

**GENERAL HISTORIES**

# **A History of the Baptists**

*By John T. Christian, A.M. D.D. L.L.D*

**Volume 1**

*Together with some account of their  
Principles and Practices*

# A HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS

TOGETHER WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF  
THEIR PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

**BY**

**JOHN T. CHRISTIAN, A.M., D.D., LL.D.**

*Professor of Christian History in The Baptist  
Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana.*

Christian, John Tyler –  
*A History of the Baptists. Volume 1*  
Original Copyright © 1922  
Bogard Press, Texarkana, TX  
Reprinted By Permission

## PREFACE

IN ATTEMPTING to write a history of the Baptists no one is more aware of the embarrassments surrounding the subject than the author. These embarrassments arise from many sources. We are far removed from many of the circumstances under survey; the representations of the Baptists were often made by enemies who did not scruple, when such a course suited their purpose, to blacken character; and hence the testimony from such sources must be received with discrimination and much allowance made for many statements; in some instances vigilant and sustained attempts were made to destroy every document relating to these people; the material that remains is scattered through many libraries and archives, in many lands and not always readily accessible; often, on account of persecutions, the Baptists were far more interested in hiding than they were in giving an account of themselves or their whereabouts; they were scattered through many countries, in city and cave, as they could find a place of concealment; and frequently they were called by different names by their enemies, which is confusing. Yet it is a right royal history they have. It is well worth the telling and the preserving.

It must be borne in mind that there are many sources of Church History. Broadly speaking we have Eastern and Western; and a want of discrimination in these sources, and frequently an effort to treat Eastern and Western churches as identical, has caused much confusion. A right understanding of these sources will clear up many dark corners. For example it is undoubtedly true that the Waldenses originated in the West and the Paulicians in the East, and that they had a different history. In later centuries they came in contact one with the other, but in origin they were diverse. Any effort to treat them as one and the same people is misleading. In my judgment both parties were Baptists. The above distinction will account for many minor differences, and even to-day these sources will be found coloring Baptist history.

It may be thought by some that on account of its length the chapter on "The Episode of John Smyth" is out of proportion with the rest of the book. It must be remembered, however, that any information in regard to the complicated history of the Nonconformists of that period is welcome. As a matter of fact several subjects are here grouped; and as all of them require notice it is believed that unity of thought, as well as length of discussion, is preserved by the method here adopted. Many questions were then raised for the first time among English Baptists which find expression to-day among all schools of Baptists.

The question has often been asked: “Were all of the ancient parties mentioned in these pages in absolute or substantial accord with all of the doctrines and customs of modern Baptists?” The question can be answered with unerring accuracy: certainly not. Nor is there anything strange in the reply. It is well known that Baptists, Mennonites, and Quakers in their history have much in common, but while they agree in many particulars there are essential differences. There are marked differences among modern Baptists. Even a superficial examination of the views and customs of Russian, English and American Baptists would reveal to an observer this fact. We need not go beyond the history of American Baptists for a convincing example. At first, Arminian doctrines largely prevailed in this country; at a later date, Calvinistic principles prevailed. Oftentimes the same persons have changed their opinions. Many of the Baptists in Virginia were Arminians, but after passing over to Kentucky some of them became rigid Calvinists. Inside the Baptist denomination to-day there are persons, and doubtless churches, who are Arminian, and there are other persons and churches who are Calvinists. There are also Unitarians and Higher Critics, as well as Evangelicals among Baptists. One who has a mind for such things could magnify these differences to an indefinite extent.

Adequate reasons might be assigned for all of this. Baptists have never had a common creed, and it is equally true that they have never recognized any authoritative creed. They desire no such standard. Their attitude toward free speech and liberty of conscience has permitted and encouraged the largest latitude in opinions. Yet none of us would care to increase these differences or make more acute the variations.

One who stops here would have only a superficial understanding of the history and polity of Baptists. Their ties of organization are so slender, their government so democratic in nature, and their hardy independence so universal, that it has been a wonder to some historians and a mystery inexplicable to those who have not understood their genius, how they have retained their homogeneity and solidarity. But holding as they have ever done the absolute and unconditional authority of the New Testament as the sole rule of faith and practice in religious matters, they have had with them from the beginning a powerful preventive to error, and a specific corrective when there has been an aberration from the truth.

All of these things, and more, must be taken into account when we come to consider the various parties and persons discussed in the pages of this history. These parties were persecuted, scattered and often segregated. They lived in different lands and frequently had no opportunity to compare notes. There were great controversies, and frequently new roads were to be blazed out, intricate doctrinal problems to be solved, and complicated questions to be

adjusted. In the insistence upon some great doctrine, it may have happened that some other doctrine of equal or relative importance did not sustain its proper position for a time. Wrong views were sometimes maintained, false doctrines introduced and defended. Much allowance must always be made, especially in considering the doctrinal views of Baptists, for the fact we are frequently indebted to a zealous and prejudiced enemy for much of our information. It is not safe without support to trust such testimony.

Many examples might be introduced to show that some of these parties might not be recognized by some Baptists now-a-days. The Montanists, the Novatians, and the Donatists held diverse opinions, not only from each other, but from the teachings of the New Testament; but they stressed tremendously the purity of the church. It is possible that the Paulicians were Adoptionists. There have always been different views in regard to the birth of Jesus. Some of the Anabaptists held that Jesus was a man, and that he did not derive his manhood from Mary, but passed through her as a channel. The Adoptionists held that Jesus was endowed with divinity at his baptism. Most modern Baptists hold that Jesus became incarnate at his birth. There were some Baptists who held the vagaries of Hofmann and other Baptists who followed the more sane and rational course of Hubmaler. No effort is here attempted to minimize, or to dismiss as trivial, these variations.

Perhaps absolute and unconditional uniformity is unattainable. Such uniformity was never, perhaps, more vigorously pressed than it was by Archbishop Laud, with a dismal failure and the tragic death to the prelate as the result.

The wonder, however, is not that there were variations in these diverse conditions, but that there could be any homogeneity or unity. Through all of the variations, however, there has been an insistence upon some great fundamental truths. There has ever appeared the vital necessity of a regenerated life; a church pure and separate from the ungodly; believers' baptism; a simple form of church government; the right of free speech and soul liberty; and the permanent and paramount authority of the New Testament. Whatever may have been the variations in any or all of these parties, on the above or kindred subjects, the voice of the Baptists has rung out clear and distinct.

The testimony here recorded has been taken from many sources. I doubt not that diligent search would reveal further facts of the highest value. As a matter of fact I have a great accumulation of material which would extend into several volumes. In my judgment a Commission should be appointed with ample means to make a thorough search in the Archives of Europe.

I am well aware of the imperfections of this book, but it presents much data never before found in a Baptist history. I have throughout pursued the scientific method of investigation, and I have let the facts speak for themselves. I have no question in my own mind that there has been a historical succession of Baptists from the days of Christ to the present time. It must be remembered that the Baptists were found in almost every corner of Europe. When I found a connection between one body and another that fact is stated, but when no relationship was apparent I have not tried to manufacture one. Straight-forward honesty is the only course to pursue. Fortunately, however, every additional fact discovered only goes to make such connections probable in all instances.

I have an expectant attitude toward the future. I heartily welcome every investigation, for truth has nothing to fear from the light.

**THE AUTHOR**

# THE CONTENTS

## *The Preface*

### ***CHAPTER 1. — THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES.***

The Great Commission — A Definition of a Church — A Voluntary Association — A Church Not National or General — The Officers of a Church — The Ordinances — The Proper Subjects of Baptism — The Form of Baptism — The Lord's Supper — The Ordinances as Symbols — The Churches Missionary Bodies — The Continued Existence of the Churches

### ***CHAPTER 2. — THE ANCIENT CHURCHES.***

Early Conditions — Isaac Taylor — Epistola ad Diognetum — The Beginning of Dangerous Heresies — Baptismal Salvation — Metropolitan Bishops — Gregory the Great — The Baptism of Believers — The Fathers — The Early Councils and Infant Baptism — The Baptism of Adults Who Had Christian Parents — The First Law and The First Rule for Infant Baptism — The Testimony of Scholars — The Form of Baptism — Six Rituals on the Subject — The Christian Monuments — The Catacombs — The Baptisteries — Clinic Baptism — Religious Liberty — Tertullian. Justin Martyr and Lactatius — Constantine the Great Issues an Edict — Theodosius the Great Enforces Religion by Law

### ***CHAPTER 3. — THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION.***

Incorruptible Churches — The Testimony of Bunsen — The Montanist Churches — The Anabaptism — The Spread of the Movement — The Novatian Churches — Robinson Traces Them to the Reformation — They Were Called Anabaptists — The Donatist Churches — Their Origin — Rejected Infant Baptism — Benedict — Lincoln — Augustine — Liberty of Conscience — Neander — Their Attitude Toward Liberty — Their Protest

### ***CHAPTER 4. — THE PAULICIAN AND BOGOMIL CHURCHES.***

The Sources of Information The Greeks, The Armenians — "The Key of Truth." — The Apostolic Origin — They Rejected Other Communion — The Story of Constantine — The Connection of the Mohammedans — The Sabians — The Numbers of the Paulicians — Religious Liberty — The Free State of Teprice — Among The Albigenses in France — Persecuted — Conybeare on Baptist Succession — Justin. A. Smith — Widely Scattered in Europe — the Paulicians not Manichaeans — Their Doctrines — The Synod of Arras — A Confession of Faith — The Adoptionists — The Form of Baptism — Macarius — The Oriental Church — The Bogomils — Brockett — Their Persecutions — The Form of Baptism

### ***CHAPTER 5. — THE ALBIGENSIAN, THE PETROBRUSIAN, THE HENRICIAN, THE ARNOLDIST, AND THE BERENGARIAN CHURCHES***

The Origin and Spread of These Churches — Prof. Bury-Their History Their Good Character — Their Writings Destroyed — They Were Not Manichaeans — Two Classes of Believers — In Southern France — The Crusades Against Them — Their

Doctrines — Rejected Infant Baptism — Peter of Bruys — His Opinions — The Petrobrusians — Accused of Being Anahaptists — Henry of Lausanne — His Great Success — Held the Opinions of the Anabaptists — Arnold of Brescia — The Testimony of Otto Freising — The Arnoldists — Berengarius — His Troubled Career

### ***CHAPTER 6. — THE WALDENSIAN CHURCHES.***

The Alps as a Hiding Place — Peter Waldo — The Preaching Tour — Origin of the Waldenses — The Name — Roman Catholic Historians on Their Origin — Rainerio Sacchoni — PregerThe Statement of the Waldenses — The Noble Lessons — The Reformers — Beza-Later Writers — The Special Historians of the Waldenses — Faher — Moreland — Claudius Seisselius on Their Character — Their Manners and Customs — Their Principles — Infant Baptism — Their Change of Views in Regard to the Practice — Adult Baptism — Immersion.

### ***CHAPTER 7. — THE ORIGIN OR THE ANABAPTIST CHURCHES.***

The Anabaptist Movement — Mosheim — Sir Isaac Newton — Alexander Campbell — Robert Barclay — Von Usinger — Sacchoni — Cardinal Hosius — Luther — Zwingli — Anabaptism no New Thing — They Were Found in Many Lands — Different Leaders — Kinship to The Waldenses — Limborch — Keller — Moeller — Lindsay — The Waldenses and The Anabaptists Found in the Same Places — Waldensian Preachers Found Among the Anabaptists — Points of Agreement — The Anabaptists Claimed a Succession From Earlier Times — The Antiquity of the Netherland Baptists — The Swiss — Moravia — The Picards — Erasmus — Sebastian Frank — Schyn — Abrahamzon — Ypeij and Dermout

### ***CHAPTER 8. — THE CHARACTER OF THE ANABAPTISTS.***

Called by Many Names — Anabaptists — Catabaptists — The Popularity of the Movement — Not a Turbulent People — Lovers of Peace — Bayle-Cassander — Pastor of Feldsburg — The Swiss Baptists — Erasmus — Persecuted in Every Land — Religious Liberty — Hubmaier — Their Appeal to The New Testament — The Baptismal Question — A Spiritual Church Their Aim — Hast — Infant Baptism — The Form of Their Organization

### ***CHAPTER 9. — THE REFORMERS BEAR WITNESS TO THE BAPTISTS.***

The attitude of the Reformers to Infant Baptism — The History of Immersion in Germany, North and East — The Saxon Confession — Melanchthon — Pomerania — Sadoleto — Luther — John Bugenhagen — Zwingli — The Catabaptists — Erasmus — Melanchthon — William Farel — Martin Bucer — Baptisms in a Tub — Calvin — Baptism Not an Especial Discussion Between the Baptists and the Reformers

### ***CHAPTER 10. — THE BAPTISTS IN THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING.***

The Testimony of Fleury “The Sum of the Holy Scripture” — Conrad Grebel in Switzerland — A Moravian Chronicle — Its Doubtful Authority — Some Roman Catholic Converts May at First Have Practised Sprinkling — Kessler — Ulimann Dipped in The Rhine — The Dippings at St. Gall — The Baptistery — The Baptisms in the Sitter River — Persecutions on This Account — The Dippings at Appenzell — John Stumpf — The Decrees Against the Baptisms of the Baptists — The



Persecutions at Zurich — The Strong Arm of the Law — The Famous Decree of Zurich — Gastius — Felix Manz Drowned Because he Practised Dipping — The Baptists in Vienna — The Italian Baptists

### ***CHAPTER 11. — OTHER BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING.***

The Church in Augsburg — Hans Denck — The Leaders all in the Practice of Dipping — Baptisteries in the Houses and Cellars — Sender — The Augsburg Historian — Urbanus Rhegius — The River Lech — The Church at Strassburg — Melchior Hofmann — The Baptisms at Emden — Tubs Used for Baptismal Purposes — Dr. Winkler — Obbe Philips — The Words of Keller — Melchior Rink — “The Ordinance of God” — The Moravian Churches — Balthasar Hubmaier — His Character and Work — Denies Infant Baptism — Adopts Immersion — Zwingli and Hubmaier — Capito — Farel — John Fabricius — The Books of Hubmaier — Peter Reidermann — Erhard

### ***CHAPTER 12. — THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING IN THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, LITHUANIA AND TRANSYLVANIA BAPTIST CHURCHES.***

The Waldenses in Holland — Religious Liberty — Rembrandt — Learned Men — Simon Menno — His Views of Baptism — “A Handful of Water” — Luther on This Phrase — The Doop — <sup>48118</sup>Romans 6:3 — Anabaptist Literature on The Subject — <sup>461213</sup>1 Corinthians 12:13 — The Practice of Menno — Immersion in the Netherlands — Bastingius — Boltens — Dooreslaar — Stark — Schyn — The Change of Practice Among the Mennonites — The Collegiants of Rhynsburg — Poland and Silesian Baptists — Immersion — Sandius — Bock — The Unitarian Baptists — Their Great Learning and Culture — Peter Gonesius — Gregory Paulus — Their Numbers and Spirit — Socinus — Martin Czechovicus — The Racovian Catechism — The Lord of Cracow

### ***CHAPTER 13. — THE PEASANT WARS AND THE KINGDOM OF MUENSTER.***

The trouble between the Peasants and the Nobility — Thomas Münzer — The Twelve Articles — The Battle of Schlachtberg — Thomas Münzer Never a Baptist — The Responsibility of Luther — Grebel and Manz Disavow Münzer — His Views on Infant Baptism — The Münster Tumults — Largely a Political Affair — the Desire for Liberty — Polygamy — Marriage Sacred — The Anabaptists Did Not Originate the Tumults — The Leaders Were All Pedobaptists — Fair Minded Historians — Keller-D’Aubigne — Ypeij and Dermout — Arnold — The “Common Man” — The Act of Baptism at Münster — “The Confession of Both Sacraments” — The Form of Baptism Dipping — Jesse B. Thomas — Keller — Heath — Cornelius — Rhegius — Fischer — John of Leyden

### ***CHAPTER 14. — THE BRITISH BAPTIST CHURCHES.***

The Statement of the Historians Thomas Crosby — R. Evans — Adam Taylor — Robert Barclay — David Masson — The First Churches in Britain — Missionary Work — The Persecutions — The Early Britons Baptists — Crosby-Davia — Immersion — Richards on the Welsh Word — Bede and Other Historians — St. Patrick in Ireland — Immersion and The Lord’s Supper — Austin — The Saxons — An Attempt to Convert the Britons to Roman Catholic Views — The Differences —

Infant Baptism — The First Instance of Infant Baptism — Laws Enacted on the Subject — The Paulicians in England — Hill Cliffe Church — Goadby — Walter Lollard — John Wyclif — His Views on Baptism — Thomas Walden — The Opinions of the Lollards — William Tyndale

### ***CHAPTER 15. — THE BAPTISTS IN THE REFORMATION PERIOD IN ENGLAND.***

Henry VIII. The Persecution of the Baptists — The Hatred of the King — The Opinions of the Baptists — Alice Grevill — Simon Fish — A Royal Proclamation Against Strangers — The Coming of the Dutch — The Baptists Burnt — Stowe — Froude — A Sensation — The Baptists Increase Daily — Their Numbers — Their Churches — Immersion — “The Sum of the Holy Scripture” — Immersion Among the Baptists — The Donatists Fuller — Featley — Edward VI. — The Baptists Increase in Numbers In London — In Kent and Elsewhere — In Essex — Baptists Burnt — The Influence of John Calvin — Joan of Kent — The Practice of Immersion — The Baptism of Adults — I. Bales — Giles Van Bellen — Robert Cooke and Dr. Turner — Queen Mary — She Attempts to Reestablish Romanism — Philip II., of Spain — Bishop Gardiner — Edward Bonner — The Baptists — Were Numerous — Shoals of Them From Abroad — Immersion — The Martyrs — Queen Elizabeth — The Name Baptist Their Churches — The Coming From Over — Seas — The heavy Hand of the Law — More Baptists Burnt — The Independents — Learn Their Ideas From the Baptists — Immersion the Rule — Immersion Among the Baptists — James I. The Baptists Not Numerous in His Reign — The Burning of Edward Wightman — A Petition to the House of Lords — An Humble Supplication to the King — An Appeal for Liberty of Conscience — Mark Leonard Busher

### ***CHAPTER 16. — THE EPISODE OF JOHN SMYTH.***

He War. an Unusual Man — The Material for His Life Rare and Complicated — Lincoln — Gainsborough — The Crowle Documents — Animosity Against Him — He is Baptized — His Great Ability — The Anabaptists in Holland — Baptist Succession — The Question of His Se-baptism — The Position of Baptist Writers — His Own Words — His Immersion — No Difficulty to Obtain Immersion in Holland — Ashton — The Mennonites — B. Evans — Muller — Robert Barclay — P.B. — R.B. — Thomas Wall — Giles Schute — Crosby — Ivimey — Taylor — Masson — Bishop Halt — Clyfton — Baillie — J.H. — Mark Leon; and Busher — Helwys — John Norcott — John Morton — I. Graunt-Smyth His Own Witness — Excluded From the Baptist Church — He Differs From the Mennonites — The Testimony of Helwys — Helwys Returns to England

### ***CHAPTER 17. — ORIGIN OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES.***

The General Baptists Numerous — Calvinistic Views Among Baptists — The Rise of the Particular Baptists — The Independent Church of Henry Jacob — Crosby — Underhill — Crosby Sometimes Misleading — The Opinion of Lewis — The MS. of William Kiffin — The Sending to Holland for Baptism — The Statement of Hutchinson — John Spilsbury — The Right to Begin Baptism — The Administrator of Baptism — The Continuance of Baptist Churches — William Kiffin — Daniel King — A Notable Introduction — Henry D’Anvers — The Confession of Somerset — Thomas Grantham — Joseph Hooke — Samuel Stennett — The Baptist Magazine — Thomas Pottenger — James Culross — The Story of Blount Going to Holland —

The Mistakes of the So-called Kiffin Manuscript — Two Kiffin Manuscripts — The So-called Practice of Sprinkling — Hanserd Knollys — The Jacob Church Often in Trouble on The Subject of Dipping — The Practice of Spilsbury — Of Eaton — Of Kiffin — Of Henry Jessey — The Church of Hubbard — Jon Canne — The Broadmead Church — Samuel HowePaul Hobson — Thomas Kilcop — the Practice of Dipping Called “New” — The Answer of the Baptists — Samuel Richardson — Thomas Collier — Hanserd Knollys — John Tombes — Jeffrey Watts — The Confession of 1643 — The Form of Baptism Dipping — Jesse B. Thomas — The Practice of the General Baptists — Masson — Featley

### ***CHAPTER 18. — A GREAT DEBATE ON BAPTISM.***

Charles I. Brought Disaster — William Laud — The Prevalence of Baptists — Persecutions — Search For The Baptists — Lord Robert Brooke — The High Commission Court Destroyed — The Boldness of the Baptists — The Church of England Tries to Enforce Immersion — Articles to be Enquired of Baptistries — Thomas BlakeWalter Craddock — Daniel Featley — Denne — John Floyer — Schaff — Greek Lexicons — The Edinburgh Encyclopedia — William Wall — The Westminster Assembly — John Lightfoot — The Action of Parliament — The Book of Vellum — The Beginning of the Great Debate — The Practice of the Baptists — W.H. King — George C. Lorimer — Joseph Angus — Daniel Featley — Thomas Collier — Lewes Hewes — Thomas Lamb — John Goodwin — Edward Barber — William Jeffrey — Clem Writer — Goadby — Featley and Four Particular Baptists — Tombes and Henry Vaughan and John Cragge — William Russell and Samuel Chandler

### ***CHAPTER 19. — THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF BAPTIST INSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOMS.***

Baptist Associations — They Originated With the Particular Baptists — The General Baptists the First to Organize — J.M. Davis — The Great Authority of the Association — Business — Number — Date — The Custom of Appeal — The Office of Messenger — The Organization of the Particular Baptists — A Letter From Ireland — The Midland Association — The Circular Letter — Objects of the Union — Support of the Ministry — Education — Hebrew, Greek and Latin — Bristol College — Mile End Academy — Pastor and Deacons — The Permanency of the Pastoral Relation — The Support of the Ministry — Ordination — Discipline — Amusements — Marrying — Laying on of Hands and Anointing of the Sick — Singing

### ***CHAPTER 20. — THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS.***

Opportunity for Growth — Robert Baillie — Thomas Edwards — Daniel Featley — An Epitome of the Period — William R. Williams — The High Attainments of the Baptists — Dr. Hawes — Mackintosh — Hugh Price HughesChalmers — The Price of Human Liberty — Persecutions — An Act of Parliament — The “Gag Law” — The Cruelty of Infant Baptism — Oliver Cromwell — Prominent Baptist Preachers in Prison — Cromwell Casts His Influence Against the Baptist — Liberty of Conscience — Confession of the Particular Baptists — Of the General Baptists — John Milton — John Bunyan — William Kiffin — James II. — William and Mary — The Baptists Brought Liberty of Conscience — John Locke — Price — Charles Butler — Herbert S. Skeats — Phillip Schaff — A Time of Paralysis Antinomianism — John Gill —

John Rippon — Baptist Publications — Abraham Booth — John Howard — Andrew Fuller — Moderate Calvinism — The Missionary Movement — William Carey — Joseph Hughes and the Bible Society — Sunday Schools — Robert Raikes — W. Fox — The Relation of the Baptists to the Young Regents Park College — Great Authors and Able Preachers — Hymn Writers

## ***CHAPTER 21. — THE ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES.***

The Date of the First Baptists in America Uncertain — Many of the Early Settlers Baptists — Cotton Mather — Plymouth — Roger Williams and Samuel Howe — The Fear of Anabaptism — A Disturbance on Account of Immersion — Governor Winthrop — Governor Bradford — A Debate on Baptism — President Chauncey — Scituate — The Lathrop Church — Henry Dunster — Hanserd Knollys — The General Court of Massachusetts Takes Part — Weymouth — Lady Moody — Painter — Persecutions — Roger Williams — At Salem — At Providence — The Form of His Baptism Immersion — Richard Scott — William Coddington — Williams Himself Testifies — Joseph B. Felt — George P. Fisher — Philip Schaff — Williams Separates From the Baptists — Apostolic Succession — The Baptists Do not Derive Their Baptism From Williams — The First Democracy — The Provisions For the Charter of Rhode Island — Religious Liberty — Arnold — Hough — Bancroft — Judge Story — Gervinus — Straus — The Persecutions of the Baptists in Massachusetts — John Clark — Obadiah Holmes — Virginia a Battle Ground for Freedom — Severe Laws — Sir W. Berkeley — The Destruction of the Establishments — The Testimony of Hawks — James Madison — Thomas Jefferson — Bishop Meade — George P. Fisher Sums up the Case — The Revolutionary War — William Pitt — Fox — Burke — Robert Ryland — No Tories Among the Baptists — The Continental Congress — The Philadelphia Association — A Memorial to Congress — The Baptists in the Army — The Chaplains — James Manning — John Hart — Thomas Jefferson — John Leland — Safeguarding the Liberty of the Land — The First Amendment to the Constitution — The Eulogy of the Baptists by George Washington

# A HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS

## CHAPTER 1. — THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

The Great Commission — A Definition of a Church — A Voluntary Association — A Church Not National or General — The Officers of a Church — The Ordinances — The Proper Subjects of Baptism — The Form of Baptism — The Lord's Supper — The Ordinances as Symbols — The Churches Missionary Bodies — The Continued Existence of the Churches.

AFTER, our Lord had finished his work on earth, and before he had ascended into glory, he gave to his disciples the following commission: "All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen" (<sup>4218</sup>Matthew 28:18-20). Under the terms of this commission Jesus gave to his churches the authority to evangelize the world.

A New Testament Church is a company of baptized believers voluntarily associated together for the maintenance of the ordinances and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The distinctive characteristics of this church are clearly marked in the New Testament.

Such a church was a voluntary association and was independent of all other churches. It might be, and probably was, affiliated with other churches in brotherly relations; but it remained independent of all outward control, and was responsible to Christ alone, who was the supreme lawgiver and the source of all authority. Originally the teachers and the people conjointly administered the affairs of the church.

In the New Testament sense of the church there can be no such an organization as a National or General Church, covering a large district of country, composed of a number of local organizations. The church, in the Scriptural sense, is always an independent, local organization. Sister churches were "united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution" (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, I. 554. Boston, 1854). Gibbon, always artistic in the use of material, continues: "Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed for more than a hundred

years after the death of the apostles. Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual, as well as friendly, intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme or legislative assembly” (Ibid, 558).

The officers of the church were first, pastors, indifferently called elders or bishops, and, secondly, deacons. These were the honorable servants of a free people. The pastors possessed no authority above their brethren, save that by service they purchased to themselves a good degree of glory.

The more recent Episcopal writers, such as Jacob and Hatch, do not derive their system from the ancient Scriptural form of government, but always acknowledge the primitive congregational form of government, and declare that episcopacy is a later development. In the New Testament, elder and bishop are different names to describe the same office. Dr. Lightfoot, the Bishop of Durham, in a very exhaustive discussion of the subject, says:

It is clear, that, at the close of the Apostolic Age, the two lower orders of the three fold ministry were firmly and widely established; but traces of the episcopate, properly so-called, are few and indistinct. ... The episcopate was formed out of the presbyterial order by elevation; and the title, which originally was common to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief of them (Lightfoot, Commentary on Philippians, 180-276).

Dean Stanley represents the same view. He says:

According to the strict rules of the church derived from those early times, there are but two orders, presbyters and deacons (Stanley, Christian Institutions, 210).

Richard B. Rackham (The Acts of the Apostles cii), A.D. 1912, says of the word bishop (episcopos)

We may say at once that it had not yet acquired the definite sense which it holds in the letters of Ignatius (A.D. 115), and which it still holds to-day, viz., of a single ruler of a diocese. From ~~Acts~~ Acts 20:28, ~~Titus~~ Titus 1:6, 7, and comparison with ~~1 Timothy~~ 1 Timothy 3:2f., we should conclude that episcopos was simply a synonym for presbyter, and that the two offices were identical.

Knowling (The Expositors Greek Testament, II. 435-437) reviews all of the authorities, Hatch (Smith and Cheetham, Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, II. 1700), Harnack (Gebhardt and Harnack, Clement of Rome, ed. altera, 5), Steinmetz, etc., and reaches the following conclusion

This one passage (~~Acts~~ Acts 20:28) is also sufficient to show that the “presbyter” and the “bishop” were at first practically identical.

Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, reminds the bishops that they owe their elevation above the presbyters, not so much to divine institution as to ecclesiastical usage; for before the outbreak of controversies in the church there was no distinction between the two, except that *presbyter* was a term of age, and *bishop* a term of official dignity; but when men, at the instigation of Satan, erected parties and sects, and, instead of simply following Christ, named themselves of Paul, of Apollos, or Cephas, all agreed to put one of the presbyters at the head of the rest, that by his universal supervision of the churches, he might kill the seeds of division (Hieron. Comm. ad Tit. i. 7). The great commentators of the Greek Church agree with Jerome in maintaining the original identity of bishops and presbyters in the New Testament. Thus did Chrysostom (Hom. i. in Ep. ad ~~<0011>~~Philippians 1:11); Theodoret (ad ~~<0011>~~Philippians 1:1); Ambrosiaster (ad ~~<0011>~~Ephesians 4:11); and the pseudo-Augustinian (Questions V. et N.T. qu. 101).

There were two ordinances in the primitive church, baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Baptism was an outward confession of faith in Christ. It thus expressed a belief in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and a subsequent resurrection of all believers through the eternal Spirit.

Only believers were baptized and that upon a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. The church was composed of believers or holy persons. The members were called in the New Testament “beloved of God, called to be saints”; “sanctified in Christ Jesus”; “faithful in Christ”; “God’s elect, holy, and beloved.” The conditions of membership were repentance, faith, righteousness, and the initiatory rite of baptism, which was symbolical of the changed life.

In this connection it is interesting to note that all the Pedobaptist Confessions of Faith include only believers in the definition of the proper members of a church. The following definition of a church is taken from the Augsburg Confession of Faith of the Lutheran Church. It fairly represents all the rest. It says:

To speak properly, the church of Christ is a congregation of the members of Christ; that is, of the saints, which do truly believe and rightly obey Christ.

So universal is this definition of a church in all of the Confessions of Faith that Kostlin, Professor of Theology in Halle, says: “The Reformed Confessions describe the Church as the communion of believers or saints, and condition its existence on the pure preaching of the Word” (Kostlin, Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopaedia, I. 474).

The above definition, consistently applied, excludes infant baptism, since infants are incapable of faith, which always, in the New Testament, is a

prerequisite to baptism. The New Testament teaching is quite clear on this point. John the Baptist required that those who were applicants for baptism should experience repentance, exercise faith, make a confession of sin and live a righteous life (~~<410E>~~Matthew 3:2; ~~<4494>~~Acts 19:4). Jesus first made disciples and then baptized them (~~<6040>~~John 4:1), and gave distinct commandment that teaching should precede baptism (~~<4139>~~Matthew 28:19). In the preaching of the apostles repentance antedates baptism (~~<4123>~~Acts 2:38): the converts were filled with joy, and only men and women were baptized (~~<448E>~~Acts 8:5, 8, 12). There is no account or inference implying the baptism of an infant by Jesus or his apostles. This is generally conceded by scholars.

Döllinger, a Catholic scholar, Professor of Church History in the University of Munich, says: “There is no proof or hint in the New Testament that the apostles baptized infants or ordered them to be baptized” (John Joseph Ignatius Dollinger, *The First Age of the Church*, II. 184).

Dr. Edmund de Pressense, a French Senator and Protestant, says: “No positive fact sanctioning the practice (of infant baptism) can be adduced from the New Testament; the historical proofs alleged are in no way conclusive” (Pressense, *Early Years of Christianity*, 376. London, 1810).

Many authors of books treating directly on infant baptism affirm that it is not mentioned in the Scriptures. One writer only is here quoted. Joh. W.F. Hofling, Lutheran Professor of Theology at Erlangen, says: “The sacred Scriptures furnish no historical proof that children were baptized by the apostles” (Hofling, *Das Sakrament der Taufe*, 99. Erlangen, 1846. 2 vols.).

A few of the more recent authorities will not be amiss on this subject. The “Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,” edited by Professor James Hastings and Professor Kirsopp Lake, of the University of Leyden, says: “*There is no indication of the baptism of children in the New Testament.*”

The “Real Encyklopadie fur Protestantische Theologie and Kirche” (XIX. 403. 3d edition), the great German encyclopaedia, says:

The practice of infant-baptism in the apostolic and post-apostolic age cannot be proved. We hear indeed frequently of the baptism of entire households, as in ~~<4453>~~Acts 15:32f; 18:8; ~~<6016>~~1 Corinthians 1:16. But the last passage taken, ~~<6074>~~1 Corinthians 7:14, is not favorable to the supposition that infant baptism was customary at that time. For then Paul could not have written “else were your children unclean.”

Principal Robert Rainy, New College, Edinburgh, Presbyterian, says:

Baptism presupposed some Christian instruction, and was preceded by fasting. It signified the forgiveness of past sins, and was the visible point of



departure of the new life under Christian influences and with the inspiration of Christian purposes and aims. Here it was the “seal” which it concerned a man to keep inviolate (Rainy, Ancient Catholic Church, 75).

The form of baptism was dipping, or an immersion in water. John baptized in the river Jordan (~~4006~~Mark 1:5); and he baptized in Aenon near to Salim “because there was much water there” (~~4023~~John 3:23). Jesus was baptized in the Jordan (~~4009~~Mark 1:9), and he “went into the water” and he “came up out of the water” (~~4016~~Matthew 3:16). The symbolical passages (~~4508~~Romans 6:3, 4; ~~5022~~Colossians 2:12), which describe baptism as a burial and resurrection make it certain that immersion was the New Testament act of baptism.

This, indeed, is the meaning of the Greek word *baptizein*. The word is defined by Liddell and Scott, the secular Greek lexicon used in all colleges and universities, “to dip in or under the water.” In the lexicon of J.H. Thayer, the standard New Testament lexicon, the word is defined as an “immersion in water.” All scholarship confirms this view. Prof. R.C. Jebb, Litt. D., University of Cambridge, says: “I do not know whether there is any authoritative Greek-English lexicon which makes the word to mean ‘sprinkle’ or to ‘pour.’ I can only say that such a meaning never belongs to the word in classical Greek” (Letter to the author, September 23, 1898). Dr. Adolf Harnack, University of Berlin, says: “Baptism undoubtedly signifies immersion. No proof can be found that it signifies anything else in the New Testament, and in the most ancient Christian literature” (Schaff, *The Teaching of the Twelve*, 50).

Dr. Dosker, Professor of Church History, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, says:

Every candid historian will admit that the Baptists have, both philologically and historically, the better of the argument, as to the prevailing mode of baptism. The word *baptizo* means immersion, both in classical and Biblical Greek, except where it is manifestly used in a tropical sense (Docker, *The Dutch Anabaptists*, 176, Philadelphia, 1921).

Nothing is more certain than that the New Testament churches uniformly practised immersion.

The Lord’s Supper shows forth the death of the Saviour till he shall come again. It is a perpetual memorial of the broken body and the shed blood of the risen Lord. In the Scriptures the Lord’s Supper is always preceded by the net of baptism, and there is no account of any person participating in the Supper who had not previously been baptized. That baptism should precede the Lord’s Supper is avowed by scholars of all communions.

Dr. William Wall sums up the entire historical field when he says: “*For no church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. ...*”

*Since among all of the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized”* (Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, I. 632, 638. Oxford, 1862).

The Baptists have always insisted that the ordinances were symbols and not sacraments. Indeed this is the heart of their contention.

President E.Y. Mullins has concisely stated the historical contention of Baptists in the following words:

They have seen with great vividness and clearness of outline the central spiritual elements of Christianity. With a like vividness and clearness they have perceived the significance of the outward forms. For them it has seemed as if the very life of Christianity depended upon keeping the spiritual and ceremonial elements in their respective places. Christian history certainly justifies them in their view. Forms and ceremonies are like ladders. On them we may climb up or down. If we keep them in their places as symbols, the soul feeds on the truth symbolized. If we convert them into sacraments, the soul misses the central vitality itself, spiritual communion with God. An outward religious ceremony derives its chief significance from the context in which it is placed, from the general system of which it forms a part. If a ceremony is set in the context of a spiritual system of truths, it may become an indispensable element for the furtherance of those truths. If it is set in the context of a sacramental system, it may and does become a means for obscuring the truth and enslaving the soul. It is this perception of the value of ceremonies as symbols and of their perils as sacraments which animates Baptists in their strenuous advocacy of a spiritual interpretation of the ordinances of Christianity (McGlothlin, *Infant Baptism Historically Considered*, 7).

The early churches were missionary bodies. They were required to carry out the great commission given by our Lord. In obedience to the missionary programme laid out by the divine Lord, the disciples in a few generations preached the gospel to the known world.

The first church was organized by Jesus and his apostles; and after the form of this one all other churches should be modeled. The churches so organized are to continue in the world until the kingdoms of this earth shall become the kingdom of our Lord, even Christ. Prophecy was full of the enduring character of the kingdom of Christ (~~2014~~ Daniel 2:44, 45). Jesus maintained a like view of his church and extended the promise to all the ages. He said: “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (~~2018~~ Matthew 16:18). The word church here is doubtless used in its ordinary, literal sense as a local institution; and in the only other passage where it is found in Matthew (~~2017~~ Matthew 18:17) it must be taken with the same signification. The great mass of scholarship supports the contention that this

passage refers to the local, visible church of Christ (Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew*).

The critical meaning of the word does not differ from this (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 197). The word “church” was used by our Lord and the apostles not so much in contra-distinction to the Jewish Theocracy, as to the Jewish synagogue, and the synagogue was always local (Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament Greek*, 330, 331). The Roman Catholics have always denied the existence of a universal spiritual church (Alzog, *Universal Church History*, I. 108, 109). Until the German Reformation there was practically no other conception of a church. When Luther and others split off from the Roman Catholic Church, a new interpretation of this passage was adopted to suit the new views; so they held that <sup><01618></sup>Matthew 16:18 merely pointed to the ultimate triumph of Christianity. But manifestly this interpretation was remote from the meaning of the Lord.

Paul gives a large promise: “Unto him be glory in the church of Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (<sup><01721></sup>Ephesians 3:21). Ellicott translates the passage: “To all the generations of the ages of ages.” The glory of Christ was to exist in all of the ages in the church. The church was, therefore, bound to exist in all of the ages. Even the redeemed in heaven are described in the Scriptures as a church.

The author believes that in every age since Jesus and the apostles, there have been companies of believers, churches, who have substantially held to the principles of the New Testament as now proclaimed by the Baptists. No attempt is made in these pages to trace a succession of bishops, as the Roman Catholics attempt to do, back to the apostles. Such an attempt is “laboring in the fire for mere vanity,” and proceeds upon a mistaken view of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and of the sovereignty of God, in his operations on the earth. Jesus himself, in a reply to an inquiry put to him by the Pharisees (<sup><01721></sup>Luke 17:20-24), compares his kingdom to the lightning, darting its rays in the most sovereign and uncontrollable manner from one extremity of the heavens to the other. And this view corresponds to God’s dealings in the spiritual realm. Wherever God has his elect, there in his own proper time, he sends the gospel to save them, and churches after his model are organized (William Jones, *The History of the Christian Church*, xvii. Philadelphia. 1832).

The New Testament recognizes a democratic simplicity, and not a hierarchial monarchy. There is no irregularity, but a perpetual proclamation of principles. There is no intimation that there was not a continuity of churches, for doubtless there was, but our insistence is that this was not the dominant note in apostolic life. No emphasis is put on a succession of baptisms, or the historical order of churches. Some of the apostles were disciples of John the Baptist

(~~4015~~John 1:35), but there is no record of the baptism of others, though they were baptized. Paul, the great missionary, was baptized by Ananias (~~4017~~Acts 9:17, 18), but it is not known who baptized Ananias. Nothing definite is known of the origin of the church at Damascus. The church at Antioch became the great foreign missionary center, but the history of its origin is not distinctly given. The church at Rome was already in existence when Paul wrote to them his letter. These silences occur all through the New Testament, but there is a constant recurrence of type, a persistence of fundamental doctrines, and a proclamation of principles. This marked the whole apostolic period, and for that matter, every period since that time.

This recurrence of type is recognized even where error was detected. The disciples desired Jesus to rebuke a man who walked not with them (~~4040~~Mark 9:40), but this Jesus refused to do. The church at Corinth was imperfect in practice and life. The Judaizing teachers constantly perverted the gospel, and John the Evangelist, in his last days, combated insidious error, but the great doctrines of the atoning work of Christ, conversion and repentance, the baptism of believers, the purity of the church, the freedom of the soul, and the collateral truths, were everywhere avowed. At times these principles have been combated and those who held them persecuted, often they have been obscured; sometimes they have been advocated by ignorant men, and at other times by brilliant graduates of the universities, who frequently mixed the truth with philosophical speculations; yet always, often under the most varied conditions, these principles have come to the surface.

Baptist churches have the most slender ties of organization, and a strong government is not according to their polity. They are like the river Rhone, which sometimes flows as a river broad and deep, but at other times is hidden in the sands. It, however, never loses its continuity or existence. It is simply hidden for a period. Baptist churches may disappear and reappear in the most unaccountable manner.. Persecuted everywhere by sword and by fire, their principles would appear to be almost extinct, when in a most wondrous way God would raise up some man, or some company of martyrs, to proclaim the truth.

The footsteps of the Baptists of the ages can more easily be traced by blood than by baptism. It is a lineage of suffering rather than a succession of bishops; a martyrdom of principle, rather than a dogmatic decree of councils; a golden chord of love, rather than an iron chain of succession, which, while attempting to rattle its links back to the apostles, has been of more service in chaining some protesting Baptist to the stake than in proclaiming the truth of the New Testament. It is, nevertheless, a right royal succession, that in every age the Baptists have been advocates of liberty for all, and have held that the gospel of the Son of God makes every man a free man in Christ Jesus.

## **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

George P. Fisher (Congregationalist), *A History of the Christian Church*, pp. 1-44.

Philip Schaff (Presbyterian), *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I.

John Alzog (Roman Catholic), *Manual of Universal Church History*, 4 volumes.

Thomas J. Conant (Baptist), *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*.

John T. Christian, *Immersion, the Act of Christian Baptism*.

Edwin Hatch. *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*.

## CHAPTER 2. — THE ANCIENT CHURCHES

Early Conditions — Isaac Taylor — Epistola ad Diognetum — The Beginning of — Dangerous Heresies — Baptismal Salvation — Metropolitan Bishops — Gregory the Great — The Baptism of Believers — The Fathers — The Early Councils and Infant Baptism — The Baptism of Adults Who Had Christian Parents — The First Law and The First Rule for Infant Baptism — The Testimony of Scholars — The Form of Baptism — Six Rituals on the Subject — The Christian Monuments — The Catacombs — The Baptisteries — Clinic Baptism — Religious Liberty — Tertullian, Justin Martyr and Lactantius — Constantine the Great Issues an Edict — Theodosius the Great Enforces Religion by Law.

THE period of the ancient churches (A.D. 100-325) is much obscured. Much of the material has been lost; much of it that remains has been interpolated by Mediaeval Popish writers and translators; and all of it has been involved in much controversy. Caution must, therefore, be observed in arriving at permanent conclusions. Hasty generalizations that all Christians and churches were involved in doctrinal error must be accepted with extreme caution. Strange and horrible charges began to be current against the Christians. The secrecy of their meetings for worship was ascribed, not to its true cause, the fear of persecution, but to a consciousness of abominations which could not bear the light. The Jews were especially industrious in inventing and propagating such stories. In this way discredit was brought on the Christian name.

It is certain, however, in the early days following the death of the apostle John, that the Christians lived simple and zealous lives. Isaac Taylor, who especially wrote against a superstitious overvaluation of the patristic age, gives a fine picture of early Christian life. He says

Our brethren of the early church challenge our respect, as well as affection; for theirs was the fervor of a steady faith in things unseen and eternal; theirs, often, a meek patience under the most grievous wrongs; theirs the courage to maintain a good profession before the frowning face of philosophy, of secular tyranny, and of splendid superstition; theirs was abstractness from the world and a painful self-denial; theirs the most arduous and costly labors of love; theirs a munificence in charity, altogether without example; theirs was a reverent and scrupulous care of the sacred writings; and this one merit, if they had no other, is of a superlative degree, and should entitle them to the veneration and grateful regards of the modern church. How little do many readers of the Bible, nowadays, think of what it cost the Christians of the second and third centuries, merely to rescue and hide the sacred treasures from the rage of the heathen (Taylor, *Ancient Christianity*, I. 37).

A most beautiful and pathetic picture is given by the author of the *Epistola ad Diognetum* in the early part of the second century. He says:

The Christians are not distinguished from other men by country, by language, nor by civil institutions. For they neither dwell in cities by themselves, nor use a peculiar tongue, nor lead a singular mode of life. They dwell in the Grecian or barbarian cities, as the case may be; they follow the usages of the country in dress, food, and the other affairs of life. Yet they present a wonderful and confessedly paradoxical conduct. They dwell in their own native lands, but as strangers. They take part in all things, as citizens; and they suffer all things, as foreigners. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every native land is a foreign. They marry, like all others; they have children; but they do not cast away their offsprings. They have the table in common, but not wives. They are in the flesh, but do not live after the flesh. They live upon the earth, but are citizens of heaven. They obey the existing laws, and excel the laws by their lives. They love all, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown, and yet they are condemned. They are killed and made alive. They are poor and make many rich. They lack all things, and in all things abound. They are reproached, and glory in their reproaches. They are calumniated, and are justified. They are cursed, and they bless. They receive scorn, and they give honor. They do good, and are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice, as being made alive. By the Jews they are attacked as aliens, and by the Greeks persecuted; and the cause of the enmity their enemies cannot tell. In short, what the soul is to the body, the Christians are in the world. The soul is diffused through all the members of the body, and the Christians are spread through the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but it is not of the body; so the Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world. The soul, invisible, keeps watch in the visible body; so also the Christians are seen to live in the world, for their piety is invisible. The flesh hates and wars against the soul; suffering no wrong from it, but because it resists fleshly pleasures; and the world hates the Christians with no reason, but they resist its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh and members, by which it is hated; so the Christians love their haters. The soul is enclosed in the body, but holds the body together; so the Christians are detained in the world as in a prison; but they contain the world. Immortal, the soul dwells in the mortal body; so the Christians dwell in the corruptible, but look for incorruption in heaven. The soul is the better for restriction in food and drink; and the Christians increase, though daily punished. This lot God has assigned to the Christians in the world; and it cannot be taken from them (Epist. ad Diognetum, C. 5 and 6 p. 69 sq. Otto. Lips., 1852).

Through all of this period there were doubtless many churches that remained true to the New Testament ideals. The more earnestly they adhered to Scriptural principles the less likely was mention made of them. It was the unusual and the heretical that attracted attention and was recorded in the histories of the times.

“For the first three centuries the Lord placed Christianity in the most unfavorable circumstances that it might display its moral power, and gain its victory over the world by spiritual weapons alone. Until the reign of Constantine it had not even a legal existence in the Roman empire, but was first ignored as a Jewish sect, then slandered, proscribed, persecuted, as a treasonable innovation, and the adoption of it made punishable with confiscation and death. Besides, it offered not the slightest favor, as Mohammedanism afterwards did, to the corrupt inclinations of the heart, but against the current ideas of the Jews and heathens it so presented its inexorable demand of repentance and conversion, renunciation of self and of the world, that more, according to Tertullian, were kept out of the new sect by love of pleasure, than by love of life. The Jewish origin of Christianity also, and the poverty and obscurity of a majority of its professors offended the pride of the Greeks and Romans” (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, I. 148).

In spite of these extraordinary difficulties Christianity made progress. The hindrances became helps in the providence of God. Persecution led to martyrdom, and martyrdom had attractions. Tertullian exclaimed to the heathen: “All of your ingenious cruelties can accomplish nothing; they are only a lure to this sect. Our number increases the more you destroy us. The blood of the Christians is their seed.” The moral earnestness of the Christians contrasted powerfully with the prevailing corruption of the age, and while it repelled the frivolous and voluptuous, it could not fail to impress most strongly the deepest and noblest minds. This progress extended to every part of the empire. “We are a people of yesterday,” says Tertullian, “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. You can count your armies our number in a single province will be greater.”

