old Constantinianism of Rome that unified the Church and State, the reformers instituted a neo-Constantinianism with its sacralist view of a society or community held together by a common religious loyalty. The Protestant Reformation was more soteriological and political than ecclesiastical, as the doctrine of the church was still largely based on an Old Testament concept of national Israel.

⁴⁰⁶ “Anabaptist” was a generic term used for almost all “heretics” that existed apart from Romanism. In the Constantinian sacralist society, such were necessarily considered religious heretics and political anarchists.

It must be noted that the anarchists such as the Men of Munster were never “Anabaptists” in the sense of believer’s baptism by immersion, but *re-sprinkled* those who came to them.

In the seventeenth century, the prefix “Ana” was dropped, and the name “Baptist” was then used to designate those who held to believer’s baptism by immersion.

Presbyterian (1542)

Scottish Presbyterian (1560)

Dutch Reformed (1566)

Congregationalists (1581)

MAINLINE PROTESTANTS EVANGELICALS & CULTS BAPTISTS
(1648—1990)

Since the Protestant Reformation a great variety of churches, denominations and cults have arisen. The major groups are listed below in a general chronological order. Mainline Protestant churches and denominations are listed to the left, Baptists to the right and other evangelical groups and cults in the center.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The latter part of this century was characterized by a reaction to the Reformed faith with its neo-scholasticism, and the beginnings of Pietism which resulted in new churches in the eighteenth century.

General Baptists (1612)

Reformed Church in America (1628)

Particular Baptists (1633)

Society of Friends (Quakers) (1647)

General Six-Principle Baptists (1652)

Old Order Amish (Swiss Brethren) (1693)

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This century was the era of the Great Awakening in America, the Great Evangelical Revival in Britain and the culmination of the Enlightenment in Europe. Pietism was a strong force in the early part of this century. The Baptists experienced much growth from the Great Awakening. Reaction to the historic faith and the rise of rationalism began to express itself in the rise of various cults.

Church of the Brethren (German) “Dunkers” (1708)

Moravian Brethren (1722)

Church of the United Brethren (1724)

Old (Original) Freewill Baptists (1727)⁴⁰⁷

Seventh-Day Baptists (1728)

Regular & Separatist Baptists (1739)

Church of the New Jerusalem
(Swedenborgian) (1757)

⁴⁰⁷ A few “Free Will Baptist” Churches were founded in the Carolinas by Paul Palmer in the 1720s. The Modern Free Will Baptists began with Benjamin Randall in New England in 1780.

Unitarianism (1774)⁴⁰⁸

“New Connection” Free Grace General Baptists
(British) (1770)

Modern Freewill Baptists (1780)

Brethren in Christ Church (1778)

Methodist Church (1784)

African Methodist Episcopal Church (1787)

Protestant Episcopal Church (U.S.) (1789)⁴⁰⁹

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1796)

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This century witnessed the formation of many new religious groups, including many of the major cults. First slavery, then the American Civil War brought divisions among the major denominations. The Holiness or “Higher Life” movement spawned new churches in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rationalism and radicalism began to entrench themselves in biblical scholarship and, together with Unitarianism and Transcendentalism, gave rise to Liberalism in this century and to Modernism in the twentieth century.

United Brethren Church (1800)

Bible Christian Church (1800)⁴¹⁰

Evangelical Church (1803)

Cumberland Presbyterian Church (1810)

Primitive Methodist Church (1811)

Church of God (German Reformed) (1825)

Catholic Apostolic Church (“Irvingites”) (1826)⁴¹¹

Two–Seed–in–the–Spirit Predestinarian
Baptists (1826)⁴¹²

Strict Baptists of England (1829)⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁸ Unitarianism was founded by liberals who broke with the orthodox Calvinists in New England Congregationalism.

⁴⁰⁹ The Protestant Episcopal Church became independent from the Anglican or Church of England after the American War for Independence.

⁴¹⁰ The “Bible Christian Church” had but one requirement for membership—at least six months’ practice of vegetarianism.

⁴¹¹ The Catholic Apostolic Church was founded on the alleged need for more experimental religion and a greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit. This was the forerunner of the modern Charismatic movement.

⁴¹² The first split among Calvinistic or Regular Baptists. The issue was para–church organizations, Sunday schools and missionary boards. This led to the establishment of the Primitive Baptists in 1827–35.

⁴¹³ The Strict Baptists are characterized by a strict Calvinism and a separatist stand.