Nevertheless, even before the death of the last of the apostles many dangerous and grievous heresies had sprung up in the Christian churches. A constant tendency to separate from the truth, as proclaimed in the Scriptures, was manifested in some places. The trend from the Word of God has been noted by the apostle Paul, and in some of his Epistles he combated error. Shortly after the death of the last of the apostles some dangerous heresies crept into the churches, and were advocated by many learned and distinguished men.

It is not to be understood that all, or even most of the doctrinal errors, which are found in later Roman Catholic history are to be found in this period. This is not the case. For example, the worship of Mary and of images, transubstantiation, the infallibility of the pope, and the immaculate conception are all of later date. The tendency was rather to lessen the demand for repentance and faith, the experimental in religion, and rather to emphasize



external signs and symbols. It was imagined that the outward symbol could take the place of the inward grace. The point of departure probably had its largest expression in baptismal salvation, and the tendency of some churches toward episcopacy, and away from democratic simplicity.

One of the very earliest voices lifted against the abuses was that of the Shepherd of Hermas. The Shepherd says:

Customs have become worldly; discipline is relaxed; the Church is a sickly old woman, incapable of standing on her feet; rulers and ruled are all languishing, and many among them are corrupt, covetous, greedy, hypocritical, contentious, slanderers, blasphemers, libertines, spies, renegades, schismatics. Worthy teachers are not wanting, but there are also many false prophets, vain, eager after the first sees, for whom the greatest thing in life is not the practice of piety and justice, but the strife for the post of command. Now the day of wrath is at hand; the punishment will be dreadful; the Lord will give unto every one according to his works.

One of the earliest and most hurtful errors was the dogma of baptismal regeneration. This error in one form or another has marred the life and colored the history of all of the Christian ages. It began early and the virus may be traced to this day not only among ritualists, but likewise in the standards of evangelical Christians. Tertullian was influenced by it to oppose infant baptism, and under other conditions it became the frightful origin of that heresy.

Nevertheless, the churches continued to be free and independent. There were as yet no metropolitan bishops, and the office and authority of a pope was not yet known. Rome in those days had no great authority in the Christian world. "The see of Rome," remarks Cardinal Newman, "possessed no great mind in the whole period of persecution. Afterwards for a long time it had not a single doctor to show. The great luminary of the Western World is St. Augustine; he, no infallible teacher, has formed the intellect of Europe" (John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita sua*, 407. London, 1864). Dean Stanley rightly adds: "There have been occupants of the sees of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Canterbury who have produced more effect on the mind of Christendom by their utterances than any of the popes" (Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, 241. New York, 1881).

There was, however, a constant tendency towards centralization. As the pastor assumed rights which were not granted to him by the Scriptures, some of the metropolitan pastors exercised an undue authority over some of the smaller churches. Then the churches in some of the cities sought the patronage and protection of the pastors of the larger cities. Finally Rome, the political center of the world, became the religious center as well. In time the pastor in Rome

became the universal pope. All of this was of slow growth and required centuries for its consummation.

Gregory the Great (A. D. 590-604) was “the first of the proper popes” and with him begins “the development of the absolute papacy” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, I. 15). The growth of the papacy was a process of history. Long before this the bishops of Rome had made arrogant claims over other churches. Notably was this true of Leo I., A.D. 440-461.. All of this is conceded by Hefele. He says:

It is, however, not to be mistaken, that the bishops of Rome did not, everywhere, in all the West, exercise full patriarchal rights; that, to-wit, in several provinces, simple bishops were ordained without his co-operation (Hefele, I. 383).

The line of the absolute Mediaeval popes began with Gregory.

“Christianity in Rome,” says Gregorovius, “became in a very short time corrupt; and this is not to be wondered at, because the ground in which the seed of its doctrine had been sown was rotten and the least apt of all other grounds to bring forth good fruit. ... The Roman character had not been changed from what it was of old, because baptism cannot change the spirit of the times” (Gregorovius, *Storia della città di Roma nel Medio Evo*, I. 155).

Gregory objected to the title “universal bishop.” “I do not esteem that an honor,” he declares, “by which my brethren lose their honor. My honor is the solid strength of my brethren. ... But no more of this: away with words which inflate pride and wound charity” (Gregory, *Ep. 30. III. 933*). Nevertheless, the conception of a local, independent church, by these and other means was partly overthrown; and much of the Christian world was called upon to suffer at the hands of a wicked and often ungodly hierarchy.

Believers’ baptism continued to prevail in the churches. Notwithstanding the efficacy which was supposed to exist in baptism, infant baptism was of slow growth. Even after its first appearance it was opposed by many, and for a long time was not generally practised.

The writers known as the Apostolic Fathers, Clement, Barnabas, Ignatius and the Pastor of Hermas, all required faith on the part of the candidate baptized. Clement does not mention baptism in his *Epistle to the Corinthians*; but he does exhort parents to “let your children be partakers of the Christian training” (Migne, *Patrologiae gr.* I. 255).

Barnabas says: “Mark how he has described at once both the water and the cross. For these words imply, blessed are they who, placing their trust in the

cross, have gone down into the water; for, says he, they shall receive their reward in due time” (Migne, *Patrologiæ gr.*, II. 755).

Ignatius writes to Polycarp as follows: “Let your baptism be to you an armor, and faith as a spear, and love as a helmet, and patience as a panoply” (Ibid, V. 847). The order of baptism as well as the exhortation exclude infant baptism.

And the Shepherd of Hermas speaks of those who “have heard the word, and wished to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Ibid, *Patrologiæ gr.*, II. 906).

The Apostolic Fathers require that faith shall precede baptism and hence they know nothing of infant baptism.. Dr. Charles W. Bennett, Professor of Historical Theology in Garrett Biblical Institute, Methodist, says: “The Apostolic Fathers contain no positive information relative to the practice of the church of their time respecting infant baptism” (Bennett, *Christian Archæology*, 391. New York, 1889).

Passing to the second generation of the Fathers, Justin Martyr, A.D. 114-168, has sometimes been quoted as favoring the practice of infant baptism. After relating the evils of human nature and the bad habits of men, Justin declares that,

in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and ignorance, but may become the children of choice and of knowledge, and may obtain in water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by name alone (Migne, VI. 419).

It is now quite generally admitted that Justin knows only the baptism of adults, though he believed in baptismal regeneration.

The celebrated passage from Irenæus is as follows:

For he came to save all through means of himself, all I say, who through him are born again to God — infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child, for children; thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of youths, and thus sanctifying them to the Lord (Migne, VII. 783).

This passage is probably spurious. There is no proof, however, that it refers to baptism at all. Dr. Karl R. Hagenbach, for fifty years professor in the University of Basel, says that this passage does not “afford any decisive proof. It only expresses the beautiful idea that Jesus was Redeemer in every stage of life; but it does not say that he redeemed children by the water of baptism” (Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*, 200. New York, 1869).

Origen, A.D. 185-254, is quoted in favor of infant baptism. His words are:

To these considerations it can be added, that it may be enquired why, since the baptism of the church is given for the remission of sins, baptism is given according to the observance of the church even to children (*parvulis*); for the grace of baptism would seem superfluous if there was nothing in children requiring remission and indulgence (Migne, XII. 492)

The same sentiment is found in his commentary on Romans.

The original Greek of Origen no longer exists, and there remain of the words of Origen only translations by Rufinus and Jerome in Latin. These translations are notoriously unreliable, and it is admitted that the ideas of a later age are freely incorporated in the writings of Origen. The children mentioned are not “infants,” for in the same work this word is used to describe Jesus at the age of twelve (Migne, XIII. 1849). All that can be claimed is that Origen refers to the baptism of children, not infants, as an apostolic tradition. This is not of much weight, when it is recalled that Origen refers to a number of things as of apostolic tradition which are not even mentioned in the Scriptures.

The earliest clear evidence of infant baptism is found in Tertullian who opposed it (A.D. 185). The first direct evidence in favor of it is found in the writings of Cyprian, in the Council of Carthage, in Africa, A.D. 253. In writing to one Fidus, Cyprian takes the ground that infants should be baptized as soon as they are born (Epistle of, Cyprian, LVIII. 2). This opinion, however, was not based upon the Scriptures, and did not meet with the approval of the Christian world.

The early councils of the church were all against infant baptism. The Council of Elvira or Grenada, A.D. 305, required the delay of baptism for two years (Hefele, History of the Councils, I. 155. Edinburgh, 1871). The Council of Laodicaea held A.D. 360, demanded that those who are “to be baptized must learn the creed by heart and recite it” (Hefele, II. 319). The Council of Constantinople decreed that persons should “remain a long time under Scriptural instruction before they receive baptism” (Ibid, II. 368). And the Council of Carthage, A.D. 398, decreed that “catechumens shall give their names, and be prepared for baptism” (DuPin, Bibliothéque universelle, c. 4. 282).

Many of the most prominent Christians, though born of Christian parents, were not baptized in infancy. The number of such persons is so great, and the details are so many, that mention can be made of only a few of them. The list would include the celebrated historian Eusebius, the emperor Constantine the Great, Ephrem. Syrus, and the great Augustine.

Basil the Great was born in the year 329, in a wealthy and pious family, whose ancestors had distinguished themselves as martyrs. His mother and

grandmother were Christians and four brothers and five sisters were well-known Christians: He was baptized when he was twenty-six years of age. In a remarkable passage, A.D. 380, he plainly indicates the drift of the times. He says:

Do you demur and loiter and put off baptism? When you have been from a child catechised in the Word, and you are not yet acquainted with the truth? Having been always learning it, are you not yet come to the knowledge of it? A seeker all your life long. A considerer till you are old. When will you make a Christian? When shall we see you as one of us? Last year you were staying till this year; and now you have a mind to stay till next. Take heed, that by promising yourself a longer life, you do not quite miss of your hope. Do you not know what changes tomorrow may bring? (Migne, XXXI. 1514).

All of this demonstrates that the early Christians continued to baptize upon a profession of faith; and that infant baptism had gained no permanent foothold till ages after the days of the apostles.

Infant baptism was not of rapid growth. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo-Regius, North Africa (A.D. 353-430) was not the first to practise it; but he was, though not himself baptized in infancy, its first and ablest defender. He developed the theological argument in its favor. The Council of Mela, in Numidia, A.D. 416, composed of fifteen persons, and presided over by Augustine, decreed:

Also, it is the pleasure of the bishops in order that whoever denies that infants newly born of their mothers, are to be baptized or says that baptism is administered for the remission of their own sins, but not on account of original sin, delivered from Adam, and to be expiated by the laver of regeneration, be accursed (Wall, The History of Infant Baptism. I. 265).

It is a suggestive fact prophetic of the future that the first council favoring the practice of infant baptism also accompanied this by a curse against those who dissented from the opinions of the council. It furthermore shows there were opponents of infant baptism in those days, and that the infant rite was not the universal custom of those times.

The first rule, to which reference is made as favoring infant baptism in Europe, was by the Spanish Council of Gerunda, A.D. 517. The Council was composed of seven men who subscribed to ten rules. The canon covering the point at issue here is Article V.:

But concerning little sons lately born, it pleaseth us to appoint, that if, as is usual, they be infirm, and do not suck their mother's milk, even on the same day in which they are born (if they be offered, if they be brought) they may be baptized.

The rule was that ordinarily catechetical instruction should precede baptism. In the case of infants who were sick, because of the fear that they would be lost in case of death without baptism, they were to be baptized in infancy. No provision was made for the baptism of infants who were in good health. It has also been seriously doubted whether this Council was ever held.

Charlemagne, A.D. 789, issued the first law in Europe for baptizing infants. He was engaged in a stubborn war with the Saxons, but their brave general Windekind, always found resources to defeat his designs. In the end his imperial majesty hit upon a method, which disheartened Windekind, by detaching his people from him, and which completely made an end of the war. This was by reducing the whole nation by a dreadful alternative; either of being assassinated by the troops, or of accepting life on the condition of professing themselves Christians by being baptized; and the severe laws still stand in the capitularies of this monarch, by which they were obliged, “on pain of death, to baptize themselves, and of heavy fines to baptize their children within the year of their birth.”

That this is a correct interpretation of the attitude of the early churches there is not the shadow of a doubt. All historians confirm, this contention. A few high authorities are here quoted.

Dr. Adolph Harnack, of the University of Berlin, says of the post-apostolic period:

There is no sure trace of infant baptism in the epoch; personal faith is a necessary condition (Harnack, History of Dogma, I. 20 note 2).

He further says:

Complete obscurity prevails as to the Church’s adoption of the practice of child-baptism, which, though it owes its origin to the idea of this ceremony being indispensable to salvation, is nevertheless a proof that the superstitious view of baptism had increased. In the time of Irenaeus (II. 22, 4), and Tertullian (de bapt. 18), child-baptism had already become very general and was founded. on Matthew 19: 14. We have no testimony regarding it from earlier times (Ibid, II. 142).

And finally he says that it:

was established in the fifth century as the general usage. Its complete adoption runs parallel with the death of heathenism (Ibid, IV. 284).

Professor H.G. Wood, of the University of Cambridge, says:

We are, as Harnack says, “in complete obscurity as to the Church’s adoption of the practice.” The clear third century references to childbaptism interpret it

in the light of original sin, and if the adoption of the practice is due to this interpretation, it is almost certainly a late second century development. ... References to original sin in Clement of Rome or other writers earlier than Cyprian cannot be held to imply a knowledge of the custom of infant baptism. Moreover, the idea that infants needed to be baptized for the remission of sins is contrary to all that is known of early Christian feeling toward childhood. ... Even in the third century infant baptism cannot be described as a Church custom. That the Church allowed parents to bring their infants to be baptized is obvious; that some teachers and bishops may have encouraged them to do so is probable, though there is no reason to suppose that Tertullian's position was peculiarly his own. But infant baptism was not at this time enjoined, or incorporated in the standing orders of the Church (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11.).

Dr. F.C. Conybeare says that "the essential thing was that a man should come to baptism of his own free will." He further says:

On such grounds was justified the transition of a baptism which began as a spontaneous act of self-consecration into an *opus operandum*. How long after this it was before infant baptism became normal inside the Byzantine church we do not know exactly. ... The change came more quickly in Latin than in Greek Christendom, and very slowly indeed in the Armenian and the Georgian churches (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, Article on Baptism).

Andre Lagarde says:

Until the sixth century, infants were baptized only when they were in danger of death. About this time the practice was introduced of administering baptism even when they were not ill (Lagarde, *Latin Church in the Middle Ages*, 37).

These facts are altogether against the idea that infant baptism was the practice of the ancient churches. In its introduction it met with the greatest opposition, and it was only under the anathema and by the point of the sword that infant baptism was pressed upon the unwilling Christians; and the same intolerance has followed its history to the present time.

Of the form of baptism practised in the ancient churches there is not a particle of doubt. It is certain that immersion was the universal rule, save in the case of a few sick persons.

There are six elaborate descriptions or rituals of baptism which have come down to us. They were all well known in the churches and all of them prescribe immersion.. They are the so-called Egyptian Acts (Gebhardt and Harnack, *Texts and Researches*, VI. c. 4 (28)); the Canon Hipolyte, the third century (Hipolyte, Bk. VII. (29)); the Apostolic Constitutions or Canons, in the

Greek, the Coptic, and the Latin versions, A.D. 350-404; Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 286 (Migne XXXIII. 43); Ambrose of Milan, A.D. 397 (Bunsen, *Analecta*, II. 465), and Dionysius Areopagita, A.D. 450. These rituals were largely used in the churches and represent the universal practice of immersion.

Of this practice of immersion there is proof in Africa, in Palestine, in Egypt, in Antioch and Constantinople and in Cappadocia. For the Roman use of immersion we have the testimony of eight hundred years. Tertullian bears witness for the second century (Tertullian, *De Bapt.*, c. 4); Leo the Great in the fifth century (Fourth Letter to the Bishop of Sicily); Pope Pelagius in the sixth century (*Epist. ad Gaudent*); Theoduff of Orleans in the eighth century; and in the eleventh century—the Romans dipped the subject “only once” (Canisius, *Lectiones Antiq.*, III. 281). These examples settle the use of the Italians.

There is also the testimony of the early Christian monuments. At first the Christians baptized in rivers and fountains. This, says Walafrid Strabo, was done with great simplicity (Migne, CXIV, 958). Later, on account of persecutions, the Christians hid themselves; and the Catacombs furnished many examples of baptisteries. Dr. Cote, who lived many years in Rome, and closely studied the baptismal question, says: “During the dark days of imperial persecutions the primitive Christians of Rome found a ready refuge in the Catacombs, where they constructed baptisteries for the administration of the rite of immersion” (Cote, *Archaeology of Baptism*, 151. London, 1876). Even a brief description of these baptisteries cannot be given here, but one who has not studied the subject carefully will be surprised at their number and extent.

Afterwards when more liberty of worship was granted to the Christians many churches were erected. At first the baptistery was an independent structure, separate from the place of worship; but later it became the custom to place the baptistery in the church house itself. Such baptisteries were erected in almost every country where the Christian religion had spread. This was particularly true in Italy. Cote gives a list of not less than sixty-six baptisteries in that country alone (Cote, *Baptisteries*, 110). As late as the eighth and ninth centuries baptisteries continued to be in full use in Italy. Baptisteries were erected in Italy as late as the fourteenth century, while immersion continued in the Cathedral of Milan till the close of the eighteenth century.

These baptisteries were decorated and naturally many of the emblems, mosaics and paintings were intended to illuminate the form of baptism. The so-called Christian Art was found in the Catacombs, on the interior of churches and on church furniture and utensils. The oldest pictures do not date before the time of the Emperor Constantine (Parker, *The Archaeology of Rome*, XII. 11. Oxford, 1877); many of them have been constantly repaired, and some of the most famous ones have been so changed that they have lost their original character



(Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*, I. 22). No certain conclusions can be drawn from this source, but the teaching of all early art indicates immersion as the form of baptism. The pictures represent river scenes, the candidate stands in the water, and every circumstance points toward the primitive act of baptism. The unanimous opinion of the professors of archaeology in the great universities is that the ancient pictures, in the Catacombs and elsewhere, of baptism, represent the rite as administered by immersion (See Christian's *Baptism in Sculpture and Art*. Louisville, 1907).

Affusion for baptism was of slow growth. Possibly the earliest mention of affusion is found in the famous Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Bryennios, *Didacha ton Dodeka Apostolon*. Constantinople, 1883), which is variously claimed to be a production of the first to the seventh century.

Novatian (A.D. 250) presents the first case of clinic baptism on record. He had water profusely poured upon him while sick in bed, but his baptism is distinctly called "an abridgement" or "compend" (Eusebius, *The Church History*, 289. New York, 1890). Affusion is a mere substitute for immersion. France was the first country where affusion was permitted to persons in the full enjoyment of health (Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, I. 576). The first law for sprinkling was obtained in the following manner: "Pope Stephen III., being driven from Rome by Astolphus, King of the Lombards, in 753, fled to Pepin, who, a short time before, had usurped the crown of France. Whilst he remained there, the monks of Cressy, in Brittany, consulted him, whether, in cases of necessity, baptism, performed by pouring water on the head of the infant, would be lawful. Stephen replied that it would" (*Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, III. 236). It was not, however, till A.D. 1311, that the Council of Ravenna decreed: "Baptism is to be administered by trine aspersion or immersion" (Labbe and Cossart, *Sacrosancta Concilia*, II. B. 2. 1586. Paris, 1671). Soon after this sprinkling became customary in France.

For the first thirteen centuries immersion was the normal practice of the Christian world. "Baptism by immersion," says Dollinger, "continued to be the prevailing practice of the Church as late as the fourteenth century" (Döllinger, *The History of the Church*, II. 294. London, 1840-42). Immersion was practised in some parts of Germany in the sixteenth century. In England immersion was the practice for sixteen hundred years.

At the time of the birth of Jesus religious liberty was unknown in the world. Even the ancient republics never recognized it. Socrates, with all of his moral heroism, never arose above the assumption, that impiety should be punished with death. In his defense before his judges he says:

My duty is to persuade you, if I can; but you have sworn to follow your own convictions in judging according to the laws — not to make the laws bend to

your partiality. And it is your duty so to do. Do not, therefore, require of me proceedings dishonorable in reference to myself and impious in regard to you, especially at a time when I am myself rebutting an accusation of impiety advanced by Miletus (Grote, History of Greece, VIII. 656).

It was fully agreed by all Pagan nations that the state had a right to regulate all matters connected with religion; and the citizen was bound to obey.

Early did the Christians avow and amplify religious liberty. The blood of persecution brought to the front this doctrine. Tertullian boldly tells the heathen that everybody has a natural and inalienable right to worship God according to his own conscience. His words are

However, it is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own convictions; one man's religion neither harms nor helps another man. It is assuredly no part of religion to compel religion — to which free-will and not force should lead us — the sacrificial victims even being required of a willing mind. You will render no real service to your gods by compelling us to sacrifice. For they can have no desire of offerings from the unwilling, unless they are animated by a spirit of contention, which is a thing altogether undivine (Tertullian, ad Scapulam, c. 2).

Justin Martyr affirmed similar opinions (Apol. I.c. 2. 4, 12), and later Lactantius says

Religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows, that the will may be affected. Torture and piety are widely different; nor is it possible for truth to be united with violence, or justice with cruelty. Nothing is so much a matter of free will as religion (Lactantius, Instit. div. V. 20).

Dr. Baur, commenting on these statements, says:

It is remarkable how already the oldest Christian Apologists, in vindicating the Christian faith, were led to assert the Protestant principle of freedom of faith and conscience as an inherent attribute of the conception of religion against their heathen opponents (Baur, Gesch. der Christl. Kirche, I. 428).

Hase says:

Thus did the church prove, in a time of unlimited arbitrary power, the refuge of popular freedom, and saints assumed the part of tribunes of the people (Hase, Church History, sec. 117, p. 161, 7th edition).

This is hardly a Protestant doctrinal tenet, but it does belong to the Baptists. Protestants have been all too ready to persecute.

When Constantine, after the victory of Milvian Bridge, on the Tiber, October 27, 312, became emperor he issued a decree of toleration. The famous edict of Milan was issued by Constantine and Licinius. It is of so much importance that the law is here transcribed in full. It is as follows:

Perceiving long ago that religious liberty ought not to be denied, but that it ought to be granted to the judgment and desire of each individual to perform his religious duties according to his own choice, we had given orders that every man, Christians as well as others, should preserve the faith of his own sect and religion. But since in this rescript, in which such liberty was granted them, many and various conditions seemed clearly added, some of them, it may be, after a little retired from such observance. When I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinus Augustus, came under favorable auspices to Milan and took under consideration everything which pertained to the common weal and prosperity, we resolved among other things, or rather first of all, to make such decrees as seemed in many respects for the benefit of every one; namely, such as should preserve reverence and piety toward the deity. We resolved, that is, to grant both to the Christians and to all men freedom to follow the religion which they choose, that whatever heavenly divinity exists may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government. We have, therefore, determined, with sound and upright purpose, that liberty is to be denied to no one, to choose and to follow the religious observance of the Christians, but that to each one freedom is to be given to devote his mind to that religion which he may think adapted to himself, in order that the Deity may exhibit to us in all things his accustomed care and favor. It was fitting that we should write that this is our pleasure, that those conditions being entirely left out which were contained in our former letter concerning the Christians which was sent to your devotedness, everything that seemed very severe and foreign to our mildness may be annulled, and that now every one who has the same desire to observe the religion of the Christians may do so without molestation. We have resolved to communicate this most fully to thy care, in order that thou mayest know that we have granted to these same Christians freedom and full liberty to observe their own religion. Since this has been granted freely to them, thy devotedness perceives that liberty is granted to others also who may wish to follow their own religious observances; it being clearly in accordance with the tranquillity of our times, that each one should have the liberty of choosing and worshipping whatever deity he pleases. This has been done by us in order that we might not seem in any way to discriminate against any rank of religion. And we decree still further in regard to the Christians, that their places, in which they were formerly accustomed to assemble, and concerning which in the former letter sent to thy devotedness a different command was given, if it appear that any have bought them either from our treasury or from any other person, shall be restored to the said Christians, without demanding money or any other equivalent, with no delay or hesitation. If any happen to have received the said places as a gift, they shall restore them as quickly as possible to these same Christians; with the

understanding that if those who have bought these places, or those who have received them, demand anything from our bounty, they may go to the judge of the district, that provision may be made for them by our clemency. All these things are to be granted to the society of Christians by your care immediately and without any delay. And since the said Christians are known to have possessed not only these places in which they were accustomed to assemble, but also other places, belonging not to individuals among them, but to the society as a whole, that is, to the society of Christians, you will command that all of these, in virtue of the law which we have above stated, be restored, without any hesitation, to these same Christians; that is, to their society and congregation; the above mentioned provision being of course observed, that those who restore them without price, as we have before said, may expect indemnification from our bounty. In all these things, for the behoof of the aforesaid society of Christians, you are to use the utmost diligence, to the end that our command may be speedily fulfilled, and that in this also, by our clemency, provision may be made for the common and public tranquillity. For by this means, as we have said before, the divine favor toward us which we have already experienced in many matters will continue sure through all time. And that the terms of this gracious ordinance may be known to all, it is expected that this which we have written will be published everywhere by you and brought to the knowledge of all, in order that this gracious ordinance of ours may remain unknown to no one (Eusebius, *The Church History*, X. 5).

Of this decree Mason says:

It is the very first announcement of that doctrine which is now regarded as the mark and principle of civilization, the foundation of solid liberty, the characteristic of modern politics. In vigorous and trenchant sentences it sets forth perfect freedom of conscience, the unfettered choice of religion (Mason, *Persecution of Dioclesian*, 327).

A forced religion is no religion at all. Unfortunately, the successors of Constantine from the time of Theodosius the Great (385-395) enforced the Christian religion to the exclusion of every other; and not only so, but they enforced so-called orthodoxy to the exclusion of every form of dissent, which was punished as a crime against the State. Absolute freedom of religion and of worship is a fact logically impossible on the churchstate system. The government of the Roman empire was too absolute to abandon supervision of religion, so that the edict of Constantine was only temporary. Further, the rising power of episcopacy fitted into the monarchical system. Many of the bishops and monks were "men in black clothes, as voracious as elephants, and insatiably thirsty, but concealing their sensuality under an artificial paleness."

The first blood of heretics shed by a Christian prince was by Maximus, A.D. 385, in the Spanish city of Treves. This act was approved by the bishops, with a single exception, but the Christian churches recoiled from it with horror.

## **BOOKS FOR FURTHER REFERENCE AND READING:**

Fisher, 45-48.

Schaff, II. 198-306.

John T. Christian, *Baptism in Sculpture and Art*.

Northcote and Brownlow (*Roman Catholics*), *Roma Sotterranea*, 3 volumes.

Philip Schaff, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Roberts and Donaldson.

## CHAPTER 3. — THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION

Incorruptible Churches — The Testimony of Bunsen — The Montanist Churches — Their Anabaptism — The Spread of the Movement — The Novatian Churches — Robinson Traces Them to the Reformation — They Were Called Anabaptists — The Donatist Churches — Their Origin — Rejected Infant Baptism — Benedict — Lincoln — Augustine — Liberty of Conscience — Neander — Their Attitude Toward Liberty — Their Protest.

AT first there was unity in fundamental doctrines and practices. Step by step some of the churches turned aside from the old paths and sought out many inventions. Discipline became lax and persons of influence were permitted to follow a course of life which would not have been tolerated under the old discipline. The times had changed and some of the churches changed with the times. There were those who had itching ears and they sought after novelties. The dogma of baptismal regeneration was early accepted by many, and men sought to have their sins washed away in water rather than in the blood of Christ. Ministers became ambitious for power and trampled upon the independence of the churches. The churches conformed to the customs of the world and the pleasures of society.

There were, however, churches which remained uncorrupted, and there were faithful men who raised their voices against the departure from apostolic practice. An account will be given of some of the early reformers who offered their protest and called the people back to the simplicity of the gospel.

Chevalier Christian Charles Bunsen, while Prussian ambassador to London, walking in the light and breathing in the atmosphere of a purer age, held holy communion with the early churches. He used these earnest words:

Take away ignorance, misunderstanding, and forgeries, and the naked truth remains; not a spectre, thank God, carefully to be veiled; but an image of divine beauty radiant with eternal truth! Break down the barriers which separate us from the communion of the primitive church — I mean, free yourselves from the letter of the later formulas, canons, and conventional abstractions — and you move unshackled in the open ocean of faith; you hold fellowship with the spirits of the heroes of Christian antiquity; and you are able to trace the stream of unity as it rolls through eighteen centuries in spite of rocks and quicksands (Bunsen, Hippolytus, 4).

The first protest in the way of separation from the growing corruptions of the times was the movement of the Montanist churches. This Montanus, the leader, was a Phrygian, who arose about the year A.D. 156. The most distinguished

advocate of Montanism was Tertullian who espoused and defended their views. They held that science and art, all worldly education or gay form of life, should be avoided, because such things belonged to paganism. The crown of life was martyrdom. Religious life they held to be austere. Against a mortal sin the church should defend itself by rightly excluding him who committed it, for the holiness of the church was simply the holiness of the members. With such principles they could not fail to come in conflict with the popular Christianity of the day. The substance of the contentions of these churches was for a life of the Spirit. It was not a new form of Christianity; it was a recovery of the old, the primitive church set over against the obvious corruptions of the current Christianity. The old church demanded purity; the new church had struck a bargain with the world, and had arranged itself comfortably with it, and they would, therefore, break with it (Moeller, *Montanism in Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia*, III. 1562).

Their contention was not so much one of doctrine as of discipline. They insisted that those who had “lapsed” from the true faith should be rebaptized, because they had denied Christ and ought to be baptized anew. On this account they were termed “Anabaptists,” and some of their principles reappeared in Anabaptism (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II. 427). Infant baptism was not yet a dogma, and we know that it was rejected by the Montanists. Tertullian thought only adults ought to be immersed. The Montanists were deeply rooted in the faith, and their opponents admitted that they received the entire Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, and they were sound in their views of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Epiphanius, *Hoer*, XLVIII. 1). They rejected episcopacy and the right of the bishop’s claim to exercise the power of the keys.

The movement spread rapidly through Asia Minor and North Africa, and for a time in Rome itself. It appealed very powerfully to the sterner moralists, stricter disciplinarians, and more deeply pious minds among all Christians. Montanism had the advantage of claiming divine revelation for stricter principles. Montanism had made so much stir in Asia Minor, before the close of the second century, that several councils were called against it, and finally the whole movement was officially condemned. But Montanism continued for centuries, and finally became known under other names (Eusebius, *The Church History*, 229 note 1 by Dr. McGiffert). In Phrygia the Montanists came in contact with, and probably in actual communion with, the Paulicians. We know that they were still in existence in the year 722 (Theophanes, 617. Bond ed.).

The rise of the Novatian churches was another outcropping of the old strife between the lax and strict discipline. In the year 250 Novatian strenuously opposed the election of Cornelius as the pastor of the church in Rome.

Novatian declared that he did not wish the office himself, but he pleaded for the purity of the church. The election of Cornelius prevailed, and Novatian carried many churches and ministers with him in his protest. The vast extent of the Novatian movement may be learned from the authors who wrote against him, and the several parts of the Roman empire where they flourished.

These churches continued to flourish in many parts of Christendom for six centuries (Walch, *Historie der Ketzereyen*, II. 220). Dr. Robinson traces a continuation of them up to the Reformation and the rise of the Anabaptist movement. "Great numbers followed his (Novatian's) example," says he, "and all over the Empire Puritan churches were constituted and flourished through two hundred, succeeding years. Afterwards, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in corners, and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and a succession of them continued till the Reformation" (Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, 126. Cambridge, 1792).

On account of the purity of their lives they were called the Cathari, that is, the pure. "What is still more," says Mosheim, "they rebaptized such as came over to them from the Catholics" (Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History* I. 203. New York, 1871). Since they baptized those who came to them from other communions they were called Anabaptists. The fourth Lateran Council decreed that these rebaptizers should be punished by death. Accordingly, Albanus, a zealous minister, and others, were punished with death. They were, says Robinson, "trinitarian Baptists." They held to the independence of the churches; and recognized the equality of all pastors in respect to dignity and authority.

The Donatists arose in Numidia, in the year 311, and they soon extended over Africa. They taught that the church should be a holy body. Crespin, a French historian, says that they held the following views:

**First**, for 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.

In his early historical writings David Benedict, the Baptist historian, wrote with much caution of the denominational character of the Donatists. He followed closely the statements of other writers in his history; but in his last days he went into the original sources and produced a remarkable book called a "History of the Donatists" (Pawtucket, 1875). In that book he recedes from



his non-committal position and classes them as Baptists. He quite freely shows from Augustine and Optatus, who were contemporaries, that the Donatists rejected infant baptism and were congregational in their form of government.

Dr. Heman Lincoln dissented from some of the conclusions of Dr. Benedict and called them fanciful. But that they held some Baptist principles he did not doubt. He says:

It is evident that the Donatists held, at some period of their history, many of the principles which are regarded as axioms by modern Baptists. In their later history, after a stern discipline of persecution, they maintained, as cardinal truths, absolute freedom of conscience, the divorce of church and state, and a regenerate church membership. These principles, in whose defense they endured martyrdom coupled with their uniform practice of immersion, bring them into close affinity with Baptists (Lincoln, *The Donatists*. In *The Baptist Review*, 358, July, 1880).

This is the position of an extreme conservative. Perhaps Dr. Lincoln underestimated the coloring which the enemies of the Donatists gave to the controversy, and he certainly did not give due credit to what Augustine says on infant baptism in his opposition to them. It has been affirmed that some of the Donatists placed too much stress upon the efficiency of baptism and affirmed episcopacy. This however is a matter of controversy of no great interest, and does not here concern us.

Governor Henry D'Anvers truly remarks:

Augustine's third and fourth books against the Donatists demonstrated that they denied infant baptism, wherein he maintained the argument for infant baptism against them with great zeal, enforcing it with severe arguments (D'Anvers, *A Treatise on Baptism*, 223, London, 1674).

Augustine makes the Donatists Anabaptists (Migne, *Patrologia Lat.*, XLII.). The form of baptism, according to Optatus, was immersion. Lucas Osiander, Professor in and Chancellor of the University of Tubingen, wrote a book against the Anabaptists, in 1605, in which he says: "Our modern Anabaptists are the same as the Donatists of old" (Osiander, *Epist. cent.* 16. p. 175. Wittenberg, 1607). These rigid moralists, however, did not count themselves Anabaptists; for they thought that there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism and that their own (Albaspinæ, *Observat.* In Optatus, i). They took no account of the baptism of others, and contended that they were wrongly called Anabaptists.

The Donatists stood for liberty of conscience, and they were opposed to the persecuting power of the State Church. They were, says Neander, "the most important and influential church division which we have to mention in this

period” (Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, III. 258). Neander continues:

That which distinguishes the present case is, the reaction, proceeding out of the essence of the Christian church, and called forth, in this instance, by a peculiar occasion, against the confounding of the 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.

Thus the Bishop Donatus, of Carthage, in 347, rejected the imperial commissioners, Paulus and Marcarius, with the acclamation: “*Quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?*” (Optatus, *Milev.*, *De Schismati Donat.* 1. iii. c. 3). And truly indeed the emperor should not have had anything to do with the control of the church. The Donatist Bishop Petilian, in Africa, against whom Augustine wrote, appealed to Christ and the apostles who never persecuted. “Think you,” says he, “to serve God by killing us with your hand? Ye err, if ye, poor mortals, think this; God has not hangmen for priests. Christ teaches us to bear wrong, not to revenge it.” The Donatist bishop Gaudentius says: “God appointed prophets and fishermen, not princes and soldiers, to spread the faith.”

The position of these Christians was not only a protest but an appeal. It was a protest against the growing corruptions and worldliness of those churches which had sadly departed from the faith in doctrine and discipline; it was an appeal, since they were fervently called back to purity of life and apostolic simplicity. All through the days of darkness their voice was not hushed, and there was not wanting a people to stand before God. Maligned, they suffered with patience; reviled, they reviled not; and the heritage of these people is liberty of conscience to a world. All hail, martyrs of God.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Fisher, 59, 58, 109, 141, 142.

Schaf, II., 415-421; 849-853.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers, edited by Roberts and Donaldson, Voles III. and IV., the writings of Tertullian.

## CHAPTER 4. — THE PAULICIAN AND BOGOMIL CHURCHES

The Sources of Information — The Greeks, the Armenians — “The Key of Truth” — The Apostolic Origin — They Rejected Other Communion — The Story of Constantine — The Connection of the Mohammedans — The Sabians — The Numbers of the Paulicians — Religious Liberty — The Free State of Teprice — Among the Albigenes in France — Persecuted — Conybeare on Baptist Succession — Justin A. Smith — Widely Scattered in Europe — The Paulicians Not Manichaeans — Their Doctrines — The Synod of Arras — A Confession of Faith — The Adoptionists — The Form of Baptism — Marcarius — The Oriental Church — The Bogomils — Brockett — Their Persecutions — The Form of Baptism.

IT is to be regretted that most of the information concerning the Paulicians comes through their enemies. The sources are twofold. The first source is that of the Greek writers, Photius (*Adv. recentiores Manichaeans*. Hamburg 1772) and Petros Sikeliotes (*Historia Manichaeorum qui Paulioiani*. Ingolstadt, 1604), which has long been known and was used by Gibbon in the preparation of the brilliant fifty-fourth chapter of his history. Not much has been added from that source since. The accounts are deeply prejudiced, and although Gibbon suspected the malice and poison of these writers, and laid bare much of the malignity expressed by them, he was at times misled in the facts. He did not have the completeness of information which was necessary for a full delineation of their history.

The second source of information in regard to the Paulicians is Armenian in its origin and has recently been brought to light and illustrated. There was an old book of the Paulicians called the “Key of Truth,” mentioned by Gregory Magistos, in the eleventh century. Fortunately, Mr. Fred C. Conybeare, M.A., formerly Fellow of University College, Oxford, was much interested in affairs in Armenia. He was a second time in that country, in 1891, in quest of documents illustrative of the history of the Paulicians. He fell upon a copy of the “Key of Truth” in the Library of the Holy Synod at Edjmiatzin. He received a copy of it in 1893; and the text with an English translation was printed by Mr. Conybeare in 1898. He also accompanied the text with important data received from Armenian histories and from other sources. As may be judged this is not only a new but a very important source of information. The Paulicians are at length permitted to plead, in a measure, for themselves. We are able, therefore, practically to reconstruct the Paulician history.

The Paulician churches were of apostolic origin, and were planted in Armenia in the first century. "Through Antioch and Palmyra the faith must have spread into Mesopotamia and Persia; and in those regions become the basis of the faith as it is 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 huge 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" (Bury's edition of Gibbon's History, VI. 543). The earliest center of Christianity in Armenia was at Taron, which was the constant home and base of operations of the Paulicians.

They claimed that they were of apostolic origin. "The Key of Truth" says:

Let us then submit humbly to the holy church universal, and follow their works who acted with one mind and one faith and taught us. For still do we receive in the only proper season the holy and precious mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Heavenly Father: — to-wit, in the season of repentance and of faith. As we learned from the Lord of the universal and apostolic church, so do we proceed: and we establish in perfect faith those who (till then) have not holy baptism (Margin, That is to say, the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians, who are not baptized); nay, nor have tasted of the body or drunk of the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore according to the Word of the Lord, we must first bring them into the faith, induce them to repent, and give it (Margin, Baptism) unto them (pp. 76, 77).

Upon this point Adeney says: "Therefore, it is quite arguable that they should be regarded as representing the survival of a most primitive type of Christianity" (Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, 217). He further says: "Ancient Oriental Baptists, these people were in many respects Protestants before Protestantism" (Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, 219).

The Paulicians did not recognize persons of other communions as belonging to the churches. "We do not belong to these," they said. "They have long ago broken connection with the church and have been excluded." Such is the testimony of Gregory Magistos, A.D., 1058, whose history is one of the chief sources of information.

We can only lightly touch upon a few events connected with their history. The story of the conversion of Constantine, A.D. 660, is interesting. This young Armenian sheltered a Christian deacon who was flying from Mohammedan persecutions. In return for his kindness he received a copy of the New Testament. "These books became the measure of his studies and the rule of his faith; and the Catholics, who disputed his interpretation, acknowledged that his text was genuine and sincere. But he attached himself with peculiar devotion to

the writings and character of Paul: and the name of Paulicians is derived by their enemies from some unknown leader; but I am confident that they gloried in their affinity to the apostle to the Gentiles” (Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, V. 386).

Constantine felt that he was called upon to defend and restore primitive Christianity; being greatly impressed by the writings of Paul, he took the name of one of his followers, Silvanus; and the churches founded by him received names from the primitive congregations. The entire people were called Paulicians from the apostle. These statements of the apostolic simplicity of these devout Christians tell more of the manners, customs and doctrines than volumes of prejudiced accounts left by their enemies. With Paul as their guide, they could not be far removed from the truth of the New Testament.

Professor Wellhausen, in his life of Mohammed (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XVI. 571, 9th Edition), gives a most interesting account of the Baptists of the Syro-Babylonian desert. He says they were called Sabians, Baptists, and that they practised the primitive forms of Christianity. Indeed, “Sabian” is an Arabized word meaning “Baptist.” They literally filled with their members Syria, Palestine, and Babylonia (Renan, *Life of Jesus*, chap. XII). They were off the line of the main advance of Christianity, and were left untouched in their primitive simplicity. From them Mohammed derived many of his externals. The importance of this must not be undervalued. “It can hardly be wrong to conclude,” continues Prof. Wellhausen, “that these nameless witnesses of the Gospel, unmentioned in church history, scattered the seed from which sprung the germ of Islam.” These Christians were the Paulicians.

This bit of history will account for a fact that heretofore has been hard to understand. The emperors had determined to drive the Paulicians from their dominions. They took refuge “in the Mohammedan dominions generally, where they were tolerated and where their own type of belief never ceased to be accounted orthodox.” This we learn; from John the Philosopher. The Arabs had since the year 650 successfully challenged the Roman influence in Armenia. The same protection, probably, preserved the Paulician churches through many ages. It is certain that the Paulicians were true to the Arabs, and that the Mohammedans did not fail them in the hour of trial.

The number of the Paulicians constantly increased, and they soon attracted the attention of their enemies. In the year 690 Constantine, their leader, was stoned to death by the command of the emperor; and the successor of Constantine was burned to death. The Empress Theodora instituted a persecution in which one hundred thousand Paulicians in Grecian Armenia are said to have lost their lives.

The Paulicians, in the ninth century, rebelled against their enemies, drove out Michael III, and established in Armenia the free state of Teprice. This is a well-known site some seventy miles from Sivas, on the river Chalta. They gave absolute freedom of opinion to all of its inhabitants (Evans, Historical View of Bosnia, 30). From the capital of this free state, itself called Teprice, went forth a host of missionaries to convert the Slavonic tribes of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Servia to the Paulician faith. This is positively stated by Sikeliotēs. Great was their success — so great that a large portion of the inhabitants of the free state migrated to what were then independent states beyond the emperor's control. The state of Teprice lasted one hundred and fifty years, when it was overcome by the Saracens. All around them were persecutions for conscience sake — they themselves had lost one hundred thousand members by persecutions in the reign of Theodora — yet here was a shelter offered to every creed and unbeliever alike. This is a striking Baptist peculiarity.

The Baptists have always set up religious liberty when they had opportunity. Conybeare, speaking of the Paulicians, justly remarks:

And one point in their favor must be noticed, and it is this, Their system was, like that of the European Cathars, in its basal idea and conception alien to persecution; for membership in it depended upon baptism, voluntarily sought for, even with tears and supplications, by the faithful and penitent adult. Into such a church there could be no dragooning of the unwilling. On the contrary, the whole purpose of the scrutiny, to which the candidate for baptism was subjected, was to ensure that his heart and intelligence were won, and to guard against the merely outward conformity, which is all that a persecutor can hope to impose. It was one of the worst results of infant baptism, that by making membership in the Christian church mechanical and outward, it made it cheap; and so paved the way of the persecutor (Conybeare, *The Key of Truth*, xii).

In the year 970 the Emperor, John Tzimisces, transferred some of the Paulicians to Thrace and granted them religious liberty; and it is recorded to their credit that they were true to his interests. In the beginning of the eighth century their doctrines were introduced and spread throughout Europe, and their principles soon struck deep into foreign soil.

It was in the country of the Albigenses, in the Southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were most deeply implanted, and here they kept up a correspondence with their brethren in Armenia. The faith of the Paulicians “lived on in Languedoc and along the Rhine as the submerged Christianity of the Cathars, and, perhaps, also among the Waldenses. In the Reformation this Catharism comes once more to the surface, particularly among the so-called Anabaptists and Unitarian Christians between whom and the most primitive

church ‘The Key of Truth’ and the Cathar Ritual of Lyons supply us with the two great connecting links” (Key of Truth, x).

They were persecuted by the popes; and all literary and other traces of them, as far as possible, were destroyed. But “the visible assemblies of the Paulicians, of Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. In the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul; who protested against the tyranny of Rome, and embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology” (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, V. 398).

Many historians, besides Gibbon, such as Muratori and Mosheim, regard the Paulicians as the forerunners of the Albigenses, and, in fact, as the same people. One of the latest of these, already frequently quoted, is Professor Conybeare, one of the highest authorities in the world on Paulician matters. He affirms that the true line of succession is found among Baptists. He says:

The church has always adhered to the idea of spiritual regeneration in baptism, although by baptizing babies it has long ago stultified itself and abandoned the essence of baptisms. Indeed the significance of the baptism of Jesus, as it presented itself to St. Paul, and the evangelists, was soon lost sight of by the orthodox churches. ... We hear much discussion nowadays of the validity of orders English, Latin, and oriental. The unbiased student of church history cannot but wonder that it has never occurred to any of these controversialists of the Church of England to ask whether they are not, after all, contending for a shadow; whether, in short, they have, any of them, real orders in the primitive sense in which they care to claim possession of them. The various sects of the Middle Ages which, knowing themselves simply as Christians, retained baptism in its primitive form and significance, steadily refused to recognize as valid the infant baptism of the great orthodox or persecuting churches; and they were certainly in the right, so far as doctrine and tradition count for anything. Needless to say, the great churches have long ago lost genuine baptism, can have no further sacraments, no priesthood, and, strictly speaking, no Christianity. If they would re-enter the pale of Christianity, they must repair, not to Rome or Constantinople, but to some of the obscure circles of Christians, mostly in the East, who have never lost the true continuity of the baptismal sacrament. These are the Paulicians of Armenia, the Bogomil sect round Moscow whose members call themselves Christ's, the adult Baptists (those who practise adult baptism) among the Syrians of the upper Tigris valley, and perhaps, though not so certainly, the popelikans, the Mennonites, and the great Baptist communities of Europe. This condemnation of the great and so-called orthodox churches may seem harsh and pedantic, but there is no escape from it, and we place ourselves on the same ground on which they profess to stand. Continuity of baptism was more important in the first centuries of the church than continuity of orders;

so important, indeed, that even the baptism of heretics was recognized as valid. If store was set by the unbroken succession of bishops, it was only because one function of the bishop was to watch over the integrity of the initiatory rite of the religion. How badly the bishops of the great churches did their duty, how little, indeed, after the third century they even understood it, is seen in the unchecked growth, from the year 300 A.D. onward, of the abuse of the baptismal rite, resulting before long in its entire forfeiture (Conybeare, *The History of Christmas*. In *The American Journal of Theology*).

Dr. Justin A. Smith, so long the scholarly editor of *The Standard*, Chicago, says of the Paulicians:

The sum of all this is, that whether or not a succession of Baptist churches can, as some think, be traced through the centuries of the Middle Ages down to the time when our denominational history in its strict sense begins, we may at least say that our ancestry goes upward along a line of descent in which, if any where in the world, pure Christianity survived; and that among our Baptist progenitors, in this sense, were men and women who had the conspicuous honor to be maligned by those whom history proves to have been adepts in the two trades of murder and slander (Smith, *Modern Church History*, 227).

One thing is certain, that in Italy, in France, and along the Rhine, the Paulicians and the Albigenses were found in the same territory, and there were no great differences between them in practice and doctrines. Writers go so far as to assert that there was a succession of churches and of interests. It is well attested, that in the middle of the eleventh century they were numerous in Lombardy and Isurbia, but especially in Milan, in Italy; and it is no less certain that they traveled through France, Germany and other countries, and by their sanctity they won large numbers of common people to their way of thinking. In Italy they were called Paternes and Cathari, and in Germany, Gazari. In France they were called Albigenses. They were called Bulgarians, particularly in France, because some of them came from Bulgaria, and they were also known by the name of Boni Homines (Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, II. 200-202). Their enemies extolled their piety. A succession of them is found through the Middle Ages.

The Paulicians were accused of being Manichaeans, and much prejudice has been excited against them on this account. "The Paulicians," says Adeney, "have been most egregiously libeled of all of the Christian sects" (*The Greek and Eastern Churches*, 216. New York, 1908). The Roman Catholics have always denounced the teachings of Marcion with singular hostility. It is now clearly known that the Paulicians were not Manichaeans. *The Key of Truth* settles this matter (p. 18). Modern Armenian scholars do not hesitate to correct



this error (Ter Mkittschain, *Die Paulikianer im Byzantinischen in Armenien*, Leipzig, 1893). Conybeare has no doubt on the subject.

Turning to the doctrines and practices of the Paulicians we find that they made constant use of the Old and New Testaments. They had no orders in the clergy as distinguished from laymen by their modes of living, their dress, or other things; they had no councils or similar institutions. Their teachers were of equal rank. They strove diligently for the simplicity of the apostolic life. They opposed all image worship which was practised in the Roman Catholic Church. The miraculous relics were a heap of bones and ashes, destitute of life and of virtue. They held to the orthodox view of the Trinity; and to the human nature and substantial sufferings of the Son of God.

Baptist views prevailed among the Paulicians. They held that men must repent and believe, and then at a mature age ask for baptism, which alone admitted them into the church. "It is evident," observes Mosheim, "they rejected the baptism of infants." They baptized and rebaptized by immersion. They would have been taken for downright Anabaptists (Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*. Oxford, 1821).

Something of the opinions of the Paulicians is gathered from a Synod held in Arras, in the year 1025, by Gerard, Bishop of Cambrai and Arras. One Gundulphus, a Paulician, was condemned. He had taught his doctrines in many places. It was found on examination that the Paulicians held:

The law and discipline we have received from our Master will not appear contrary either to the Gospel or apostolic institutions, if carefully looked into. This discipline consists in leaving the world, in bridling carnal concupiscence, in providing a livelihood by the labor of our hands, in hurting nobody, and affording our charity to all who are zealous in the prosecution of this our design.

Concerning baptism they made reply:

But if any man shall say, that some sacrament lies hid in baptism, the force of that is taken off from three causes: the first is, Because the reprobate life of ministers can afford no saving remedy to the persons to be baptized. The second, Because whatsoever sins are renounced at the font, are afterwards taken up again in life and practice. The third, Because a strange will, a strange faith, and a strange confession do not seem to belong to, or to be of an advantage to a little child, who neither wills nor runs, who knows nothing of faith, and is altogether ignorant of his own good and salvation, in which there can be no desire of regeneration, and from whom no confession of faith can be expected (Allix, *The Ecclesiastical Churches*, 104).

A better answer could not this day be given. There is a Confession of Faith which is attributed to the Paulicians, A.D. 1024, which declares:

In the beginning of Christianity there was no baptizing of children; and their forefathers practised no such thing and we do from our hearts acknowledge that baptism is a washing which is performed in water, and doth hold out the washing of the soul from sin (Mehring, *Der heiligen Tauff Historie*, II. 738).

It is possible that the Paulicians were Adoptionists. This is the view of Conybeare (lxxxvii), but his views are often inferential (xiv). He further says: “My suggestion that the European Cathars were of the Adoptionists origin also rests on mere inference” (xiv).

The connection of this view with that of modern Baptists is set forth by Conybeare as follows:

It is therefore a promising field of research to enquire whether the Paulicians were not partially responsible for many sects which at the Reformation made their appearance and exhibit, some more, some less, an affinity to Paulician tenets as set out in the *Key*. This is not the place to embark on such an inquiry, which would require a separate work. Perhaps the data no longer exists which would enable one to trace the channels of communication. To do so would require in any case a vast amount of research; but it does seem probable that in at least two of the sects of the age of the Reformation we have a survival of the same ancient form of the Catholic Church which the pages of the *Key* reveal to us. These two sects are the Anabaptists and the Unitarians, afterwards called Socinians from their great teacher Socinus. From the former are derived the great Baptist churches of England and America, and also the Mennonites of Germany. The arguments of the sixteenth century Baptists against Paedobaptism are the same as we have in the *Key*, and — what we might also expect — an Adoptionist view of Christ as a rule went with them in the past; though the modern Baptists, in accepting the current doctrine of the Incarnation, have both obscured their origin and stultified their distinctive observances. From the first ages Adoptionist tenets have as naturally and as indissolubly been associated with adult baptism, as has infant baptism with the pneumatic Christology, according to which Jesus was from his mother’s womb and in his cradle filled with the Holy Spirit, a pre-existent Divine being, creator, and controller of the universe (Conybeare, *The Key*, cl, cli).

Whatever may be the final conclusions in the matter, it is certain that the Adoptionist views of the Paulicians accentuated their opposition to infant baptism.

The form of baptism was to dip the subject into the water once, while the Greeks dipped three times. There is much evidence that in Armenia the form of baptism was immersion. Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, A.D. 331 to 335, writing to the Armenians, says that baptism was administered with “triple immersion burying in the water of the holy font” (*Library of the Mechitarist Fathers of Vienna*. MSS. Cod. Arm. No. 100). There is an oration preserved out of the twelfth century ascribed to Isaac Catholicos of Armenia, which gives

the practice of the Paulicians. John Otzun, A.D. 718, speaks of the Paulicians descending into the baptistery (Otzun, Opera, 25. Venice, 1834). And he further tells how the Mohammedans tried to prevent them from baptizing in the running rivers, for fear that they would bewitch the waters and render them unwholesome.

The constant practice of the Oriental Church was immersion. Rev. Nicholas Bjerring says of its baptism: "Baptism is celebrated sometimes in the church and sometimes in private houses, as needs may be. It is always administered by dipping the infant, or adult, three times" (Bjerring, The Offices of the Oriental Church, xii. New York, 1880). And further on in the Liturgy he gives the ceremony of immersion. Thus did the Paulicians practise immersion as the Scriptures indicate.

The Bogomils were a branch of the Cathari, or Paulicians, who dwelt in Thrace. Their name appears to have been derived from one of their leaders in the midst of the tenth century, though others declare that their name comes from a Slavic word which is defined, "Beloved of God." The Bogomils were repeatedly condemned, and often persecuted, but they continued to exist through the Middle Ages, and still existed in the sixteenth century.

Their historians claimed for them the greatest antiquity. Dr. L.P. Brockett, who wrote a history of them, says:

Among these (historians of the Bulgarians) I have found, often in unexpected quarters, the most conclusive evidence that these sects were all, during their early history, Baptists, not only in their views on the subjects of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but in their opposition to Pedobaptism, to a church hierarchy, and to the worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and in their adherence to church independency 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 an apostolic succession of Christian churches, New Testament churches, and that as early as the twelfth century these churches numbered a converted, believing membership, as large as that of the Baptist churches throughout the world to-day (Brockett, The Bogomils of Bulgaria and Bosnia, 11, 12).

Some Roman Catholic writers have affirmed that the Bogomils did not practise baptism, or observe the Lord's Supper; and, that further, they denied the Old Testament Scriptures. This probably means no more than that they rejected infant baptism, and quoted the New Testament as supreme and authoritative in the matter.

The persecutions of the Bogomils, as of other Paulicians, were continuous and severe. Every effort was made to destroy them. "Yet it was not stamped out," says Conybeare, "but only driven under ground. It still lurked all over Europe,

but especially in the Balkans, and along the Rhine. In these hiding places it seemed to have gathered its forces together in secret, in order to emerge once more into daylight when an opportunity presented itself. The opportunity was the European Reformation, in which, especially under the form, of Anabaptism and Unitarian opinion, this leaven of the early apostolic church is found freely mingling with and modifying other forms of faith. In engendering this great religious movement, we feel sure that the Bogomils of the Balkan States played a most important part” (The Key of Truth, cxcvi).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING OR REFERENCE:**

Fisher, 142.

John C.L. Gieseler, A Compendium of Ecclesiastical History, II. 208-212; III. 494-500.

Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Edition of Bury.

F. C. Conybeare, Rituale Armenorum.

F. C. Conybeare, The Key of Truth.

John L. von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, II. 101-105, 135, 136, 201-205.

Augustus Neander, A General History of the Christian Religion and Church, V. 337-370.

## CHAPTER 5. — THE ALBIGENSIAN, THE PETROBRUSIAN, THE HENRICIAN, THE ARNOLDIST AND THE BERENGARIAN CHURCHES.

The Origin and Spread of These Churches — Prof. Bury — Their History — Their Good Character — Their Writings Destroyed — They Were Not Manichaeans — Two Classes of Believers — In Southern France — The Crusades Against Them — Their Doctrines — Rejected Infant Baptism — Peter of Bruys — His Opinions — The Petrobrusians — Accused of Being Anabaptists — Henry of Lausanne — His Great Success — Held the Opinions of the Anabaptists — Arnold of Brescia — The Testimony of Otto Freising — The Arnoldists — Berengarius — His Troubled Career.

IT has already been indicated that the Paulicians came from Armenia, by the way of Thrace, settled in France and Italy, and traveled through, and made disciples in, nearly all of the countries of Europe. The descent of the Albigenses has been traced by some writers from the Paulicians (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I. 454. 9th edition). Recent writers hold that the Albigenses had been in the valleys of France from the earliest ages of Christianity. Prof. Bury says that “it lingered on in Southern France,” and was not a “mere Bogomilism, but an ancient local survival.” Mr. Conybeare thinks that it lived on from the early times in the Balkan Peninsula, “where it was probably the basis of Bogomilism” (Bury, Ed. Gibbon, *History of Rome*, VI. 563).

They spread rapidly through Southern France and the little city of Albi, in the district of Albigeois, became the center of the party. From this city they were called Albigenses. In Italy the Albigenses were known by various names, like the Paulicians, such as “Good Men,” and others. It is difficult to determine the origin of all of the names; but some of them came from the fact that they were regarded as vulgar, illiterate and low bred; while other names were given from the purity and wholesomeness of their lives. It is remarkable that the inquisitorial examinations of the Albigenses did not tax them with immoralities, but they were condemned for speculations, or rather for virtuous rules of action, which the Roman Catholics accounted heresy. They said a Christian church should consist of good people; a church had no power to frame any constitutions; it was not right to take oaths; it was not lawful to kill mankind; a man ought not to be delivered up to the officers of justice to be converted; the benefits of society belong alike to all members of it; faith without works could not save a man; the church ought not to persecute any, even the wicked; the law of Moses was no rule for Christians; there was no need of priests, especially of wicked ones; the sacraments, and orders, and

ceremonies of the church of Rome were futile, expensive, oppressive, and wicked. They baptized by immersion and rejected infant baptism (Jones, *The History of the Christian Church*, I. 287). They were decidedly anti-clerical,

“Here then,” says Dr. Allix, “we have found a body of men in Italy, before the year one thousand and twenty-six, five hundred years before the Reformation, who believed contrary to the opinions of the Church of Rome, and who highly condemned their errors.” Atto, Bishop of Vercelli, had complained of such a people eighty years before, and so had others before him, and there is the highest reason to believe they had always existed in Italy (Ibid, I. 288). The Cathari themselves boasted of their remote antiquity (Bonacursus, *Vitae haereticorum. ... Cathorum*, ap. D’Archery, *Scriptorum Spicilegium*, I. 208).

In tracing the history and doctrines of the Albigenses it must never be forgotten that on account of persecution they scarcely left a trace of their writings, confessional, apologetical, or polemical; and the representations which Roman Catholic writers, their avowed enemies; have given of them, are highly exaggerated. The words of a historian who is not in accord with their principles may here be used. He says:

It is evident, however, that they formed a branch of that broad stream of sectarianism and heresy which rose far away in Asia from the contact between Christianity and the Oriental religions, and which, by crossing the Balkan Peninsula, reached Western Europe. The first overflow from this source were the Manichaeans, the next the Paulicians, the next the Cathari, who in the tenth and eleventh centuries were very strong in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Dalmatia. Of the Cathari, the Bogomila, Patoreni, Albigenses, etc. ... were only individual developments (C. Schmidt, *Schaff-Herzog*, I. 47).

That is to say, these parties were all of the same family, and this connection is rendered all the more forceful on account of the terms of reproach in which this writer clothes his language.

It has already been indicated that the Paulicians were not Manichaeans, and the same thing may probably be said of the Albigenses. The Albigenses were oppressed on account of this sentiment, which accusation was also made against the Waldenses. Care must be taken at this point, and too prompt credence should not be given to the accuser. The Roman Catholic Church sought diligently for excuses to persecute. Even Luther was declared by the Synod of Sens to be a Manichaean. The celebrated Archbishop Ussher says that the charge “of Manichaean-ism on the Albigensian sect is evidently false” (Acland, *The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois*, lxvii. London, 1857). It would be difficult to understand the Albigenses from this philosophical standpoint. They were not a metaphysical people. Theirs was not a philosophy,

but a daily faith and practice, which commended itself to the prosperous territory of Southern France.

They held to the division of believers into two classes — the perfect and the imperfect. This was the common classification of the Paulicians, Waldenses and Anabaptists. The most elaborate accounts are given of the initiation of the *perfecti* by a single immersion into, the body of believers (Beausobre, *Historic du Manichaeism*, II. 762-877).

The Waldenses were also found in the city of Albi and they were also called Albigenses because they resided in that city (Martin Schagen, *The History of the Waldenses*, 110). It was from Italy that the movement extended to Southern France; and the soil was wonderfully well prepared for the seed. The country was the most civilized portion of France, rich, flourishing, and independent; the people gay, intellectual, progressive; the Roman Catholic Church dull, stupid and tyrannical; the clergy distinguished for nothing but superstition, ignorance, arbitrariness, violence and vice. Under such circumstances the idea of a return to the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age could not fail to attract attention. The severe moral demands of the Albigenses made a profound impression, since their example corresponded with their words. They mingled with their tenets a severe zeal for purity of life and were heard with favor by all classes. No Wonder that the people deserted the Roman Catholic priests and gathered around the *Boni Homines*. In a short time the Albigenses had congregations and schools and charitable institutions of their own. The Roman Catholic Church became an object of derision (Schaff-Herzog, 1.47).

This state of affairs greatly alarmed and aggravated the pope. In the year 1139 they were condemned by the Lateran Council; by that of Tours in 1163, and mission after mission was sent among them to persuade them to return to the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Henry, in 1180, employed force. Pope Innocent III. published a crusade against them. Says the Historian Hume:

The people from all parts of Europe moved by their superstition and their passion for wars and adventures, flocked to his standard. Simon de Monfort, the general of the crusade, acquired to himself a sovereignty of these provinces. The Count of Toulouse, who protected, or perhaps only tolerated the Albigenses, was stripped of his dominions. And these sectaries themselves, though the most inoffensive and innocent of mankind, were exterminated with the circumstances of extreme violence and barbarity (Hume, *History of England*, II. ch. xi).

In the second crusade the first city captured was that of Braziers, which had some forty thousand inhabitants. When Simon de Monfort, Earl of Leicester, asked the Abbot of Ceteaux, the papal legate, what he was to do with the inhabitants, the legate answered: "Kill them all. God knows His own." In this

manner the war was carried on for twenty years. Town after town was taken, pillaged, burnt. Nothing was left but a smoking waste. Religions fanaticism: began the war; rapacity and ambition ended it. Peace was concluded in 1229, and the Inquisition finished the deadly work.

The proof is overwhelming that the Albigenses rejected infant baptism. They were condemned on this account by a Council held at Toulouse, A.D. 1119 (Maitland, *Facts and Documents Illustrative of the Albigenses*, 90. London, 1832), and that of Albi in 1165 (Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of Piedmont*, 150). The historians affirm that they rejected infant baptism. Chassanion says: "I cannot deny that the Albigenses, for the greater part, were opposed to infant baptism; the truth is, they did not reject the sacrament as useless, but only as unnecessary to infants" (Chassanion, *Historie des Albigeois*. Geneva, 1595). Dr. Emil Comba, of the Waldensian Theological College, Florence, Italy, the latest of the Waldensian historians, says that the Albigenses rejected "all the sacraments except baptism, which they reserved for believers" (Comba, *History of the Waldenses*, 17. London, 1889).

The story is a pathetic one. "We live," says Everwin, of Steinfeld, "a hard and wandering life. We fled from city to city like sheep in the midst of wolves. We suffer persecution like the apostles and martyrs because our life is holy and austere. It is passed amidst prayer, abstinences, and labors, but everything is easy for us because we are not of this world" (Schmidt, *Hist. et. Doct. de la secte des Cathares*, II. 94). Dr. Lea, the eminent authority on the Inquisition, has said that no religion can show a more unbroken roll of victims who unshrinkingly sought death in its most abhorrent form in preference to apostasy than the Cathari.

Peter of Bruys, a well-known Baptist preacher of those times, sought, about the year 1100, a restoration of true religion in Languedoc and Provence, France. He considered that the gospel ought to be literally understood and he demanded Scripture and not tradition from those who attempted to refute him. He was a pupil of the celebrated Abelard. Dollinger thinks he learned his doctrines from the Cathari and presents many reasons for his opinion. Others think that he presupposes the existence of the old evangelical life for several hundred years in Italy and Southern France. "There is much evidence," says Prof. Newman, "of the persistence in Northern Italy and in Southern France, from the early time, of evangelical types of Christianity" (Newman, *Recent Researches Concerning Mediaeval Sects*, 187).

His principal opponent was Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Clugni, and it is from Peter's book (*Contra Petrobrusianos*, *Patrologia Lat.*, CLXXXIX. 729) that we must judge of the doctrines of Peter of Bruys.



He held that the church was a spiritual body composed of regenerated persons. “The church of God,” says Peter of Bruys, “does not consist of a multitude of stones joined together, but in the unity of believers ansembled.” He held that persons ought not to be baptized till they come to the use of their reason. Thus he rejected infant baptism referring to <sup><12819></sup>Matthew 28:19 and <sup><11616></sup>Mark 16:16. He denied that “children, before they reach the years of understanding, can be saved by the baptism of Christ [the Roman Catholic statement of his belief], or that another faith could avail those who could not exercise faith since, according to them (the Petrobrusians) not another’s but their own faith saves, according to the Lord’s word. He who shall believe and be baptized shall be saved, but he who shall not believe shall be condemned.” “Infants,” he continues, “though baptized by you [Roman Catholics], because by reason of age they cannot believe, are not saved [that is by baptism] and hence it is idle and vain at that time to plunge them in water, by which they wash away the filth of the body, and yet cannot cleanse the soul from sin. But we wait for the proper time, and when one can know and believe in him, we do not (as ye accuse us), rebaptize him who can never be said to have been baptized — to have been washed with the baptism by which sins are washed away” [symbolically]. In respect to the Lord’s Supper he not only rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, but he also denied the sacramental character of the rite.

On account of his great popularity he was with difficulty banished from Languedoc. He then appeared in the diocese of Narar and Toulouse, where he preached for twenty years with great success. In the year 1126 he was seized by the authorities and burnt at St. Gilles.

He had a great company of followers, who after his death were called Petrobrusians. They held the same views on baptism that he did. Deodwinus, Bishop of Liege, writing to Henry I., of France, says of the followers of Peter of Bruys “They as far as in them lies overthrow infant baptism” (Wall, The History of Infant Baptism, I. 478).

It will be seen from the extracts given above that Peter of Bruys and his disciples rebaptized, and were, therefore, in the eyes of their opponents, Anabaptists. Jacques Benigne Bossuet, the distinguished Bishop of Meaux and the great Roman Catholic controversialist, 1704, complained of the followers of Calvin that they sought apostolic succession through the Waldenses. He says: “You adopt Henry and Peter of Bruys among your predecessors, and both of them, everybody knows, were Anabaptists.” Faber says: “The Petrobrusians were only a sort of Antipedobaptists, who rejected not baptism itself, but who denied simply the utility of infant baptism” (Faber, The Vallenses and Albigenses, 174. London, 1838). J.A. Fabricius says: “They were the Anabaptists of that age” (Fabricius, Bibliographia, c. xi. 388).

Henry of Lausanne, A.D., 1116-1148, was a disciple of Peter of Bruys, and was so successful in his work of reformation that he left a large number of followers who were called Henricians. He is described as “a man of great dignity of person, a fiery eye, a thundering voice, impetuous speech, mighty in the Scriptures.” “Never was there a man known of such strictness of life, so great humanity and bravery,” and that “by his speech he could easily provoke even a heart of stone to compunction.” He came out of Switzerland to Mans and other cities of France. So great was his success that whole congregations left the churches and joined with him. When he had come, in 1148, to Toulouse, Pope Eugene III. sent Bernard of Clairvaux, the great heresy hunter, to that city to preach against him. Bernard describes the effect of Henry’s preaching, saying that the churches were deserted, “the way of the children is closed, the grace of baptism is refused them, and they are hindered from coming to heaven; although the Saviour with fatherly love calls them, saying, Suffer little children to come unto Me.” Henry was compelled to flee for his life. Within a short time he was arrested in his retreat, brought before the Council of Rheims, committed to a close prison in 1148, and soon afterwards finished his days in it.

Like Peter of Bruys, he rejected infant baptism. Georgius Cassander, who, at the instance of the Duke of Cleves, wrote against the Anabaptists, says of Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne: “They first openly condemned infant baptism, and stiffly asserted that baptism was fit only for the adult; which they both verbally taught, and really practised in their administration of baptism” (Cassander, *De Baptismo infantium. Coloniae, 1545*).

Arnold of Brescia was born in the beginning of the twelfth century and died about A.D. 1148. He was a student of Abelard, in Paris, and returned with lofty notions of reformation in Italy. From one country to another he was driven by persecution. He finally returned to Rome and led a patriotic attempt for the freedom of the country against the pope. He was taken prisoner, hanged, his body burned, and the ashes thrown into the Tiber.

Otto Freising, the contemporary Roman Catholic bishop, remarks: “That he was unsound in his judgment about the sacraments of the altar and infant baptism” (Freising, *De Gentis Frid., II. c. 20*). So he was condemned by the Lateran Council under Innocent II., A.D., 1139. Dr. Comba, in making a record of his opinions, says: “With the Albigenes, he condemned the above-mentioned superstitions, as that also of the salvation of children by the sprinkling of water” (Comba, *History of the Waldenses, 16*).

Arnold had his followers, for he was very popular in Lombardy. “He founded,” so his enemies said during his stay in Rome, “a sect of men which is still called the heresy of the Lombards” (Johannes Saresberensis, *Historia Pontificalis*).

See Breyer, Arnold von Brescia). They had great congregations of laboring men which formed such an important feature of the work of the Waldenses and Anabaptists.

The Arnoldists, like their leader, rejected infant baptism. Of these men, Guillaume Durand, A.D., 1274, says: "The Arnoldists assert that never through baptism in water do men receive the Holy Spirit, nor did the Samaritans receive it, until they received the imposition of hands" (Bull of Pope Lucius III. Hist. Pon. Prestz, 515).

By the year 1184 the Arnoldists were termed Albigenses, a little later they were classed as Waldenses. Deickhoff, one of the German writers on the Waldenses, affirms: "There was a connection between the Waldenses and the followers of Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne and Arnold of Brescia, and they finally united in one body about 1130 as they held common views" (Dieckhoff, Die Waldenser im Mittelalter, 167, 168. Gottingen, 1851). This is the general opinion of the authorities. M. Tocco does not hesitate to affirm that "the Poor of Lombardy (the Waldenses) descended in a direct line from the Arnoldists" (Tocco, L'Eresia nel medio Evo. Paris, 1884).

Berengarius, who was born at Tours, and died in the adjacent island of St. Cosme, was accused of holding Baptist views. He was a representative of that craving for spiritual independence, and opposition to Roman Catholicism, which came to the surface all through the Middle Ages. In 1140 he became director of the Cathedral schools of Tours, but his departure from Romanism caused his condemnation by many councils, until he closed his troubled career in deep solitude. His great learning both in the Fathers and in classical literature, together with his profound study of the Scriptures, led him to the conclusion that the doctrine of transubstantiation was false, and that it was necessary for him to distinguish between the symbol and the thing symbolized in the Lord's Supper. Deodwinus, Bishop of Liege, a contemporary, states that there was a report out of France that the Berengarians "overthrew the baptism of infants." This view is accepted by quite all of the historians.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Fisher, 194, 188,189, 209, 211, 424.

Schaff, V. Pt. 1. 507-515, 483-486.

Gieseler, III. 51-53.

## CHAPTER 6. — THE WALDENSIAN CHURCHES.

The Alps as a Hiding Place — Peter Waldo — The Preaching Tour — Origin of the Waldenses — The Name — Roman Catholic Historians on Their Origin — Rainerio Sacchoni — Preger — The Statement of the Waldenses — The Noble Lessons — The Reformers — Beza — Later Writers — The Special Historians of the Waldenses — Faber — Moreland — Claudius Seisselius on Their Character — Their Manners and Customs — Their Principles — Infant Baptism — Their Change of Views in Regard to the Practice — Adult Baptism — Immersion.

*O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings  
Than the Diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;  
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtues shall not decay,  
Whose light shall be a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way.*  
— Whittier.

IT is a beautiful peculiarity of this little people that it should occupy so prominent a place in the history of Europe. There had long been witnesses for the truth in the Alps. Italy, as far as Rome, all Southern France, and even the far-off Netherlands contained many Christians who counted not their lives dear unto themselves. Especially was this true in the region of the Alps. These valleys and mountains were strongly fortified by nature on account of their difficult passes and bulwarks of rocks and mountains; and they impress one as if the all-wise Creator had, from the beginning, designed that place as a cabinet, wherein to put some inestimable jewel, or in which to preserve many thousands of souls, who should not bow the knee to Baal (Moreland, History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valley of Piedmont, 5. London, 1658).

Here a new movement, or rather an old one under different conditions, received an impetus. Peter Waldo, or Valdesius, or Waldensis, as he was variously called, was a rich and distinguished citizen of Lyons, France, in the closing decades of the twelfth century. Waldo was at first led to study the Bible and he made a translation of it which he circulated among the people. The reading of the Gospels led to an imitation of Christ. Waldo took the manner of his life from the Scriptures, and he soon had a multitude of disciples. They gave their property to the poor and began to preach in the city. When they refused to cease preaching they were expelled from Lyons. Taking their wives and children with them, they set out on a preaching mission. The ground was well prepared by the Albigenses and the Cathari, as well as by the insufficiency and immorality of the Roman Catholic clergy. They traveled two by two, clad in woolen garments, with wooden shoes or barefoot. They penetrated Switzerland and Northern Italy. Everywhere they met with a hearty

response. The principal seat of the Waldenses became the slopes of the Cottian Alps and East Piedmont, West Provence and Dauphiny. Their numbers multiplied into thousands. It is certain that in the beginning of his career Waldo was a Roman Catholic, and that his followers separated from their former superstitions.

There has been much discussion in regard to the origin of the Waldenses. It is asserted on the one hand that they originated with Waldo, and had no connection with former movements. This view is held absolutely, probably by very few, for even Comba admits that “in a limited sense their antiquity must be admitted” (Comba, *History of the Waldenses in Italy*, 12); and he also states that the Waldenses themselves believed in their own antiquity. Those who hold this view now generally state that the Waldenses were influenced by the Petrobrusians the Arnoldists and others. Others affirm that the Waldenses were only a part of the general movement of the dissent against Rome. They were of “the same general movement” which produced the Albigenses (Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, 272. New York, 1887). The contention is that the name Waldenses is from the Italian Valdese, or Waldesi, signifying a valley, and, therefore, the word means that they lived in valleys. Eberhard de Bethune, A.D. 1160, says: “Some of them call themselves Vallenses because they live in the vale of sorrows or tears” (Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*, 68. London, 1818). Bernard, an Abbot of a Monastery of the Remonstrants, in the Diocese of Narbonne, about 1209, says that they were called “Waldenses, that is, from a dark valley, because they are involved in its deep thick darkness or errors” (Migne, CCIV. 793). Waldo was so called because he was a valley man, and was only a noted leader of a people who had long existed. This view is ardently supported by most of the Waldensian historians (Leger, *Histoire Generale des Vaudois*. Leyden, 1669). It is certain that they were called by the names of every one of the ancient parties (Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, 308). Jacob Gretsch, of the Society of Jesus, Professor of Dogmatics in the University of Ingolstadt, A.D. 1577, fully examined the subject and wrote against the Waldenses. He affirmed their great antiquity and declared that it was his belief “that the Toulousians and Albigenses condemned in the year 1177 and 1179 were no other than the Waldenses. In fact, their doctrines, discipline, government, manners, and even the errors with which they had been charged show the Albigenses and the Waldenses were distinct branches of the same sect, or the former was sprung from the latter” (Rankin, *History of France*, III. 198-202).

The most remote origin has been claimed for the Waldenses, admitted by their enemies, and confirmed by historians. “Our witnesses are all Roman Catholics,” says Vedder, “men of learning and ability, but deeply prejudiced against heretics as men could possibly be. This establishes at the outset a

presumption against the trustworthiness of their testimony, and is a warning to us that we must weigh it most carefully and scrutinize every detail before receiving it. But, on the other hand, our witnesses are men who had extraordinary opportunities for discovering the facts; some were inquisitors for years, and give us the results of interrogating a large number of persons” (Vedder, *The Origin and Teaching of the Waldenses*. In *The American Journal of Theology*, IV. 466). This is a very interesting source of information.

Rainerio Sacchoni was for seventeen years one of the most active preachers of the Cathari or Waldenses of Lombardy; at length he joined the Dominican order and became an adversary of the Waldenses. The pope made him Inquisitor of Lombardy. The following opinion in regard to the antiquity of the Waldenses was rendered through one of the Austrian inquisitors in the Diocese of, Passau, about the year 1260 (Preger, *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Waldesier*, 6-8). He says:

Among all the sects, there is no one more pernicious to the church than that of the Leonists (Waldenses), and for three reasons: In the first place, because it is the most ancient: for some say that it dates back to the time of Sylvester (A.D. 325); others to the time of the apostles. In the second place, because it is the most widespread. There is hardly a country where it does not exist. In the third place, because if other sects strike with horror those who listen to them, the Leonists, on the contrary, possess a great outward appearance of piety. As a matter of fact they lead irreproachable lives before men and as regards their faith and the articles of their creed, they are orthodox. Their one fault is, that they blaspheme against the Church and the clergy, points to which laymen in general are known to be too easily led away (Gretsch, *Contra Valdenses*, IV.).

It was the received opinion among the Waldenses that they were of ancient origin and truly apostolic. “They call themselves,” says David of Augsburg, “successors of the apostles, and say that they are in possession of the apostolic authority, and of the keys to bind and unbind” (Preger, *Der Tractat des David von Augsburg uber die Waldensier*. Munchen, 1876).

A statement of the Waldenses themselves is at hand. In a Waldensian document, which some have dated as early as the year 1100, in a manuscript copy which dates from 1404, may be found their opinion on the subject of their antiquity. The Noble Lessons, as it is called, says:

We do not find anywhere in the writings of the Old Testament that the light of truth and holiness was at any time completely extinguished. There have always been men who walked faithfully in the paths of righteousness. Their number has been at times reduced to few; but has never been altogether lost. We believe that the same has been the case from the time of Jesus Christ until now; and that it will be so until the end. For if the cause of God was founded,

it was in order that it might remain until the end of time. She preserved for a long time the virtue of holy religion, and, according to ancient history, her directors lived in poverty and humility for about three centuries; that is to say, down to the time of Constantine. Under the reign of this Emperor, who was a leper, there was a man in the church named Sylvester, a Roman. Constantine went to him, was-baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and cured of his leprosy. The Emperor finding himself healed of a loathsome disease, in the name of Jesus Christ, thought he would honor him who had wrought the cure by bestowing upon him the crown of the Empire. Sylvester accepted it, but his companion, it is said, refused to consent, separated from him, and continued to follow the path of poverty. Then, Constantine, went away to regions beyond the sea, followed by a multitude of Romans, and built up the city, to which he gave his name — Constantinople — so that from that time the Heresiarch rose to honor and dignity, and evil was multiplied upon the earth. We do not believe that the church of God, absolutely departed from the truth; but one portion yielded, and, as is commonly seen, the majority was led away to evil; and the other portion remained long faithful to the truth it had received. Thus, little by little, the sanctity of the church declined. Eight centuries after Constantine, there arose a man by the name of Peter, a native, they say, of a country called Vaud (Schmidt, Aktenstrucke, ap. Hist. Zeitschrift, 1852 s. 239. MSS. Cambridge University, vol. A.f. 236-238 and Noble Leizon, V. 403. For the genuineness of the Noble Lessons see Brez, Histoire des Vaudois, I. 42. Paris, 1793).

The great church historian, Neander, in commenting on this document, suggests that it may have been “of an elder origin” than 1120. He further says

But 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 — that is, as they believed, from the time of Constantine’s gift to the Roman bishop Sylvester — such an opposition finally broke forth in them, had been existing all along. See Pilicdorf contra Waldenses, c.i. Bibl. patr. Ludg. T. XXV. f. 278. (Neander, History of the Christian Church, VIII. 352).

Such was the tradition and such was the opinion of the Waldenses in regard to their origin. They held to a “secret perpetuity during the Middle Ages, vying with the Catholic perpetuity” (Michelet, Histoire de France, II. 402. Paris, 1833).

Theodore Beza, the Reformer of the sixteenth century, voices the sentiment of his times, when he says:

As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian 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, and the Western part so

miserably oppressed by the Bishop of Rome, falsely so-called; nor those horrible persecutions which have been expressly raised against them, were able so far to prevail as to make them bend, or yield a voluntary subjection to the Roman tyranny and idolatry (Moreland, History of the Evangelical Churches, 7).

Jonathan Edwards, the great President of Princeton University, in his “History of Redemption,” says of the Waldenses:

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. There is no one age of antichrist, even in the darkest time of all, but ecclesiastical historians mention a great many by name, who manifested an abhorrence of the Pope and his idolatrous worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of witnesses, through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries, as historians demonstrate, and mention them by name and give an account of the testimony which they held. Many of them were private persons, and many of them ministers, and some magistrates and persons of great distinction. And there were numbers in every age, who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

Then speaking especially of the Waldenses, he says:

Some of the Popish writers themselves own that that people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the Popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, the heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world. It is supposed, that this people first betook themselves to this desert, secret place among the mountains to hide themselves from the severity of the heathen persecutions, which were before Constantine the Great.

The special historians of the Waldenses claim the most remote origin for them. For example, Mr. Faber says

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. Hence it follows, that, even in the twelfth and thirteenth, centuries, the Valensic churches were so ancient, that the remote commencement was placed, by their inquisitive enemies themselves, far beyond the memory of man. The best informed Romanists of that period pretended not to affix any certain date to their organization. They were unable to pitch upon any specific time, when these venerable churches existed not. All that they certainly knew was that they had flourished long since, that they were far more ancient than any modern sect, that they had visibly existed from a time beyond the utmost memory of man (Faber, The Vallenses and Albigenses).



Sir Samuel Moreland remarks that any lapse between Claudius of Turin and Waldo “would hinder the, continual succession of the churches no more than the sun or moon cease to be when their light is eclipsed by the interposition of other bodies, or more than the Rhone or the Garonne lose their continual current because for some time they were underground and appeared not” (Acland, *The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois*, xxxvi).

Many pages might be used in describing the upright character of the Waldenses, but space is allowed for only a few statements from their enemies. To this end, the testimony of Claudius Seisselius, the Archbishop of Turin, is interesting. He says: “Their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear except by compulsion [an Anabaptist trait] 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.” He very candidly admits: “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” (Perrin, *Hist. des Vaudois*, I.v. Geneva, 1618).

In the time of the persecution of the Waldenses of Merindol and Provence, a certain monk was deputed by the Bishop of Cavaillon to hold a conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood prevented. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that in his whole life he had never known so much Scripture as he had learned in then few days that he had been conversing with the heretics. The Bishop, however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men, who had lately come from the Sorbonne, which, at that time, was the very center of theological subtlety at Paris. One of these publicly avowed that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children in their catechisms than by all the disputations which he had ever heard (Vecembecius, *Oratio de Waldensibus et Albigenis Christianis*, 4).

After describing the inhabitants of the valleys of Fraissiniere, he proceeds:

Their clothing is of the skins of the sheep — they have no linen. They inhabit seven villages, their houses are constructed of flint stone, having a flat roof covered with mud, which, when spoiled or loosed by the rain, they again smooth with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however by a fence. They also have two caves set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other themselves when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being, through constant practice, excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live in a state of seclusion from the rest of mankind. One thing is very

remarkable, that persona externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They know French sufficiently for the understanding of the Bible and the singing of Psalms. You can scarcely find a boy among them, who cannot give you an intelligent account of the faith which they possess. In this indeed, they resemble their brethren of other valleys. They pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligations of the duty is peculiarly noted in their confessions of faith. If, by reason of civil wars, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and at the first opportunity they send it to the king's taxgatherers (Thaunus, *Hist. sui temporis*, VI. 16).

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 men." This the Roman Catholics interpreted to mean a refusal to submit to the authority of the pope and the prelates. All of the early attacks against them contain this charge. This was a positive affirmation of the Scriptural grounds for religious independence, and it contained the principles of religious liberty avowed by the Anabaptists of the Reformation.

The second distinguishing principle was the authority and popular use of the Holy Scriptures. Here again the Waldenses anticipated the Reformation. 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. Peter Waldo and his associates were preachers. All of the early documents refer to the practice of the Waldenses of preaching as one of their worst heresies, and an evidence of their insubordination and arrogance. Alanus calls them false preachers. Innocent III., writing of the Waldenses of Metz, declared their desire to understand the Scriptures a laudable one, but their meeting in secret and usurping the functions in preaching as only evil. They preached in the highways and houses, and, as opportunity afforded, in the churches.

They claimed the right of women to teach as well as men, and when Paul's words enjoining silence upon the women was quoted, they replied that it was with them more a question of teaching than preaching, and quoted back ~~Titus~~ Titus 2:3, "The aged women should be teachers of good things." They declared that it was the spiritual endowment, or merit, and not the church's ordination which gave the right to bind or loose. They struck at the very root of the sacerdotal system.

To the affirmation of these fundamental principles the Waldenses, on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, added the rejection of oaths, the condemnation of the death penalty, and purgatory and prayers for the dead. There are only two

ways after death, the Waldenses declared, the way to heaven and the way to hell (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. V. Pt. I. 502-504).

The Waldensian movement touched many people, through many centuries and attracted converts from many sources. Many Roman Catholics were won over and some of them doubtless brought some error with them. Moreover, the term Waldenses is generic, which some, having overlooked, have fallen into mistakes in regard to them. The name embraced peoples living in widely separate lands and they varied in customs and possibly somewhat in doctrines. There was a conference between the Poor men of Lombardy and the Waldenses. The Italian and French Waldenses probably had a different origin, and in the conferences they found that there were some differences between them. It is possible that some of the Italian Waldenses (so-called) practised infant baptism (Dollinger, *Sektengeschichte*, II. 52). There is no account that the French Waldenses, or the Waldenses proper, ever practised infant baptism. As early as the year 1184 there was a union of the Poor men of Lyons, as some of the followers of Waldo were called, and the Arnoldists, who rejected infant baptism.

The Confessions of Faith of the Waldenses indicate that they did not practise infant baptism. There is a Confession of Faith which was published by Perrin, Geneva, 1619, the date of which is placed by Sir Samuel Moreland, A.D. 1120 (Moreland, *History of the Churches of Piedmont*, 30). That date is probably too early; but the document itself is conclusive. The twelfth article is as follows:

We consider the sacraments as signs of holy things, or the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard it as proper and even necessary that believers use these symbols or visible forms when it can be done. Notwithstanding which we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs, when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them (Perrin, *Histoire des Vaudois*, I. xii., 53).

In 1544 the Waldenses, in order to remove the prejudice which was entertained against them, and to make manifest their innocence, transmitted to the king of France, in writing, a Confession of Faith. Article seven says of baptism

We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's Invisible operation, is within us, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through (the faith of) Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing our faith and the change of life (Sleiden, *The General History of the Reformation*, 347. London, 1689).

Other writings of the Waldenses likewise convey no idea of infant baptism. There is a “Treatise concerning Antichrist, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacraments,” which Bishop Hurd makes of the thirteenth century. There is a passage which condemns the Antichrist since “he teaches to baptize children in the faith, and attributes to this the work of regeneration, with the external rite of baptism, and on this foundation bestows orders, and, indeed, grounds all of Christianity” (Moreland, Churches of Piedmont, 148).

A Catechism emanating from the Waldenses of the thirteenth century makes no allusion to infant baptism. It says that the church catholic, that is, the elect of God, through the merits of Christ, is gathered together by the Holy Spirit, and foreordained to eternal life (Gilly, Waldensian Researches, I. lxxii. London, 1825), which is not consistent with infant baptism.

The Noble Lessons say: “Baptize those who believe in the name of Jesus Christ” (Moreland, Churches of Piedmont, 112).

There is a Liturgy, of great antiquity, which was used by the Waldenses. The Office contains no Directory for the baptism of children. Robinson says of it that it has not

The least hint of pouring or sprinkling; on the contrary, there is a directory for the making of a Christian of a pagan before baptism, and for washing the feet after. Thus the introductory discourse of the presbyter delivering the creed, runs thus: “Dear Brethren, the divine sacraments are not properly matters of investigation, as of faith, and not only of faith, but also of fear, for no one can receive the discipline of faith, unless he have a foundation, the fear of the Lord. ... You are about to hear the creed, therefore to-day, for without that, neither can Christ be announced, nor can you exercise faith, nor can baptism be administered.” After the presbyter had repeated the creed, he expounded it, referring to trine immersion, and closed with repeated observations on the absolute necessity of faith, in order to a worthy participation of baptism (Robinson. Ecclesiastical Researches, 473, 474).

The Roman Catholics soon came into conflict with the Waldenses on the subject of baptism. The Lateran Council, A.D. 1215, pointing to the Waldenses, declared that baptism “in water” was profitable as “well for children as adults” (Maitland, Facts and Documents, 499). There is a long list of such Roman Catholic authors. One of them said: “I paid great attention to their errors and defenses.” Some of these authors are here quoted.

Enervinus of Cologne writes to St. Bernard a letter in which he says of the Waldenses:

They do not believe in infant baptism; alleging that place in the Gospel, Whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved (Mabillon, Vetera Analecta, III. 473).

Petrus Cluniacensis, A.D., 1146, wrote against them, and brought this charge:

That infants are not to be baptized, or saved by the faith of another, but ought to be baptized and saved by their own faith ... And that those who are baptized in infancy, when grows up, should be baptized again ... rather rightly baptized (Hist. Eccl. Madgeburg, cent. XII. c.v. 834).

Eckbert of Schonaugh says:

That baptism does no good to infants, because they cannot of themselves desire it, and because they cannot confess any faith (Migne, CXCv. 15).

Pictavius, A.D. 1167, says:

That confessing with their mouths the being of God, they entirely make void all the sacraments of the Church — namely, the baptism of children, the eucharist, the sign of the living cross, the payment of tithes and oblations, marriage, monastic institutions, and all of the duties of priests and ecclesiastics (D' Archery, Veterum aliquot Scriptorum Spicilegium, II.).

Ermengard, A.D. 1192, says

They pretend that this sacrament cannot be conferred except upon those who demand it with their own lips, hence they infer the other error, that baptism does not profit infants who receive it (Migne, CCIV. 1255).

Alanus, a monk of the Cistercian order, was a voluminous writer and his learning and abilities obtained for him the title of Universalis. He died in the year 1201. He says that the Waldenses taught that:

Baptism avails nothing before years of discretion are reached. Infants are not profited by it, because they do not believe. Hence the candidate is usually asked whether he believed in God, the Father omnipotent. Baptism profits an unbeliever as little as it does an infant. Why should those be baptized who cannot be instructed? (Migne, CCX. 346).

Stephen de Borbone was a monk of the Dominican order. He died about the year 1261, but probably wrote the account here given about the year 1225. The manuscript of his book is in the Library of the Sorbonne and only a part of it is in print. He says:

One argument of their error is that baptism does not profit little children to their salvation, who have neither the motive nor the act of faith, as it is said in the latter part of Mark (Dieckhoff, Die Waldenser im Mittelalter, 160).

Moneta, a Dominican monk, who wrote before the year A.D. 1240, says:

They maintain the nullity of the baptism of infants, and affirm that none can be saved before attaining the age of reason.

Rainerio Sacchoni, A.D. 1250, published a catalogue of the errors of the Waldenses. He says:

Some of them hold that baptism is of no advantage to infants, because they cannot believe (Coussard, *contra Waldenses*, 126).

One of the Austrian Inquisitors, A.D., 1260, says:

Concerning baptism, some err in saying that little children are not to be saved by baptism, for the Lord says, He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. Some of them baptize over again (Preger, *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Waldesier*).

David of Augsburg, A.D. 1256.1272, says:

They say that a man is then truly, for the first time baptized, when he is brought into this heresy. But some say that baptism does not profit little children, because they are never able actually to believe (Preger, *Der Tractat des David von Augsburg die Waldesier*).

A more influential line of contemporary witnesses could scarcely be found. "It is almost superfluous to point out the striking agreement between these teachings of the Waldenses," says Professor Vedder, "and the sixteenth century Anabaptists. The testimony is unanimous that the Waldenses rejected infant baptism" (*American Journal of Theology*, IV. 448). If the Waldenses were not Baptists there is no historical proof of anything.

It is equally clear that the form of baptism was immersion. This was, at the time, the practice of the whole Christian world. The great Roman Catholic writers affirm that immersion was the proper form of baptism. Peter the Lombard, who died A.D. 1164, declared without qualification for it as the proper act of baptism (Migne, CXCII. 335.). Thomas Aquinas refers to immersion as the general practice of his day, and prefers it as the safer way, as did also Bonaventura and Duns Scotus. These were the great doctors of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle ages. Mezeray, the French historian, is correct as to the form of baptism when he says: "In baptism of the twelfth century, they plunged the candidate into the sacred font, to show what operation that sacrament had on the soul" (Mezeray, *Histoire de France*, 288). And the contemporary writers, Eberhard and Ermengard, in their work "*contra Waldenses*," written toward the close of the twelfth century, repeatedly refer to immersion as the form of baptism among the Waldense (See Gretscher, *contra Waldenses*. In *Trias Scriptorum contra Waldenses*, Ingoldstadt, 1614; also in *Max. Patr.* XXIV. and finally in Gretscher's *Works*, XII.) Wall also remarks of these people: "As France was the first country in Christendom here dipping of children in baptism was left off; so there first antipaedobaptism began" (Wall,

The History of Infant Baptism, 1. 480). They denied infant baptism and practised dipping.

Mabillon, the great Roman Catholic historian, gives an account, at much this date, of 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” (Mabillon, *Annales ordinis sancti Benedicti*, I. 43). Even the pope in those times practised dipping.

Every institution has its vicissitudes, and after progress comes decline. On the eve of the Reformation everything was on the decline — faith, life, light. It was so of the Waldenses. Persecution had wasted their numbers and had broken their spirit and the few scattered leaders were dazed by the rising glories of the Reformation. The larger portion had gone with the Anabaptist movement. Sick and tired of heart in 1530 the remnant of the Waldenses opened negotiations with the Reformers, but a union was not effected till 1532. Since then the Waldenses have been Pedobaptists.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Fisher, 204, 219, 272.