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter–Day
 Saints (Mormons) (1830)
 Plymouth Brethren (1831)
 Adventists (Millerites) (1831)
 Christian Church, Disciples of Christ,
 or Church of Christ
 (Campbellites) (1832)
 Primitive Baptists (1835)
 Old & New School Presbyterians (1837)
 Original Session (1733) Church of Scotland (1842)
 Free Church of Scotland (1843)
 British–Israelism (1840)
 Free Church of England (Reformed Episcopal) (1844)
 Southern Baptist Convention (1845)⁴¹⁴
 Stundtists (Russian Pietists, “Stundto–
 Baptists”) (1845)
 Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) (1847)
 Christadelphians (1848)
 Reorganized Church of the Latter–Day Saints (1852)
 Christian Reformed Church (1857)
 Bible Fellowship Church (1858)
 Free Methodist Church of North America (1860)
 Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern) (1861)
 Gospel Standard Baptists (1861)⁴¹⁵
 New Apostolic Church (1863)⁴¹⁶
 Seventh–Day Adventists (1863)
 Christian Union Church (1864)
 Reformed Episcopal Church (1873)
 Theosophical Society (1875)
 Baptist General Conference
 (Swedish Baptists) (1879)
 Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science) (1879)
 Jehovah’s Witnesses (Russellites) (1879)
 Church of God (Anderson) (1880)

⁴¹⁴ The formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 marked the second break among the Regular or Calvinistic Baptists in America. The basic issue was the support of missionaries who were slave–holders. The Baptists in the north formed the Northern Baptist Convention.

⁴¹⁵ The Gospel Standard Baptists broke with the Particular Baptists over a defective Christology, which denied the eternal sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴¹⁶ The New Apostolic Church broke from the Catholic Apostolic Church of the Irvingites.

Evangelical Covenant Church of America (1885)
 Church of God (Pentecostal) (1886)
 Christian & Missionary Alliance (1887)
 Christian Congregation Church (1887)
 Unity School of Christianity (1890)
 Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1892)
 Church of Christ Holiness Church (1894)
 Christian Nation Church (1895)
 Fire-Baptized Holiness Church (1895)
 Cooneyites (1897)
 Church of Divine Science (1898)
 Doukhobors (Canada) (1898)

TWENTIETH CENTURY

The twentieth century religious character has been dominated by major extreme movements: Fundamentalism and Modernism, Conservatism and Liberalism, Conservatism and Ecumenicism. These have caused many denominations to divide. New churches, denominations and associations have been organized along conservative lines, and the union of liberal churches and denominations have formed new ecumenical entities.⁴¹⁷

United Free Church of Scotland (1900)
 American Baptist Association
 (ABA) (Landmarkers) (1905)
 Baptist World Alliance (1905)
 United Methodist Church of Britain (1907)
 National Primitive Baptist Convention
 (Black) (1907)
 Church of the Nazarene (1907)
 Northern Baptist Convention (1907)
 Evangelical Free Church (1909)
 Moral Rearmament (Oxford Group, Buchmanites) (1910)
 National Spiritual Alliance (Spiritists) (1913)
 The Apostolic (Oneness) Church (1913)
 Assemblies of God (1914)
 National Baptist Convention of America
 (Black) (1915)

⁴¹⁷ For a complete listing of American churches and religious entities, with historical sketches, see Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*; F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America*; and J. Gordon Melton, Ed., *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*. See also Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce Shelley and Harry S. Stout, Eds., *Dictionary of Christianity in America*.

United Lutheran Church (1918)
 Liberal Catholic Church (1918)
 Church of our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith (1919)
 Fundamental Baptist Fellowship
 (1920)
 The Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) (1920)
 African Orthodox Church (1921)
 Bible Baptist Union (1923)
 International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (1923)
 United Church of Canada (1925)
 Christian Church of North America (Italian) (1927)
 Modern United Church of Scotland (1929)
 Independent Fundamental Churches of America (IFCA) (1930)
 Rastafarians (1930)
 Orthodox Baptists (1931)
 General Association of Regular Baptists
 (GARBC) (1932)
 World Baptist Fellowship (1932)
 German Evangelical Church (1933)
 The Church of God (Seventh-Day) (1933)
 Evangelical & Reformed Church (1934)
 I AM Movement (Theosophical) (1934)
 Worldwide Church of God (1934)
 Open Bible Standard Churches (1935)
 National Association of Freewill Baptists
 (Black) (1935)
 Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1936)
 Berean Fundamental Church (1936)
 Bible Presbyterian Church (1937)
 Bible Protestant Church (Methodist) (1939)
 British Council of Churches (1942)
 National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) (1942)
 United Pentecostal Church (1945)

Evangelical United Brethren (1946)
 Conservative Baptist Association
 (CBA) (1947)
 World Council of Churches (WCC) (1948)
 International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) (1948)
 Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (1948)
 National Council of Churches (NCC) (1950)
 American Baptist Convention (Northern)
 (1950)
 North American Baptist Association (NABA)
 (Landmarkers) (1950)
 Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI)
 (1950)
 Evangelical Fellowship of India (1951)
 World Evangelical Fellowship (1951)
 Church of Scientology (Dianetics) (1952)
 Unification Church (Moonies) (1954)
 Congregational Christian Church (1955)
 Reformed Baptists (1950s)
 Southwide Baptist Fellowship (1956)
 Unification Church
 (Holy Spirit Association
 for the Unification of World Christianity)
 (1957)
 United Presbyterian Church (1958)
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