Schaff, V. Pt. i., 469, 473-507.

Gieseler, III. 411-421.

Emilio Combs, *History of the Waldenses of Italy*.

## CHAPTER 7. — THE ORIGIN OF THE ANABAPTIST CHURCHES.

The Anabaptist Movement — Mosheim — Sir Isaac Newton — Alexander Campbell — Robert Barclay — von Usinger — Sacchoui — Cardinal Hosins — Luther — Zwingli — Anabaptism no New Thing — They Were Found in Many Lands — Different Leaders — Kinship to the Waldenses — Limborch — Keller — Moeller — Lindsay — The Waldenses and the Anabaptists Found in the Same Places — Waldensian Preachers Found Among the Anabaptists — Points of Agreement — The Anabaptists Claimed a Succession From Earlier Times — The Antiquity of the Netherland Baptists — The Swiss Moravia — The Picards — Erasmus — Sebastian Frank — Schyn — Abrahamson — Ypeij and Dermount.

THE beginnings of the Anabaptist movement are firmly rooted in the earlier centuries. The Baptists have a spiritual posterity of many ages of liberty-loving Christians. The movement was as old as Christianity; the Reformation gave an occasion for a new and varied history.

The statement of Mosheim who was a learned Lutheran historian, as to the origin of the Baptists, has never been successfully attacked. He says:

The origin of the sect, who from their repetition of baptism received in other communities, are called Anabaptists, but who are also denominated Mennonites, from the celebrated man to whom they owe a large share of their present prosperity, is involved in much obscurity [or, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, as another translator has it]. For they suddenly started up, in various countries of Europe, under the influence of leaders of dissimilar character and views; and at a time when the first contests with the Catholics so engrossed the attention of all, that they scarcely noticed any other passing occurrences. The modern Mennonites affirm, that their predecessors were the descendants of those Waldenses, who were oppressed by the tyranny of the Papists; and that they were of a most pure offspring, and most averse from any inclinations toward sedition, as well as all fanatical views.

In the first place I believe the Mennonites are not altogether in the wrong, when they boast of a descent from these Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and others, who are usually styled witnesses for the truth before Luther. Prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe, but especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany very many persons, in whose minds were deeply rooted that principle which the Waldenses, Wyclifites, and the Husites maintained, some more covertly and others more openly; namely, that the kingdom which Christ set up on the earth, or the visible church, is an assembly of holy persons; and ought therefore to be entirely free from not only ungodly persons and sinners, but



from all institutions of human device against ungodliness. This principle lay at the foundation which was the source of all that was new and singular in the religion of the Mennonites; and the greatest part of their singular opinions, as is well attested, were approved some centuries before Luther's time, by those who had such views of the Church of Christ (Moeheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, III. 200).

This opinion of Mosheim, expressed in 1755, of the ancient origin of the Baptists and of their intimate connection with the Waldenses, and of other witnesses of the truth, meets with the approval of the most rigid scientific research of our own times.

Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest men who ever lived, declared it was "his conviction that the Baptists were the only Christians who had not symbolized with Rome" (Whiston, Memoirs of, written by himself, 201). William Whiston, who records this statement, was the successor of Newton in Cambridge University, and lectured on Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. He himself became a Baptist and wrote a book on infant baptism.

Alexander Campbell, in his debate with Mr. Macalla, says:

I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practised by the Baptists, had its advocates in every century up to the Christian era ... and independent of whose existence (the German Anabaptists), clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced (Macalla and Campbell Debate on Baptism, 378, 379, Buffalo, 1824).

Again in his book on Christian Baptism (p. 409. Bethany, 1851), he says:

There is nothing more congenial to civil liberty than to enjoy an unrestrained, unembargoed liberty of exercising the conscience freely upon all subjects respecting religion. Hence it is that the Baptist denomination, in all ages and in all countries, has been, as a body, the constant asserters of the rights of man and of liberty of conscience. They have often been persecuted by Pedobaptists; but they never politically persecuted, though they have had it in their power.

Robert Barclay, a Quaker, who wrote largely upon this subject, though not always free from bias, says of the Baptists:

We shall afterwards show 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 times of the apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine Truth,

and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Societies of the Commonwealth*, 11, 12. London, 1876).

These statements might be worked out in circumstantial detail. Roman Catholic historians and officials, in some instances eye-witnesses, testify that the Waldenses and other ancient communions were the same as the Anabaptists. The Augustinian, Bartholomaeus von Usingen, set forth in the year 1529, a learned polemical writing against the "Rebaptizers," in which he says that "Anabaptists, or Catabaptists, have gone forth from Picardism" (Usingen, *Contra Rebaptizantes*. Cologne, 1529). The Mandate of Speier, April 1529, declares that the Anabaptists were hundreds of years old and had been often condemned (seller, *Die Waldenser*, 135. Leipzig, 1486). Father Gretscher, who edited the works of Rainerio Sacchoni, after recounting the doctrines of the Waldenses, says: "This is a true picture of the heretics of our age, particularly of the Anabaptists;" Baronius, the most learned and laborious historian of the Roman Catholic Church, says: "The Waldenses were Anabaptists" (D'Anvers, *Baptism*, 253). Baronius has a heavy and unreadable chronicle, but valuable for reference to original documents.

Cardinal Hosius, a member of the Council of Trent, A.D. 1560, in a statement often quoted, says:

If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of the Anabaptists since there have been none for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to the most cruel sorts of punishment than these people Hosius, *Letters Apud Opera*, 112-113. *Baptist Magazine* CVIII, 278. May, 1826.

That Cardinal Hosius dated the history of the Baptists back twelve hundred years, i.e. 360, is manifest, for in yet another place the Cardinal says:

The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect. Of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been, although some of them lately, as they testify in their apology, declare that they will no longer re-baptize, as was their former custom; nevertheless, it is certain that many of them retain their custom, and have united with the Anabaptists (Hosius, *Works of the Heresaeies of our Times*, Bk. I. 431. Ed. 1584).

From any standpoint that this Roman Catholic testimony is viewed it is of great importance. The Roman Catholics were in active opposition to the Baptists, through the Inquisition they had been dealing with them for some centuries,

they had every avenue of information, they had spared no means to inform themselves, and, consequently, were accurately conversant with the facts. These powerful testimonies to the antiquity of the Baptists are peculiarly weighty. The Baptists were no novelty to the Roman Catholics of the Reformation period.

The testimony of Luther, Zwingli, and other Reformers, is conclusive. Luther was never partial to the Baptists. As early as 1522, he says: "The Anabaptists have been, for a long time spreading in Germany" (Michelet, *Life of Luther*, 99). The able and eloquent Baptist, the late Dr. E.T. Winkler, commenting on this statement says: "Nay, Luther even traces the Anabaptists back to the days of John Huss, and apologetically admits that the eminent Reformer was one of them."

Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, is more specific than Luther. From the beginning of his work he was under the necessity of dealing with the Anabaptist movement. He says:

The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for three hundred years has 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.

No definite starting place can be ascribed to the Baptists of the Reformation, for they sprang up in many countries all at once. It is impossible to trace them first of all to any one place, for they appeared in many countries at the same time (J.C. Fusslin, *Beitrag zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte*, I. 190; II. 64, 65, 265. 323; III. 323. Zurich, 1754). And Fusslin adds: "The Anabaptists were not wrong, therefore, when they said that anabaptism was no new thing. The Waldensians had practised it before them" (Ibid, II. 166). No one can certainly say whether they appeared first in the Netherlands, Germany or Switzerland, and their leaders were not confined to and, one country, and seem to have had no especial connection with each other.

No one leader impressed himself upon all of them. There was an independence and an individuality that made it impossible to express a complete system of their intellectual beliefs. There are three contemporary accounts which show the divergence of opinion among them — two from hostile and one from a sympathetic historian. Bullinger (*Der Wiedertäufern Ursprung, Furgang, Secten*. Zurich, 1650) attempts a classification of their different divisions, and mentions thirteen distinct sects within the Anabaptist circle; but they manifestly overlap in such a way as to suggest a very large amount of difference which cannot be distinctly tabulated. Sebastian Frank notes all the varieties of views which Bullinger mentions, but refrains from any classification. "There are," he says, "more sects and opinions, which I do not know and cannot describe, but it appears to me that there are not two to be

found who agree with each other in all points.” Kessler (Sabbatta, St. Gall, 1902), who recounts the story of the Anabaptists of St. Gall, records the same variety of opinions. The seed had been sown by earlier Christians, in many lands, and the Baptists were the fruitage. They did not spring from any individual, hence the great variety and independence exhibited by Baptist churches. Through persecution they had not been permitted to hold conferences to frame their plea, probably they did not know of each other’s existence, hence there were dissimilarities in their views; but in the main there was unity in thought, since they had learned their heart lessons out of the same blessed Gospels, and had been taught by the same free Spirit.

The Anabaptist movement was the continuation of the old evangelical faith maintained by the Waldenses and other Mediaeval Christians. Limborch, the historian of the Inquisition, says:

To speak my mind freely, if their opinions and customs were to be examined without prejudice, it would appear that among ail of the modern sects of Christians, they had the greatest resemblance to that of the Mennonites or Dutch Baptists (Limborch, *The History of the Inquisition*, I. 57. London, 1731).

Dr. Allen, Professor in Harvard University, says:

Side by side with the creed which has worked itself out into such shapes as these (referring to the Roman hierarchy) has come down the primitive, obstinate, heroic, anti-sacerdotal tradition, which has made the starting point of many a radical protest, from the Puritan Novatians of the third century down to the English Independents of the seventeenth. That tradition In its most logical form is not only Protestant, but Baptist.

Dr. Ludwig Keller, a learned member of the Reformed Church, the Münster Archivist, and now in charge of the Archives in Berlin, says:

It is not to be doubted also that in the process of scientific investigation 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 before the Reformation (*The Baptist Quarterly Review*, VII. 28-31).

In his last work Keller says:

The salient points of this mode of viewing history is that inside of the evangelical world an unbroken course of development and historical continuity reached far back beyond the sixteenth century, is a matter of fact; and yet it equally repudiates the Catholic supposition that only since 1517 “an appalling apostasy from the true faith took place in the Western World,” and that of Luther’s followers that with him the light of the Gospel first (since the apostasy) came into the world (Keller, *Die Anfange der Reformation*, iii, iv. Translated for *The Western Recorder* by Dr. Albert H. Newman).

The statement of Dr. William Moeller, late Professor of Church History, in Kiel, is to the same effect. He says:

The Baptists have often been called the most consistent and the most genuine sons of the Reformation, or it has been thought that they have been excellently characterized by the name of “Ultras” of the Reformation; but this view is supported only by the very extraneous circumstance that many of their numbers had previously been adherents of Zwingli or Luther, and that the Swiss Reformation prepared the way for their doctrine of the eucharist and the Biblical radicalism. Even the attempt of Cornelius to explain their rise to the effect of the Bible in the hand of the ordinary man is only sufficient to account for certain formalities and singular eccentricities. To judge from their collective view of the world, measured by their motives and aims, they belonged not to the Reformation, but to Medieval Christianity, a continuation of the opposition (which grew up in the second half of the Middle Ages on Catholic soil) to the secularized church (Moeller, *History of the Christian Church*, 90, 91).

Dr. Thomas M. Lindsay, Principal of the Free Church College, Glasgow, A.D., 1906, says:

To understand sympathetically the multiform movement which was called in the sixteenth century Anabaptism, it is necessary to remember that it was not created by the Reformation, although it certainly received an impetus from the inspiration of the age. Its roots can be traced for some centuries, and its pedigree has at least two stems which are essentially distinct, and were only occasionally combined. The one stem is the succession of the Brethren, a Mediaeval anti-clerical body of Christians whose history is written only in the records of the Inquisition of the Mediaeval Church, where they appear under a variety of names, but are universally said to prize the Scriptures and to accept the Apostles' Creed. The other existed in the continuous uprising of the poor peasants in rural districts and the lower classes in the towns against the rich, which was a feature of the latter Middle Ages (Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation*, II. 235. New York, 1908).

The statements of these writers have been dwelt upon since they exhibit the spirit of the new learning by experts, who have applied the principles of investigation by the scientific method to the history of the Baptists.

In those places where the Waldenses flourished there the Baptists set deep root. This statement holds good from country to country, and from city to city. Innumerable examples might be given. For long periods there were Waldenses in Cologne. The Beghards were spread all over the Flemish Netherlands; and in Switzerland, along the Rhine, and in Germany, where afterwards we meet the Baptists (Heath, *The Anabaptists and Their English Descendants*. In *Contemporary Review*, 403. March, 1891). Metz was a place of refuge for the Waldenses (Michelet, *Histoire de France*, II. bk. iii); they spread through

Austria-Hungary, as far as Transylvania; the Cathari were found in the height, of the Alps, in Switzerland; they came to Bern (Chron. of Justinger. Ochsenbein, op. cit. 95); and they came to Freiberg (Oehsenbein, Der Inquisitions prozesz wider die Waldenser. Bern, 1881). They were found in Strassburg. In all of these places were the Waldenses in Mediaeval times; in all of them were the Baptists in Reformation times. The ground along the banks of the Rhine was so well prepared that a Waldensian in the fifteenth century could readily travel from Cologne to Milan without spending the night with any but a fellow-believer. It was precisely in these places that the Baptists flourished in great numbers.

Many able preachers of the Waldenses became widely known as Baptist ministers. Such were the martyrs, Hans Koch, Leonard Meyster, Michael Sattler and Leonard Kaser, who were all renowned Baptist ministers (Mehrning, Baptisma Historia, 748). Koch and Meyster were put to death in Augsburg, in 1524; Sattler in 1527, at Rotenburg, and Kaser was burnt August 18, the same year, at Sherding. At Augsburg, in 1525, was a Baptist church of eleven hundred members. Mans Denck was the pastor, and he was of Waldensian, origin. Ludwig Hatzer was expressly called by a contemporary a Picard; and Mans Hut was an adherent of the "old Waldensian, brethren" (Der Chronist Joh. Salat. In Archiv. f. Schweiz. Ref. Gesch., I. 21). Leonard Scheimer and Hans Schaffer were Baptist preachers (Keller, Die Anfänge der Reformation, II. 38). There was also Thomas Hermann, who, in 1522, labored as a Waldensian minister, but he was martyred, in 1527, as a minister of the congregation of the Baptists (Beck, Die Geschichte Bucher der Wiedertaufer, 13). Conrad Grebel, the distinguished Baptist leader of Switzerland, received his learning from the Waldenses. Many of the distinguished Baptist families of Hamburg, Altona and Emden were of Valdensian origin (Blaupt Ten Cate, A Historical Enquiry, in Southern Baptist Review, October, 1857). Moreover, the trade unions and much of the weaving business which was originally in the hands of the Waldenses all became Baptist.

There are many external points between the Anabaptists and Waldenses, which force themselves upon us. The peculiar attitude which the Waldenses, as well as the Anabaptists, took toward the historical books of the Old Testament (Keller, Johann von Staupitz, 101, 162, 166, 342. Leipzig, 1888), can by no means be accidental. The Waldenses translated the Bible into the Romance and Teutonic languages early in the thirteenth century, the Baptists retained these versions of the Bible two hundred years after Luther's version. The oldest German Bible is of Baptist origin. In these versions alone the Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans appears. The attitude of the two bodies toward the question of grave yards, the use in the worship of certain forms of prayers, the singing of the same hymns, of observing the Supper, the principles in church buildings,

the gray dress of the apostles, the itinerate preachers; in the form of asking a blessing and many other details mark the Waldenses and the Baptists as of the shine origin.

Professor S. Minocchi, in a valuable pamphlet on *The Bible in the History of Italy*, says:

Nevertheless, among the Waldenses and others, versions of its most noted and precious books, such as the Psalms, the book of those who suffer, pray and hope, or the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, which are full of such deep wisdom and profound melancholy, were largely circulated. The New Testament was sought after, and was spread about; and in its pages were found the condemnation of the Church of Rome and its faulty clergy, and at the same time the hope of a religious revival among the people. The book of Revelation, in the image of Babylon, gave them a picture of the horrors of the Church; in the New Jerusalem they viewed the Christian restoration, which they were longing for. The Epistles of St. Paul fascinated them by their deep religious feeling, their wisdom so profound, their thought so spiritually free, their description of customs so simple. The Acts of the Apostles gave them in the insuperable model of a poor, virtuous, and happy life, such as that of the primitive Christians with their simple rites and with their having all things in common. But it was the Gospel, above all, that showed them, in the poor and humble figure of Jesus, the perfect ideal of a true religious life, so different from that of the ostentatious pontiffs of Rome (Salvatore Minocchi, *La Bibbia nella Storia d'Italia*. Firenze, 1904).

According to Professor Minocchi, the thirteenth century versions of the Italian Bible “Sprang, like many of the other old versions, anonymously, from the people who required a means of affirming the religious ideas born in them by the change that had taken place in their minds and conscience. But if we consider its intimate relationship with the contemporary heretical translations of France, Provence, and Savoy, we may safely believe that the first Italian version had its origin in some centers of the sect called the ‘Poor of Italy,’ and if we consider its phraseology, we may even more definitely hold that it was issued by the Tuscan Patarene”

The Baptists of the Reformation claimed that they had an ancient origin and went so far, as to suggest a “succession of churches”. This claim, was put forth by them at the very beginning of the Reformation A.D. 1521. An old letter is in existence founding: “*Successio Ana-baptistica*.” The letter bears its own date as “that of the Swiss brethren, written to the Netherland Anabaptists, respecting their origin, a year before, Anno 1522” (Suptibus Bernardi Gaultberi. Coloniae, 1603 and 1612). The letter is particularly important since it shows that the Baptists as early as 1521 claimed a succession. Van Gent, a Roman Catholic, quotes the letter and calls the Anabaptists “locusts,” “which last, as apes of the Catholics, boasted as having an apostolic succession” (Van

Gent, Grundliche Historic, 85. Moded, Grondich bericht von de erste beghinselen der Wederdoopsche Sekten).

The author of the “Successio Anabaptistica,” says of the Anabaptists:

I am dealing with the Mennonites or Anabaptists, who pride themselves as having the apostolic succession, that is, the mission and the extraction from the apostles. Who claim that the true Church is found nowhere, except among themselves alone and their congregations, since with them alone remains the true understanding of the Scriptures. To that end they appeal to the letter of the S.S. and want to explain them with the S.S. And thus they sell to the simple folks glass rubies for precious stones. ... If one charges them with the newness of their sect, they claim that the “true Church” during the time of the dominion of the Catholic Church, was hidden in her (Cramer and Pyper, Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica, VII. 510).

The point of this inquiry is that the Swiss Baptists wrote a letter, in 1522, on the apostolic origin of their churches in reply to one they had received the year before from the Baptists of the Netherlands, and that a Roman Catholic condemned them on that account.

We know also that at that date there were Baptists in the Netherlands. John Huibrechtsz was sheriff, in 1518, and he protected the Anabaptists (Wagenaar, Description of Amsterdam, III, 6, 66). Upon the origin of the Netherland Baptists the scholarly Van Oosterzee remarks:

They are peculiar to the Netherlands and are older than the Reformation, and must, therefore, by no means be confounded with the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, for it can be shown that the origin of the Baptists reaches further back and is more venerable (Herzog, Real Ecyelopadie, IX. 346).

There is a like claim to the antiquity of the Swiss Baptists. At Zurich the Baptists, in 1525, held many discussions with Zwingli and others, in the presence of the City Council. On November 30, 1525, Zwingli secured a rigorous edict against them. The beginning of the edict contains the following words

You know without doubt, and have heard from many, that for a very long time, some peculiar men, who imagine that they are learned, have come forward astonishingly, and without any evidence of the Holy Scriptures, given as a pretext by simple and pious men, have preached, and without the permission and consent of the church, have proclaimed that infant baptism did not proceed from God, but from the devil, and, therefore, ought not to be practised (Blaupot Ten Cate, Historical Enquiry).

From this it appears that the Baptists of Zurich, and thereabouts, had already been known “a very long time.” The former statement of Zwingli; already given, will be recalled. There is no doubt that Zwingli wrote this decree. Two



or three years would not be “a very long time.” The antiquity of the Baptists was claimed by themselves, and admitted in 1525 by their enemies.

A notable proof of the antiquity of the Baptists of Moravia is here recorded. Johanna Schlecta Costelacius wrote a letter from Bohemia, October 10, 1519, to Erasmus, affirming that for one hundred years the Picards had been dipping believers, and that they rebaptized and were therefore Anabaptists. His words are: “Such as come over to their sect must every one be dipped in mere water (*in aqua simplici re-baptizari*)” (Pauli Colimesii, Opera Theologica, Critica et Historias. No. XX. 534, 535, Hamburg, 1469).

These Picards, Waldenses, were spread all over the Flemish Netherlands and in Germany. They were found in the places where the Anabaptist; flourished. Two of these persons, about whom Costelacius wrote, waited on Erasmus, at Antwerp, and congratulated him on his bold stand for the truth. He declined their congratulations and reproached them with being Anabaptists (Robinson, Ecclesiastical Researches, 506). They returned to tell their brethren: “They are averse to us because of our name, i.e. Anabaptists” (Camerarius, de Eccl. Fratrum, 125. Ivimey, History of the Baptists, I. 70). Erasmus wrote of them

The Husites renounce all rites and ceremonies. of the Catholic Church; they ridicule our doctrine and practice in both sacraments; 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.

Sebastian Frank, the father of modern German history, who wrote under the date of 1531, out of the chronicles of the Picards, of Bohemia, in 1394, says: “The Picards in Bohemia are divided into two, or some say three parties, the large, the small, the very small, who hold in all things with the Anabaptists, have all things common, and do not believe in the real presence” (Frank, Chronica, Zeitbuch and Geschichte, clxix. Strassburg, 1531). He tells many additional things concerning these Baptists of 1394. He says the Roman Catholics reported very shameful things in regard to them, but that the Bohemian historians tell otherwise. Ziska, a Bohemian king, tried to exterminate them, but later they increased greatly until they numbered eighty thousand. They were a pious, childlike and sincere people; and many of them suffered on account of their faith. These Baptists are still living, writes Frank, in Bohemia. Their fathers had to live in the forests and caves. They supported each other mutually. The Lord’s Supper they held in a house set apart for that purpose. They had no Articles of Faith other than the Bible. They accepted no interpretations of the fathers. They held the Scriptures to be the word of God.

These statements are from contemporary authors. The fact is established that the Baptists had existed in Bohemia since the year 1394; that they practised immersion and close communion; in no wise received infant baptism; and were in all points like the Anabaptists.

The Dutch Baptist historians all claim apostolic origin for the Baptists. Such is the claim of Hermann Schyn (*Historia Christianorum* 134 A.D. 1723); of Galenus Abrahamzon (*Verdediging der Christenen*, 29); and J.H. Halbertsma affirms the Waldensian origin of the Baptists. "The Baptists," says he, "existed several centuries before the Reformation" (*Halbertsma, De Doopsgezinde*). While Blaupot Ten Cate says:

I am fully satisfied that Baptist principles have in all ages, from the times of the apostles to the present, prevailed over a greater or smaller portion of Christendom (Cate, *Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in Friesland*, 5).

The claim of the Dutch Baptists to apostolic origin was made the object of a special investigation in the year 1319, by Dr. Ypeij, Professor of Theology in Gronigen, and the Rev. J.J. Dermout, Chaplain to the King of the Netherlands, both of whom were learned members of the Reformed Church. Many pages might be filled with the reports that they made to the King. In the opinion of these writers:

The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who during the latter part of the twelfth century fled into Flanders; and into the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, where they lived simple and exemplary lives, in the villages as farmers, in the towns by trades, free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

We have now seen that the Baptists who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long in the history of the church 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 doctrines 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 brought about in the sixteenth 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 (Ypeij en Dermout, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*. Breda, 1819).

This testimony from the highest authority of the Dutch Reformed Church, through a Commission appointed by the King of the Netherlands, is a rare

instance of liberality and justice to another denomination. It concedes all that Baptists have ever claimed in regard to the continuity of their history. On this account State patronage was tendered to the Baptists, which they politely, but firmly declined.

The claims here considered in regard to the Baptists are of the highest consideration. The best historical study and scientific scholarship all lean toward the continuous history of the Baptists. In the last twenty years there has been much patient investigation of the history of the Baptists, especially in Germany and Switzerland. Likewise many of the sources have been published, and the trend of scholarship favors the idea of the continuity of Baptists from very early and some say from apostolic times.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Schaff, VII. 74-84.

Lindsay, I. 336-339.

Fisher, History of the Reformation, 475.

## CHAPTER 8. — THE CHARACTER OF THE ANABAPTISTS

Called by Many Names-Anabaptists-Catabaptists-The Popularity of the Movement — Not a Turbulent People — Lovers of Peace — Bayle — Cassander — Pastor of Feldsberg — The Swiss Baptists — Erasmus — Persecuted in Every Land — Religious Liberty — Hubmaier — Their Appeal to the New Testament — The Baptismal Question — A Spiritual Church Their Aim — East — Infant Baptism — The Form of Their Organization.

IT is amazing how many names were applied, in the period of the Reformation, to the Baptists. They called each other brethren and sisters, and spoke of each other in the simplest language of affection. Their enemies called them Anabaptists because they repeated baptism when converts came from other parties. This name Anabaptist is a caricature. It damns first by faint praise and then by distortion. “The opprobrious term ‘Anabaptist’ was and is a vile slander. It was invented to conceal thought. It shrouded in a fog the grand ideals of a people loving peace and truth. The term is even yet a pellet of wax on the object glass of a telescope. The tendency of history is to change front, but the most historiographers still look at the whole question through corrugated glass” (Griffis, *the Anabaptists*. In *The New World*, 648. December, 1895).

They were called Catabaptists because they denied infant baptism and practised immersion. The name Baptist dates from the earliest days of the Reformation. In contemporary literature they are generally called Baptists (Frank, *Chronik*, III. 198). It is an old and honored name.

The extent of the Baptist movement in the sixteenth century can scarcely be exaggerated. “This malady of Anabaptism and fanaticism,” says Dorner, “had, in the third and fourth decades,” that is between 1520 and 1540, “spread like a hot fever through all Germany; from Swabia and Switzerland along the Rhine to Holland and Friesland; from Bavaria, Middle Germany, Westphalia and Saxony, as far as Holstein” (Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, 132. Munich, 1867).

Anabaptism represented in the sixteenth century the stream of popular thought, feeling and aspiration, which has not ceased to flow through the centuries. Had it not been for fierce persecutions, which from the beginning fell upon the Baptists, in all human probability the Reformation would have been distinctly a Baptist movement. In that event the character of the Reformation would have been far more thorough and spiritual, and the battle for human liberty would not have been delayed for ages. But the leaders of the Reformation feared for

their prerogatives and the rulers for their thrones, and these two forces combined to defeat any show of human freedom. The masses of the people, however, were with the Baptists.

The novelty and boldness of the doctrines of the Baptists literally filled with terror the rulers of the world. Many of the leaders were scholarly men well versed in Greek and Hebrew. The wholesale slaughter of the Peasants, in 1525, caused the spread of Anabaptism, in the next twenty-five years, all over Europe. Cities and districts which had been friendly to Luther went over to the Anabaptists, and thousands of tradesmen were to be counted as their adherents. (Guy de Bres, *Racine, Source et Fondement des Anabaptistes*, 5. Ed 1555). The Archbishop of Lund, Imperial Ambassador with the King of Rome wrote July 9, 1535, that while thousands of them had been killed “there is a great quantity of this sect in several parts of Germany” (State Papers of Venice, V. 29). Albertus Hortensius writing, in 1548, affirms: “The Anabaptists have increased with marvelous rapidity in all places” (Hortensius, *Tumultum Anabaptistarum*).

Thousands were baptized by Hubmaier, and other Baptist preachers in Switzerland, Moravia, Germany, the Netherlands, and other countries. Frank says:

The course of the Baptists was so swift that their doctrines soon spread over the whole country, and they quickly obtained a great body of adherents, baptized many thousands and also drew to their side many well-meaning souls. They were thrown into prison tortured with branding sword, fire, water, and divers imprisonments, so that, in a few years, some two thousand or more are estimated to have been put to death (Frank, *Chronik*, III. 198).

So much has been said about the Baptists being turbulent and fanatical, that it is really a surprise to many when it is found, that they were the most peaceful of men. That there were many persons called Anabaptists who were fanatics there is no doubt. When it is remembered, however, that the worst of outrages were committed against them, and that they were hunted like wild beasts, that their women were outraged, that they were drowned in rivers and burnt at the stake, that every means of exasperation was used against them, we are only surprised that they were as moderate as they were. Had the cause of these revolutionists succeeded they would have been regarded as the most brilliant champions of liberty, and they would have been classed among the world patriots. Since they failed they have been counted the worst of reprobates. It has been shown also that most of the fanatics were not Anabaptists at all, and that the contention in which they were engaged was far more political than religious.

The Baptists were peace lovers and did not believe in the use of the sword. This trait would probably describe the most of them. They were reviled and they reviled not again, they were persecuted and they pleaded for liberty of all. It is pleasing to note that their true worth has been appreciated. Pierre Bayle, 1648-1706, the learned encyclopaedist, Professor of Philosophy at Rotterdam, tells of the mild character of the Baptists, and of their long list of martyrs. He says:

Could it only produce those who were put to death for attempts against the government, its bulky martyrology would make a ridiculous figure. But it is certain that several Anabaptists, who suffered death courageously for opinions, had never any intention of rebelling. Give me leave to cite an evidence, which cannot be suspected; it is that writer (Guy de Bres) who has exerted his whole force in refuting this sect. He observes that its great progress was owing to three things: The first was, That its teaching deafened its hearers with numberless passages of Scriptures. The second, That they affected a great appearance of sanctity. The third, That their followers discovered great constancy in their sufferings and death. But he gives not the least hint that the Anabaptist martyrs suffered death for taking up arms against the state, or stirring up rebellion (Bayle, Historical and Critical Dictionary, I. 287 note).

Georgius Cassander, who lived in those times, and disputed with the Anabaptists and visited some of their ministers in prison, in his Epistle to the Duke of Cleves, gives a good reputation to the Baptists of Belgium and Lower Germany. He says:

They discover an honest and pious mind; that they erred from the faith through mistaken zeal, rather than from evil disposition; that they condemned the outrageous behaviour of their brethren of Münster; and that they taught that the kingdom of Jesus Christ was to be established only by the cross. They deserve, therefore, to be pitied and instructed, rather than to be persecuted (Cassander, Praefat. Tractet. de Baptismo Infantium).

The Roman Catholic Pastor at Feldsberg, A.D. 1604, says:

Among all of the sects none had a finer appearance and a greater external sanctity than the Anabaptists. Among themselves they call each other brother and sister; they curse not, they revile not, they swear not, they use no defensive armor, and at the beginning had no weapons. They never eat or drink immoderately, they use no clothes that would indicate worldly pride, they have nothing as individuals but everything in common. They do not go to law before the magistracy and endure everything in patience, as they pretend, in the Holy Spirit. Who then would believe that under these garments lurk pure ravaging wolves?

The character of the Swiss Baptists has the highest commendation of Erasmus. In the time of their persecution in Basel, Erasmus lived in that city. He remarked upon the persecuting desire of those who had themselves just escaped from danger and declared:

They who are so very urgent that heretics should not be put to death, did yet capitally punish the Anabaptists, who were condemned for much fewer articles, and were said to have among them a great many who had been converted from a very wicked life, to one as much amended; and who, however, they doted on their opinions, had never possessed themselves of any churches, or cities, or fortified themselves by any league against the force of princes, or cast any one out of his inheritance or estate (*Epistolarum de Erasmus, XXXI. 59. A.D. 1530*).

On account of these statements Bellarmine accused Erasmus of being of the Baptist persuasion. No one could express a favorable opinion of the Baptists and escape abuse.

Dr. Schaff has summed up his opinion of the entire movement of the Reformation. Luther, of all the Reformers, arouses his enthusiasm. With a patriotic interest he narrates the story of his countryman, Zwingli. For Calvin as a theological genius he had a high admiration, but he pronounced him to be "one who forbids familiar approach". To Dr. Kostlin he wrote (1888) "I am now working on the Swiss Reformation, but I cannot stir up as much enthusiasm for Calvin or Zwingli, although he is my countryman, as for Luther." About the same time he wrote to Dr. Mann:

The Reformation everywhere had its defects and sins, which it is impossible to justify. How cruel was the persecution of the Anabaptists, who by no means were only revolutionary fanatics but for the most part simple, honest Christians and suffered and died for liberty of conscience and the separation of church and state. And how sad were the moral state and the rude theological quarrels in Germany. No wonder that Melanchthon longed for deliverance from the rabies theologorum. I hope God has something better and greater in store for His Church than the Reformation (*Schaff, The Life of Philip Schaff, 462*).

Earnest and evangelical as were the Baptists it would seem natural to suppose that they would at least be tolerated by the government. But their views were too radical, and their principles too far reaching, to fail to challenge the hatred of that persecuting era. The whole Christian world was organized upon lines of persecution. The only exception to the rule were the Baptists. They held that every man had a God-given right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience; and the larger right that other men had the same privilege. In this contention they stood absolutely alone; and standing alone they paid the price in human blood in order that every man might worship, or not worship,

God according to the dictates of his own conscience. It was a costly sacrifice, but it was none too dear for the world's redemption.

The entire Christian world was engaged in persecution. The Baptists, in all lands, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, were cruelly persecuted by imprisonment, exile, torture, fire and sword. The Baptists by thousands were martyred. They alone pleaded for liberty. "The principles from which the Anabaptists proceeded," says Emil Egli, "manifested a powerful grasp on original Christian ideas" (Egli, *Die Zurischer Wiedertaufer*, 94. Zurich, 1884). Their voice on the subject of liberty of conscience was clear and distinct. Hans Muller, of Medicon, when brought before the Zurich magistrates, said:

Do not lay a burden on my conscience, for faith is a gift freely from God, and is not a common property. The mystery of God lies hidden, like the treasure in the field, which no one can find, but he to whom the Spirit shows it. So I beg you, ye servants of God, let my faith stand free (Egli, 76).

Balthasar Hubmaier, in a tract published at Schaffhausen, in Switzerland, included the Turks and atheists in his plea for the rights of conscience. He says:

The burning of heretics cannot be justified by the Scriptures. Christ Himself teaches that the tares should be allowed to grow with the wheat. He did not come to burn, or to murder, but to give life, and that more abundantly. We should, therefore, pray and hope for improvement in men as long as they live. If they cannot be convinced by appeals to reason, or the Word of God, they should be let alone. One cannot be made to see his errors either by fire or sword. But if it is a crime to burn those who scornfully reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ, how much more it is a crime to burn the true expounders and exemplars of the Word of God. Such an apparent zeal for God, the welfare of the soul, and the honor of the church is a deception. Indeed to every one it must be evident that the burning of heretics is a device of Satan (Hubmaier, *Von Ketzeru und verbrennen*. A.D. 1524).

The Baptists appealed directly to the New Testament as the sole authority in matters of religion. They at once repudiated the traditions of the Fathers and appeals to earthly councils, and chose the Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice. They believed in the personal interpretation of the Word of God and that a man must walk according to the light which is in Him. An important feature of the Baptist movement was its strange atmosphere of Bible reading, almost to the exclusion of other literature. This was also characteristic of the earlier evangelical movements, but not to the same extent as among the Baptists of the Reformation. There had been more than one translation of the Bible into German before Luther's time. The Baptists used with great power their heritage of the Waldensian Bible, and they hailed with delight Luther's translation of the Bible. Their own leaders, such as Hatzer and Denck,



translated the Scriptures out of the originals into the vernacular of the people. Among the skilled artisans, journeymen and better situated peasants of the early sixteenth century, there were not a few who could read sufficiently to make out the text of the German Bible, whilst those who could not read would form a circle around those who could, and the latter, from the coigne of intellectual advantage, would not merely read, but would often expound the text after their own fashion to their hearers. These informal Bible readings became one of the chief functions among Baptists (Bax, *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*, 163-165. London, 1903).

The Baptist movement was radical in its nature, but the baptismal question was secondary in its importance. The movement involved the entire reconstruction of the State Church and of much of the social order. It was nothing less than revolutionary. The Reformers aimed to reform the Roman Catholic Church by the Bible; the Baptists went directly to the apostolic age and accepted the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice. The Reformers founded a popular State Church, including all citizens and their families; the Baptists insisted on the voluntary system and selected congregations of baptized believers, separated from the world and the State (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VII. 72). They preached repentance and faith, they organized congregations, and exercised rigorous discipline. They were earnest and zealous, self-denying and heroic. They were orthodox in the articles of the Christian faith.

Hast says:

To realize regeneration among men was the Anabaptist aim, and if they failed, the noble and exalted thought which animated them, and for which they strove, must not be depreciated. They have deserved in this particular the respect of an unprejudiced later age, before a thousand others; and they seem in the choice of means to attain this end, to have been generally worthy of respect. It was not so much the advocacy of the doctrine; of regeneration that was so noticeable and characteristic of them, but the fact that they held on so hard for its realization. They stood in their consciousness much higher than the world about them, and, therefore, were not comprehended by it (Hast, *Geschichte der Wiedertaufer*, 144. Münster, 1836).

This need of praise by the German historian is none too high. The nature of a church was the fundamental contention of the Baptist movement of the Reformation.

The Baptists could find no trace of infant baptism in the Bible, and they denounced it as the invention of the pope and the devil. Baptism, they reasoned, presupposes instruction, faith and conversion, which is impossible in the case of infants.

Voluntary baptism of adults and responsible converts is, therefore, the only valid baptism. They denied that baptism is necessary to salvation, and maintained that infants are, or may be, saved by the blood of Christ without water baptism (Augsburg Confession, Article IX). But baptism was necessary to church membership as a sign of conversion.

From this conception of baptism followed, as a sequence, the rebaptism of those converts who wished to unite with the Baptists from other bodies.

The two ideas, a pure church of believers and the baptism of believers only, were the fundamental articles of the Baptist creed.

The administration of the affairs of the congregation was exceedingly simple. Through baptism one entered into the fellowship of the believers. Each congregation had its own leader called teacher or pastor who was elected by the congregation. If death or persecution removed him a new man was immediately elected to take his place. Besides these there were persons selected to take care of the poor and competent persons were sent out as missionaries. The duties of the pastor were to warn, to teach, to pray in meetings, to institute the breaking of bread, and to represent the church in withdrawing the hand of fellowship. On Sunday the congregation came together to read the Word of God, to exhort one another and to build one another up in Christian doctrine. From time to time the Lord's Supper, which they termed the breaking of bread, was celebrated (Cornelius, *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, II. 49).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Schaff, VII. 74-84.

Lindsay, I. 336-339.

Fisher, *History of the Reformation*, 475.

## CHAPTER 9. — THE REFORMERS BEAR WITNESS TO THE BAPTISTS.

The Attitude of the Reformers to Infant Baptism — The History of Immersion in Germany, North and East — The Saxon Confession — Melanchthon — Pomerania — Sadoleto — Luther — John Bugenhagen — Zwingli — The Catabaptists — Erasmus — Melanchthon — William Farel — Martin Bucer — Baptisms in a Tub — Calvin — Baptism Not An Especial Discussion Between the Baptists and the Reformers.

THERE was a constant conflict between the Reformers and the Baptists on the proper subjects of baptism. At first the Reformers were disposed to take the Baptist side of the controversy and to deny the necessity of infant baptism. "The strength of the Baptist reasoning in regard to infant baptism," says Planck, the great German Protestant historian, referring to Melanchthon, "made a strong impression on his convictions." Planck continues: "The Elector, wishing to quell the controversy, dissuaded the Wittenberg theologians from discussing the subject of infant baptism, saying he could not see what benefit could arise from it, as it was not of much importance, and the rejection of it would create great excitement, since it had been so long hallowed in the Church by the influence of Augustine, its defender. Melanchthon agreed with the Elector. Whether it were right in him to be so quickly convinced, we leave it for theology to determine" (Planck, *Geschichte der Entstehung, der Veränderungen and der Bildung unseres protestantischen Lehrbegriffs*. Leipsic, 1781-1800. 6 vols). When the Reformers for State and political reasons finally retained infant baptism, between them and the Baptists there was a constant controversy. On the form of baptism, however, by dipping, there was but slight conflict between the parties, since the Baptists and the Reformers held practically the same views. Even when the Reformers practised, or permitted, pouring or sprinkling, they generally affirmed that the primitive rite was by dipping.

De Hoop Sheffer relates that in Germany "until 1400, there was no other method (of baptism) than immersion." The displacement of immersion after that date was not rapid. Dipping as the form of baptism, at the time of the Reformation, still existed in many parts of Germany. "In the North and East of Germany," says Van Slee, "even as in England and the Northern kingdoms immersion still existed up to the breaking in of the Reformation period of the sixteenth century" (Van Slee, *De Rijnsburger Collegianten*, 376. Harlem, 1895). Dipping for baptism, in Germany, was practised as late as 1560. The Archbishop of Metz, in 1549, called a provincial council, which published decrees that were not only applicable to that province, but also to Treves and

Cologne. The Synod made no provision for sprinkling, but required the priest “to dip the child three times in water” (Sleiden, *The General History of the Reformation*, XXI. 481).

In 1551, at Wittenberg, the Saxon Confession of Faith was adopted by the superintendents, pastors and professors, that it might be presented to the Council of Trent. The Confession was published by Melancthon, and contained the following reference to baptism:

Baptism is an entire action: to-wit, a dipping (*mersio*) and a pronouncing of these words, I testify by this inversion (*mersione*) that thou art washed from sin, etc.

In Pomerania, one of the Northern provinces of Prussia, the form of baptism in 1560 was immersion. They were required to baptize by the ritual of Luther, which was by immersion, and the following is added:

Where it is possible, we would much rather they be baptized naked, whether it be in Winter or Summer time. But where it is not, they can be baptized in their clothes. Still no one should take offense, for we baptize not the clothing, but the person. Not alone in the head, hit the whole body as the ordinance of Christ and the words in baptism convey (*Acta et Statuta Synodica Ecclesiarum Pomeraniae Domini*, 1560).

The Roman Catholic custom of the period is mentioned by the celebrated Jacopo Sadeleto, who was Secretary to Leo X., and was afterwards made a cardinal by Paul III. Writing in the year 1536, he says:

Our trine immersion in water at baptism, and our trine emersion, denote that we are buried with Christ in the faith of the true trinity, and that we rise again with Christ in the same belief (*Sadoleto, Pauli Epist. ad Romanos commentar. cap VI. 8*).

It is observed that in the North and East of Germany the form of baptism as practised by the Baptists was not especially a matter of note. This was because that in the North and East of Germany immersion was the common practice and so the dippings of the Baptists did not seem an unusual thing. But in the South of Germany at Strassburg and Augsburg the practice of dipping was especially made a record of as peculiar to the Baptists, because there affusion was the common practice of the people. The Baptists stood out in this particular as acting contrary to the customs of the people. Had the Baptists of North and East Germany practised sprinkling it would have been a matter of peculiar remark. That this was not done is a powerful intimation that the Baptists of those sections practised dipping.

Martin Luther did not differ substantially from the view expressed by the Roman Catholic Church on the form of baptism. The act of baptism was not an

item of controversy at that time, for the Reformers either preferred immersion, as Luther, or held the act to be a matter of indifference, as Calvin. Luther at first followed the practice of his own country and insisted on immersion. It is not altogether impossible that Luther learned the practice of dipping from the Baptists of Bohemia, for in the early days of the Reformation he leaned heavily on the old evangelicals (Enders, Luthers Briefwechsel. II. 345, Nr. 280).

Roman Catholics claimed that the Baptists received their views of baptism from Luther. This was the charge of John Eck, the old opponent of Luther (Eckius, Enchiridion Locitvm Communion, 226. Anverpiae, 1539). This charge greatly exasperated Luther. Robinson says:

Luther bore the Zwinglian dogmatizing, but he could not brook a further Reformation in the hands of the dippers. What rendered the great man's conduct more surprising is that he had himself, seven years before, taught the doctrine of dipping. ... The Catholics tax Luther as being the father of the German dippers, some of the first expressly declare, they received their first ideas from him, and the fact seems undeniable, but the article of Reforming without him he could not bear. This is the crime objected against them, as it had been against Carlstadt. This exasperated him to the last degree, and he became their enemy, and notwithstanding all that he had said in favor of dipping, persecuted them under the title of re-dippers, re-baptizers, Anabaptists. It is pot an improbable conjecture that Luther at first conformed to his own principles and dipped infants (Robinson, Ecclesiastical Researches, 542, 543).

It is doubtless true that Luther began by dipping infants. That he taught immersion there can be no doubt. In his celebrated sermon on Baptism, date 1518, he says:

First baptism is called in Greek *baptismos*, in Latin *mersio*, that is, when we dip anything wholly in water, that it is completely covered over. And although in many provinces it is no longer the custom (in other provinces it was the custom) to thrust the children into the font and to dip them; but they only pour water with the hands out of the font; nevertheless, it should be thus, and would be right, that after speaking aloud the word (baptize) the child or any one who is to be baptized, be completely sunk down into the water, and dipt again and drawn out, for without doubt in the German tongue the word (*taufe*) comes from the word *tief* (deep), that a man sinks deep into the water, what he dips. That also the signification of baptism demands, for it signifies that the old man and sinful birth from the flesh and blood shall be completely drowned through the grace of God. Therefore, a man should sufficiently perform the signification and a right perfect sign. The sign rests in this, that a man plunge a person in water in the name of the Father, etc., but does not leave him therein but lifts him out again; therefore it is called being lifted out of the font or

depths. And so must all of both of these things be the sign; the dipping and the lifting out. Thirdly, the signification is a saving death of the sins and of the resurrection of the grace of God. The baptism is a bath of the new birth. Also a drowning of the sins in the baptism (Opera Lutheri, I. 319. Folio edition).

In the judgment of Luther, in the year 1518, in Germany, *taufen* meant to dip. He is altogether a capable witness on this point. It is a significant fact that when the Ritual of Luther (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, VI. 578, 607, 608), in 1523, prescribed immersion there was no controversy on baptism between him and the Baptists.

There is an account of how Luther caused dipping to be restored in Hamburg. John Bugenhagen found that only sprinkling was performed, and he reported the case to Luther. There was some confusion on the subject. Bugenhagen, A.D. 1552, says:

At length they did agree among themselves, that the judgment of Luther, and of the divines at Wittenberg, should be demanded upon this point: which being done, Luther did write back to Hamburg that sprinkling was an abuse, which they ought to remove. Thus was plunging restored at Hamburg (Crosby, The History of English Baptists, I. xxii. London, 1738).

Luther affirmed that the Baptists were in the practice of dipping. In a familiar letter written to his wife he says:

Dear Kate — We arrived here, at Halle, about 8 o'clock, but have not ventured to go to Eisleben, for we have been stopped by a great Anabaptist (I mean a flood) which has covered the road here, and has not threatened us with mere "sprinkling," but with "immersion," against our will, however. You may comfort yourself by being assured that we are not drinking water, but have plenty of good beer and Rhenish wine, with which we cheer ourselves in spite of the overflowing river. Halle, January 25, 1546.

No other construction, save that the Baptists were in the practice of dipping can be applied to this language of Luther.

We now turn to the testimony of Huldreich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer. As early as June 15, 1523, he wrote to his friend, Wittenbach, that the bread and wine in the Eucharist are what the water is in baptism. "It would be in vain," he added, "for us to plunge a man a thousand times in water, if he does not believe" (D' Aubigne, History of the Reformation, III. 298).

Zwingli published, at this date, a book which is most suggestive of the practice of the Baptists, and without point if they did not practise dipping. The book is *Elenchus contra Catabaptistas*, A Refutation of the Tricks of the Catabaptists or Drowners. Why should they be called "drowners" if they did not immerse? The title of such a book would be inappropriate to persons in the practice of

sprinkling. The word “Catabaptist” essentially means a submersion, and not one who merely despises baptism. The idea of despising baptism is not inherent in the word, but only an implication from their rejection of infant baptism, or any part of the meaning of Catabaptist, for the word does not mean anything different from submersion. Other words may be used in connection with it to indicate that the Baptists despised infant baptism, but the idea is not contained in the word Catabaptist, but in words which explain such hatred. Catabaptist is a Greek word which means one who submerges. The lexicons and the Greek language are all in accord with this use.

Hence Ottius, under the year 1532, relates:

Our churches are infested throughout the country by the Catabaptists whom it is not possible at this time to reproach with evil. We have tried by the Scripture to persuade them but with their convictions this is not possible. Silence was then placed upon them, the neglecting of which, it is deserving that the authorities should return to their pertinacities that they shall be immersed a second time and returning be submerged from within deeply (Ottius, *Annales anabaptistica*, 55).

The Baptists preferred the name Catabaptists to that of Anabaptists. Indeed, they always repudiated the word Anabaptist, since they did not consider that they practised anabaptism. They simply baptized; never attempted to rebaptize. They did think they practised catabaptism, namely, immersion. They never would have admitted the name as applicable to them if it meant despisers of baptism. They practised baptism; they rejected infant baptism. “They naturally disowned,” says Gieseler, the able historian, “the name Anabaptist, as they declared infant baptism invalid and called themselves Catabaptists” (Gieseler, *A Compendium of Ecclesiastical History*, V. 255, 256).

The use of the word Catabaptist among Baptists may be found in Fusslin (III. 229); and as late as the time of Schyn, A.D. 1729, the name Catabaptist, even among the Mennonites, meant immersion. There had been before the days of Schyn changes among the Mennonites, and in his time many of them practised affusion, yet the word Catabaptist still meant immersion. Schyn rejected the word Baptist as not appropriate to his people. “Yet some think,” he continues, “that the name Catabaptist is more suitable; but because this word is of ambiguous meaning, and is used by adversaries in a bad sense, and more properly means immerse, and that rite is not in common use among Mennonites, nor is it esteemed necessary among all Mennonites, hence also the name does not suit all Mennonites” (Schyn, *Historiae Mennonitarum Plenior Deductio*, 35).

Zwingli made many references to the immersions of the Catabaptists. A few instances are here cited. He says: “Since, therefore, you see that Catabaptism

which you hope as from a fountain to derive all your counsel is proved by no Scripture,” etc. Once more he says of his Baptist opponent: “What then if upon you, you raging wild ass (for I could not call him a man whom I think was baptized among the shades of the Phlegethon),” etc. This was one of the rivers of hell. He further says of his opponent: “Yet, as I have said, since the man now doubtless burns among the shades as much as he froze here through his Catabaptist washings, I have concluded to omit his name.” He further tells of a whole family of Baptists who had been immersed and then made ship-wreck of themselves.

Desiderius Erasmus was the most brilliant representative of the humanistic culture of the sixteenth century. Writing out of England, in 1532, he says: “We dip children all over in water, in a stone font” (Erasmus, *Coloquia Familiaria*). His influence was very great upon the educated ministers among the Baptists of the lower Rhenish provinces, such as John Campanus, and others (Rembert, *Die Wiedertauffer im Herzogtum Jülich*), and the Baptists often spoke of him as the ornament of the German nation (Beck, *Die Geschichte Bucher der Wiedertauffer*, 12 note). We certainly know that John Campanus was in the practice of dipping.

Philip Melanchthon, the colaborer with Luther, says:

The immersion in water is a seal, the servant he who plunges signifies a work of God, moreover, the sinking down in that manner is a token of the divine will, with the form spoken, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; as the apostles use to baptize in Acts, in the name of Christ. In which words the signification is plain. Behold, to what end we should plunge, that so ye may receive, and also to be made certain of favor toward thee in the divine testimony. ... A seal is made in baptism, for from this custom he may know that he is passing from death unto life. It is also the sinking down of the old Adam in death, and the coming forth of the new. This is why Paul calls it the bath of regeneration. This signification is easily perceived from the type (Melanchthon, *Loci communes rerum theologicarum*, Part, *De Baptisms* A.D. 1521).

William Farel, the Geneva Reformer and the friend of Calvin, wrote in 1528 in the defense of the Baptists. He had already written, September 7, 1527, a letter in appreciation of the position of the Baptists on the subject of baptism. He now compares their baptism by dipping to that of Christ. He says:

It is not understood by many what it is to give one's name to Christ to walk and preserve in the newness of life by the infusion of the Spirit with whom Christ dips his own, who, in His mind and by His grace wish to be dipped in water (*intingi aqua*) in the presence of the Christian congregation, that they may publicly protest that they believe in their hearts, that they may be dearer to the brethren and closer bound to Christ by his solemn profession, which is



only rightly dispensed as that great John, and the greatest of all, Christ, commanded (Herminjard, Correspondance des Reformateurs dans les pays de la langue francaise, II. 48).

There is an instance of dipping on record from Henry Slachtcheaf. He wrote to Martin Bucer as follows:

And this I desire to admonish thee, brother, no longer to impart baptism to infants. I see this by the Lord who has shown to me clearly by the Spirit, and not on that account to dare to dip our children in water. Hence it is cursed with the mother, it is cast out from place to place, etc. Hence my friend, I beseech you, do not oppose the truth. Vehemently and wickedly have the things of our Gospel suffered with many most of all about these two ordinances, the Supper and the baptism, but with the Lutherans very badly. With the Anabaptists that I know thus far baptism is observed literally (Cornelius, Die Geschichtquellen d. Bisthums Münster, I. 228, 229).

Thus was immersion the literal practice of the Baptists. Slachtchaef baptized a child by dipping upon a profession of faith. Cornelius says of him:

He preached in Hueckelhoven in the house of Godert Reinharts and he dipped it in a bucket of water (*er es eimer wasser taucht*) (Ibid, 228).

The vessel (*eimer*) was doubtless a tub used to hoist water out of the well. Whatever the vessel was the child was dipt into it. The ceremony was performed by a man who had written Bucer against infant baptism and stated that baptism was by dipping. This same vessel is elsewhere mentioned in the practice of dipping among the Baptists.

There are two examples in the writings of John Calvin which go to show that the Baptists were in the practice of dipping. Calvin came in direct contact with the Baptists and well knew their opinions, for he married the widow of a Baptist preacher. In the first example, he defines, in a well-known passage the meaning of the word. He says:

The word signifies to immerse, and it is certain that the rite of immersion was observed in the ancient church (Calvin, Institutes, Bk. IV. c. 15).

Immediately following this statement he makes a reply to a Baptist who urged that ~~449B~~ Acts 19:3-5 taught rebaptism. Calvin says to the Baptist:

That if ignorance vitiated the former baptism, so that another baptism is made to correct it; they were the first of all to be baptized by the apostles, who in all the three years after their baptism scarcely tasted a small particle of the measure of the sincere doctrine. Even now among us, where would there be sufficient rivers for a repetition of the dipping of so many, who in ignorance of the compassion of the Lord, are daily corrected among us (Ibid, c. 15. sec. 18).

Calvin thus speaking of his own times declares that if the opinions of the Baptists prevailed the rivers would not suffice suffice for their dippings.

The second instance where Calvin refers to the dipping practised by the Baptists is as follows:

Truly so much ignorance deservedly requires another baptism, if for ignorance they should be rebaptized again. But what pertains to us it would be necessary always to have a lake or a river at our back, if so often as the Lord purge any error, we should be completely renewed from baptism (Calvin, Opuscula. Contra Anabaptists, II. 28. Geneva, 1547).

Calvin was here discussing the relation of baptism to ~~the~~ Acts 19:3-5 as expounded by the Baptists. He declared the *Baptists needed a river or lake to carry out their ideas of dipping.*

Diodati, the Geneva reformer and scholar, expressed himself, A.D. 1558, clearly on the subject of dipping. In speaking of the baptism of John, Math. 3:6, he says: "Plunged in the water for a sacred sign and seal of the expiation and remission of sins" (Diodati, Pious and Learned Annotations Upon the Holy Bible. London, 1648).

When once the position of Luther and the other Reformers is understood, it is not surprising that the form of baptism was not a subject of discussion between the Reformers and the Baptists. The testimony of the Reformers is clear and distinct that the Baptists were in the practice of dipping.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Schaff, VII. 218-220.

The Works of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin.

## CHAPTER 10. — THE BAPTISTS IN THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING

The Testimony of Fleury — “The Sum of the Holy Scripture” — Conrad Grebel in Switzerland — A Moravian Chronicle — its Doubtful Authority — Some Roman Catholic Converts may at First Have Practised Sprinkling — Kessler — Ulimann Dipped in the Rhine — The Dippings at St. Gall — The Baptistery — The Baptisms in the Sitter River — Persecutions on This Account — The Dippings at Appenzell — John Stumpf — The Decrees Against the Baptisms of the Baptists — The Persecutions at Zurich — The Strong Arm of the Law — the Famous Decree of Zurich — Gastins — Felix Manz Drowned Because he Practised Dipping — The Baptists in Vienna — The Italian Baptists.

REFERENCE has already been made, in former pages, to the fact that the Waldenses practised dipping; that this was at first the custom; of the Reformers; and some reliable testimony has been introduced to show the practice of the Baptists. The point of controversy between the Baptists and the Reformers on baptism was not dipping, but the necessity of infant baptism. There is much more available material on the form of baptism among the Baptists. That subject is now pursued further.

L’Abbé Fleury, the great Roman Catholic historian, under date of 1523, gives an account of the Baptist practice. He says:

This was called the heresy of the Anabaptists, because the name was attributed to this erroneous sect. for they baptized in a sacred fountain all those baptized in infancy, and they condemned baptism given to little children. ... Neither did they detest baptism the less, and all, as many as gave name to their own faction, dipped again in the sacred fountain; whence they were called Anabaptists (Fleury, *Historiæ Ecclesiastica*, XXXIV. 282)

These clear and circumstantial statements are confirmed by a book published in Dutch, as early as 1523, called the *Sum of the Holy Scripture*, which was translated by Simon Fish, in 1529, into English, and was for more than a generation the hand-book of the English Baptists. The author of the old book says:

The water of baptism taketh not away our sin for then it were a precious water. And then it behooved us daily to wash therein. Neither hath the water of the fountain more virtue in itself than the water that runneth in the River Rhine. For we may as well be baptized in the Rhine as in the font. ... We be plunged under the water. ... And this we promised to do when we be baptized and we signify even the same, when we be plunged under the water (*Sum of Scripture*, British Museum. 4401 b. 2).

The subject was a believer, the act was immersion and the river Rhine was the place. The Rhine for the Baptists became a famous baptizing place.

It is a significant fact that the most distinguished advocate of Baptist views in Switzerland, Conrad Grebel, dipped his converts upon a profession of faith. Associated with him was George Blaurock, a monk of Coire; on account of his eloquence called the “mighty George.”

The account which follows is given prominent place in some histories of the Baptists in Switzerland, and from it are deducted some remarkable conclusions as to the practice of sprinkling among Baptists. The representation is that the account is taken from an anonymous Moravian chronicle. The account is as follows:

At one of the meetings of the “brethren” at Zurich, according to a Moravian chronicle, all bowed in prayer before God that he would grant them power to fulfill the divine will. Blaurock, thereupon, arose and asked Grebel to baptize him upon a confession of his faith. Again he fell upon his knees, and Grebel baptized him. All the rest present were baptized by Blaurock. The celebration of the Lord’s Supper followed. At the house of Rudolf Thoman, at Zolikon, a like scene was enacted not long after. There was a meeting of the brethren there. After they had long read and conversed together, John Brubach, of Zurich, arose and wept loud, saying that he was a great sinner, and desired others to pray for him. Hereupon Blaurock asked him if he desired the grace of God. He replied “Yes.” Then Manz arose and said: “Who will forbid me to baptize this person?” “No one,” replied Blaurock. He then took a dipper of water and baptized him in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then Hottinger arose and desired baptism (Cornelius, *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, II. 26, 27).

If the events described above took place, of which there is much doubt, it was at the time Grebel had first broken with Zwingli, and was still a Presbyterian, and Blaurock had just come from the Roman Catholic Church, and before either of them had embraced Baptist views. But did these things occur? The authority given is an anonymous Moravian chronicle. Why a “Moravian chronicle”? Would not a Swiss chronicle do better? This “Moravian chronicle” has been made to do good service. Who wrote the “Moravian chronicle”? What is its date, and where did it come from? Who has it now, and who ever saw it? There are too many of these anonymous “chronicles,” and “manuscripts,” and all of them unauthenticated. All of them are quoted by Pedobaptists in support of sprinkling among Baptists. Not much importance can be attached to such statements. All who mention this circumstance concerning Blaurock quote the “Moravian chronicle” as their authority. This was true of Fusslin (1740); Cornelius (1860), and Egli (1879) — all of them Pedobaptists. Not one of these writers claims to have seen the “Moravian

chronicle,” not one gives the date of it, not one mentions the year or even century in which it was written, not one gives the page.

The face of the narrative is against the authenticity of the “Moravian chronicle.” It was manifestly not written by the “Brethren,” but by an enemy. The details are circumstantial enough for the writer to have been an eye-witness. It was from the nature of the case impossible for an enemy to have been present in these assemblies. These were dangerous times and no very accurate account could have been expected of the private meetings of the “Brethren.” It is opposed to the spirit of the Baptists of the sixteenth century. It is said that Blaurock asked Brubach “if he desired the grace of God,” referring to baptism. The Baptists did not call baptism “the grace of God.” They were accused of despising baptism, and it is certain that they did not regard it as a means of grace. The language does not sound natural in the mouth of a Baptist of the sixteenth century, and it does have the flavor of Pedobaptist writers of a later time. It is contrary to the known fact that Grebel, a few days later, was in the practice of dipping, and that Manz practised dipping, and that dipping was the act of baptism used at Zolikon.

There is another version of this same affair (Hosek, Balthasar Hubmaier, ch. V.), which takes no account of affusion. The story is told in a different manner, the people are crossing themselves as Roman Catholics, and evidently they were not Baptists. All such unauthenticated documents should be received with caution.

It must be remembered that in the early days of the Reformation men of every character, and of almost every opinion, were called Anabaptists. It was only needful that a man should assail Roman Catholicism in the interest of human freedom to be thus classed. The Roman Catholics did not closely discriminate when speaking of their opponents. They hastened to brand them, with such epithets as appeared to be useful. There were those who practised infant baptism who were called Anabaptists. It was an hour of revolution. Men today did not hold views they warmly advocated yesterday. Transition was everywhere.

It is possible that some converts turning from Romanism practised sprinkling; but it is equally true, a little later, that some of these persons were in the practice of dipping (Nitsche, *Geschichte der Züricher Reformation*, 282. Zurich, 1879). The account given above as coming from a “Moravian chronicle” is described elsewhere as a trial before a court (Egli, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte ver Zürischer Reformation*, 282. Zurich, 1879). It is not certain that these persons were identified at this moment with the Baptist movement. It is certain that some of them were just turning from Romanism, and it is further certain at this time that dipping was the normal act

of baptism among the Baptists (Kessler, Sabbatta, III. 266). At first they were probably followers of Luther or Zwingli from the Romanists, and they passed through several stages of thought before they became Baptists. In the meantime, by their enemies, they were all classed as Anabaptists.

There is no obscurity in the fact that Grebel practised dipping. In March, 1525, Grebel baptized Ulimann by dipping him into the Rhine (Stark, Geschichte der Taufe, 184). The account is taken from Kessler, who says:

Wolfgang Ulimann, on the journey to Schaffhausen, met Conrad Grebel who instructed him so highly in the knowledge of Anabaptism that he would not sprinkle out of a dish, but was drawn under and covered over with the waters of the Rhine (Kessler, Sabbatta, II. 266).

Dipping is here declared, by this contemporary writer to be the distinctive Baptist practice. Kessler expressly says Grebel "instructed him (Ulimann) so highly in the knowledge of Anabaptism that he would not be sprinkled out of a dish," but was dipped in the waters of the Rhine. Dipping in the waters of the Rhine was, therefore, well instructed Anabaptist knowledge. Hence dipping was the normal act of baptism among the Baptists of Switzerland. The teaching of Grebel, and his associates, procured for them the name of Dippers or Baptists (Van Brought, Martyrology, I. 7). Therefore, according to this contemporary Lutheran Pastor Kessler, neither sprinkling nor pouring were well instructed Baptist doctrines.

Grebel returned to St. Gall, and when he learned that Kessler was allowed to preach in one of the churches, he asked permission to do the same. Being refused, March 18, he announced a great meeting in the Weavers' Hall, and further declared that he would preach in the Square, the Market Place, the Marsh and elsewhere. The people came to hear him from all parts of St. Gall, Appenzell and many other parts of the country. The success of his plea was instantaneous (Arx, Geschichte des Kantons St. Gallen, II. 501. St. Gall, 1811). Great numbers of converts were made and dipped in a baptistery especially prepared for the purpose (Kessler, Sabbatta, 270). Daily the people from the surrounding country flocked to St. Gall inquiring for the baptistery. Augustus Naef, Secretary to the Council of St. Gall, in a work published in 1850, records the success of the Baptist movement. He says: "They baptized those who believed with them in rivers and lakes, and in a great wooden cask in Butcher's Square before a great crowd" (Naef, Chronik Stadt and Landschaft St. Gallen, 1021). The number of converts grew with such rapidity that the baptistery was not sufficient for the immersions. Then it was that the Baptists sought the Sitter River. The Sitter River is two or three miles from St. Gall, and is gained by a difficult road. The only solution for the choice of the river is that it was a suitable place for Grebel to baptize his converts.

For the success of the Baptist movement at St. Gall there is the testimony of Frodolin Sichers, a Roman Catholic eyewitness. He says:

The number of converts increased so that the baptistery could not contain the crowd, and they were compelled to use the streams of the Sitter River (Arx, Geschichte des Kantons St. Gallen, 501).

One of the baptismal occasions was Palm Sunday, April 9, 1525. On that day Grebel led out to the Sitter River a great company of converts and baptized them (Kessler, Sabbatta, 267). The Baptist church at St. Gall soon had eight hundred members. The Bible was read, its divine lessons were earnestly and tenderly unfolded, and sinners were urged to flee from the wrath to come. It was a new gospel to thousands, and multitudes, with tears of repentance, asked the privilege of confessing Christ, and retired to some mountain stream to exclaim with the eunuch, "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" The solemn ordinance was administered, and coming forth from the water both the convert and the bearer of the glad tidings "went on their way rejoicing" (Burrage, Anabaptists, 108).

When Grebel was forced by persecution to flee from St. Gall, Roggenacher, a skinner, and Eberle Polt, continued to teach and preach. The latter, Kessler says, was a pious, good-hearted man, practised in the Scriptures, and of agreeable speech. He preached during the Eastertide in the, Butcher's Hall and on the Berlingsberg. Sichers says:

Crowds came to be baptized in large vessels in the fields, and to each of the new baptized a new name was given (Sichers, Chronik, XX. 19).

The Council induced the Burgomaster to invite Eberle to his house, and urged him to leave the city. He went on the following Friday, and eight days afterwards, May 29, he suffered martyrdom at Schwyz.

It has already been recorded that the people of Appenzell came to St. Gall to be immersed by Conrad Grebel. In 1525 the Baptists had three places in this district where meetings were held. The largest was at Teuffen, with a second at Herisau, and a third at Brunnen. In all of these places the services were held under the open sky, while the converts were baptized in the neighboring brooks and streams. Indeed, these are the exact words of the Appenzell Chronicle (Appenzell, Chronik, Gabriel Walser, 440. St. Gallen, 1740).

John Stumpf, who lived in the vicinity of Zurich, in the period under survey, was familiar with the Baptist contention in Switzerland. He is, therefore, a valuable witness. He says the early Baptists in Switzerland were "rebaptized in rivers and brooks" (Stumpf, Gemeiner Loblicher Eydgenossenschaft, 1722). This testimony is direct and of an authoritative character.

The Council of St. Gall, at the instigation of Zwingli, it is alleged, determined to rid themselves of the “Dippers.” As the Baptists dipped for baptism they were to be drowned for punishment. The edict is as follows:

In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If any one is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment. Every person is obliged to report those favorable to rebaptism. Whoever shall not comply with this ordinance is liable to punishment according to the sentence of the magistracy. Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers, and leaders of hedge meetings are to be drowned. Those previously released from prison who have sworn to desist from such things, shall incur the same penalty. Foreign Baptists are to be driven out; if they return they shall be drowned. No one is allowed to secede from the (Zwinglian) church and to absent himself from the Holy Supper. Whoever flees from one jurisdiction to another shall be banished or extradited upon demand (Simler, Sammlung, I. ii. 449).

The date of the decree is Septembr 9, 1527. The decree did not produce the desired effect, for upon March 26, 1530, another edict was put forth. It enjoined:

All who adhere to or favor the false sect of the Baptists, and who attend hedge-meetings, shall suffer the most severe punishments. Baptist leaders, their followers, and protectors shall be drowned without mercy. Those, however, who assist them, or fail to report or to arrest them shall be punished otherwise on body and goods as injurious and faithless subjects (Bullinger, Reformationsgeschichte, II. 287).

Matters were worse in Zurich. Zwingli and the Council of Zurich knew no mercy towards the Baptists. At first Zwingli held debates with their leaders with indifferent success, then he evoked the strong arm of the law. The first Zurich decree, A.D., 1525, was as follows:

We, therefore, ordain and require that hereafter all men, women, boys and girls forsake rebaptism, and shall not make use of it hereafter, and shall let infants be baptized; whoever shall act contrary to this public edict shall be fined for every offense, one mark; and if any be disobedient and stubborn they shall be treated with severity; for, the obedient we will protect; the disobedient we will punish according to his deserts, without fail; by this all are to conduct themselves. All this we confirm by this public document, stamped with the seal of our city, and given on St. Andrew’s Day, A.D., 1525).

The decree went into effect at once. For the good name of Zwingli it could have been wished that be would never be more severe. There is preserved



another official decree which indicates that the Baptists of Switzerland practised immersion. On March 6, 1526, the Senate of Zurich decreed:

*Decrevit clarissimus Senatus aqua mergere, qui merserit baptismo suo, oui prius emererat* (Zwingli, *Elenchus contra Cantabaptistas*. III. 364).

It is elsewhere written in shorter form. *Qui mersus fuerit mergatur*, that he who immerses shall be immersed (Starke 183). This is the official statement of the Senate of Zurich that the Baptists of Switzerland practised immersion.

The civil authorities of Zurich set an example of severity scarcely surpassed by Protestants, and of the deplorable execution of the sentence many examples are on record. The persecutors delighted to fit the penalty, as they cruelly judged it, to the fault, and so they put the Baptists to death by drowning.

Upon the very day of the decree of the Senate of Zurich against the Baptists, Zwingli, who evidently was greatly pleased with the action of the Senate,, wrote to Vadian:

It has been decreed this day by the Council of the Two Hundred (of Zurich) that the leaders of the Catabaptists shall be cast into the Tower, in which they formerly lay, and allured by bread and water diet until either they give up the ghost or surrender. It is also added that he who after this is dipped shall be submerged permanently (*qui posthac tingatur, prossus nergatur*); this is not published (Zwingli, *Opera*, VII. 477).

Zwingli is even more explicit as to the form of baptism among the Baptists, for he further says of this decree:

But the illustrious senate decreed, after having come together, which without doubt has been the tenth time after others either publicly or private, to sink in water whoever should immerse in baptism him who before had emersed. This may be a somewhat disgusting thrust to your observant reader (Zwingli, *Opera*, III. 364).

Persons, even Anabaptists, if there were such in Switzerland, who practised sprinkling, were not included in this verdict. Only those who immersed in baptism were to be drowned. The punishment was as ironical as it was terrible. Since the Baptists immersed in baptism they were drowned.

Gastins, who was a contemporary, was quite sarcastic towards the Baptists. He refers to the decree of the Senate of Zurich, just quoted, in these words: "To immerse in water whoever should immerse in baptism him before was emersed," and adds: "They like immersion, so let us immerse them (*aquis mergere, qui merserit baptismo eo, qui primus emererit*)" (Gastins, *De Anabaptismi*, 8. Basive, 1544). Gastins in another place enumerates the errors,

as he calls them, of the Baptists, and one of them was that they “immersed in water (*immergunter aquis*)” (Ibid, 129, 130).

The edict of March 7 was ratified November 19, 1526. The Baptists were to be delivered to the executioner, who should bind their hands, place them in a boat and throw them into the water to die. Great numbers of Baptists thus perished. So much was this true that it became a matter of international correspondence (Calendar of State Papers in Venice, IV. 35. A.D. 1532. Sannto Diaries, V. lvi. 380).

Among the number thus imprisoned was Felix Manz, who was convicted, January 5, 1527. He was sentenced to death and drowned. Bullinger says of him:

As he came down from the Wellingberg to the Fish Market and was led through the shambles to the boat, he praised God that he was about to die for the truth; for Anabaptism was right and founded upon the Word of God, and Christ had foretold that his followers should suffer for the truth’s sake. And the like discourse he urged much discussing with the preacher who attended him. On the way his mother and brother came to him and exhorted him to be steadfast, and he persevered in his folly to the end. When he was bound upon the hurdle and was about to be thrown into the stream by the executioner, he sang in a loud voice, *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*, “In thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit,” and herewith was drawn into the water by the executioner and drowned (Bullinger, Reformationen Geschichte, II. 382).

In consequence of these terrible persecutions the Baptists fled to other lands. In many instances they were followed, captured, and put to death by drowning. “At Vienna many Anabaptists were so tied together in chains, that one drew the other after him into the river, wherein they were all suffocated” (Featley, *The Dippers Dipped*, 73). “Here you see the hand of God,” continues Dr. Featley, “in punishing these sectaries some way answerable to their sin according to the observation of the wise man, *quo quis peccat eo puniatur*, they who drew others into the whirlpool of error, by constraint draw one another into the river to be drowned; and they who profaned baptism by a second dipping, rue it by a third immersion. But the punishment of these Catabaptists we leave to them that have the legislative power in their hands, who though by present connivance they may seem to give them line; yet, no doubt, it is that they may entangle themselves and more easily be caught”.

The neighboring Italian Baptists were likewise in the practice of dipping (Benrath, *Wiedertauffer in Venetianischen. Theologische Studien and Kritiken*, 1885). The Reformation and the Baptists did not make as great gains in Italy as in other countries; but they did not keep themselves aloof from agitation. The

Roman Catholic writer, Canto, says: “Although the love for the new ideas did not carry away either the people or the princes, and although those who were anxious about the condition of their own belief were very few, compared with the number of those who lived believing without analysing their creed, yet he who thinks that the Reformation had neither extension nor civil or political consequences on this side of the Alps, makes a great mistake” (Canto, *Gli eretici d’Italia*. Quoted from McCrie). Canto further remarks that “whilst the Reformation in Germany was associated with princes, and in France with the nobility, in Italy it principally touched the men of letters.”

This was practically true, but not exclusively so. It to a degree extended its influence among all classes.

The sixteenth century was essentially a selfish one. The great historian of those times, Francesco Guicciardini wrote “I do not know if there be a man more disgusted than I am with the ambition, avarice, and effeminacy of the priests. ... Nevertheless, my position at the Court of several popes made it necessary for me, in view of my own private interests, to love their greatness; had it not been for that reason, I should have loved Martin Luther dearly, not in order to be rid of the laws laid upon us by the Christian religion as it is commonly interpreted and understood, but in order to see that pack of villains reduced to the point of being either without vices, or without authority” (Guicciardini, *Opere inedite*, Ricordo 28). The Baptist cause flourished only feebly in Italy, but even there some believed the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Henry S. Burrage, *The Anabaptists of Switzerland*.

Richard Heath, *The Anabaptists*.

## CHAPTER 11 — BAPTISTS OF GERMANY AND MORAVIA PRACTISE DIPPING.

The Church in Augsburg — Hans Denck — The Leaders all in the Practice of Dipping — Baptisteries in the Houses and Cellars — Sender — The Augsburg Historian — Urbanus Rhegius — The River Lech — The Church at Strassburg — Melchior Hofmann — The Baptisms at Emden — Tubs used for Baptismal Purposes — Dr. Winkler — Obbe Phillips — The Words of Seller — Melchior Rink — “The Ordinance of God” — Moravian Churches — Balthasar Hubmaier — His Character and Work — Denies Infant Baptism — Adopts Immersion — Zwingli and Hubmaier — Capito — Farel — John Fabricus — The Books of Hubmaier — Peter Reidermann — Erhard.

A BAPTIST church was found in Augsburg, in 1525, where Hans Denck was pastor. In this city Denck was exceedingly popular, so that in a year or two the church numbered some eleven hundred members. Urbanus Rhegius, who was minister in that city at the time, says of the influence of Denck: “It increased like a canker, to the grievous injury of many souls.” Augsburg became a great Baptist center.

Associated with Denck at Augsburg were Balthasar Hubmaier, Ludwig Hatzler and Hans Hut. They all practised immersion. Keller in his life of Denck says:

The baptism was performed by dipping under (*untertauchen*). The men were in this act naked, the women had a covering (Keller, Ein Apostel der Wiedertauffer, 112).

Schaff is particular to relate that the four leaders of the Anabaptists of Augsburg all practised immersion. He says:

The Anabaptist leaders, Hubmaier, Denck, Hatzler, Hut, likewise appeared in Augsburg, and gathered a congregation of eleven hundred members. They had a general synod in 1527. They baptized by Immersion. Rhegius stirred up the magistrates against them; the leaders were imprisoned and some were executed (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, VI. 578).

Immersion was the practice of the Baptists of Augsburg. There is the testimony of a trusted eye-witness in the Augsburg Benedictine, Clemens Sender. This old historian says of the Baptists of Augsburg:

In Augsburg in the gardens of the houses in 1527, men and women, servants and masters, rich and poor, more than eleven hundred of them were rebaptized. They put on peculiar garments in which to be baptized, for in their houses were their baptisteries where there were always a number of garments always prepared (Clemens Sender, Die Chronik, 186).

Sender thus bears witness to the large number of persons immersed in Augsburg. It has sometimes been claimed that the baptisms which occurred among the Baptists in houses and cellars must have been by sprinkling. They had especially prepared baptisteries in their houses for immersions. When it was dangerous and inconvenient to go to the rivers and streams for baptismal purposes baptisteries were erected in private houses. This is the testimony of an eye-witness. Hubmaier is moreover associated with these immersions.

Wagenseil, a historian of Augsburg, says:

In the year 1527 the Anabaptists baptized none who did not believe with them; and the candidates were not merely sprinkled, but they were dipped under (Wagenseil, *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, 1820).

Urbanus Rhegius was likewise a witness to the practice of the Baptists of Augsburg. He was a resident of the city at the time. He was a learned man, a university student, honored by the Emperor Maximilian and a follower of Luther. In 1528 two letters were written by the Baptists of Augsburg. Rhegius answered these letters (*Zwen wunderbar zam sendbrieff zweyer Wiedertauffer, Augsburg, 1528*). He discussed at length the position of the Baptists on infant baptism. In regard to the form of baptism there is a picture on the title page that shows the Baptists in the practice of immersion. There is a large expanse of water, an ocean we judge by the appearance of a ship in the waters; and these waters are full of Baptists, nude, and practising immersion. Front one side of the stream the Baptists, in great numbers, are tumbling into the waters. From the other side flows a river which is washing the Baptists out of the sea into a flaming fire. The baptismal waters of the Baptists become the fires of hell, and there even stands one shaking a viper into the fire, while gaping multitudes approve. This is a prejudiced picture of their practice of immersion.

Instances are related, and details given, in regard to the baptisms which took place in Augsburg. "The act of baptism," says Theodore Keim, in his article on Ludwig Hatzler, "was administered in the River Lech, the men being naked, the women wearing bathing trousers." He mentions the wife of the artist Adolf Ducher "who during the absence of her husband in Vienna three days in the Holy Week of 1527 opened her house, which was favorably situated on the River Lech, for the purpose of baptizing" (*Jarbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, 278. Stuttgart, 1856). At other times, as we have seen, baptisteries were erected in the houses and cellars. Many details of these immersions have recently been published from the original records (*Zur Geschichte der Wiedertauffer in Obersschaben, von Dr. Friedrich Roth. In Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben and Neuberg. Augsburg, 1901*).

Heath, who has written much on the history of the Baptists, and has given particular study to the Continental Baptists, says of these immersions in

Augsburg that “this fact, which seems well authenticated, would suggest that the mode was the same throughout South Germany, Switzerland, and the Tyrol; since the Augsburg community was founded by the Walshuter Jacob Gross and the Tyrolese Ferber. Moreover Augsburg appears to have been the center most important for the Baptists of South Germany” (Heath, Anabaptists, 94).

Strassburg was associated with Augsburg in the work of the Baptists. Denck came to Strassburg in 1526 and rendered valuable service there. Many of the most distinguished citizens joined the Baptist church. Baptism, at this date, among the Baptists of Strassburg was by dipping. Gerbert states that the baptisms occurred at this time “before the Butcher’s Gate, probably in a branch of the Rhine” (Gerbert, Strassburgischen Sectenbewegung, 93). Bertel and Essinger declare that these immersions among the Baptists were performed by a shoemaker (Röhrich, Die Strassburgischen Wiedertauffer. In *Zeitscheift für die historischen Theologie*. 48. A.D. 1860)

One of the best known Baptist preachers of those days was Melchoir Hofmann. On account of his peculiar views of prophecy he plunged himself and the Baptists into grief. His preaching caused much excitement. At Emden he organized a Baptist church.

The probability is that having connected himself with the Baptists of Strassburg he practised immersion exclusively. It has, however, been confidently affirmed that Hofmann, on a visit to Emden, practised sprinkling; and by this rite three hundred persons in the great church at Emden were baptized. Such a supposition, however, is not based upon the facts in the case. It is a theory established by guesses. He came, as has been stated, from Strassburg. It is certain the Baptists of Strassburg practised immersion.

The claim that he practised sprinkling at Emden, is based upon the statement of a late German writer, who reached that conclusion upon an inference. The inference was that since the baptism took place in a church house and was performed in a great tub therefore it was by sprinkling. Nothing is said in Cornelius (*Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, II. 222); and Hast (*Geschichte des Wiedertauffers*, 255) that a great tub was used in the baptism, while Frederich Otto zur Linden describes the baptism as taking place in the open, air (*Melchoir Hofmann ein Prophet der Wiedertauffer*, 236). Why a great tub should be necessary for sprinkling has not yet been explained.

The baptism of converts in tubs was no unusual thing. Otho, in the twelfth century, directs the Pomeranians to be immersed, and this was accomplished in the open air in wooden tubs or troughs. These tubs were let into the ground and filled with water. The candidates were immersed in the tubs (Henrici Canisii,

Vita Ottonis. Inter Jacobi Basagii, II. vv. 60). This was in a neighboring country to Emden.

Dr. Winkler made a study of these tubs and in an able article he published the results of his studies. He says:

We can prove from ecclesiology and from the testimony of Luther himself that the pail or tub, such as Hoffmann used at Emden (a large pail) was the baptismal font of the Western Churches. There was even a certain sacredness connected with it. We find in Luther's Table Talk (Bohn's ed. p. 165) the following incident. Dr. Menius asked Luther in what manner a Jew should be baptized? The Doctor replied: You must fill a large tub with water, and having divested a Jew of his clothes, cover him with white garments. He must then sit down in the tub and you must then baptize him quite under the water. This garb, added Luther, was rendered the more suitable from the circumstances that it was then, as now, the custom to bury people in a white shroud, and baptism, you know, is the emblem of our death.

Here Luther alludes to these immersions which are very familiar to ecclesiologists. ... There is reason to believe that the baptismal fonts in early Europe were tubs. The ecclesiologist Poole (*Structures, etc., of Churches*, 45) says: The first defined shape which the font assumed in England is that of a circular tub-shaped vessel, some probably of Saxon, many of them of the Norman date, as the antique font of St. Martin's Church, at Canterbury. Knight (*Land We Live In*. I. 261) says: "It is even supposed to have been built by Christians of the Roman army, A.D. 187. It was certainly one of the first ever made in England. It was about three feet high and capacious within. It has no stand; but rests upon the ground. The sculptures upon it are a sort of ornamental interlacings in low relief. It closely resembles the font delineated by the old illuminators in representing the baptism of King Ethelbert, and it is believed to be the first font in which the first of our Christian kings was baptized."

Under this division, the tub fonts, Poole, an Episcopalian antiquarian, groups the font of Castle Frome, Herefordshire, that at Bride Kirk, in Cumberland, that at West Haddon, in Northamptonshire, and that in Thorpe Emald, in Leicestershire. And in regard to all of the ancient fonts of England he says: The rule of the Church of England, however many the exceptions, and however accounted for, is to be baptized by immersion; and for this the ancient fonts are sufficiently capacious (Poole *Structure*, 59 note).

We learn from Bourasse, a Catholic archaeologist, that the leaden font in the cathedral at Strassburg has a tub shape, and so has the baptismal font at Espanburg, Diocese of Beauvais. Both of these baptismal tubs are represented on the plates of Bourasse's *Dictionnaire D'Archaologie Sacree*. At Notre Dame, in Rouen, the font was made in the form of a coffin, with a covering of black wood. This sepulchral figure was the symbolical translation of the

words of Paul: We are buried with him by the Baptism into death (Dr. Winkler, in *The Alabama Baptist*, 1875).

These circumstantial details and the actual examples. given show that the tubs were large enough for immersions, and that adults were immersed in them.

It is not necessary to depend upon late German writers for the original narrative of the baptizings of Hofmann at Emden. It may be found in the writings of Obbe. Philips. He says:

Among these (German Baptists) there arose one Melchoir Hofmann. He came to Emden from the High German country, and publicly (in the open air) baptized in the Church at Emden three hundred persons, both burgher and peasant, master and servant. The old count, to be sure, allowed this to be done, and it is said that the count was himself disposed toward the same faith (Philips, *Bekentnisse*, Biiii. Zur Linden, Hofmann, 236).

Hackenroth adds:

As soon as the civil authorities learned that Melchoir began to baptize (*doopen*, to dip) he and all those who adhered to the sect, who allowed themselves to be baptized (*doopen*, dipped) again, were banished out of East Friesland, and all belonging to the sect were obliged to leave (Hackenroth, 652).

This is much like other Pedobaptist accounts of sprinkling among Baptists, the nearer the approach is made to the original sources, the more certainly do the signs of sprinkling recede. Philipsz does not mention the great tub; but he does declare that the baptism was performed in the open. The possibility is that the preaching took place in the church, and the baptism at some suitable place for the immersion. There is no reference to affusion or anything that would indicate that immersion was not the form of baptism used on the occasion.

The direct testimony is at hand that Hofmann was, at this time, practising immersion. He had just come from East Friesland to Emden; but in East Friesland he had been dipping converts (Linden, Melchior Hofmann, 283). Keller speaks of this as follows:

It appears as if by the presence of Melchior Rink, who, in 1524, dared to attack, and gave the first thrust. In a remarkable manner Rink dipped (*taught*) again in Friesland at the same time with Hofmann in the year 1530. According to some versions the same men had worked in common, from 1524 till 1539, in Sweden, Livonia, Holstein, etc. Both were furriers, both from Swabia. The question needs a closer enquiry whether we shall consider both of the Melchiors one or two persons (Keller, *Geschichte der Wiedertauffer*, 127).



So far as the inquiry goes as to whether there were two Melchoirs or only one is of no interest in this place. If there were two Melchior then there were two preachers who practised immersion; and if the two names indicate the same person then there was one Baptist who preached there practising dipping. The form of baptism is not in dispute. It stands as a recorded fact that Melchior Hofmann was dipping his converts in East Friesland before he came to Emden. If he dipped in East Friesland, there is no suggestion why he would have practised sprinkling in Emden.

Fortunately the practice of Melchior, or Rink, as he was sometimes called, in the form of baptism is not unknown. Justus Menius and F. Myconius wrote, in 1530, a book against the Baptists. The name of Rink is especially mentioned. Of the practice of the Baptists these authors say:

First in regard to baptism which is, that man upon the command of Christ must be dipped into the water and lifted out again (*inns wasser eingetaucht*). That is a symbol of the forgiveness of Christ, though by nature a servant of sin and a child of condemnation, how saved from death and the devil, how eternally living under the grace of God, as dearly shown under the Gospel and promised through Christ in the entire gospel in his own and he shall consider it his own for all time to come. To such the meaning of baptism is declared in its signification and to them all doubt will grow less (Menius and Myconius, *Der Wiedertauffer Lere vnd geheimnis*. Wittenberg, 1530).

These writers, who were hostile to the Anabaptists, mention Rink, and bear witness to the practice of dipping.

It was in the same year that Hofmann published his book, *Die Ordinanz Gottes*, The Ordinance of God. The book may be found in the Mennonite Library, at Amsterdam. In that book Hofmann says:

Furthermore, it is commanded of the Lord to his messengers; after they have thus taught, called and admonished the people through the Word of God, they shall lead forth those who have given themselves to the Lord out of the kingdom of Satan and espoused them openly to Christ through the true sign, of the covenant, through the baptism, that thereupon henceforth they completely put to death their own wills and as a bride to her beloved bridegroom to be obedient in all things. And thus also in these last times will the true Apostolic Messengers gather together the chosen band, and through the call of the Gospel and through the baptism espouse and bind them to the Lord ... Christ as an example for his own band permitted himself to be baptized by John the Baptist, and was then led of the Spirit of God into the wilderness, there to fast forty days and to suffer the temptations of Satan, but true to his Father unto the end he fought it through and overthrew Satan ... But the sign of the covenant is established alone for those old enough to understand and for those who are of full age, and not one letter in the Old and the New Testament alludes to the infants. Woe unto those who wilfully put

lies instead of the truth, and charge against God, what in eternity he has not willed or commanded. God is the enemy of all liars and no one of them has a part in the kingdom, but their inheritance is the everlasting perdition. (Cramer and Pyfer Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica, VI).

This extract from Hofmann is fully in accord with immersion. All of the allusions given above refer to immersion. The baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan by John, the putting to death of the will and the resurrection to a better life are symbolically set forth by immersion. Such references are never in harmony with the practice of sprinkling.

A dispassionate statement of the facts leads to the conclusion that Hofmann practised dipping.

Moravia became an open field for the Baptists, and in that country the work prospered marvelously. Balthasar Hubmaier, or Hubnor, as he generally wrote his name, was the great apostle of the Baptists of Moravia. He was truly a remarkable man and a preacher of power. He had not the impulsiveness of Grebel, or the brilliancy of Hatzler, or the eloquence of Denck; but for calmness, soberness, logical clearness, and consistency, absolute devotion to truth, and freedom from important errors, he stands unrivalled by any man of the Reformation. He approximated truth slowly. This is notable in his rejection of infant baptism. He had progressed so far that on January 16, 1525, he had doubts concerning infant baptism, and had a dedicatory service for children instead of the baptismal rite; but he still baptized children, if the parents desired it. In the meantime he became so violently opposed to infant baptism that he broke the font which was used for that purpose (Müller, *Geschichte der Eidgenossen*, VII. 12 Zurich, 1829). When this act was followed by his book, *Von den christlichen der Glaubigen*, it was apparent to all that he had become Baptist. He had, indeed, been baptized, with one hundred and ten others, on Easter Day, by William Roubli, one of the Swiss Baptists who had been pastor at Basel (Füsslin, *Beytrage*, I. 217).

His view of the form of baptism was also a growth. It is quite certain that at the beginning of 1525 Hubmaier thought that believers' baptism could be administered by pouring. In the book mentioned above he said:

To baptize in water is to pour over (*ubergiessen*) the confessor of his sins external water, according to the divine command, and to inscribe him in the number of these separately upon his confession and desire.

It is not evident at the time that he had given the form of baptism any consideration. He certainly wrote strongly in favor of believers' baptism, and against infant baptism.

In April, 1525, at Waldshut, it being Easter, “there assembled a strong party of adherents in that town,” where Hubmaier “called his followers together on Easter eve in the year 1525, and, after having some water brought to him in a milk pail, solemnly rebaptized three hundred persons” (Sohm, *Geschichte der Stadt pfarrie Waldshut ein Merkwurdeger, Beitrage zur Weidertauffer Geschichte*). At this date, April, 1525, Hubmaier practised pouring. At the same time he held foot-washing to be a Bible ordinance. Only a brief period before this he was dedicating children to the Lord and in the presence of obdurate parents he christened the children. This was a formative period in his life on the subject of baptism.

While Hubmaier was in Waldshut he probably began practising dipping. Dr. Paul Burckhard, a careful student of Baptist affairs in Germany, says, “that it is also possible that in Waldshut on the Rhine the people were baptized by Hubmaier in the Rhine” (Letter to the author, March 28, 1900). Hubmaier was found in 1527, in Augsburg, along with other Baptist leaders, practising immersion (Sender, *Die Chronik*, 186. Leipzig, 1894): He had advanced from the practice of pouring in 1525 to that of immersion in 1527. This was no more sudden than many other changes which took place with him, Indeed, it was no more than could have been expected. Schaff, who is usually quite accurate on such points, is certain that Hubmaier, in 1527, practised dipping.

Zwingli is a witness to the fact that Hubmaier practised immersion. He says:

He posed like a fool in a carnival, who acts as though he is lifting nothing but straw. His adherents, the bath fellows, are geese who cackle in every direction, but do not know which way to fly; but he himself, the Doctor is clothed in magnificent apparel and, therefore, he considers it unbecoming to wash little children, as he says himself; although it is not becoming in him, it is perfectly becoming for Jesus Christ and the humble preachers of Zurich (Hosek, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, ch. VI).

This was November 6, 1526. He was the companion of “bath fellows.” What could be the meaning of this if Hubmaier did not practise dipping? More than once Zwingli uses this term to describe immersion among the Anabaptists.

There is another proof that in 1527 Hubmaier was an immersionist. Capito writing to Zwingli, November 27, 1527, says: “What I have written lately concerning Balthasar on submersion, I have drawn from, letters from Feneston and Vienna” (Zwingli, *Opera*, VIII. 112). Hubmaier had been writing upon and practising dipping.

It is mentioned in another chapter where Farel, September 7, 1527, mentions Hubmaier, where he refers to baptism as dipping in water (Keller, *Die Reformation*, 386 note). Keller says that this defense of Hubmaier and Denck

are not well known. It shows from a contemporary that Hubmaier practised dipping.

Another contemporary bears witness that in the last days of his life Hubmaier practiced dipping. This is John Fabricius, the learned Roman Catholic writer. In his book against Hubmaier, 1525, he says:

Their leader and founder was a certain doctor Balthasar, who, though he used to write that he was the “mountain of peace,” was an incessant recusant of wars and rebellions, he was, I say, a man, of such lofty spirit that he boasted that in his learning he excelled and by far surpassed all the Zwinglians, Oecolampadius, and even Luther himself. He was not satisfied because that in Germany in many towns, and above all under the renowned house of Austria he incited horrible tumults and for a long time among the Ligurians, he denied an oath the delusion of rebaptism. He also condemned it, and under a curse he publicly asserted it. Immediately in Moravia the usage of the universal church having been repudiated he treasonably relapsed into the same heresy of the Catabaptists (dippers) as a dog does to his vomit, and the baptism of children having been rejected, he decreed that only old men, drybones, and almost toothless, ought to be baptized, or dipped, in the sacred fountain, concerning this thing he wrote books and tracts surely not a few, and this new and detestable abuse produced new conspiracies of the people, illicit unions in love, and other crimes of this kind almost limitless (Fabricus, Aversus Doctorum Balthasarum Pacimontanum).

Hübmaier is himself a witness to the practice of immersion. In an early book he refers to baptism as a pouring; in later books he refers to it as performed in water. In one of the passages against his enemies who called him an Anabaptist he pithily answers: “Water is not baptism, else the whole Danube were baptism, and the fishermen and boatmen would be daily baptized.”

One of his books has the title: The Form of Baptism in Water. In another of his books, Von der Briederlichen straff, he gives an explanation of the celebrated passage in the sixteenth of Matthew. He not only says that baptism is a dipping but he explains the passage to refer to the ordinary congregation of believers. The passage is as follows

He commanded her to use them faithfully, according to his Word, when he said to Peter, Thou art a stone, and on this rock, meaning his public and uninterrupted confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the diving God, I will build my church (he had just spoken of them as Christian churches), my company, my congregation, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. In saying “to thee,” Christ sets forth the unity of the churches, as saying, “ye” he implies) that many shall be assembled in this unity of the faith and Christian love. It

was after the glorious resurrection that Christ committed the power of the keys to the church, bidding them preach the Gospel and thus gather a congregation of believers, and afterwards baptize them in water, and with the first key open the door of the Christian Church and admit them for the remission of sins (Hosek, Balthasar Hubmaier, ch. IX).

Hübmaier always denied that he was an Anabaptist or that he practised anabaptism. He claimed that he practised the baptism of believers, since infant baptism was no baptism at all.

The Baptists of Moravia were not a unit on the form of baptism as they were not a unit on other things. There was published in the year 1545 a Confession of Faith, which was drawn up by Peter Riedermann who died in Pruzga, Hungary, December 1, 1556. In the section referring to the administration of baptism Riedermann says:

Then the baptizer commands the candidate to humble himself with beaded knees before God and his church, and take pure water and pour it upon him, and say, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mittheillungen aus dem Antiquariate, I. 309).

This was not the position of all of the Moravian Baptists. This may have been a private statement of Riedermann. How far the Baptists of Moravia agreed with him is not known. But Erhard, who was an eye-witness, wrote: "Would that Diogenes might see your baptism and make sport of your washings. You will sometimes be called Tritio-Baptists, when you are immersed in the Strygian Lake" (Armitage, History of the Baptists, 381).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Schaff, VI. 267-571.

W.J.B. Bennett, The Church's Broken Unity. The Anabaptists. II. 1-14-.

## CHAPTER 12 — THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING IN THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, LITHUANIA AND TRANSYLVANIA BAPTIST CHURCHES

The Waldenses in Holland — Religious Liberty — Rembrandt — Learned Men — Simon Menno — His Views of Baptism — “A Handful of Water” — Luther on This Phrase — The *Dooop* — ~~456B~~ Romans 6:3 — Anabaptist Literature on the Subject — ~~46213~~ 1 Corinthians 12:13 — The Practice of Menno — Immersion in the Netherlands — Bastingius — Boltens — Dooreslaar — Stark — Schyn — The Change of Practice Among the Mennonites — The Collegians of Rhynsburg — Poland and Silesian Baptists — Immersion — Sandius — Fock — Bock — The Unitarian Baptists — Their Great Learning and Culture — Peter Gonesius — Gregory Paulus — Their Numbers and Spirit — Socinus Martin Czechovicus — The Racovian Catechism — The Lord of Cracow.

THE Waldenses entered Holland in 1182 and by the year 1233 Flanders was full of them. Many of them were weavers, and Ten Cate says that at a later date all of the weaving was in the hands of the Baptists. Ypeij and Dermount say: “The Waldenses scattered in the Netherlands might be called their salt, so correct were their views and devout their lives. The Mennonites sprang from them. It is indubitable that they rejected infant baptism, and used only adult baptism” (Ypeij en Dermount, *Geechieddenis der Netherlandische Hervormde Kirk*, I. 57, 141). The Reformation in the Netherlands was practically synonymous with the Baptist movement.

Here, as everywhere, the Baptists were good citizens; paid taxes; and advocated liberty of conscience. The fires of persecution were frequently lighted in Holland. The Baptists had assisted the Prince of Orange in his struggle against Spanish tyranny; and he steadfastly resisted all efforts to persecute them. Two Baptists, J. Cortenbosch and Peter Bogaert, a minister, brought to him a considerable sum of money as an offering from the Baptists. They performed this task at the risk of their lives. The Prince assured them that they would be treated as equals (*Ottii Annales*, ad ann., 1572).

Motley says of the Prince of Orange:

He resolutely stood out against all meddling with men’s consciences or inquiring into their thoughts. While smiting the Spanish Inquisition into the dust, he would have no Calvinist Inquisition set up in its place. Earnestly a convert to the Reformed religion, but hating and denouncing only what was corrupt in the ancient church, he would not force men, with fire and sword, to travel to heaven upon his own road. Thought should be free. Neither monk

nor minister should burn, drown, or hang his fellowcreatures when argument or expostulation failed to redeem them from error. It was no small virtue, in that age, to rise to such a height. We know what Calvinists, Zwinglians, Lutherans have done in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Switzerland, and almost a century later in New England. It is therefore, with increased veneration that we regard this large and truly catholic mind (Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, II. 362).

In regard to his relations to the Baptists the historian continues:

It was impossible for the Prince thoroughly to infuse his own ideas on the subject of toleration into the hearts of his nearest associates. He could not hope to inspire his deadly enemies with a deeper sympathy. Was he not himself the mark of obloquy among the Reformers, because of his leniency to Catholics? Nay, more, was not his intimate counselor, the accomplished Saint Aldegonde in despair because the Prince refused to exclude the Anabaptists from Holland? At the very moment when William was straining every nerve to unite warring sects, and to persuade men's hearts into a system by which their consciences were to be laid open to God alone — at the moment when it was most necessary for the very existence of the Fatherland that Catholic and Protestant should mingle their social and political relations, it was indeed a bitter disappointment for him to see wise statesmen of his own creed unable to rise to the idea of toleration. "The affair of the Anabaptists," wrote Saint Aldegonde, "has been renewed. The Prince objects to excluding them from citizenship. He answered me sharply, that, their yea was equal to our oath, and that we should not press the matter, unless we were willing to confess that it was just for the Baptists to compel us to a divine service which was against our conscience." It seems hardly credible that this sentence, containing so sublime a tribute to the character of the Prince, should have been indicted as a bitter censure, and that, too, by an enlightened and accomplished Protestant (Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, II. 206).

But William of Orange held on his way. When the Union of Utrecht, the foundation of the Dutch Republic was formulated, it was expressly provided that "every individual should remain free in his religion, and that no man should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship" (Ibid. II. 412).

It is interesting to note that Rembrandt, the greatest painter of Holland, was a Baptist. Professor H. Weizsäcker, in his chapter on Holland (*Protestantism in the Nineteenth Century*, I. 295) says of him: "Little is known of the religious character of Rembrandt, but an Italian biographer of the seventeenth century says he was brought up a Baptist and belonged to their fellowship. How can we think him of such a community?" he asks. "His whole life was in the world. Yet he painted many portraits of preachers, some of his best. That of Sylvius, bending over the pulpit, Bible in hand, and that of Anseo, the Baptist pastor

with the saintly face, are well known. In days of adversity, when his personal effects were sold, among them were found five books. One of these five books was a Josephus and another a copy of the Bible. When he died he left one book as an heirloom, and that was a Bible.”

Rembrandt was moved by the spirit of liberty. It must be borne in mind that in the beginning of the seventeenth century Holland had risen to a great power. Though not yet formally free from the Spanish yoke, she had broken the fetters by the heroic efforts of the former generation, and had entered on her grand career of national enterprise. Science and literature flourished in her universities, poetry and the stage were favored by her citizens. It was a time of new ideas. Old conventional forms in religion, philosophy and art had fallen away, and liberty was inspiring new conceptions. Here there was no church influence to fetter Rembrandt in the choice and treatment of his subjects, no academies to prescribe rules. He was thus left to himself to paint the life of the people among whom he lived. The legends of the Roman Church were no longer of interest; and the Bible was read and studied with avidity. Under such influences Rembrandt became “the Shakespeare of Holland.”

“During the seventeenth century it became evident,” says Dosker, “that men of considerable talent were to be found among the rank and file of the Mennonites. And they were not confined to one learned profession or to one social stratum. There were physicians of more than local reputation: men like A.J. Roscius, doctor of medicine and preacher at Hoorn; the celebrated Bidloo brothers, one of whom was body-physician to Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, and the other similarly employed at the Court of Prince William III. of the Netherlands. Another of these famous Mennonite doctors was Galenus de Haan ... who was equally celebrated as preacher and practitioner of medicine at Amsterdam; and especially A. C. Van Dale, whose works on the science of healing made him a European celebrity.

“Among the men of letters I mention J.P. Schabalje, preacher at Alkmaar, renowned as a scholar and poet. So far as is known he was the first to write a ‘Life of Christ’

“We find poets among them like J.A. van der Goes, celebrated by his *Ystroom*, and Karel van Mander, translator of Virgil and of the Iliad.

“In the world of art they boasted a Mierevelt, especially Ruysdael, the greatest of the Dutch landscape-painters, and the greatest of all, perhaps, Rembrandt. For science they could claim, J.A. Leeghwater, who drew the plans for the reclamation of Haarlem lake, a marvelous engineering problem; and J. van der Heyden, who first undertook the illumination of the streets of Amsterdam, and



who was the inventor of the prototype of the modern fire-engine” (Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists*, 244).

In the second and third decades of the Reformation Simon Menno became the leader of the Baptists in that country. He was born in Friesland, in 1492, and died in Holstein, January 13, 1559. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest; but he became a convert to the Baptist faith when, in 1531, Seike Feerks or Sicke Snyder was burnt at the stake. On his conversion he at once preached Jesus and soon became a conspicuous leader among the Baptists.

There is no record known of the manner of the baptizing of Menno. Judging from the tenor of his writings, he was baptized by immersion. In a great number of instances, in his writings, he refers to baptism as a dipping in water. In two or three instances in refuting his enemies reference is made to pouring. In answering a scorner he says:

We think that these, and like commands, are more painful and difficult to perverse flesh which is naturally so prone to follow its own way, than to have a handful of water applied; and a sincere Christian must at all times be ready to do all of this; if not, he is not born of God; for the regeneration are of the mind of Christ. (Menno, *Opera Theologica*, 224. Amsterdam, 1651).

The other passages are to the same effect. Menno says these scornors were wrong in heart and “that a whole ocean of water” would not satisfy them. The man might have a handful of water cast on him, or he might be baptized in the ocean, if his heart was not clean he would be a miserable sinner. Water does not cleanse a man from sin. The handful of water did not represent the act of Menno, but the objection of the scorner of baptism. Menno was not expressing his own opinion, he was refuting his opponent.

Menno could not have endorsed “a handful of water” as the proper act of baptism, since these were the very words the Baptists had long been accustomed to hurl at their opponents. To hold that such an act of baptism was valid would have been contrary to every Baptist argument of the times. The Baptists long before, and at the time of Menno, invariably taunted their opponents by calling infant baptism “a dog’s bath,” “a handful of water,” etc. That Menno applied such terms to his own act is incredible. A few instances where Baptists thus taunted their opponents are here given.

Luther writing against the Baptists charged them with judging of his baptism from the abuse of the Roman Catholic Church. He says:

But now are they in their madness thinking that baptism is like a thing such as water and salt consecrated, or as caps and leaves carried about; so from this they proceed to call it a dog’s bath, a handful of water, and many other such abominable words (Luther, *Werke*, XVII. 2865. Ed. 1740, d.G. Walsh).

Again Luther remarks:

For the devil knows well, that if the crazy mob should hear a pompous slander word, that they stumble over it, and faith flies away. Ask no further ground or reason. As when they may hear it said, the baptism is a dog's bath, and the baptizer is a false and villainous bath servant Thus they conclude from hence; why, if so, let the devil baptize, and let God shame the false bath servant. ... Yes with me such things have been spoken, as these pompous slander words, dog's bath, bath servant, handful of water, etc. (Ibid, 2686).

Once more Luther says:

In the second place, here is also the overthrow of the assertions of the Anabaptists and such like company. Who thus teach ... the beloved baptism to despise, as to be nothing more than plain common water, from hence they indulge to slander it: What can a handful of water help the soul (Luther, Kirchen Postill, 721).

“A handful of water” was the term of reproach that the Baptists used toward their enemies. It is incredible to think that Menno would have used such a term to describe his own baptism.

Baptism in the opinion of Menno was dipping. He refers to baptism as *doop* (dipping). There is no proof that Menno ever used this word in any sense other than to dip; and there is no proof that *doop* meant anything less in the time of Menno. Apart from the word *doop* Menno constantly uses other words to describe baptism by dipping. He devotes several chapters to the *doop* and never mentions pouring.

The symbolic passage ~~ROM~~ Romans 6:3, 4 is mentioned and enforced more than one hundred times by Menno. In this passage the symbolism of baptism is given as a burial, an immersion, an emersion. He says

Observe all of you who persecute the word of the Lord and his people, this is our instruction, doctrine and belief concerning baptism (*doop*), according to the instruction of the words of Christ, namely, we must first hear the word of God, believe it, and then upon our faith be baptized (*gedoopt*); we are not seditious or contentious; we do not approve of polygamy; neither do we seek nor wait for any kingdom upon earth. Oh no! No! To God be eternal praise; we will know that the word of the Lord teaches us and testifies to, on the subject. The word of the Lord commands us that we, with sincere hearts, desire to die to sin, to bury our sins with Christ, and with him to arise to a new life, even as baptism (*doop*) is portrayed (Menno, Wercken, 17).

The word “portrayed” represents a portrait, or photograph. As a picture is an exact image of a person so this burial and resurrection is an exact image of the act of baptism. But the exact image of a burial and resurrection is an immersion in, and emersion out of the water.

The citation of Romans by Menno, as determining the form of baptism, is characteristic of the literature of the Baptists in the Reformation period. We find in the Protocol of Emden, 1578; in that of Franckenthal, 1571, where it is explained as meaning that “baptism is a symbol of death and a new life;” and in the Münster Restitution (issued 1634) baptism is described as “the burial of the sinful flesh (*begravinge unses sundtliken fleisches*).” In the Berne Disputation, 1532, the Baptist says: “Baptism is always a symbol of a renewed man entombed (*vergraben*) into the death of Jesus Christ” (Dr. Jesse B. Thomas in *The Western Recorder*, 1897).

Menno quotes <sup><461213></sup>1 Corinthians 12:13 as sustaining the practice of immersion. He says:

Moses believed the word of the Lord, and erected a serpent; Israel looked upon it and was healed, not through the virtue of the Image, but through the power of the divine word, received by them through faith. In the same manner salvation is ascribed in scriptural baptism (*doope*) <sup><411616></sup>Mark 16:16; the forgiveness of sins, <sup><440238></sup>Acts 2:38; the putting on of Christ, <sup><481827></sup>Galatians 3:27, being dipped into (*indoopinge*) one body. <sup><461213></sup>1 Corinthians 12:13 (Menno, Wercken, 14).

There are direct passages where Menno mentions his own practice as dipping. For example he says:

In short, had we forgiveness of sins and peace of conscience, through outward ceremonies and elements, so that we must have that true sinking down (*ondergaen*) and with his merits to yield and give way. Behold, this is the only true foundation of baptism (*doop*) maintained by the Scriptures, and none others. This we teach and practise though all the gates of hell rise up against us; for we know that this is the word of God, and the divine ordinance, from which we dare not take away, nor add thereto, lest we be found disobedient and false before God (who alone is the Lord and God of our consciences) for every one of the Lord is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him (Ibid, 15).

Baptism is here described as a “sinking down,” and thus portrays immersion. He further says, this “we teach and practise.” Again he says:

In the third place, we are Informed by the historians, ancient and modern, also by the decrees, that baptism was changed both as to its mode and time of administering. In the beginning of the holy church, persons were dipped in common water (*gedoopt in inbezwoeren water*) on their first profession, upon their own faith, according to the Scriptures (Ibid, 16).

It is not readily to be believed that a man who says that the mode and time of baptizing has been changed, and severely criticises those who wrought the change, and calls the people back to the primitive practices, would be found in

the use of affusion. Menno plainly says the Scriptures teach dipping, says the mode has been changed, and that men ought literally to obey the commandments of God.

In passages too numerous here to mention Menno refers to baptism “as dipping in the water.” Three instances are given where the word must mean immersion. He says:

Again Paul calls baptism (*doop*) a water bath of regeneration. O Lord, how lamentably the word is abused. Is it not greatly to be lamented, that men are attempting, notwithstanding these plain passages, to maintain their idolatrous invention of infant baptism, and set forth that infants are regenerated thereby, as if regeneration was simply a thrusting into the water (*induckinge in't water*) (Menno, Wercken, 13).

Again

O Lord, Father, how very broad, easy and pleasing to the flesh is the entrance into the miserable, carnal church; for it is all as if one said, no matter who, or what, or how he is, it is all right, if he has been but sworn before the fountain, and washed and dipped in it (*ende in de fonts gewaschen ende gedoopt is*) (Ibid, 411).

Once more:

Do you think, most beloved, that the new birth consists in nothing but in that which the miserable world hitherto has thought that it consists in, namely, to plunge into the water (*in te duycken in den water*), or say thus: I baptize (*doope*) thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Ibid, 419).

The Mennonites of our day reject infant baptism and practise believers' baptism by affusion. Menno and his immediate followers were in the practice of dipping, but later the Mennonites did not strenuously insist upon this form of baptism. At length some practised dipping and others sprinkling; and in the course of time affusion became the normal act and immersion the exception among them.

At the close of the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth dipping was considered, in the Netherlands, as the meaning of the Greek word baptizein. There is an example of this found in the Commentary of Jeremiah, Bastingius on the Heidelberg Catechism which was then used in the Low Countries. He says:

The word baptism is a Greek word, and cometh of *baptizein*, and signifieth properly dipping into water, etc. (Bastingius, An Exposition or Commentarie upon the Catechism, 138).

The historian Backus explains the change of the Mennonites from immersion to affusion in the following manner: “The Mennonites are also from Germany and are of like behaviour, but they are not truly Baptists now. Their fathers were so in Luther’s time, until confinement in prison brought them to pour water on the head of the subject, instead of immersion; and what was then done out of necessity is now done out of choice, as other corruptions are” (Backus, *History of the Baptists*).

There were those in Holland, who, for a long time, continued in the practice of dipping. At the close of the sixteenth century full toleration was given to the church at Altona. The following account is taken from the “History of the Different Religious Denominations in Altona,” by John Adrian Boltens, published in Altona, 1790:

The free exercise of religion being now obtained in Altona, many Mennonites resorted thither, particularly prior to the breaking out of the thirty-years-war in Holstein, as well as prior to that event. Thus their numbers kept continually increasing, to which increase the intolerant decrees of Hamburg did not a little contribute. In course of time a difference of opinion arose as to the mode of baptism. This was the cause of the Mennonites now in Altona, which were one church, separating into two interests. The one maintained the mode of pouring; the other adopted that of immersion, and were, therefore, distinguished by the name of Immergenten. This separation continued until the year 1666, though efforts had been made towards a union, but without the desired effect. Of the two, the Immergenten were the most numerous, and a new church was erected by them out of the profits of the whale fishery, in which many of their members were engaged (*The Baptist Magazine*, XV. 290. September, 1823).

There was in Friesland in the beginning of the year 1600 a party of Mennonites who would receive none but those who dipped. Of these people Stark says:

Some of them have again introduced among themselves entire immersion; and on this account, they have been called immersers by other congregations. Still with most, only the pouring of water on the head has been introduced (Stark, *Geschichte der Taufe und Taufgesinnten*, II. 348).

These statements are important in many respects. They show that the original form of baptism among the Mennonites was immersion, that in some instances it had been set aside in favor of pouring, that dipping was still used in some congregations, and that there were some Mennonite congregations who would not receive any form of baptism save immersion.

There was a book printed in the year 1649 showing the differences between the Reformed Church of the Netherlands and the Baptist churches. Of baptism it said:

As formerly the circumcision, so now is baptism a symbol of the spiritual uncleanness of man. For circumcision taught by taking away the foreskin, and baptism by immersion or sprinkling with water, that man is unclean by nature and, therefore, guilty before God (Abraham Dooreslaar and Peter Jacobi Austro-Sylvium, *Grondige ende lare Wertooninghe*, 464).

Even the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, in 1649, held that immersion was baptism. Indeed, immersion was preferred to sprinkling. Van Braght, who held to sprinkling, affirmed that immersion was the practice in the Netherlands, “Yes, to our present time,” A.D. 1659 (Van Braght, *Martyrs’ Mirror of the Baptists*). Hooke, in 1701, says that immersion was practised among the Baptists of the Netherlands (Hooke, *A Necessary Apology for the Baptist Believers*, 122, 133. London, 1701).

The historian of the Mennonites, Schyn, points out that in his day, A.D. 1729, while sprinkling was the ordinary form of baptism among the Mennonites that immersion was also practised. It was declared to be the primitive practice, but that it had been generally, but not completely superseded by “an abundant sprinkling.” Another witness is Cornelius Ris, who says as late as 1776, the year of American Independence:

What concerns the holy baptism, we thus understand thereby, one dipping in, or under, of the whole body in the water, or an abundant sprinkling of the same. Which last method in these Northern regions we almost generally hold to be more convenient, while the same facts may be signified thereby (Cornelius Ris, *Von die Heilige Wasser-Taufe*, Art. 25. sec. 96).

About the year 1619 there had been a revival of immersion in Holland, under three brothers van der Kodde. These persons were called Collegiants, and they were organized into societies near Leyden at Rhynsburg. They practised immersion having received it from the Silesian Baptists, who had it from the Swiss (Heath, *The Anabaptists and their English Descendants*, 390. *The Contemporary Review*, March, 1891). Van Slee (*De Rijnsburger Collegianten*, 371. Haarlem, 1891) shows all along, in the Netherlands, there had been a family by the name of Geesteranus which was in sympathy with the practices of the Poland Baptists. The presidency of the great Baptist school, at Cracow, was offered to a member of this family; and one of the first persons to be immersed at Rhynsburg was John Geesteranus. One of the members of the Collegiants gives a record of the procedure of baptism as follows:

The candidate for baptism makes publicly his profession of faith on a Saturday in the morning, before an assembly of Rhynsburgers, held for that purpose; a discourse is pronounced on the excellency and nature of baptism; the minister and candidate go together to a pond, behind the house belonging to one of the number. In that pond the neophyte, catechumen, is baptized by immersion; if a man, he has a waistcoat and drawers; if a woman, a bodice

and petticoat, with leads at the bottom, for the sake of decency. The minister, in the same dress as the men wear, is also in the water, and plunges them in it, pronouncing at the same time, the form used by the most of the Christian communions. This being over, they put on their clothes, go back to the meeting, and hear an exhortation to perseverance in complying with the precepts of Christ. A public prayer is said, and canticles or psalms sung (Picart, Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the World. English Translation in 1737 in 6 volumes).

The Baptists of Poland and Transylvania all held that “dipping in water and a personal profession of faith and repentance, are essential to baptism” (Catechesis Ecclesiarum Poloniarum, sec. vi. cap. iii). These Baptists received their form of baptism from Switzerland and transferred it to Poland. This origin is now quite generally admitted and all historians state that it was by immersion (Barclay, The Inner Life of the Commonwealth, 12 note).

The testimony to the practice of immersion among the Baptists of Poland is quite satisfactory. Sandius, in his vindication of the Baptists of Poland, says that the Baptists of that country rejected infant baptism, and that believers, according to the symbolism of the primitive church, were baptized by immersion of the whole body in the water (Sandius, Bibliotheca AntiTrinitatorum, 268 note). There is an anonymous manuscript, written by one of the Baptists of Poland, which declares that there is no other baptism save that which is performed by immersion. The title may be consulted in Bock (Historia Antitrinitatorum, I. pt. 1. 19). Fock likewise states that the baptism of Poland was by immersion (Fock, Der Socialismus, 588). These are the principal authorities on the conditions in Poland, and these writers are unanimous in the statement that the Baptists of that country practised dipping.

The Unitarian Baptists, as they have been called, originated, for the most part in Italy (Speculum Anabaptistica Froris, 1808). They have frequently been called Socinians, deriving the name from the illustrious house of Sozini, which long flourished in Sienna, a noble city of Tuscany. There were a number of distinguished men born to this family. One of that number was Faustus Socinus who became a leader among the Baptists of Poland.

The Unitarians were among the most cultured of men. The peculiar tone of the belles-lettres culture that followed upon the revival of learning was quite congenial with their opinions. They called in question the foundations of the state religions and were disposed to sift all creeds. There were not less than forty educated men at Vicenza who were united in a private association who held these views. These men were mostly banished from Italy, many of them fled to Switzerland, and afterwards found refuge in Poland. One of these, Blandrata, a learned physician, fled to Geneva, and afterwards became an influential propagator of Baptist principles in Poland. The Italian and Swiss Baptists sought refuge in Poland about A.D. 1550 and carried with them the

idea of dipping from the earlier Baptists of Switzerland. The reason that the Baptists selected Poland as a place of refuge lay in the fact that Poland was so strongly attached to liberty in religious matters.

Probably the first to introduce Baptist views into Poland was Peter Gonesius. He fell in with the Baptists of Moravia and was led to reject infant baptism (Lauderbach, Polish Arianischen Socianismus).

Baptist views rapidly spread among the people. The Synod of Wengrow, December 25, 1565, was composed of forty-seven ministers and eighteen noblemen, besides a great number of lesser people. It was acknowledged by the churches of a number of districts as far as the Carpathian mountains. The Synod declared in favor of adults as the subjects and immersion as the form of baptism. At this meeting Czechovicus baptized James Niemojowski by immersion (Count Valerian Krasineki, The Reformation in Poland, I. 361).

Gregory Paulus was a noted Baptist and an immersionist. He was pastor at Cracow. On May 30, 1566, John a Lasco represented him as denying "that infants ought to be admitted to baptism as the fountain of life and the door of the church." He impressed men that baptism belonged to adults and not to crying children, and when he had done this he led "them to the river and immerses them." He claimed that these things were the first "rudiments of the ancient religion about to be restored" (Letter to Beza, May 30, 1556. In Museum Helveticum, Part XIV. 282).

The Baptists of Poland and Siebenburgen, in 1574, were a numerous and aggressive people. In that year they issued a Catechism (*Catechesis et Confessio fidei coetus per Poloniam congregati*) which contains one hundred and sixty pages, but copies of it are now rare. The printer was Turobinus, and it was issued at Cracow. The writer of the Catechism was the celebrated George Schomann (Schomann, *Testamentum. Jo. Adam Muller, de Unitatorum*, XXI. 758). Baptism is confined to adults and defined as "the immersion in water and the emersion of a person who believes the Gospel and repents, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or in the name of Christ only, whereby he publicly confesses that by the grace of God the Father, in the blood of Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, he is washed from all his sins, in order that being inserted in the body of Christ he may mortify the old Adam, with the assurance that after the resurrection he will attain unto eternal life" (Rees, *Racovian Catechism*, LXXI).

Stanislaus Farnovius, A.D. 1568-1614, held to adult baptism by immersion. George Schomann, mentioned above, was a great scholar among them. He was born at Ratibon in Silesia, in the year 1530. He was baptized by immersion at



Chmelnik in 1572 and in 1573 he became the assistant of Gregory Paulus at Cracow (Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, II. 200).

The famous Faustus Socinus also held to Baptist views and was a firm believer in the immersion of a converted man in water. He was born at Sienna, 1539, and died at Luclawice, Poland, in 1604. He attempted to unite with the Baptists of Poland but was refused except on condition that he be rebaptized. He refused to permit this since he said it was not necessary in his case. He was a firm believer in immersion (Socinus, *De Baptismo Aquæ*, 716. Racoviae, 1613). Many Baptists of that period held lightly to all forms of externals since they believed that the spiritual life was all that was essentially necessary (Otto Fock, *Der Socianianismus*, 586). The views of Socinus mightily impressed the Baptists of Poland, and he became a most influential leader among them. His noble birth, intellectual powers and polished manners commended him to the favor of the Polish nobles; and his influence was augmented by his marriage to a daughter of one of the nobility.

Martin Czechovicus was a Lithuanian. The first heard of him was on September 16, 1661, when he was the bearer of a letter from Calvin to the Synod of Cracow. He contended that baptism by immersion was necessary in the case of all adult believers "whether those born of Christian parents, or those converted of heathen nations."

Simon Ronemberg was born at Dantzic on Christmas Day, 1540. He was christened when an infant by sprinkling in the Roman Catholic Church; then he was sprinkled as an adult, and lastly he was immersed when he united with the Baptists. Of this he gives a particular account in one of his books. His being baptized by immersion was regarded as a grievous offense; and being commanded by the Senate of Dantzic, August 17, 1552, to defend himself against this charge, and not choosing to deny what took place, or to recant, he was formally deprived of his office, and immediately left Dantzic with his wife and eight children (Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, II. 238).

John Caper, Sr., after officiating as Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Meseritz for about twenty-eight years, changed his views late in life and went over to the Baptists. He was immersed in a pool at Smigel, on the last of July, 1588; on which occasion Valerius Herberger, a popular Evangelical minister, wrote some satirical verses. It is said that Caper presided as a Baptist minister over the church at Smigel, from the time of his conversion to his death; and that about the year 1606 he was drowned by a company of horsemen, probably in the very pond in which he had been immersed (Bock, *Hist. Ant.*, 92, 93).

The Racovian Catechism was written about 1590 but was first published in 1605. It superseded the old Catechism, which was rude and ill digested. It was

corrected by some, enlarged by others and more ingeniously stated, and became the creed of the entire communion. The article on baptism is as follows:

It does not pertain to infants since we have in the Scriptures no command for, or example of, infant baptism, nor are they yet capable, as the thing itself shows, of faith in Christ, which ought to precede this rite.

In answer to the question: “What then is the thought of those who baptize infants?” It is replied.

You cannot correctly say that they baptize infants For they do not baptize them, since that cannot be done without immersion and ablution of the whole body in water; whereas they only lightly sprinkle their heads, this rite not only being erroneously applied to infants, but also through this mistake evidently changed.

Speaking of a profession of faith the Catechism says:

Declaring, and as it were representing by their very ablution, immersion and emersion, that they design to rid themselves with Christ, and, therefore, to die with him, and to rise to newness of life (The Racovian Catechism, 252, 253. London, 1818).

The highest prosperity was now obtained by the Baptists of Poland James a Sienna, Lord of Cracow, in the year 1600, renounced the Reformed Church and came over to the Baptists, and two years after caused a famous school, intended for the Seminary of the churches, to be established in his own city which he made the metropolis of the Baptist movement (Wissowatius, *Naratio Unitairorum a Reformatis*, 214).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Motley, *Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic*, II.

Weizsäcker, *Protestantism in the Nineteenth Century*.

## CHAPTER 13. — THE PEASANT WARS AND THE KINGDOM OF MÜNSTER

The trouble between the Peasants and the Nobility — Thomas Mtinzer — The Twelve Articles — The Battle of Schlatchberg — Thomas Münzer Never a Baptist — The Responsibility of Luther — Grebel and Manz disavow Münzer — His Views on Infant Baptism — The Münster Tumults — Largely a Political Affair — The Desire for Liberty — Polygamy — Marriage Sacred — The Anabaptists did not originate the Tumults — The Leaders Were all Pedobaptists — Fair Minded Historians — Keller — D' Aubigne — Ypeij and Dermout — Arnold — The "Common Man" — The Act of Baptism at Münster — "The Confession of Both Sacraments" — The Form of Baptism Dipping — Jesse B. Thomas — Keller — Heath — Cornelius — Rhegius — Fischer — John of Leyden.

THERE has been reserved for this chapter an account of certain events which have been alleged against the Baptists, namely, the Peasant Wars and the tumult at Münster. Because of these the Baptists have been charged with the wildest vagaries and with instigating horrible tumults.

The most searching investigation has failed to prove that Münzer, the leader of the riots in the Peasant Wars, was a Baptist, or that the Baptists were in anywise responsible for the uprisings.

There had long been trouble between the peasants and the nobility. Many times and in different localities, during the preceding one hundred years, had the oppressed peasants in Central Europe attempted to throw off the yoke which their feudal lords had laid upon them. Heavy burdens had been placed upon the laboring classes by their lay and ecclesiastical masters. The forcible repression of evangelical doctrines was an added grievance. Leonard Fries, secretary of the city of Wurtzburg, who gathered the documentary evidence of that time, writing in the spirit of the age, calls the uprising a deluge. It cannot be doubted that many of these grievances called for redress.

Now again the peasants were in revolt. The leader of the movement was Thomas Münzer, born at Stoltzberg, at the foot of the Hartz Mountains. He had been a priest, but became a disciple of Luther, and was a great favorite of the Reformer. His deportment was remarkably grave; his countenance was pale; his eye was sunk as if absorbed in thought; his visage long, and he wore no beard. His talent lay in a plain and easy method of preaching to the country people, whom it would seem as an itinerant he taught almost throughout the Electorate of Saxony. His air of mortification won him the hearts of the rustics; it was singular then for a preacher so much as to appear humble. When he had

finished his sermon in any village he used to retire, either to avoid the crowd or to devote himself to meditation and prayer. This was a practice so very singular and uncommon that the people used to throng about the door, peep through the crevices, and oblige him sometimes to let them in, though he repeatedly assured them that he was nothing; that all he had came from above, and that admiration and praise were due only to God. The more he fled from applause, the more it followed him. The people called him Luther's curate, and Luther called him his Absalom, probably because he stole "the hearts of the men of Israel" (Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, ch. xiv).

The peasants set forth their views in twelve articles. Some have said that the articles were written by Hubmaier, but there is no proof of this. It was an eloquent appeal for human liberty. When the peasants arrived in any village they caused the articles to be read. The articles, in brief, are as follows:

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.
- 6-8. 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 the 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 he proved to them that a single one of these articles is contrary to the Word of God (Hosek, Balthasar Hubmaier, ch. ii. Brunn, 1867. Translated by Dr. W.W. Everts, Jr. In *The Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine* 1891, 1892).

There were thousands of peasants who followed the standard of Münzer. On the approach of the armies of the nobles they entrenched themselves on a height above Frankenhausen, still called Schlachtberg. It is needless to say that Münzer was utterly defeated, and not less than five thousand peasants lost their

lives on that day, May 15, 1525. This was an end of the Peasants' War. That the peasants had cause for grievance there can be no dispute, and had their cause succeeded it would have been hailed in history as a cause worthy of the heroes of liberty.

Thomas Münzer, the leader of the tumult, was never a Baptist, but all his life was a Pedobaptist dreamer. "Indeed, in no sense of the term," remarks Burrage, "and at no period of his career, was he an Anabaptist, though strangely enough he is often called the founder and leader of the Anabaptists" (*The Baptist Quarterly Review*, 140. April, 1877). More than any other man Luther was responsible for the bloody outbreak of the peasants. He stirred hopes within them with great smiting words, which fired the hearts of the peasants with their wrongs and a desire for better days. He made them ready to risk and dare, and led them to their fate.

"When Luther's enemies," says Alzog, "sarcastically taunted him with being an accomplished hand at kindling a conflagration, but an indifferent one at putting out the flames, he published a pamphlet against '*those pillaging and murdering peasants.*' 'Strike,' said he to the princes, 'strike, slay, front and rear; nothing is more devilish than sedition; it is a mad dog that bites you if you do not destroy it. There must be no sleep, no patience, no mercy; they are the children of the devil.' Such was his speech in assailing those poor, deluded peasants, who had done no more than practically carry out his own principles. They were to be subdued by the strong hand of authority, and to receive no sympathy, no mercy., from their victorious conquerors. It is computed that a hundred thousand men fell in battle during the Peasants' War, and for this immense loss of life Luther took the responsibility. 'I, Martin Luther,' said he, 'have shed the blood of the rebellious peasants; for I commanded them to be killed. Their blood is indeed upon my head; but,' he blasphemously added, 'I put it upon the Lord God, by whose command I spoke' (Luther, Table Talk, 276. Eisleben, edition)" (Alzog, *Universal Church History*, III, 221, 222. Dublin, 1888).

Münzer once held a conference with Grebel and Manz, the Baptist leaders (Bullinger, *Reformationgeschichte*, I. 368); but no account of the proceedings has come down to us. There is an extant letter which Grebel wrote on the subject. "As Grebel's letter shows," says Burrage, "he and his associates were not agreed with Münzer in reference to baptism. They did not believe in the use of the sword as he did. Doubtless thee found that they and the Saxon reformer widely differed. Münzer's aims were social and political chiefly" (Burrage, *The Anabaptists of Switzerland*, 89).

The Baptists distinctly disavowed the views of Münster. Grebel in his letter to him, after stating his own position, offered to Münster the following delicate hint:

Since you have expressed yourself against that infant baptism, we hope that you do not sin against the eternal word, wisdom and command of God, according to which believers only are to be baptized and that you decline to baptize infants (Cornelius, *Geschichte des Munserichen Aufruhrs*, H. M-247).

Cornelius, who was a Roman Catholic, admits the Baptists were “in unconcealed opposition to Münster in cardinal points.”

Münzer, beyond doubt, was a Lutheran. There is positive proof, though he sometimes “played tricks with the sacraments,” that he was never a Baptist (Erbkam, *Geschichte der protestantischen Sekten*, 494). Possibly he denied at one time the necessity of infant baptism, but he practised that rite to the end of his life. There is no proof that he was ever rebaptized or in any way was ever connected with the Baptist movement. “He was not baptized,” says Frank, “as I am trustworthily informed” (Frank, *Chronik*, 493b).

In the year 1523 he put forth a book for the direction of God’s service (Münzer, *Ordnung und berechnung des Teutschen*, 6), and in this book he prescribes infant baptism. In 1525, in a letter to Oecolampadius he defends infant baptism and held to its practice (Herzog, *Das Leben Joh. Oekolampads*, I. 302. Basel, 1843). That he was never a Baptist is quite plain (Sekendorf, *Historia Lutheranismi*, I. 192; II. 13). Frank says: “He himself never baptized, as I am credibly informed” (Frank, *Chronik*, clxxiib), and adds he was never a Baptist. With this statement modern scholars agree (Marshall, *The Baptists*. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, III. 370, Cambridge, 1910).

It may be concluded that Münster was a follower and friend of Luther; he practised infant baptism to the close of his life; he was never in the practice of Anabaptism; he was opposed by the Baptist leaders; held doctrinal views radically different from the Baptists on the use of the sword; and he was never intimately associated with the Baptists.

All parties seem anxious to rid themselves of the responsibility of the Münster affair. The Roman Catholics charge the Lutherans with the disturbances, and the Lutherans in return lay all the blame on the Anabaptists. It suited the purposes of each party to make the account of the disturbances as horrible as possible. This is only one more instance of how the dominant class of every age writes history in its own interest, and how it has hitherto succeeded not only in imposing its views on the average intelligence of its own time, but in passing it down to the second-hand historians of subsequent ages (Bax, *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*, 173). The accounts given by the enemies of a

party, are to be received with caution. This is doubly true in this instance, since the Lutherans were trying to shield themselves from the Roman Catholics, and were endeavoring to lay the blame on the Anabaptists. The Lutherans became the historians, and they wrote what they pleased, and there was no one to correct them.

The insurrection of Münster had more to do with politics than it had with religion. The feudal system had long oppressed the common people. Thought was now awakened, principles which had long been dormant were revived. The “common man” saw his rights and he determined to possess them. Buck, much against his will, acknowledges this. He says:

It must be acknowledged that the true rise of the insurrections of this period ought not to be attributed to religious opinions (Buck, A Theological Dictionary, 20, Article, Anabaptists).

In the early sixteenth century, we may be quite sure, the revolt against feudalism was not ideal in all of its individual elements. It would be manifestly foolish to expect such to be the case with sections of a population, more or less suddenly cast adrift from their social and economic moorings. But at the same time there can be no doubt in the mind of any person who has seriously studied the history of social movements, that the bulk of those who thronged the city of Münster in the year 1534, were infinitely more honest, and more noble characters in reality, than the unscrupulous ruffians of the moribund feudalism with whom they were at war (Bax, Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists, 174). It should never be forgotten, as it frequently is, that during the whole period of the Anabaptist domination of Münster, that town was undergoing the perils of a siege, and the military considerations had to be kept largely in mind. Nor should it be forgotten that during its existence the Bishop’s troops were murdering in cold blood every Anabaptist they could lay their hands on (Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, II. 460).

Had the insurrection of Münster succeeded it would have been regarded as one of the most brilliant events in the history of human liberty. Had the United States failed in the Revolutionary War what would have been the consequences! Washington would have been called a rebel, and our struggle for liberty sedition. That there were wrongs and excesses at Münster no one denies, but what revolution has them not? Bancroft has beautifully referred to this. He says:

The plebeian sect of the Anabaptists, the same of the Reformation, with greater consistency than Luther, applied the doctrines of the Reformation to the social relations of life, and threatened an end to kingcraft, spiritual dominion, tithes, and vassalage. The party was trodden under foot with foul reproaches and most arrogant scorn; and its history written in the blood of

myriads of the German peasantry; but its principles, safe in their immortality, escaped with Roger Williams to Providence; and his colony is the witness that, naturally, the paths of the Baptists were paths of freedom, pleasantness and peace (Bancroft, History of the United States, II. 459).

It has been charged that polygamy was instituted at Munster. It must not be forgotten by the conventional historian, who overflows with indignation at the wickedness of the Münsterites in instituting polygamy, that such accredited representatives of orthodox Protestant respectability as Luther and Melancthon had declared polygamy not contrary to Christianity. This, it is true, was said by the distinguished Reformers in question in order to secure the favor of Henry VIII., of England, and the Landgrave of Hesse, respectively, and they, together with their patrons, would have wished doubtless to keep it, as Kautsky has suggested, as a reserve doctrine for the convenience of the great ones of the earth on emergency (Bax, Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists, 253).

The Baptists never held to polygamy in any form. Archaeologists have exhumed a long list of the writings of the leaders in the Münster uprising, and it has been found that their teachings were often at variance with the Romanists and Lutheran doctrinal confessions, but they never varied from the moral life which all Christians are called upon to live. Their writings seldom refer to marriage; but when they do it is always to bear witness to the universal and deeply rooted Christian sentiment that marriage is a sacred and unbreakable union of one man with one woman. Nay, more, one document has descended to us which bears testimony to the teaching of the Anabaptists within the beleaguered city only a few weeks before the proclamation of polygamy. It is entitled *Bekentones des globens und lebens gemein Christe zu Münster* (Cornelius, Die Geschichte des Bisthums Münster, 445, 457, 458), and was meant to be an answer to calumnies circulated by their enemies. It contains a paragraph on marriage which is a clear and distinct assertion that the only Christian marriage is the unbreakable union of one man and one woman (Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, II. 464).

Paul Kautsky, after giving certain reasons why polygamy was permitted at Münster, points out further:

That prostitution was not tolerated within the walls of the New Jerusalem. The very communism of the brethren itself sufficed to render this difficult or impossible, so that women who wished to live by the sale of their bodies had no alternative but to seek the market outside of the walls amid the forces of law and order in the Bishop's camp. In addition to this, one of the first edicts of the Twelve Elders was one of Draconian severity directed against adultery and seduction (Bax, Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists, 203).



No attempt is made to defend polygamy at Münster, or elsewhere, but the people of Münster were more consistent than Luther and Melanchthon, and they put every safeguard around the sanctity of the home.

After all has been said of the Anabaptists they were not the prime movers of the rebellion of Münster. This is a mere episode in their history, and we hear of it only through poisoned sources. The doings of Bockhold and his followers were those of a small minority, and they were abhorred by a vast majority of the Baptists. Compared with the company within the walls of Münster, the number of the brethren, the Anabaptists so-called, were as thousands to units (Griffis, *The Anabaptists. The New World*, 657. December, 1895).

No one denies that there were Anabaptists among the people of Münster, but the rebellion began with, and was led by Lutherans (Ten Cate, *Gesch. der Doopsg. in Holland*. I, 11). Most of the leaders were Pedobaptists. Gregory and Ruter say:

Nor is it just to charge all of the insurrections of those times, whether at Münster or other places, where the Anabaptists had societies, to that class of people. The first insurgents groaned under severe oppression, and took up arms in defense of their civil rights. The Anabaptists appear rather to have seized the occasion than to have been the prime movers (Gregory and Ruter, *History of the Christian Church*, 500).

It is certain that the leaders in Münster differed essentially in principles from those who elsewhere bore the name of Baptists. The men of Münster wielded the sword; the Baptists were distinguished from other Christians by refusing to bear arms. The men of Münster dreamed of establishing a secular kingdom; the Baptists looked alone to the spiritual reign of Christ. Any one who will impartially study the history of Menno Simon and that of John of Leyden will not deny that the doctrines and spirit of the two men were wholly unlike; and more unlike are they for example, both in doctrine and in spirit than were Luther and the Roman Catholics.

Bernhardt Rothmann, a ringleader, was a Pedobaptist, the Lutheran preacher at the Church of St. Maurice, in Münster. He had been early attracted by the teaching of Luther, as we learn from his Confession of 1532 (Detmer, *Bernhardt Rothman*, 41. Münster, 1904), and he went to Wittenberg to make the acquaintance of Luther and Melanchthon. He led the movement at Münster before many Anabaptists appear to have been connected with it (Spanheim, *Hist. Anab.*, 12). Read the following:

It is certain that the disturbances in the very city of Münster were begun by a Pedobaptist minister, whose name was Bernhardt Rothmann; that he was assisted in his endeavors by ministers of the same persuasion, and that they began to stir up tumults; that is, teach revolutionary principles a year before

the Anabaptist ringleaders, as they were called, visited the place. These things the Baptists knew, and they failed not to improve them to their own advantage. They uniformly insisted that Luther's doctrines led to rebellion, and his disciples were the prime movers in the insurrections, and they also asserted that an hundred and fifty thousand Lutherans perished in the Rustic War (Fessenden. Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 77).

A great many were Roman Catholics, and a still greater part had no religious principles whatever (Buck, A Theological Dictionary, 20).

Some fair-minded and discriminating historians have distinguished between the Anabaptists of Münster and the Baptists. Dr. Ludwig Keller says:

Whenever, at the present time, the name "Anabaptist" is mentioned the majority think only of the fanatical sect which, under the leadership of John of Leyden, established the kingdom of the New Jerusalem at Münster. The history of the religious ideas whose caricature appears in the communion of Münster, however, in no wise connects itself with the beginning and the end of the short episode. There were Baptists long before the Münster rebellion, and in all of the centuries that have followed, in spite of the severest persecutions, there have been parties which, as Baptists and Mennonites have secured permanent position in many lands (Keller, *Preussische Jahrbücher*, September, 1882).

D' Aubigne says:

On one point it seems necessary to guard against misapprehension. Some persons imagine that the Anabaptists of the times of the Reformation, and the Baptists of our day, are the same. But they are as different as possible, there is at least as wide a difference between them as there was between the Episcopalians and the Baptists. ... So much for the historical affinity. As to the principles, it is enough to look at the social and political opinions of the Anabaptists, to see that the present Baptists reject such sentiments. The doctrine of the Mennonites themselves differ not essentially from that of other Protestant communions (Schyn, *Historia Christianorum qui in Belgio*. Amsterdam, 1723). A popular American work (Fessenden's Encyclopedia) states the difference. It says, article Anabaptist., The English and Dutch Baptists do not consider the word as applicable to their sect. And farther on, it is but justice to observe that the Baptists in Holland, England, and the United States, are to be considered as entirely distinct from these seditious and fanatical individuals above mentioned; and they profess an equal aversion to all principles of rebellion of the one and enthusiasts of the other (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, I. 9 preface).

Few writers have given the subject more thought than Drs. Ypeij and Dermout, who were especially appointed by the King of Holland to look into the facts and give a true report. They write on this theme at great length. They say:

The fanatical Anabaptists, of whom we now speak, were originally from Germany, were under the bishoprick of Speiers, they, by a rebellion, had made known their displeasure at the oppression of the so-called feudal system. This was in the year 1491. Since that time they, by their revolt, have often caused anxiety, and have given the government no little trouble. This continued till the time of the Reformation, when these rebels sought in the new religion an augmented power, and made the most shameful misuse of it to the promotion of their harassing 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 in which we are now about to make.

At much length they draw a distinction between the Baptists and the turbulent Anabaptists of Münster. John of Leyden is described, as are the Münster men. They declare that the Baptists and these turbulent Anabaptists were not the same. They proceed:

We shall now proceed more at length to notice the defense of the worthy Baptists. The Baptists are Protestant Christian 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 time of the Reformation of the Church were existing in the Netherlands. In their flight they came thither in the latter part of the twelfth century. In this country and in Flanders, in Holland, and Zealand they lived as quiet inhabitants, not intermeddling with the affairs of Church and State, in the villages tilling the land, in the cities working at some trade or engaging in traffic, by which means each one was well supplied and in no respect burdensome to society. 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 (Ypeij, A. en Dermout, 1. J., *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*, 1819. Chapter on Baptists).

Gottfried Arnold, born at Annaberg, Saxony, September 5, 1666, was Professor of History in Giessen. In his great book, which made an epoch in Church History, he says:

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 Münster sedition showed themselves so impious and seditious. Nevertheless it is manifestly evident 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, especially the Mennonites, never agreed with the Münsterites (Arnold, *Unparteiischen Kirchen und Ketzler Historie*, II. 479).

The careful discrimination made by these authors is worthy of consideration. The Baptists, or the people ordinarily called Anabaptists, were entirely distinct from these furious persons who were likewise termed Anabaptists. They had nothing in common save that both parties practised rebaptism. The Münster fanatics did not recognize the baptism of the Baptist churches, but rebaptized all alike. This likeness was the occasion of the Roman Catholics calling the Münster men Anabaptists; but they likewise laid the revolt at the door of the followers of Luther and Zwingli. The Lutherans seized upon the point of rebaptism, and in order to clear themselves, they placed the entire uprising on the Baptists. The Baptists has little to do with it. The Lutherans were the historians, and the Baptists have been to this day compelled to bear the blame.

The Peasant Wars were attributed to the Baptists, although Münzer, The leader, practised infant baptism to the close of his life. The Münster insurrection was charged to the Baptists, although it was opposed to a fundamental tenet held by them, that under no condition should a Christian bear arms or in any way engage in a tumult. The Baptists held steadfastly to this view before the Münster insurrection. Grebel and Manz were called "false prophets" because they refused to engage in any entangling political alliances (Keller, *Die Reformation and die alteren Reformationparteien*, 40.) In a meeting of the Anabaptists, in January, 1535, at Sparendam, when the Münster riots were in full swing, they were condemned ten to one. In a large gathering at Bocholt, in Westphalia, in the summer of 1536, the Baptists repudiated the whole movement. The Schleithem Confession of Faith condemned the use of the sword by any Christian. The followers of Menno to this day do not bear arms.

The evidence submitted shows that the Münster insurrection began previous to 1491 and grew out of political disturbances of the times; that it was the opposition of the "common man" to the old feudal system of bishops and nobles; that it was intended to be in the interest of human liberty; that most of the leaders were followers of Luther, and did not become Baptists; that there were many Roman Catholics and many of no religious faith in the movement; that those who were termed Anabaptists in Münster held views divergent from the ordinary tenets of regular Baptists of the period; that the so-called Anabaptists had no vital connection with the great Baptist movement; and had this insurrection succeeded gloriously, as it failed miserably, it would doubtless have been regarded as one of the greatest achievements of human liberty.

The act of baptism practised in Münster has been the occasion of no end of controversy. Since, as it has been seen this was not a representative Baptist movement, but one largely composed of Lutherans, the act of baptism in Münster was not necessarily the practice of the Baptists of the period. After a

somewhat patient investigation it may safely be affirmed that the ordinary form of baptism in Münster was immersion. The evidence is set down impartially.

The *Bekentnisse van Beiden Sacramentem*, The Confession of both Sacraments, which was subscribed to by Bernhardt Rothmann, John Klopries, Hermann Strapade, Henry Roll, Dionysius Vinne and Gottfried Stralen is especially significant. The

Confession says:

What the word *doop* means. Every German knows, of course, the meaning of *doopen* (to dip), and consequently also of *doop* and *doopsel* (dipping). *Doopen* is as much as to say dip or immerse in water, and *doop* is as much as to say a ducking or besprinkling with water. Now, this word *doop*, by reason of its natural signification, may be used of all and every kind of dipping. But in the Christian sense there is not much more than one sort of dipping in water that can be called (*doop*), which is when a person is dipped according to the command of Christ; otherwise, if it be done in a manner, or with a different intent from what Christ and the Apostles practised, it may literally or naturally be called (*doop*), but It can never be called *doop* in the Christian sense; for all dipping in water is In fact, and may be called *doop*, but only that which is done according to the command of Christ is the Christian *doop*.

What the *doop* (baptism) is. ... It is a small matter that I be plunged into water. Indeed, it is of no benefit to the soul that the filth of the flesh be put away; but the certain announcement of a good conscience the putting off of the old man, the laying aside the lust of sin, and endeavor henceforth to live in obedience to the will of God — on this salvation depends, and this Is also that which in baptism is acquired. ...

The dipping, as the Apostles write it, and also used the same, Is to be performed with this understanding. They also who are dipped are therein to confess their faith, and, by virtue of this faith, to be disposed to put off the old man, and henceforth to live in a new conversation; indeed, it is on this condition that the dipping is to be received, by every candidate that he, with the certain announcement of a good conscience, renewed and born again through the Holy Ghost, will forsake all unrighteousness with all works of darkness, and will die to them. And, accordingly, the dipping is a burial of the old man and a raising up of the new man; likewise a door into the holy church, and a putting on of Jesus Christ.

There are some who ... make of the dipping a sign of grace; but this can be proved by no Scripture, that the dipping was intended to be the true token of grace. ... But, well, be it so; let the immersion In water be the sign; we hold, however, that the water does not bring anything more with it, but that it is an external sign. But we pray thee, then, what is the use of the sign, where the reality which is signified is not present? He who gives or receives the sign of

anything without regard to the reality, is he not a traitor? The kiss is the sign of friendship. Judas gave the sign, and had not the reality; how did he fare? Likewise, when one receives a troth penny, accepts the right hand of his friend in token of fidelity, if, in fact, he be found untrue, having not the reality of the sign (which is truth) in his heart, dear friend, what wouldst thou think of such a man? ... and for what wouldst thou value such a sign? ... Accordingly, whoever would rightly receive the external sign must assuredly bring the inward reality along with him; otherwise the sign is false, useless and unworthy of commendation.

Well, then, to be brief, and to reach a conclusion as to what the *doop* is, we say that the dipping is an immersion in water, which the candidate desires and receives as a token that he has died to sin, has been buried with Christ, thereby risen to a new life, thenceforth to walk not in the lust of the flesh, but obediently according to the will of God. They who are thus minded and thus confess, the same should be dipped; and they are also rightly dipped, and thus assuredly receive forgiveness of sins in the dipping, and also admission into the holy church and the putting on of Christ. And this comes to the person dipped, not by virtue of the dipping, nor yet because of the formula employed, "I dip thee," etc., neither by reason of the faith of the fathers and of their uninvited vows and suretyship — it comes to him through his knowledge of Christ, his own faith, and because of his own free will and heart, through the Holy Ghost, he puts off the lusts of the flesh and puts on Christ. And this is briefly what *doop* is, and to whom it should and may be usefully administered.

... After that this gateway was thus destroyed and opened to everybody, the holy church, was also desecrated and injured; and it is to be expected that the holy church itself also shall never be able to reach her glory unless the gateway be built up, and be judged and cleansed of all abominations (Bouterwek, *Zur Literatur und Geschichte der Wiedertauffer*, 6-8. Bonn, 1864).

The original of the Confession is not at hand, and the point might profitably be raised whether the phrase "besprinkled with water" is a part of the original document. Such a phrase appears to be entirely out of harmony with the argument and spirit of the Confession and might be accounted for as a gloss. It is an interesting question and a comparison with the original manuscript, if it can be found, might throw light on the question. Much care needs to be taken in authenticating manuscripts; and none require more accurate consideration than those which treat of Anabaptist history.

It is to be noted, however, that, in the Confession, "besprinkle with water" is not "recognized side by side with immersion as valid baptism," but that the definition is given as a possible one for the doop then used. Only dipping is recognized by the Confession as the proper form of baptism among Christians. "We may say that the baptism is an immersion in water," runs the Confession,

“which the one baptized requests and receives as a true token that he has died to Sin.”

In speaking of the Confession, Dr. Jesse B. Thomas truly remarks:

It seems incredible that the clear distinction between the broader etymological signification of the word *doopen*, and its single exclusive use, accompanied by so elaborately detailed explanation of its specific use could have been simultaneously repudiated by the voluntary substitution in practice of the illegitimate modifications condemned in it (*The Western Recorder*, 1898).

On this point of dipping, Dr. Keller says:

The dipping (*eintauchung*) in water was by all means a sign of the dying of the old man. The very nature of baptism they could conceive to be nothing else; hence, to them, the baptism of unintelligent, thoughtless and speechless children, appeared to them as an abominable blasphemy, and the source of the destruction of all of the apostasy of the holy church (Keller, *Geschichte der Wiedertauffer*, 132).

Heath, the English writer on the Anabaptists, is equally clear on this point. He says:

The “Confession of both Sacraments” describes baptism as a dipping or plunging completely into water, for only under this form can it be spoken of as being buried with Christ (Heath, *The Anabaptists*, 147, 148).

Cornelius, the Roman Catholic writer, says that Rothmann held:

Baptism is the sign through which we exhibit the passage from death to life; as the passage through the Red Sea was unto the children of Israel of the grace of God so it is to us a sure sign of the grace of God to be baptized in the water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Cornelius, *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, I. 132).

Thus speak the scholarly students of the Anabaptists, and they hold that the practice of the Anabaptists of Münster was dipping. There is an instance on record of a baptism in Münster. Heath says: “On January 5, 1534, two Hollanders arrived at Münster, apostles sent out by Jan Matthysz. They used the words: ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ that they denounced the wrath of God on all tyrants and blood-shedders, that they called on the believers in Münster to be baptized and form a true community, in which they should be equal and have all things in common, can hardly be doubted. Rothmann, Klopries, Vinne and Stralen were baptized, and, with Roll, were appointed to baptize others. The rite was performed in Rothmann’s house, and, judging from the terms of the Confession, was probably by immersion. In eight days there were already 1,000 persons baptized in Münster. Of their state of mind they have left this record: ‘In the day God awakened us so that we were

faithful to be baptized, there was poured out a spirit, a brotherly love, rising to the floodtide.’ And of their consecration therein they say: ‘Whatever we now find day by day that God wills among us, that will we do, cost what it may.’” (Heath, *The Anabaptists*, 160).

We have seen elsewhere that the Anabaptists were accustomed to practise dipping in their houses. Dr. Urbanus Rhegius wrote a furious book, from Wittenberg, in 1535, against the Anabaptists of Münster. The Preface of the book was by Martin Luther. He designates the third article of the Anabaptists as an error. He says:

III. The Münster error of holy baptism. In 1 Peter 3. we read that baptism saves, through which we obtain the covenant of good conscience toward God. This demands death of the flesh and all good works. Where no faith is there are no good works, the result is then that faith is necessary to baptism. Then it follows that only true believers can be baptized, Romans 6.

Galatians 3. 1 Peter 3. Acts 2, 8, 10, 16, 22. Conscientiousness and faith must precede, which is not true of children consequently they are not rightly baptized. Therefore one should be baptized right, if one understands and believes. Therefore they drag into ridicule holy baptism and they compare child’s baptism, though they plunge them into water (*inns wasser stekt*), to cat and dog baptism and say that it is mockery and child’s play (Rhegius, *Widderlegung der Münsterischen neuen Valentinaner*. Wittenberg, 1535).

Christopher Andreas Fischer, A.D., 1607, commenting on this article of the Münster Confession, says:

The baptism in water is nothing, but the baptism which is the death of the flesh saves. The child’s baptism is a cat and dog baptism, though they are plunged in the water (*ins wasser steckt*) and is a ridicule and child’s play (Fischer, *Vier and Funffzig Exhebliacke warumb die Wiedertauffer*, 7).

The form of baptism which the enemies of the Anabaptists practised was dipping and the subjects were infants. The form of baptism among the Anabaptists was dipping and the subjects were adult believers. The Anabaptists spoke slightly of the baptism of infants as no better than the baptism of a cat or dog. It will be noticed that the act of baptism was dipping. This was undoubtedly the form of baptism practised by the Anabaptists of Münster. Nothing can be plainer than this. If, therefore, we can trust the statement given by Bouterweg, and the contemporaneous account of Rhegius, who gives the words of the Anabaptists, then the Anabaptists of Münster were in the practice of dipping.

Rhegius argued that one thus baptized possessed the new birth, or water bath, and should, therefore, be baptized. And then follows the passage:



It is God who regenerates us young and old. Our knowledge and work cannot accomplish it but the grace of the Holy Spirit. The same can work alike in the infant child as in the mature man as we see in John the baptist, Luke 1.

A child can have all that is necessary to baptism. One can dip it in the water (*ins wasser tuncke*) at the same time quote the Word of God.

The argument of Rhegius is forceful. As the Anabaptists claimed that only adults ought to be baptized in water; so he thinks baptism will bring the same blessing to children. This argument is unanswerable that immersion was the practice of Münster. Rhegius was quite willing that the Anabaptists should dip adults; if the Anabaptists would allow the dipping of children.

The view of John of Leyden on the form of baptism has been preserved by Hermann Kerssenbrock. This writer knows only what is evil of the Anabaptists and only what is good of their opponents. But he directly says that John of Leyden practised redipping (Kerssenbrock, *Historia belli Monasteriensis*, 15).

The testimony establishes the fact that the so-called Anabaptists of Münster were in the practice of dipping.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Bax, *The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*.

Schaff, VI. 440449.

## CHAPTER 14 — THE BRITISH BAPTIST CHURCHES

The Statement of the Historians — Thomas Crosby — B. Evans — Adam Taylor — Robert Barclay — David Masson — The First Churches in Britain — Missionary Work — The Persecutions — The Early Britons Baptists Crosby — Davis — Immersion — Richards on The Welsh Word — Bede and other Historians — St. Patrick in Ireland — Immersion and the Lord's Supper — Austin — The Saxons — An Attempt to Convert the Britons to Roman Catholic Views — The Differences — Infant Baptism — The First Instance of Infant Baptism — Laws Enacted on the Subject — The Paulicians in England — Hill Cliffe Church — Thomas Walden — The Opinions of the Lollards — William Tyndale — Goadby — Walter Lollard — John Wyclif — His Views on Baptism — Thomas Walden — The Opinions of the Lollards — William Tyndale.

THE existence of Baptist people and principles in England, extending back to remote periods, as related by the historians, is unusually clear and convincing.

Thomas Crosby began the first volume of his history of the English Baptists in 1738, with the story of John Wyclif.

This was the point where Neal had commenced his History of the Puritans. Crosby apparently had not, at the time he began to write, gone deeply into the subject. He had married a daughter of the celebrated Benjamin Keach, was a Baptist deacon, and taught a private school in Southwark. His brother-in-law, Mr. Benjamin Stinton, had gathered material for an English Baptist history. At the time of his death he had only finished the Introduction which was an account of foreign Baptists, in which he traced them back to the times of the Apostles.

Mr. Stinton died and the material came into the hands of Mr. Crosby, who had no intention of writing a history. After vainly trying to induce others to undertake such a work Crosby wrote the history.

The beginning by Crosby of his history of the English Baptists with Wyclif, and the statements he makes in regard to "the reviving of immersion," led to misapprehensions in the minds of some. There was much discussion among English Baptists in regard to the administrator of baptism, and Crosby gives an account of how certain English Protestants were in favor of reviving the ancient practice of immersion, in the time of James I., and again in 1633.

All of this had a confusing effect upon some readers. His history was immediately attacked by the Pedobaptists and criticised by the Baptists. The Rev. John Lewis, a clergyman of the Church of England, in Kent, wrote

against Crosby at great length. He published a volume entitled, “A Brief History of the English Anabaptists,” and besides this he left in manuscript form, in many volumes, his researches concerning the Baptists in England (Rawlinson MSS. C. 409. Bodleian Library). He was violent and venomous, but he gathered much valuable information concerning the Baptists. Crosby replied to Mr. Lewis with spirit. He says: “There were many Anabaptists and learned ones before the year 1600” (Crosby, A Brief Reply to the Rev. Mr. John Lewis, 20. London, 1738).

These criticisms led Crosby to take up the entire subject, and to make some original investigations. These studies led to his second and subsequent volumes.

If there was doubt as to the meaning of Crosby in the first volume there was none in the second. He is strong and clear. In the first volume he traces Baptists through foreign sources to the Apostles, in the second volume he makes out an English line of succession. No advocate of church succession would require a stronger statement. He says:

This great prophet John, had immediate commission from heaven, ~~and~~ Luke 3:2, before he entered upon the actual administration of his office. And as the English Baptists adhere closely to this principle, that John the Baptist was by divine command, the first commissioned to preach the gospel, and baptize by immersion, those that receive it; and that this practice has ever since been maintained and continued in the world to this present day; so it may not be improper to consider the state of religion in this kingdom; it being agreed on all hands, that the plantation of the gospel here was very early, even in the Apostles days (Crosby, A History of the Baptists, II. ii).

Crosby gives a sketch of the preservation of immersion from the days of Christ to the beginning of the seventeenth century. He nowhere intimates that any Baptist church in England ever changed its practice from sprinkling to immersion. He assumes throughout that the Baptists had all along practised immersion. He is at pains to point out that the Continental Anabaptists practised immersion. He believed that immersion had been continuously practised in England since the time “the gospel was preached in Great Britain soon after our Saviour’s death” (II. 9). He says, in speaking of the opinions of Wyclif: “I shall only further observe that the practice of immersion or dipping in baptism, continued in the church until the reign of James I., or about the year 1600” (II. xlvi). By church he evidently meant the Church of England, since he also says “That immersion continued in the Church of England till about the year 1600.” “Yet,” he further says, “there were some who were unwilling to part with this laudable and ancient practice” (II. Iii). He quotes with great approval Sir John Floyer, who says: “The age which has practised sprinkling in England began 1644, and to the present year are 77 years”

(Floyer, *An Essay to Restore the Dipping of Infants*, 61. London, 1722). Once more Floyer says: “Dr. Lightfoot wrote about 1644, near the time that sprinkling was introduced” (Ibid, 33). Such is the testimony of Crosby to the existence of Baptists in England.

No less important is the statement of B. Evans, who wrote an important history of English Baptists. He says:

The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who come over to their communion ... is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained” (Mosheim, IV. cent, xvi. chap. iii. 429). No one conversant with the records of the past can doubt this. The whole facts of history place the truth beyond dispute. I have seen enough to convince me that the present English dissenters, contending for the sufficiency of Scripture, and for primitive Christian liberality to judge of its meaning, may be traced back in authentic manuscripts to the Nonconformists, to the Puritans, to the Lollards, to the Vallenses, to the Albigenses, and I suspect, through the Paulicians and others, to the Apostles (Robinson, *Claude of Turin*, II. 53). Dissidents from the popular church in the early ages, compelled to leave it from the growing corruption of its doctrines and morals, were found everywhere. Men of the apostolic life and doctrine contended for the simplicity of the church and the liberty of Christ’s flock, in the midst of great danger. What the pen failed to do, the sword of the magistrate effected. The Novatians, the Donatists, and others that followed them are examples. They contended for the independence of the church; they exalted the divine Word as the only standard of faith; they maintained the essential purity of the church, and the necessity of a holy life springing from a renewed heart. Extinguished by the sword, not of the Spirit, — their churches broken and scattered, — after years of patient suffering from the dominant sect, the seed which they had scattered sprung up in other lands. Truth never dies. Its vitality is imperishable. In the wild wastes and fastnesses of Europe and Africa it grew. A succession of able and intrepid men taught the same great principles, in opposition to a corrupt and affluent state church, which distinguished modern English Nonconformists; and many of them taught those peculiar views of Christian ordinances which are special to us as Baptists. Beyond all doubt such views were inculcated by the Paulicians, the primitive Waldenses, and their brethren. Over Europe they were scattered, and their converts were very numerous, long before the Reformation shed its light in the darkness of Europe (Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, I. 1. 2).

Adam Taylor, the historian of the English General Baptists, says:

But we may be permitted to state a few facts, which will prove that, in all ages of the church, there have been Baptists, who have heartily joined with the first Baptist, John, in pointing sinners “to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists*, I. 1. 2).

These are the most weighty historians who have written on English Baptist history. It is no less interesting to note that historians who are not Baptists give great antiquity to the Baptists of England. Barclay, a Quaker, who wrote a book, in which he largely treats of the Baptists, says:

As we shall afterwards show, the rise of the Anabaptists took place long prior to the foundation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe, small hidden societies, who held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the times of the Apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of divine truth and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage of succession more ancient than the Roman Church (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, 12).

The testimony of Professor David Masson, of the University of Edinburgh, is important because he gave the matter critical attention. He says:

The Baptists were by far the most numerous of the sectaries. Their enemies (Featley, Paget, Edwards, Baillie, etc.) were fond of tracing them to the anarchial German Anabaptists of the Reformation; but they themselves claimed a higher origin. They maintained, as Baptists still do, that in the primitive or apostolic church the only baptism practised or heard of was an immersion in water; and they maintained further that the baptism of infants was one of the corruptions of Christianity against, which there had been a continued protest by pure and forward spirits in different countries, in ages prior to Luther's Reformation, including some of the English Wyclifites, although the protest may have been repeated in a louder manner, and with wild admixtures, by the German Anabaptists who gave Luther so much trouble (Masson, *The Life of Milton*, V. 146-149. London, 1871).

Thus standard Baptist writers are reinforced by eminent historians who are not Baptists, but who have investigated the history of English Baptists. They all agree in giving great antiquity to the Baptists, and some of them assign an antiquity to them reaching to the days of the Apostles.

The first churches planted in Great Britain were Baptist churches. "The prevalence of Baptists in Britain," says Dr. R.B.C. Howell, "from the earliest times and in no small numbers, will be questioned by no one who is at all familiar with the religious history of the land of our fathers" (Howell. *The Early Baptists of Virginia*).

The tradition is that the gospel was preached in Britain in the apostolic age (Collier, *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, I. 27); though it is difficult to ascertain who first carried it there. The Roman Catholic historian Lingard, who tries in every way to throw doubt upon the early progress of Christianity in Britain, is compelled to admit that in apostolic times "the Christian doctrines were silently disseminated among the natives" (Lingard, *The Anglo-Saxon*

Church, I. 2. London, 1858). We see the light of the world shining, but we do not see who kindled it. Gildas, the most ancient British chronicler, says: “Meanwhile these islands, stiff with cold and frost, and in a distant region of the world, remote from the visible sun, received the beams of light, that is, the holy precepts of Christ, the true Sun, showing to the whole world his splendor, not only from the temporal firmament, but from the height of heaven, which surpasses everything temporal, as the latter part, as we know, of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, by whom his religion was propagated without impediment, and death threatened to those who interfered with its professors” (Gildas, *The Works*, 302).

Missionaries multiplied rapidly. The superstitions of the people gave way and the common people gladly accepted the Word. At length, in the year 180, Lucius was converted. He was the first king to receive baptism (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of England*, 10). He and his people were baptized upon a profession of their faith (Fox, *Martyrology*, I. 1381). It is generally agreed that at this period many pagan temples were turned into edifices for the worship of the true God. Religion had spread so wonderfully that Justin Martyr said:

There is no nation; whether of Barbarians or of Greeks, or any other by what names soever they are called; whether they live in wagons, or without houses, or in tents, among whom prayers are not made, and thanksgiving offered up, to the Father and Creator of all, through the name of the crucified Jesus.

Under Diocletian, about the year 300, the British Christians suffered a fierce persecution. Their books and churches were burnt, and many of them put to death. “God, therefore, who wished all men to be saved, and who calls sinners no less than those who think themselves to be righteous, magnified his mercy toward us, and, as we know, during the above named persecution, that Britain might not be totally enveloped in the dark shades of night, he, of his own free gift, kindled up among us bright luminaries of holy martyrs, whose places of burial and martyrdom, had they not for our manifold crimes been interfered with and destroyed by the barbarians, who have kindled in the minds of the beholders no small fire of divine charity” (Gildas, *The Works*, 303). “Whom I must regard as Baptist martyrs,” says Crosby, “till the Paedobaptists convince me to the contrary” Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, II. xiv).

Were these early Christians Baptists? Crosby makes no qualifications. He says

Now in this enquiry, so much has occurred to me, as carries with it more than a probability, that the first English Christians were Baptists. I could not therefore pass by so material a fact in their favor. And because it cannot be placed where it belongs, I have fixed it by way of preface to this second volume (Crosby, II. To the Reader).

Further on he says:

The true Christian doctrine, and form of worship, as delivered by the Apostles, was maintained in England, and the Romish government and ceremonies, zealously withstood, till the Saxons entered into Britain, about the year 448. During which time there is no mention of any baptizing in England, but adult persons only. And from this silence of history, touching the baptizing of infants in England; from the Britons being said to keep so strictly to the holy Scriptures, in doctrine and in ceremonies; in which there is no mention of the baptizing of infants; and from the accounts of those who were baptized which expressly mention their faith and conversion, the English Baptists have concluded, that there was no such practice as baptizing of infants in England for the first three hundred years after it received the Gospel and certainly he would have a very hard task that should undertake to prove that there was (II. xii).

Davis, the Welsh Baptist historian, says:

Infant baptism was in vogue long before this time (A.D. 600) in many parts of the world, but not in Britain. The ordinances of the Gospel were then administered exclusively there, according to the primitive mode. Baptism by immersion, administered to those who professed repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Welsh Christians considered the only baptism of the New Testament. That was their unanimous sentiment as a nation. from the time that the Christian religion was embraced by them, in 62, until a considerable time after 600 (Davis, History of the Welsh Baptists, 14).

There is no question that baptism was performed by immersion. The original word among the Britons for baptize means to dip (Richards, A Plain and Serious Discourse Concerning Baptism. Lynn, 1793). An instance of baptism is given by the Roman Catholic historian Bede. He says:

The holy days of Lent were also at hand, and were rendered more religious by the presence of the priests, inasmuch as the people being instructed by daily sermons, resorted in crowds to be baptized; for most of the army desired admission to the saving water; a church was prepared with bough's for the feast of the resurrection of our Lord, and so fitted UP in that martial camp, as if it were a city. The army advanced, still wet with the baptismal water; the faith of the people was strengthened; and whereas human power had before been despaired of, the Divine assistance was now relied on (Bede, 31).

For the space of forty years the noted St. Patrick, a Briton born, preached extensively among the Irish, Scotch and Britons. The time of his birth, even the century in which he was born, is unknown. It was probably the close of the fourth century.

No certain data can be given concerning his beliefs. It can, however, be positively stated that he was not a Roman Catholic (Nicholson, St. Patrick. Dublin, 1868); and that he approximated in many things the doctrines of the

Baptists. Cathcart (*Ancient British and Irish Churches*. Philadelphia, 1894) argues at length and with much ability that he was a Baptist. He did not hold to the Roman Catholic idea of church government, and he ordained one or more bishops in every church (Nennius, *Historia Britorum*, 3, 54). He did not believe in purgatory (Hart, *Ecclesiastical Records of England*, xxii).

In regard to the form of baptism Patrick practised immersion upon a profession of faith. During his life he is said to have immersed one hundred and twenty thousand people. He baptized Hercules, a king, in the fountain Loigles, and thousands of others on that day (Todd, *Life of Patrick*, 449).

His opinions on the subject of the Lord's Supper were equally meritorious. Sedulius, an Irishman, who flourished in the fifth century, tells us (*Commentary of 1 Corinthians 11*), that our Lord left "the memorial unto us, just as a person going to a distance leaves a token to him whom he loves, and as often as he sees it he may call to his mind his benefits and friendship" (Hart, *Ecclesiastical Records*, xvii). He also speaks of the elements of the communion as "the sweet meat of the seed of wheat, and the lovely drink of the pleasant vine." The Lord's Supper was taken in both kinds, and there was no mention of transubstantiation.

In the year 597 Gregory the Great sent Austin, or, as he is sometimes called, Augustine, to Britain to convert the Saxons. Gregory when a monk had seen some fair-haired Saxon youths, and when he asked them from what country they came, they replied from the land of the Angles, but Gregory thought they should more appropriately be called angels. He was anxious to go on a missionary journey to this people, but he was so popular in Rome he was raised to the papal see. He did not, however, give up his cherished design to convert the Saxons. He could not go, but he persuaded Austin to undertake the mission, and Austin reached the country in the year indicated; above. Austin was to offer them the most liberal terms, and allow them to retain all of their former practices, if they would submit to baptism. He was not to destroy the heathen temples; only to remove the images of their gods, to wash the walls with holy water, to erect altars and deposit relics in them, and so convert them into Christian churches; not merely to save the expense of new ones, but that the people might easily be prevailed upon to frequent those places of worship to which they had been accustomed. Gregory directed him further to accommodate the services of the Christian worship, as much as possible, to those of the heathen, that the people might not be startled at the change; and in particular, he advised him to allow the Christian converts, on certain festivals, to kill and eat a great number of oxen to the glory of God, as they had formerly done to the glory of the devil (Henry, *The History of Great Britain*, III. 194. London, 1800).



Austin met with success; the king and great numbers of the people were converted to his views, and baptized. They came in so fast that he is said to have baptized ten thousand by immersion in one day in the River Swale (Fuller, Church History of Britain, I. 98).

After his success with the Saxons Austin turned his attention to the British Christians to bring them, if possible, in subjection to the pope. The native Christians did not acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. They did not practise infant baptism. These and other questions greatly perplexed Austin. As he was not able to determine the questions, he wrote Gregory, who gave him the needed instruction (Bede, Ecclesiastical History, 45).

It was finally agreed that Austin should meet representatives of the Britons. In the conference which followed Austin said to them:

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" (Bede, Ecclesiastical History, 71).

Austin affirmed that there were many differences between the Roman Catholics and the British Christians, and the Britons asserted that they were not subject to Austin and would not receive him as archbishop. They differed on the subject of baptism. The Britons did not baptize after the manner of the Roman Church. As there was no difference between them on the act of Baptism as all parties practised immersion, it must have been on the subjects of baptism. There is no proof that the Britons practised infant baptism. Fabyan, an old Roman Catholic writer, explains what Bede meant by "baptism according to the custom of the holy Apostolic Church." Fabyan says of Austin:

Then he said to the: Sins ye wol not assent to my hestes generally assent ye to me specially in in things.

The first is, that ye kepe Ester day in due fourme and tyme as it is ordayned.

The seconde, that ye geve Christendome to children.

And the thyrde is, that ye preache unto the Anglis the words of God, as afortimes I have exhorted you. And all the other deals I shall suffer you to amende and refourme within yourselves, but they would not receave of theyr brethren peace, they should recieve warre and wretche, the which was put in

experience by Ethelfirdus, King of Northumberland (Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, I. 115. London, 1811).

Austin was true to his threat, and he did bring war and wretchedness upon the Baptists of England. Roger de Wendover says that “all of this came to pass in every respect as he had foretold, through the working of God’s vengeance” (Roger de Wendover, *The Flowers of History*, 60). True to the principles of Roman Catholics, and Pedobaptism, an army was sent, with orders that the Britons should be slain, even though they bore no arms. About twelve hundred of them who came to pray are said to have been killed, and only about fifty escaped by flight. The facts in regard to Austin have been summed up as follows: “He found here a plain religion, (simplicity is the badge of antiques), practised by the Britons, living some of them in the contempt, and many more in the ignorance, of worldly vanities, in a barren country; and surely piety is most healthful in those places where it can least surfeit of earthly pleasure. He brought in a religion spun of a coarser thread, though guarded by a finer trimming, made luscious to the senses with pleasing ceremonies; so that many, who could not judge of the goodness, were courted with the gaudiness therof. Indeed, the papists brag, that he was ‘the apostle to the English,’ but not one in the style of St. Paul” (Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, I. 101).

The first instance of infant baptism on record in England occurred in the year 626. King Edwin promised Paulinus, the Roman Catholic archbishop, that he would believe in his God if he would give him the victory over his enemy Quichelm, “and as a pledge of his fulfilling his promise, he gave orders that his daughter should be baptized” (Roger de Wendover, *Flowers of History*, 67). In the following year Edwin was immersed in York by Paulinus. On going with the king to his country place, the zeal of the people was so great, that for thirty-six days, Paulinus, “from morning to night, did nothing else but instruct the people resorting from all the villages and places, in Christ’s saving word; and when instructed, he washed them with the water of absolution in the river Glen, which was close by” (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 96-98). In like manner he baptized great numbers in the river Swale.

The Roman Catholics enforced infant baptism with great difficulty. The laws of the Northumbrians, A.D. 950, demanded:

Every infant to be baptized within nine days, upon pain of six ores; and if the infant die a pagan (unbaptized) within nine days, let the parents make satisfaction to God without any lawful mulet; if after he is nine days old, let him pay twelve ores to the priest besides (Wilkins, *Councils*, I. 228).

The 15th canon made in King Edgar’s time, A.D. 960, reads:

That every infant be baptized in thirty-seven nights; and that no one delay too long to be confirmed by the bishop (Hart, *Ecclesiastical Records*, 196).

The Constitutions of the Synod of Amesbury, A.D. 977, were drawn up by Oswald, and required children to be baptized in nine days of their birth. In commenting upon this decree Collier, the English Church historian, says:

It is plain as will be shown farther, by and by, that the English Church used the rite of immersion. It seems that they were not at all discouraged by the coldness of the climate, nor thought the primitive custom impracticable in the northern regions; and if an infant would be plunged into the water at nine days old, without receiving any harm, how unreasonable must their scruples be who decline bringing their children to public baptism for fear of danger? How unreasonable, I say, must this scruple be when immersion is altered to sprinkling? (Collier, Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, I. 471).,

After the year 1000 the Paulicians began to make their appearance in England. In 1154 a body of Germans migrated into England, driven into exile by persecution. A portion of them settled in Oxford. William Newberry (*Rerum Anglicarum*, 125. London, 1667) tells of the terrible punishment meted out to the pastor Gerhard and the people. Six years later another company of Paulicians entered Oxford. Henry II ordered them to be branded on the forehead with hot irons, publicly whipped through the streets of the city, to have their garments cut short at the girdles, and be turned into the open country. The villages were not to afford them any shelter or food, and they perished a lingering death from cold and hunger (Moore, *Earlier and Later Nonconformity in Oxford*, 12).

At an early date a Baptist church was located at Hill Cliffe, near Warrington, in Cheshire. English Baptists constantly mention this church as having had its origin far beyond the Reformation. The historian Goadby appears to give a fair representation of the facts. He says:

We have reliable evidence that a Separatist, and probably a Baptist church, has existed for several centuries in a secluded spot of Cheshire, on the borders of Lancashire, about a mile and a half from Warrington. No spot could be better chosen for concealment than the site on which this ancient chapel stood. Removed from all public roads, enclosed by a dense wood, affording ready access into two counties, Hill Cliffe was admirably situated for the erection of a "conventicle", an illegal conventicle. The ancient chapel built on this spot was so constructed that the surprised worshippers had half a dozen secret ways of escaping from it, and long proved a meeting place suited to the varying fortunes of a hated and hunted people. Owing to the many changes inseparable from the eventful history of the church at Hill Cliffe, the earliest records have been lost. But two or three facts point to the very early existence of the community itself. In 1841 the old chapel was enlarged and modernized; and in digging for the foundation, a large baptistery of stone, well cemented, was discovered. How long this had been covered up, and at what period it was erected, it is impossible to state; but as some of the tombstones in the

graveyard adjoining the chapel were erected in the early part of the sixteenth century, there is some probability for the tradition that the chapel itself was built by the Lollards who held Baptist opinions. One of the dates on the tombstones is 1357, the time when Wyclif was still a fellow at Merton College, Oxford; but the dates most numerous began at the period when Europe had just been startled by Luther's valliant onslaught upon the papacy. ... Many of these tombstones, and especially the oldest, as we can testify from a personal investigation, look as clear and as fresh as if they were engraved only a century ago. ... Hill Cliffe is undoubtedly one of the oldest Baptist churches in England, ... The earliest deeds of the property have been irrevocably lost, but the extant deeds, which go back considerably over two hundred years, describe the property as being "for the Anabaptists" (Goadby, *Bye Paths of Baptist History*, 23).

The latest book on the subject is by James Kenworthy. He says: "On the subject of baptism they have always followed the practice of the Christians of the New Testament and of the early churches — baptism by immersion or dipping" (Kenworthy, *History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe*, 14).

Walter Lollard, a Dutchman, of remarkable eloquence, came, according to Fuller, into England, in the reign of Edward III., "from among the Waldenses, among whom he was a great bard or pastor." His followers rapidly increased so that Abelard declared "our age is imperiled by heretics, that there seems to be no footing left for the true faith." Knighton, the English chronicler, says: "More than one-half of the people of England, in a few years, became Lollards" (Knighton, col. 2664). Hallam says in his *History of the Middle Ages*: "An inundation of heresy broke in the twelfth century over the church, which no persecution was able to repress, till it finally overspread half the surface of Europe." The clergy were so alarmed that they dispatched the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London, to the King in Ireland, to entreat him to immediately return to England, to protect the church which was in danger of destruction. "As soon," says a contemporary historian, "as the king heard the representation of the commissioners, being inspired by the divine spirit, he hastened into England, thinking it more necessary to defend the church than to conquer kingdoms" (Walsingham, *Historia Anglica*, VIII. 213). This address of the commissioners was occasioned by the Lollards having affixed a number of theses to the church doors against the scandalous lives of the clergy and the received doctrines of the sacraments (Collier, *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, III. 213).

At this period, A.D. 1371, Wyclif was the greatest man in England. He was educated at Oxford and none doubted his learning. Knighton, who was his enemy, described him as "second to none in philosophy, in scholastic discipline altogether incomparable." The popularity of the doctrines of Wyclif at Oxford is abundantly attested by the reiterated complaints of Archbishop

Arundel, who affirmed that Oxford was a vine that brought forth wild and sour grapes, which, being eaten by the fathers, the teeth of the children were set on edge; so that the whole Province of Canterbury was tainted with novel and damnable Lollardism, to the intolerable and notorious scandal of the University. “She who formerly was the mother of virtues, the prop of the, Catholic faith, the singular pattern of obedience, now brings forth only abortive children, who encourage contumacy and rebellion, and sow tares among pure wheat” (Le Bas, *The Life of Wyclif*, 278).

Thomas Walden, who had access to the writings of Wyclif, charges him with holding the following opinions:

That it is a blasphemy to call any “head of the church” save Christ alone. That Rome is not the seat in which Christ’s vicar doth reside. That the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church of Rome, in matters of faith, is the greatest blasphemy of anti-Christ. That in the times of the Apostles, there were only two orders, namely, priests and deacons, and that of bishop doth not differ from a priest. That it is lawful for a clergyman to marry. That he defined the church to consist only of persons predestinated. That those are fools and presumptuous who affirm such infants not to be saved who die without baptism; and also, that he denied that all sins are abolished in baptism. That baptism does not confer, but only signifies grace, which was given before (Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, I. 441).

The above paragraph contains, as far as it goes, a satisfactory statement of doctrine. Upon the Lord’s Supper and other matters of belief Walsingham says:

That the eucharist, after consecrations, was not the true body of Christ but only an emblem or a sign of it. That the Church of Rome is no more the head of all churches than any other church, and that St. Peter had no greater authority than the rest of the apostles. That the pope of Rome has no more jurisdiction in the exercise of the keys than a common priest. That the Gospel is a sufficient direction for the life and government of a Christian. That all other supplementary rules, instituted by holy men, and practised in the monasteries, give no more improvement to Christianity than whiteness does to a wall. That neither the pope, nor any other prelate, ought to have prisons for the punishment of offenders against discipline; but every person ought to go at large, and have his liberty, both in notion and practice (Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, 191).

It is evident that Wyclif made great advances in reform over the Roman Catholic Church of his day. Year after year marked a further departure from Rome and her dogma. In nothing was this more manifest than in infant baptism. In the early years Wyclif firmly believed in the efficacy of infant baptism, but in later years he appears to have greatly modified his views.

Thomas Walden goes so far as to call him “one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pit for denying infant baptism, that heresy of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ring-leader.” Walsingham says: “That damnable heretic, John Wyclif, reassumed the cursed opinions of Berangarius” (Walsingham, *Ypod. Neust.*, 133), of which it is certain denying infant baptism was one. Collier expressly tells us “he denied the necessity” of infant baptism (Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, III. 185). The statement of Collier is unquestioned. Wyclif did not deny infant baptism itself, but the necessity of it. He did not believe that a child dying unbaptized would be lost (Wall, *History of Infant Baptism*, I. 436, 437). This was greatly in advance of the age and marked Wyclif at once a heretic and “an enemy of the Church.”

There is no effort in this place to assign Wyclif to a position among Baptist martyrs, but there is no doubt he held firmly to many Baptist positions. Crosby, on the other hand, declares he was a Baptist and argues the question at great length. “I am inclined to believe that Mr. Wyclif,” says he, “was a Baptist, because some men of great note and learning in the Church of Rome, have left it upon record, that he denied infant baptism.” Among other authorities he quotes Joseph Vicecomes (*De Rit. Bapt.*, lib. ii. chap. i). “Besides,” continues Crosby, “they charged him with several of those which are called Anabaptistical errors; such as refusing to take an oath (art. 41. condemned by the Council of Constance), and also that opinion, that dominion is founded in grace (Fuller, *Church History of Great Britain*, I. 444, Art. 51). Upon these testimonies, some Protestant writers have affirmed that Wyclif was a Baptist, and have put him in the number of those who have borne witness against infant baptism. And had he been a man of scandalous character, that would have brought reproach upon those of that profession, a less proof would have been sufficient to have ranked him among that sect” (Crosby, *The History of English Baptists*, I. 8, 9).

No doubt the sentiments of Wyclif, on many points, were the same as those of the Baptists, but there is no document known to rife that warrants the belief that he was a Baptist (Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, I. 13).

It is certain that the Lollards, who had preceded Wyclif and had widely diffused their opinions, repudiated infant baptism (Neal, *History of the Puritans*, II. 354). The testimony of Neal is interesting. He says:

That the denial of the right of infants to baptism was a principle generally maintained among Lollards, is abundantly confirmed by the historians of those times, (Neal, *History of the Puritans*, II. 354).

The followers of Wyclif and Lollard united and in a short time England was full of the “Bible Men.” “‘Tis, therefore, most reasonable to conclude,” says Crosby, “that those persons were Baptists, and on that account baptized those

that came over to their sect, and professed the true faith, and desired to be baptized into it” (Crosby, I. 17).

The Lollards practised believers’ baptism and denied infant baptism. Fox says one of the articles of faith among them was “that faith ought to precede baptism.” This at least was the contention of a large portion of those people.

The Lollard movement was later merged into the Anabaptist, and this was hastened by the fact that their political principles were identical (Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, VI. 123). The Lollards continued to the days of the Reformation. Mosheim says: “The Wyclifites, though obliged to keep concealed, had not been exterminated by one hundred and fifty years of persecution” (Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, III. 49).

Davis (*History of the Welsh Baptists*, 21) claims that William Tyndale (A. D. 1484-1536) was a Baptist. He was born near the line between England and Wales, but lived most of the time in Gloucestershire. “Llewellyn Tyndale and Hezekiah Tyndale were members of the Baptist church at Abergaverney, South Wales.” There is much mystery around the life of Tyndale. Bale calls him “the apostle of the English.” “He was learned, a godly, and a good-natured man” (Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, II. 91). It is certain he shared many views held by the Baptists; but that he was a member of a Baptist church is nowhere proved. He always translated the word *ecclesia* by the word *congregation*, and held to a local conception of a church (Tyndale, *Works* II. 13. London, 1831). There were only two offices in the church, pastor and deacons (I. 400). The elders or bishops should be married men (I. 265). Upon the subject of baptism he is very full. He is confident that baptism does not wash away sin. “It is impossible,” says he, “that the waters of the river should wash our hearts” (Ibid, 30). Baptism was a plunging into the water (Ibid, 287). Baptism to avail must include repentance, faith and confession (III. 179). The church must, therefore, consist of believers (Ibid, 25). His book in a wonderful manner states accurately the position of the Baptists.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

THOMAS FULLER, *The Church History of Britain*, 2 volumes.

JEREMY COLLIER, *The Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*. 9 volumes.

## CHAPTER 15. — THE BAPTISTS IN THE REFORMATION PERIOD IN ENGLAND.

Henry VIII. — The Persecution of the Baptists — The Hatred of the King — The Opinions of the Baptists — Alice Grevill — Simon Fish — A Royal Proclamation Against Strangers — The Coming of the Dutch — The Baptists Burnt — Stowe — Froude — A Sensation — The Baptists Increase Daily — Their Numbers — Their Churches — Immersion — “The Sum of the Holy Scripture” — Immersion Among the Baptists — The Donatists — Fuller — Featley — Edward VI — The Baptists Increase in Numbers in London — In Kent and Elsewhere — In Essex — Baptists Burnt — The Influence of John Calvin — Joan of Kent — The Practice of Immersion — The Baptism of Adults — J. Bales — Giles Van Bellen — Robert Cooke and Dr. Turner — Queen Mary — She Attempts to Reestablish Romanism — Phillip II., of Spain — Bishop Gardiner — Edward Bonner — The Baptists Were Numerous — Shoals of Them From Abroad — Immersion — The Martyrs — Queen Elizabeth — The Name Baptists — Their Churches — The Coming From Over — Seas — The Heavy Hand of the Law — More Baptists Burnt — The Independents — Learn Their Ideas From the Baptists — Immersion the Rule — Immersion Among the Baptists — James I. — The Baptists Not Numerous in His Reign — The Burning of Edward Wightman — A petition to the House of Lords — An Humble Supplication to the King — An Appeal for Liberty of Conscience — Mark Leonard Busher.

THE Reformation period was of long duration in England. It began with Henry VIII and really did not end till the Long Parliament which beheaded Charles I. During this formative time the Creed, the Liturgy, and the Practice of the Church of England were determined.

Henry VIII (1509-1547) came to the English throne under the most favorable circumstances. He was young, cultivated, brilliant, and endowed with all those social and mental qualities which sent a thrill to the heart of the nation and inspired the most sanguine hopes for the future. He had a splendid coronation, for his father had left him ample means to gratify his love for display. He married his deceased brother's wife, Catherine of Spain, after a solemn repudiation of the lawfulness of the former contract. This was the beginning of his troubles, and the occasion of endless disputes and ultimately the separation of the Church of England from Rome.

As much as Henry VIII hated the papal party, after he had broken with the Pope, he had still more hatred for the Baptists, at home and abroad. Neither threats nor cajolery prevented the spread of the Baptists. Like the Israelites in Egypt, “the more they were afflicted, the more they grew.”



The history of the Baptists of England, in the times of Henry VIII, is written in blood. He had scarcely come to the throne before proceedings were begun against them, and they were persecuted to the death.

The chief agent of the king in these persecutions was William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. There appeared before him, at the Mansion at Knoll, May 2, 1511, a number of persons. “Then I say, “says Crosby, “it is evident that they were opposers of infant baptism at that time, and then the rise of the Baptists is not of such late date as some would have it” (Crosby, *The History of the Baptists*, I. 30). They were required to renounce the following articles:

- 1.** That in the sacrament of the altar is not the body of Christ, but material bread.
- 2.** That the sacrament of baptism and confirmation are not necessary, or profitable for men’s souls.
- 3.** That confession of sins ought not to be made to a priest.
- 4.** That there is no more power given by God to a priest than to a layman.
- 5.** That the solemnization of matrimony (by a priest) is not profitable or necessary for the well of a man’s soul.
- 6.** That the sacrament of extreme unction is not profitable or necessary to a man’s soul.
- 7.** That pilgrimages to holy and devout places be not profitable, neither meritorious for man’s soul.
- 8.** That images of saints are not to be worshipped.
- 9.** That a man should pray to no saint, but only to God.
- 10.** That holy water, and holy bread, be not the better after the benediction made by the priest, than before (Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, I. 27).

All were punished. Alice Grevill, who had been a Baptist for twenty-eight years, was condemned to death. Simon Fish and James Bainham, in the year 1525, belonged to a Baptist church, located in Bow Lane. Fish was a theologian and a pamphleteer. He was educated in Oxford, came to London and entered Gray’s Inn, about 1525. He was denounced as a damnable heretic, and in 1531 he died of a plague. His wife, who was suspected of heresy, married Bainham, who was burnt for heresy in 1532. He was a lawyer of high character and Burnet says “that for true generosity, he was an example to the age in which he lived.” This is truly a remarkable testimony coming as it does from a bishop of the Church of England. Under examination he said that “the

truth of the holy Scriptures was never these eight hundred years past so plainly and expressly declared to the people as it had been within these six years.” He demanded that only believers should be baptized in this militant church (Fox, Book of Martyrs, II. 329, 330). There was then an organized Baptist church, in London, in the practice of believers’ immersion in the year 1525. He died a triumphant death, at the stake, April 20, 1532, at Smithfield.

The law against heretics was strengthened, in 1534-5. The most alarming letters were sent into England, by English foreign officials, as to the insubordination of the Anabaptists, on the Continent. Henry VIII was already interested in the extermination of the Baptists, and his zeal extended to foreign lands. He extended his help in exterminating the Baptists in Germany (Gardiner, Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, VII. 167).

The interest of the king was not confined to Germany. In the same year a royal proclamation was issued, in which it is said that many strangers are coming into this realm, 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” (Wilkins, Concilia, III. 779). They did not return to the Continent and continued under the royal inspection (Cottonian MSS., Titus B.I. vol. 415).

This law was soon placed into operation. The old Chronicler Stowe, A.D. 1533, relates the following details:

The 25th day of May were — in St. Paul’s Church, London — examined nineteen men and six women, born in Holland, whose opinions were, First, that Christ is not two natures, God and man; secondly, that Christ took neither flesh nor blood of the Virgin Mary; thirdly, that children horn of infidels may be saved: fourthly, that baptism of children is of none effect, fifthly, that the sacrament of Christ’s body is but bread only, sixthly, that he who after baptism sinneth wittingly, sinneth deadly, and cannot be saved. Fourteen of them were condemned; a man and a woman were burnt at Smithfield; the other twelve of them were sent to other towns, there to be burnt.

Froude the English historian, gives a beautiful tribute to their fidelity. He says:

The details are all gone, their names are gone. Poor Hollanders they were and that is all. Scarcely the fact seems worth the mentioning, so shortly is it told in a passing paragraph. For them no Europe was agitated, no courts were ordered in mourning, no papal hearts trembled with indignation. At their death the world looked on complacent, indifferent, or exulting. Yet here, too, out of twenty-five poor men and women were found fourteen who by no terror of stake or torture could be tempted to say they believed what they did not believe. History has for them no word of praise; yet they, too, were not giving their blood in vain. Their lives might have been as useless as the lives of most

of us. In their deaths they assisted to pay the purchase money for England's freedom (Froude, History of England, II. 385).

The burning of the Baptists caused a profound sensation. It became a matter of court correspondence throughout Europe. One who has not studied the subject in the light of recent revealed facts cannot appreciate the large place the Baptists occupied in the public mind in the sixteenth century. But the burnings continued to the end of the reign of this king.

The Baptists died with the greatest fortitude. Of them Latimer says:

The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England as I have heard of credible men, I saw them not myself, went to their death, even intrepid, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go (Latimer, Sermons, I. 143).

The Landgrave of Hesse, in examining certain Baptists in Germany, found letters in their hands in regard to England. The letters showed that "the errors of that sect daily spread" in England. He wrote a violent letter to Henry and warned him against the Anabaptists. In October, 1538, the king appointed a Commission composed of Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President, with other distinguished men to prosecute the Anabaptists.

The result was that the books of the Baptists were burnt wherever they were found. On November 16, following, the king issued a proclamation to the effect that none were "to sell or print 'any books of Scripture', without the Supervision of the king, one of the councils, or a bishop. Sacramentarians, Anabaptists, and the like, who sell books of false doctrine, are to be detected to the king or Privy Council" (Titus MSS. B.I. 527). All strangers who "lately rebaptized themselves" were ordered from the kingdom, and some Baptists were burnt at the stake.

The thoughtful reader has doubtless frequently asked how many Baptists there were in England in the reign of Henry VIII. The question can only approximately be answered. There were probably more Baptists there at the period under survey than there were in America at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Ammonius, under dates 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" (Brewer, Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, I. 285). Erasmus replied that Ammonius "has reason to be angry with the heretics for increasing the price of fuel for the coming Winter" (Ibid, 297). This was horrible jesting.

It was regarded as a great feat to discover and break up "a bed of snakes," as their meetings were called. Erasmus, under date of February 28, 1528, wrote to

Moore: "The heresy of the Anabaptists is much more widely diffused than any one suspects" (Brewer, Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, IV. pt. ii. 1771). The Bishop of Faenza, June 8, 1535, wrote to M. Ambrogio that the Anabaptists already have "a firm footing in England" (Gardiner, Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, IX. 344). Hackett, an English official, places their number at 6,000 and daily increasing. He says:

Said that the king's justice and amiable and good entreating toward his subjects would preserve the rearm against all adversity, and he marveled that those whose eyesight was so sharp as to see the fire that burns before their own doors, and the commotion of this new sect of rebaptizement, which now numbers 6,000, and is daily increasing (Brewer, Henry VIII., VII. 136).

One town had more than 500 Baptists in it. Latimer, who was a contemporary, says of their numbers:

I should have told you of a certain sect (the margin says they were Anabaptists) of heretics that spake against their order and doctrine; they have no magistrates or judges no the earth. Here I have to tell you what I have heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and worshipful man, of a town in this realm of England that bath above five hundred of heretics of this erroneous opinion in it (Latimer, Sermons, V. 151. Parker Society).

Petrus Taschius, under date of September 1, 1538, says "In England the truth silently but widely is propogated and powerfully increases" (Corp. of the Reformation, III. 580).

Immersion was the universal rule of baptism in the reign of Henry VIII. There are two elaborate rituals of the Church of England at this period. The one is: "A Declaration of the Seremonies to the Sacrament of Baptysm," A.D. 1537; and the other is the "Saulsbury Liturgy," 1541. The last is regarded, by some, as the most sacred Liturgy belonging to the Church of England. Both of these liturgies enforce immersion. Erasmus, writing from England in 1532, gives the English practice. He says: "We dip children all over in cold water, in a stone font." Every English monarch of the sixteenth century was immersed. Henry VIII and his elder brother Arthur, Elizabeth in 1533 and Edward VI in 1537 were all immersed.

The form of baptism among the Baptists is equally clear. Simon Fish was compelled to flee beyond the seas and while there he translated the old Baptist book, *The Sum of the Holy Scripture*. This old Dutch book demanded the immersion of the believer and denied infant baptism. It was printed in England in 1529. Through the next fifty years many editions of the book appeared in England (Fish, *The Sum of Holy Scripture*. British Museum, C. 37 a. Arber proper dialogues in *Rede me and not Wroth*. English Reprints, 1871), and it became the Baptist text book next to the New Testament. There were editions

of the book printed in England in 1547, 1548 and 1550 (British Museum, C. 37 a). There are copies of two editions in the Library of the University of Cambridge. All of these editions exhibit the same bold language against the baptism of infants, and in favor of the immersion of believers as the only act of baptism. The book was secretly published in the face of the greatest hostility, condemned by the decrees of councils and persistently circulated by the Baptists (Ex. reg. Warham, 188).

The quaint and queer old Church historian Fuller, in giving a reason for the coming of so many Dutch Baptists to England, also mentions something of their doctrines, their practice of immersion and activities. He says:

A match being now made up, by the Lord Cromwell's contrivance, betwixt King Henry and Lady Anne of Cleves, Dutchmen flocked faster than formerly into England. Many of them had active souls; so that whilst their hands were busied about their manufactures, their heads were also beating about points of divinity: Hereof they had many crude notions, too ignorant to manage themselves and too proud to crave the directions of others. Their minds had a by-stream of activity more than what sufficed to drive on their vocation: and this waste of their 'souls they employed in needless speculations, and soon after began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of Anabaptists. These Anabaptists for the main, are but "Donatists new dipt," and this year their name first appears in our English chronicles, etc, (Fuller, Church History of Britain, H. 27).

Fuller was wrong in stating that these were the first Anabaptists who appeared in England. He was right, however, in declaring that they were in the practice of dipping. The "Donatists new dipt" and the allusion to the "bye-streams," show, of course, that the Baptists practised dipping. The statement is incapable of any other construction. Fuller was born in 1609 and wrote his history in 1654. He was an eye witness of much of the times through which Baptists passed in their persecutions, and this account is peculiarly valuable.

There is another author who lived only a short distance from Fuller and published a book one year after the appearance of Fuller's history. He is the author of the book "The Anabaptists Routed." He also refers to the Donatists in connection with the Anabaptists. In fact the Donatists seem to have been a current name by which the Baptists were called. What Fuller mentions in a figure of speech this author states in plain words. He declares:

Anabaptists not only deny believers' children baptism, as the Pelagians and Donatists did of old, but affirm that dipping the whole body under water is so necessary that without it none are truly baptized (as has been said) (The Anabaptists Routed, 171, 172).

Daniel Featley, D.D., the opponent of the Baptists, born in 1582, also declares that the Baptists of the reign of Henry VIII practised dipping. He says:

Let the punishment bear upon it the print of the sin, for as these sectaries drew one another into their errors, so also into the gulfe; and as they drown men spiritually by rebaptizing, and so profaning the holy sacrament, as also they were drowned corporally. In the year of our Lord 1539, two Anabaptists were burnt beyond Southwark (Featley, *The Dippers Dipt*).

It will be noticed that Fuller says these Baptists were from Cleves, where the Baptists in 1534 were numerous (Seller, *Preussische Jahrbücher*, September, 1882). The Baptists of this Dukedom practised dipping in water (Rembert, *Die Wiedertauffer in Hexogtum Jülich*, 253).

The practice of immersion was universal in the reign of Henry VIII. It was the form of baptism of all parties and there is no known testimony to the contrary. The Church of England practised immersion. The Catholics practised immersion. The Baptists practised immersion.

In the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) the laws against the Baptists were enforced, and the two persons burned at the stake in this reign were Baptists. Others were safe, had the protection of the laws, even criminals were pardoned, but to be a Baptist was a grave crime. This sterling young king, merciful to an astonishing degree, for his heart was peculiarly kind and tender, visited upon the Baptists a cruelty that reminded one of a wild beast.

The Baptists steadily increased in numbers. They were found in the court, and among the common people, in the town and in the country. Bishop Burnet says: "There were many Anabaptists in many parts of England" (Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, II. 110). Heylyn says: "And at the same time, the Anabaptists, who had kept themselves unto themselves in the king's time, began to look abroad, and disperse their dotages" (Heylyn, *History of the Reformation*, I. 152). Bishop Fowler Short says: "Complaints had been brought to the Council of the prevalence of the Anabaptists. ... To check the progress of these opinions a Commission was appointed" (*Short History of the Church of England*, VI. 543). These references had to do with the Baptists throughout the country.

Their numbers in London were great. Bishop John Hooper wrote to Henry Bullinger, under date of June 25, 1549, as follows: "The Anabaptist flock to this place (London) and give me much trouble." (Ellis, *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, I. 65). In 1550 Ridley was Bishop of London. In "the articles to be enquired of", early in June, the clergy were ordered to ascertain

Whether any speak against infant baptism., Whether any of the Anabaptists' met, or other, use notoriously any unlawful or private conventicle (churches), whether they do use doctrine or administration of sacraments, separating themselves from the rest of the parish (British Museum C. 53 aa 11)

Here is a direct official statement that there were Baptist conventicles, or churches, in London. Some of these churches were "notorious," and some of them more "private." These churches "do use doctrine," had "the administration of the sacraments," that is, they baptized and observed the Lord's Supper, and they were separated from the parish churches. That is to say, there were fully organized Baptist churches in London in the year 1550.

The information is equally positive that there were Baptist churches in Kent. Bishop John Hooper, June 26, 1550, writes regarding this district as follows: "That district is troubled with the frenzy of the Anabaptists more than any other part of the kingdom" (Ellis, Original Letters, I. 87). Strype says: "There were such assemblies [churches] in Kent" (Strype, Memorials, II. 266). Such congregations were in Feversham, Maidstone and, Eythorne.

The Baptists of Kent had a number of eminent ministers. Such was Cole of Feversham. Henry Hart began preaching in the reign of Henry VIII. He was strict and holy in life but hot in his opinions. He, with several others, was thrown into prison. Humphrey Middleton was another. When he was cast into prison he said to the Archbishop: "Well, reverend sir, pass what sentence you think fit upon us; but that you may not say that you were forewarned. I testify that your turn will be next." It accordingly came to pass that upon the release of Middleton the Archbishop was thrown into prison. Another preacher in Kent was John Kemp who "was a great traveler abroad in Kent, instructing and confirming the gospellers" (Strype, Annals of the Reformation, II. ii. 284).

There is much important information in regard to the Baptist churches in Essex (Strype, Memorials Ecclesiastical, II. i. 369). There was an organized Baptist church at Bocking (Strype, Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer, I. 334. Also Lansdowne MSS., 930. 95). "The Bocking-Braintree church book, which is still in existence, carries the authentic records of the church for more than two hundred years; but there is no question that the origin of the church dates back to the days of Edward VI" (Goadby, Bye Paths in Baptist History, 26-28). John Veron, in 1551, writing to Sir John Gates, says:

For this our country of Essex, in which many of these libertines and Anabaptists are running in, "hoker moker," among the simple and ignorant people to incite and move them to tumult and insurrection to magistrates and rulers of this realm. Whence I trust if ye once know them, ye will soon weed out of this country to the great good and quiet of the king's subjects of the same county and shire (Tracts on the Liberty of Conscience, cx).

Only two Baptists were burnt during the reign of Edward VI. Burnet says there were two kinds of Anabaptists in the country. Says he:

For the other sort of Anabaptists who only denied infant baptism, I find no severity used against them, but several books were written against them, to which they wrote some answers (Burnet, History of the Reformation, II. 112).

The influence of John Calvin had begun to be felt in English affairs. His books had appeared in translations in England. He was responsible in a large measure for the demon of hate and fierce hostility which the Baptists of England had to encounter. He advised that "Anabaptists and reactionists should be alike put to death" (Froude, History of England, V. 99). He wrote a letter to Lord Protector Somerset, the translation was probably made by Archbishop Cranmer (Calvin to the Protector, MSS. Domestic Edward VI, V. 1548), to the effect: "These altogether deserve to be well punished by the sword, seeing that they do conspire against God, who had set him in his royal seat."

The first to be burnt in this reign was Joan of Kent, who was probably a member of the church at Eythorne (Evans, The History of the English Baptists, I. 72 note). She was a pious and worthy woman, and a great reader of the Scriptures. She was arrested in the year 1548 on the charge of heresy and she was burnt April 30, the following year.

The other Baptist who suffered martyrdom in this reign was George van Pare. He was by profession a surgeon. He could not speak English and had to plead his cause through an interpreter. Burnet says of his death:

He suffered with great constancy of mind, and kissed the stake and faggots that were to burn him. Of this Pare I find a popish writer saying, that he was a man of most wonderful strict life, that he used to eat not more than once in two days, and before he would eat he would lie sometimes in his devotions prostrate on the ground (Burnet, History of the Reformation, II. i. 112).

All parties in the reign of Henry VIII practised immersion and there was but slight change in the reign of Edward VI. Twice was the Prayer Book revised during this period, and the form of baptism prescribed in both books was immersion. A slight concession was made in the last Prayer Book of Edward, possibly to the growing influence of Calvin, but more probably from a dread that children dying unbaptized would be lost, to the effect that if the child be weak it would suffice to pour water upon it. This was the first time that fine "clothes," or a desire for worldly show, was permitted to enter into the ceremony of baptism.

In such instances pouring was permitted but it was performed with the greatest hesitation and doubt. Tyndale says:



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" (Tyndale, Works, III. 289).

Instructions were further given to the archdeacons, in 1553, as follows:

Whether there be any who will not suffer the priest to dip the child three times in the font, being yet strong and able to abide and suffer it in the judgment and opinion of discreet and expert persons, but will needs have the child in the clothes, and only be sprinkled with a few drops of water (Hart, Ecclesiastical Records, 87).

Immersion was insisted upon in all cases where it could be performed. In the Catechismus, that is to say, a Short Instruction into the Christian Religion there is a Sermon on Baptism. There is a picture representing a number of adults being baptized by immersion. The Sermon further says:

For what greater shame can there be, than a man to profess himself to be a Christian man, because he is baptized, and yet he knoweth not what baptism is, nor what strength the same hath, nor what the dipping in the water doth betoken. ... For baptism and the dipping into water doth betoken, that the old Adam, with all his sin and evil lusts, ought to be drowned and killed by daily contrition and repentance (Sermon on Baptism, ccxxiii).

Provision was made for the baptism of adults and only immersion was allowed. The Catechism of Edward VI provided:

Him that believeth in Christ, professeth the articles of the Christian faith, and mindeth (I speak now of them that are grown of ripe years) the minister dippeth in or washeth in pure clean water, in the name of, etc.

In the very year that Edward came to the throne, A.D. 1547, J. Bales wrote a book against the Baptists (A breyfe and plain declaration ... Anabaptists). He had been accused of holding Baptist principles and this book was a reply to the charge. He declares that they "that be of age" as well as infants "ought to be baptized" "in the fountain of regeneration." He thought that grown people ought to be immersed upon a profession of faith. He says when he thus speaks of baptism he is called an Anabaptist. According to Bales an Anabaptist is one who immersed those that be of age in a fountain. Bales continues:

If he speaks anything concerning the abuse of the ceremonies and sacraments: what exlaminations do they make and how do they report him to be a sacramentary. If ye speak anything of baptisme: declaring that neither the holiness of the water, neither the oil, can give the grace therein promised, and

that the washing in the fount avayleth not them that observe not the profession they make there how detestable Anabaptists shall be counted.

The opinion of the Anabaptists was that they did not believe that the water saves, but that an adult ought to be dipped in water on his profession of faith and live a holy life after that profession.

The opinion of the Baptists on immersion is set forth in the trial of the Dutchman Giles van Bellan, in York. He said:

Item, That no man can make any water holler than God made It; therefore the water in the font, or the holy water in the church, is no holier than the water in the river, for the water in the river is as holy as the water in the font, if a man be baptized in it, and the words of baptism be spoken over him.

Item, That any man may baptize in water as well as a priest (Evans Early English Baptists, I. 243).

He held to the baptism of immersion in water. These are the words almost literally condemned by Archbishop Warham as taken from the Sum of the Holy Scripture.

Robert Cooke was a celebrated Baptist who lived during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth. He was connected with the court for more that forty years. He was ardent in his opinions, full of debate, eloquent and well educated. He was probably the Baptist against whom John Knox wrote his celebrated book on the Anabaptists (Works of John Knox, V. 16). Dr. William Turner also wrote a book against him (A Preservative, or triacle, against the poyson of Pelagius, lately renewed and styrred up in the furious sect of Anabaptists).

Turner was described as a “noted and forward theologist and physician of his time.” On coming to the court he and Cooke would have debates in private. At length he preached a sermon against the Anabaptists which sermon was reported to Cooke and he answered it. Turner had already written something against the Anabaptists. A book had appeared in 1548 called the Sum of Divinity by Robert Hutton. The introduction was written by Turner. In the chapter on baptism are found these words:

Repentance and remission of sins, or, as Saint Paul sayeth a regeneration or new birth for the dipping into water signifieth that the man to be mortified with sin, the coming up again or deliverance out of the water signifieth the new man to he washed and cleansed and reconciled to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The persons mentioned as dipped into the water were adults. A striking contrast is drawn by Dr. Turner. Cooke and his church dipped believers only;

Turner and his church dipped infants. Both practised the same form of baptism, dipping, but they differed in regard to the subjects. The position is stated by Dr. Turner in these words:

And because baptism is a passive sacrament, and no man can baptize himself, but is baptized of another: and children may as well be dipped into the water in the name of Christ (which is the outward baptism as much as one man can give to another) even as old folks; and when as they have the promise of salvation, as well as the old folks and can receive the sign of the sacrament as well; there is no cause why the baptism of children shall be deferred (Turner, Preservative, 40).

Turner says these Baptists practised “over baptism, which is the dipping into water in the name of Christ,” and he thinks infants should be dipped as well (Ibid, 43). He further says “that these water snakes” are everywhere.

Mary Tudor, known in history as the “Bloody Mary,” came to the throne July 6, 1553, and died in the early morning of November 17, 1558. Mary was an intense Roman Catholic at the time when Roman Catholicism was passing from England forever. “Catholicism had ceased to be the expression of the true conviction of sensible men on the relation between themselves and heaven. Credible to the student in the cloister, credible to those whose thoughts were but echoes of tradition, it was not credible any more to men of active and original vigor of understanding. Credible to the uneducated, the eccentric, the imaginative, the superstitious; credible to those who reasoned by sentiment, and made sylogisms of their passions, it was incredible then and ever more to the sane and healthy intelligence which in the long run commands the mind of the world” (Froude, History of England, VII. 10).

When Mary came to the throne her first thought was to re-establish the Roman Catholic religion. She was literally consumed by her zeal. Henry VIII and Edward VI had both burnt the Baptists. Mary sought to burn all who were opposed to Romanism, Baptists and Reformers alike. There was intense opposition to the policy of the Queen, an opposition which finally worked her doom, but Mary was none the less determined on that account. “I have never seen,” said Renard the Imperial Ambassador of Charles V, “the people as disturbed and discontented as now.” Mary was determined that burning should be administered to heretics.

She was ably seconded by several lieutenants. Philip II of Spain, the husband of Mary, was the leader in the punishment of heretics through the horrible Inquisition. Her chief agent and adviser was Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester. Bishop Ponet gave the following description of him:

The doctor had a smart color, hanging nose, frowning brows, eyes an inch within his head, a nose hooked like a buzzard's; nostrils like a horse, ever snuffing in the wind; a sparrow mouth, great paws like the devil, talons on his feet like the grife, two inches longer than the natural toes, and so tied with sinews that he cannot abide to be touched (Froude, History of England, VI. 105, 197, 295, 298).

Loyd said of him:

His reserveness was such that he never did what he named at, never aimed at what he intended, never intended what he said, and never said what he thought; whereby he carried it so, that others should do his business when they opposed it, and should undermine theirs when he seemed to promote it. A man that was to be traced like a fox, and read like Hebrew, backward. If you would know what he did, you must observe what he did not; that whilst intending one thing, he professed to aim at the opposite; that he never intended what he said, and never did what he intended (Lodge, Illustrations of English History, I. 126).

Another enemy of the Baptists was Edward Bonner the Bishop of London. The brutality of Bonner was notorious and unquestionable. A published letter was addressed to him by a lady in which he is called "the common cut throat and general slaughter slave of all the bishops of England" (Godly Letter Addressed to Bonner. Fox, Acts and Monuments, VII. 611).

These were the murderers of the Baptists. J.M. Stone is the latest writer on Mary. He is a Roman Catholic and an apologist. He is compelled to admit, after he had done all he could to explain her acts, that she persecuted. He says:

"But apart from all misrepresentations, exaggerations, distorted evidence and positive fiction, there remains the fact that a considerable number of persons did perish at the stake in Mary's reign (Stone, History of Mary I., 371, 372).

"That the Baptists were very numerous," says Crosby, "at this time, is without controversy; and no doubt many of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days were such, though historians seem to be silent with respect to the opinion of the martyrs about baptism; neither can it be imagined, that the papists would in the least favor any of that denomination which they so detested and abhorred" (Crosby, History of the English Baptists, I. 63). Investigations have confirmed the surmises of Crosby, and we know that many of the martyrs were Baptists. The historian Ivimey also declares that "the Baptists came in for their full share of suffering, and that many of the martyrs were of that denomination, which was then numerous" (Ivimey, History of the Baptists, I. 97).

The exact number of the martyrs among the Baptists, at this period, probably will never be known, but the large majority of those who suffered were of this communion. William Clark recently investigated this subject a-vi gave the

following testimony: “A considerable proportion of those who suffered under Mary were Anabaptists” (Clark, *The Anglican Reformation*, 328). This conservative statement is borne out amply by the original documents.

Nothing but immersion was permitted in England at this time. Bishop Bonner, of London, in his article to be enquired of demanded:

Item: Whether there be any that will not suffer the priest to dip the child three times in the font, being yet strong, and able to abide and suffer it in the judgment and opinion of discreet and expert persons; but will needs have the child in the clothes and only be sprinkled with a few drops of water (Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, I. 157).

Trine immersion had long been the practice of the Church of England. There was a tendency in Mary’s time to practise one dipping (Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, I. 580). The testimony of Dr. Watson, the Bishop of Lincoln, is at hand. He says:

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 the water, it is sufficient. Yea, and in times of great peril and necessity, if the water be poured on his head, it will suffice. (Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke Doctryne Concernynge the Seven Sacraments*, 22, 23. London, 1558).

There is no recorded exception to dipping among the Baptists.

Elizabeth the second queen regnant of England, the last sovereign of the Tudor line, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, was born at the Palace of Greenwich, September 7, 1533, and died March 24, 1603. In her treatment of religion she was vacillating and could not be depended upon to pursue the same policy. Although the Roman Catholics were constantly plotting against her throne and even her life, she treated them with great leniency. With the Baptists it was not so. From the beginning she was their enemy, and her hostility continued with increasing violence to the end of her life.

At best the distinction between the names Baptists and Anabaptists is technical; for the word Anabaptists is still used in England to designate the Baptists of today; and was long used in this country, even after the Revolution, in the same manner. It is now the legal name of the Baptists of New England. The word Baptists was used by a high official of the English government in the earlier days of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. That official was Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, then the Secretary of State and especial adviser of the Quest. The date is March 10, 1569. It is found in a remarkable sketch drawn up possibly for his own use, as his habit was, to look everything square in the face; but more probably that he might place before Elizabeth the

dangers that beset her government At any rate, it is an official memorandum of the highest officer of state, and easily the most influential man under Elizabeth. It is a long document, covering many pages, but in this instance we are interested in only one of the alleged dangers enumerated. Secretary Cecil says:

The next imperfections are here at home, which be these: The state of religion many ways weakened by boldness to the true service of God; by increase of the cumber and courage of the Baptists, and the deriders of religion; and lastly by the increase of numbers of irreligious and Epicures. (A Collection of State Papers relating to the Reign of Elizabeth. Transcribed from original Letters and other authentic Memorials, left by William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and now remaining at Hartfield House, in the Library of the Right Honorable the Present Earl of Saulsbury, by Samuel Haynes, M.A., London, 1740. I. 585, 586).

It is therefore scientifically correct to call these people Baptists.

The Baptists had not been exterminated in the reign of bloody Mary. Under her many Baptists had suffered martyrdom, some fled to other lands, the most remained at home. It is certain that at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth England was full of Baptists. The opinion of Marsden, one of the calmest of the Puritans, may be of interest on this point. He says:

But 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 chief strength was more abroad (Marsden, 144).

Evans, an unusually careful historian, says:

Not only the existence, but the wide spread of Baptist principles, during the reign of the royal Tudor lioness, is acknowledged on all hands (Evans, Early English Baptists, I. 147).

There were at this time a number of Baptist churches in England and the Baptists had a great following. Three reasons may be offered for the multitude of the Baptists of England in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth. First, protection had been given to Dutch and French refugees. Churches were allowed to them in which divine worship, according to their own views, could be conducted. While none of these permitted churches were Baptist, yet many Baptists unawares to the authorities came in. Second, the state of the Netherlands supplied another cause. England under a Protestant Queen, appealed to them as a land of freedom, and many Baptists hoped there to find at least partial liberty of conscience. Third, there were also in England numbers of native Baptists. At the prospects of liberty they came from their hiding places where they had been sequestered.

The native Baptists were reinforced by shoals of Baptists from abroad. The Bishop of London described these exiles as “a marvelous colluvies of evil persons, for the most part *facinorosi ebriosi et sectarii*.” Roger Hutchinson, a contemporary, thus speaks of them:

Divers sectaries were crept in, under the cover and title of true religion, who through the persuasion of the devil hath owed the devilish seed, as the ...  
Anabaptists (Roger Hutchinson, Works, 214).

Bishop Jewel, who had just been consecrated Bishop of Saulsbury, wrote to Peter Martyr, November 6, 1560, as follows:

We found at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, a large and inauspicious crop of Asians, Anabaptists, and other pests, which, I know not how, but as mushrooms spring up in the night and in darkness, so these sprung up in that darkness and unhappy night of the Marian timed. These I am informed, and hope that it is the fact, have retreated before the light of pure doctrines, like owls at the light of the sun and are nowhere to be found (Zurich Letters, 91).

Strype went over the subject and carefully recorded the facts as follows:

There were so many of these strangers in London, even upon the first coming of the Queen to the crown, that in her second year she was fain to issue a proclamation for the discovery of them, and a command to transport them out of her dominions; or else expected to proceed against them according to the laws ecclesiastical or others (Strype, The Life of Archbishop Grindal, 180).

The Queen being informed of the coming of these Baptists, issued letters, dated in May, to Archbishop Parker, to cause a visitation to be made. The Queen wrote:

Forasmuch as we do understand that there do daily repair into this realm great numbers of strangers from the parts beyond the seas, otherwise than hath been accustomed; and the most part thereof pretending the cause of their coming to be for to live in this realm with satisfaction of their conscience in Christian religion, according to the order allowed in this realm, that are infected with dangerous opinions, contrary to the faith of Christ's Church, as Anabaptists, and such other sectaries, etc. (Cardwell, Documentary Annals, I. 307, 308).

Bishop Aylmer says:

The Anabaptists with infinite other swarms of Satanites, do you think that every pulpit may well be able to answer them? I pray God that there may be many who can. And in these later days, the old festered sores newly broke out, as the Anabaptists, the freewillers, with infinite other swarms of God's enemies. These ugly monsters, brooks of the devil's brotherhood (Aylmer, Harborough of Faithful subjects, in Preface).

Whitgift in 1572 wrote a book against the Baptists. He came to, the following conclusions:

Only I desire you to be circumspect, and to understand, that Anabaptism, (which usually followeth the preaching of the Gospel) is greatly to be feared in the Church of England.

It is indeed true that the Baptists usually “follow the preaching of the Gospel.” There were many replies to Whitgift. In a large volume (The Defence) in reply to his opponents he repeatedly denounced the Baptists: One of their worst faults was, he says:

They had their private and secret conventicles, and did divide and separate themselves from the Church, neither would they communicate with such as were not of their sect, either in prayers, sacraments, or hearing of the word (Whitgift, An Answer to a Certain Libel).

The Baptists had churches, observed the sacraments, and were of the stricter sort. Bishop Cox was also disturbed by the Baptists. In writing to Gaultner, June 12, 1578, he says:

You must not grieve, my Gaultner, that sectaries, are showing themselves to be mischievous and wicked interpreters of your most just opinion. For it cannot be otherwise but that tares must grow in the Lord's field, and that in no small quantity. Of this kind are the Anabaptists ... and all other good for nothing tribes of sectaries (Zurich Letters, 285).

Persecution was resorted to but the Baptists continued to multiply; foreigners continued to stream into the country, as many as 4,000 resided near Norwich, many of them avers Baptists. Moreover churches were formed. Of those still existing it is alleged that Farington was founded in 1576; Crowle and Epworth both in 1597; Dartmouth, Oxford, Wedmore, Bridgewater, all in 1600. That is to say there were conventicles in at least nine counties outside of London, where churches still exist as their direct successors (Langley, English Baptists before 1602. London, April 11, 1902. In The Baptist). Some of these Baptists were foreigners but some of them were “even in England amongst ourselves and amidst our bowels” (Acta Regia, IV. 86). Dr. Some (A Godly Treatise, wherein are examined and Confuted many execrable fancies) not only tells of “the Anabaptistical conventicles in London, and other places,” but he likewise affirms that many of the Anabaptists were educated in the universities.

“The Anabaptists,” says Burnet, “were generally men of virtue, and of universal charity” (Burnet, History of the Reformation of his own Time, 702). But no principle of toleration was to prevail toward them. The people of that generation, save the Baptists, never understood religious liberty. Least of all did Elizabeth understand, it. On December 27, 1558, she commanded all



preaching to cease; and February 4, 1559, the High Commission Court was established by Parliament. This was the beginning of unnumbered woes to the Baptists. The Baptists were to suffer most of all.

Three things were undertaken against the heretics. The first was certain injunctions given by the Queen's Majesty (British Museum, 698 h 20 (1)). One of the injunctions was:

That no man shall wilfully or obstinately defend or maintain heresies, errors, or false doctrine, contrary to the faith of Christ and his holy Scripture.

Another was against "the printing of heretical and seditious books."

The second, To follow these prohibitions with a search war, rant, or a visitation, as it was called. When a royal visitation was to be made the kingdom was divided into circuits, to which was assigned a certain number of visitors, partly clergymen, partly laymen. The moment they arrived in any diocese the exercise of spiritual authority by every other person ceased. They summoned before them the bishop, the clergy, and eight, six or four of the principal householders from each parish, administered the oath of allegiance and supremacy, required answers upon oath to every question which they thought proper to put, and exacted a promised obedience to the royal injunctions. In this manner the search for heretics was pursued from parish to parish throughout the kingdom.

The third step began February 28, in an Act for the Uniformity of Religion and came fully into operation December 17 of the same year. An Act of Parliament was obtained for one religion, for a uniform mode of worship, one form of discipline, one form of church government for the entire nation; with which establishment all must outwardly comply. This Act metamorphosed the Church of England into its present form, being the fourth alteration in thirty-four years.

Elizabeth was anxious to do what she could to gratify Philip II, and she took an opportunity of showing him that the English for whom she demanded toleration from him, were not the heretics with whom they had been confounded. She had caught in her net some Dutch Anabaptists. These became the scapegoat for her diplomacy. "The propositions for which they suffered," says Froude, "with the counter propositions of the orthodox, have passed away and become meaningless. The theology of the government mischievous; but they were not punished in the service of even imagined truth. The friends of Spain about the Queen wished only to show Philip that England was not the paradise of heresy which the world believed" (Froude, *History of England*, II. 43, 44). Two noble men were carried to Newgate and burnt at Smithfield, July 22, 1575. One was a man of years with a wife and nine children; the other was a young man who had been married my a few weeks.

The last years of Elizabeth were marked by special cruelty. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada she had time to press her ideas of conformity. After the death of Grindal she had chosen John Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury. Honest and well intentioned, but narrow minded to an almost incredible degree the one thought which filled his mind was the hope of bringing all men into conformity with the Church of England. Fletcher, the historian of the Independents, described him as follows:

This man was thorough in all he did, especially if souls were to be snared, or persons of real piety to be punished. He seemed to take a malicious delight in bending the laws over to the side of persecution; and when no law existed which could thus be used, he either made or sought to procure one. He was probably more feared and detested than any man of his day (Fletcher, History of Independency, II. 145).

Whitgift choked the prisons with Baptists. He regarded the Baptists as heretics beyond any of his times. The doctrines of these men were fatal to the idea of a National Church. There could be no National Church if infants were not to be baptized, if priests did not by the magic of baptism make all children Christians. He made the pulpits ring against the Baptists. He preached in St. Paul, November 17, 1583, against the Anabaptists as "our wayward and conceited persons." The consequence was that some Baptists went to foreign lands, but the most hid themselves or under the cloak of conformity waited for better times.

It has been sometimes stated that the Baptists originated with the Independents. The exact reverse is true. The Independents derived their ideas of religious liberty and independent form of government from the Baptists.

Robert Browne was the father of the Independents or Congregationalists. It was in the year 1580 that he went to Norwich. This was the headquarters of the Dutch Baptists in England. There were "almost as many Dutch strangers as English natives inhabiting therein" (Fuller, Church History of Britain, III. 62). Collier says:

At this time the Dutch had a numerous congregation at Norwich; many of these people inclining to Anabaptism, were the more disposed to entertain any new resembling opinions (Collier, Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, VII. 2).

From these Dutch Baptists he learned some of his opinions, and so, in that city, in the year 1584, he organized the first Independent Church. Many of the foremost writers admit, as the circumstances indicate, that he copied from the Baptists. No one except the Baptists ever held these peculiar views of liberty of conscience and independence of church government; and the Congregationalists did not well learn these lessons.

Weingarten makes this strong statement:

The perfect agreement between the views of Browne and those of the Baptists as far as the nature of a church is concerned, is certainly proof enough that he borrowed this idea from them, though in his “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 his, that of Anabaptists. In 1571 there were no less than 3,925 Dutchmen in Norwich (Weingarten, *Revolutions Kirchen Englands*, 20).

Sheffer says:

Browne’s new ideas concerning the nature of the Church opened to him in the circle of the Dutch Baptists in Norwich.

One of the most recent of the historians of the Congregationalists is Williston Walker, Professor in Hartford Theological Seminary. About the connection between Browne and the Anabaptists he makes the following statements:

In many respects — in their abandonment of the State Church, in their direct appeal to the Word of God for every detail of administration, in their organization and officers — their likeness to those of the radical Reformers of the Continent is so striking that some affiliation seems almost certain. Nor is the geographical argument for probable connection with continental movements less weighty. These radical English efforts for a complete reformation had their chief support in the eastern counties, especially in the vicinity of Norwich and London. These regions had long been the recipient of Dutch immigration; and the influx from the Netherlands had vastly increased during the early reign of Elizabeth, owing to the tyranny of Philip II. In 1562 the Dutch and Walloons settled in England numbering 30,000. By 1568 some 5225 of the people of London were of this immigration; and by 1587 they constituted more than half of the population of Norwich, while they were largely present in other coast towns. Now these immigrants were chiefly artisans, and among the workmen of Holland Anabaptist views were widely disseminated; and while it would be unjustifiable to claim that these exiles on English soil were chiefly, or largely, Anabaptists, there were Anabaptists among them, and an Anabaptist way of thinking may not improbably have been widely induced among those who may have been entirely unconscious of the source from which their impulse came. Certainly the resemblance between the Anabaptist movement of the Continent and English Congregationalism in theories of church polity, and the geographical possibilities of contact between the two, are sufficiently manifest to make a denial of relationship exceedingly difficult (Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches of the United States*, 26).

After tracing certain dissimilarities of the two bodies he says that Browne never acknowledged his indebtedness to the Anabaptists. He then further remarks:

Though no trace of a recognition of indebtedness to Anabaptist thought can be found in Browne's writings, and though we discover no Dutch names among the small number of his followers whom we know by name at all, the similarity of the system which he now worked out from that of the Anabaptists is so great in many respects that the conclusion is hard to avoid that the resemblance is more than accidental (p. 36).

In 1582 he emigrated, on account of persecutions, to Middleburg, Zealand. Here his church was broken up by dissensions. The Baptists were numerous here, and some of his people fell in with them (Brandt, *History of the Reformation in the Low Countries*, I. 343, 443). Johnson, the Pastor of the Separatist Church, in Amsterdam, writing in 1606, says of these people who fled from England on account of persecution:

A while after they were come hither, divers of them fell into the errors of the Anabaptists, which are too common in these countries, and so persisting, were excommunicated by the rest (Johnson, *An Inquire and Answer of Thomas White*, 63).

Immersion was the almost universal rule in Elizabeth's reign. Gough, a learned antiquarian, of two centuries ago, states the condition of things in England under this queen. He quotes the original authorities to make good his words. He says:

This (immersion) in England was custom, not law, for, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the governors of the Episcopal Church in effect expressly prohibited sprinkling, forbidding the use of basins in public baptism. Last of all (the Church Wardens) shall see that in every Church there be an holy font, not a basin, wherein baptism may be administered, and it be kept comely and clean. Item, that the font be not removed, nor that the curate do baptize in parish churches in any basins nor in any other form than is already prescribed. Sprinkling, therefore, was not allowed, except in the Church of Rome, in cases of necessity at home (*Archaeology*, X. 207, 208).

The authorities were particular that the law should be complied with. The first commentary upon the Book of Common Prayer was by Thomas Sparrow. He says on baptism as it was understood in his time:

This baptism is to be at the font. What the font is everybody knows, but why is it so called. The rites of baptism in the first times were performed in fountains and rivers, both because their converts were many, and because of those ages were unprovided of other baptisteries; we have no other reminder of the rite but the name. For hence it is we call our baptisteries fonts; which when religion found peace, were built and consecrated for the more reverence and respect of the sacrament (Sparrow, *A Rationale upon the Book of Common Prayer*, 299).

Bishop Horn writing to Henry Bullinger, of Zurich, in 1575, says of baptism in England:

The minister examines them concerning their faith, and afterwards dips the infant (Zurich Letters, Second Series, 356).

John Brooke, A.D. 1577, gives a glimpse of the form of baptism by immersion. He says:

I believe that baptism ought to be administered (not with oil, salt, spittle, or such things) but only in pure and clean water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Brooke, A brief and clean Confession of the Christian Fayth).

Many of the Baptists were connected with the church of John a Lasco which was organized in London in 1550. This was a good hiding place for foreign Baptists. The practice of this church was dipping. Their Catechism prescribes:

Q. — What are the sacraments of the church of Christ? A. — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Q. What is baptism? A. — It is a holy institution of Christ, in which the church is dipped in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Denkleynen catechismus, oft kinder leere der Duytscher Ghmeynte van London. An. 1566).

In this connection Robinson states that the Anabaptists practised dipping. He says:

They found no fault with the ordinary mode of baptizing, for that was dipping, but their objections lie against the subject, a child (Robinson, The History of Baptism, 565).

The year 1571 marks the appearance of a very important book (Reformation Legum Ecclesiasticarum), which was to have been sent forth by the authority of John Fox. It was prepared by Archbishop Cranmer and other Commissioners, and was probably written by Dr. Haddon. It was printed under the supervision of Bishop Parker in the 13th Parliament of Elizabeth. It makes clear that the Church of England required the candidates to be “plunged into the waters (*in aquas demergitur*) and rise again out of them.” It is equally clear on the practice of dipping among the Baptists. After alluding to their denial of infant baptism it says:

Likewise more errors are heaped up by others in baptism, which some so amazed look as if they believed that from that eternal element itself the Holy Spirit emerges, and that his power, his name, and his efficiency, out of which we are renewed and his grace and the remaining gifts proceeded out of it, swim in the very founts of baptism. In a word, they wish our total regeneration to be due to that sacred pit which inveighs against our senses.

The year 1578 affords an additional proof of immersion among the Baptists of England. The Rev. John Man, Merton College, Oxford, published in English, a translation and adaptation of the *Common Places of the Christian Religion* by Wolfgang Musculus. He says the word baptism comes from a Greek word which means in English, "dipping or drowning." He declares the form of baptism among the Baptists to be immersion. He continues:

But some man will object. If the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ be all one, then the Apostles had no reason to baptize the twelve disciples in the manner of our Lord Jesus, who were baptized before of John. For what purpose was it to dip them twice in one baptism? Did not some of the fathers,, and the Anabaptists of our days, take the foundation of their baptizing of this (Man, *Common Places of the Christian Religion*, 678).

Wall particularly marks the correspondence between the decline of dipping in the Church of England and the growth of the Baptists. According to his position, Baptists thrive wherever Pedobaptists practise pouring or sprinkling. Dipping and the Baptists go together. The Dutch Baptists made no particular progress in England because the English practised dipping. When pouring began to be the custom in the days of Elizabeth the Baptists made progress, and their great popularity in England was secured by the growth of sprinkling in the reigns of James I and Charles I. The statements of Wall are very interesting. He says:

Germany and Holland afterwards had their share of trouble with this sect; but not till they also had, almost generally, left off the dipping of infants. England all this while kept to the old way. And though several times some Dutch Anabaptists came over hither during these times, endeavouring to make proselytes here; yet Foxe the historian in Queen Elizabeth's time declares that he never heard of any Englishman that was perverted by them. So that antipaedobaptism did not begin here while dipping in the ordinary baptisms lasted. Then for two reigns pouring water on the face of the infant was most in fashion, and some few of the people turned antipaedobaptists, but did not make a separation for it. They never had any considerable numbers here, till the presbyterian reign began. These men (out of opposition to the church of England I think) brought the external part of the sacrament to a less significant symbol than Calvin himself had done, (for he directs pouring of water on the face,) and in most places changed pouring to sprinkling. This scandalized many people, and indeed it was, and is really scandalous. So partly that, and partly the gap that was then set open for all sects that would, to propagate themselves, gave the rise to this: which I therefore think, as I said, would upon our return to the church of England way, cease (Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, II. 464, 465).

The reign of James I. (1603-1625) was in a wild time, an age of ceaseless conflict all around. The human mind, awakening from the sleep of Feudalism

and the Dark Ages, fastened on all of the problems inherent in human society problems which even at the present day are not half solved. In England during the seventeenth century, men were digging down to the roots of things. They were asking, What is the ultimate authority in human affairs? Upon what does government rest and, For what purpose does it exist? (Arber, *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 6). But the Baptists and others were to win victories on constitutional and religious liberty hitherto unknown in England.

The Baptist churches in the early part of the reign of James I were in the extremity of weakness, in the depths of obscurity, and in the midst of violent persecutions. The powers of the state and of the hierarchy were combined, and persistently directed to stamp them out of existence. Imprisoned, banished, or put to death, it was supposed for a time that they had almost become extinct; but they grew in secret, multiplied exceedingly, and were found in every part of England. It is said by Omerod, in 1605, that “so hold our Sectaries also conventicles in private houses, and in secret corners, which truth seldom seeketh.” He continues: “And thus their plotting and plodding together they (being few in number at the first) are grown to such a multitude, as that one of their own preachers said openly in a pulpit, he was persuaded that there were 10,000 of them in England, and that the number of them increased daily in every place of all stations and degrees” (Omerod, *The Picture of a Puritan*. London, 1605). These doubtless were not all Baptists, but the Baptists were well represented among the Dissenters.

Notwithstanding that Edward Wightman was burnt to death, the Baptists petitioned, in 1610, the House of Lords for wider liberty of conscience and greater privileges. The petition is preserved in the Library of the House of Lords, and is endorsed on the back “read and rejected.” The petition is as follows:

To the right Honorable assembly of the Commons House of Parliament.

A most humble supplication of divers poor prisoners, and many others the King’s native loyal subjects ready to testify it by the oath of allegiance in all sincerity, whose grievances are lamentable, only for cause of conscience.

Most humbly showing that whereas in the Parliament holden in the seventh year of the King’s majesty’s reign that now is, it was enacted that all persons whatsoever above the age of eighteen years of age, not coming to Church, etc. should take the oath of allegiance, and for the refusal thereof, should be committed to prison without bail, etc. By such statute the Popish Recusants upon taking the oath, are daily delivered from imprisonments: and divers of us are also set at Liberty when we fall under the hands of the Reverend Judges and Justices. But when we fall into the bands of the bishops we can have no benefit by the said oath, for they say it belongeth only to Popish Recusants and not to others; but kept have we been by them in lingering imprisonments,

divided from wives, children, servants and callings, not for any other cause but only for conscience toward God, to the utter undoing of us, our wives and children.

Our most humble supplication therefore to this high and Honorable Assembly is, that in commiseration of the distressed estate of us, our poor wives and children, it may be enacted in express words that other the King's majesty's faithful subjects, as well as the Romish Recusants may be freed from imprisonment upon taking the said oath.

And we shall still (as we do day and night) pray that the God of heaven may be in your Honorable Assembly, for by him do princes decree justice.

By his majesty's faithful subjects

Most falsely called

Anabaptists.

Rejected by the Committee.

The Baptists, in 1615, put forth an "humble supplication to the King's majesty." It bore the title, "Persecution for Religion judged and condemned" (British Museum, 4108 de 30 (5)). It was reprinted by the Baptists in 1620 and 1622. In the Epistle to the king they pathetically say:

Yet our most humble desire of our Lord the King, is, That he would not give his power to force his faithful subjects to dissemble to believe as he believes, in the least measure of persecution; though it is no small persecution to live many years in filthy prisons, in hunger, cold, idleness, divided from wife, family, calling, left in continual miseries and temptations, so as death would be to many less persecution; seeing that his majesty confesseth, that to change the mind must be the work of God. And of the lord bishops we desire, that they would a little leave off persecuting those that cannot believe as they, till they have proved that God is well pleased therewith, and the souls of such as submit are in safety from condemnation; let them prove this, and we protest that we will forever submit to them, and so will thousands; and therefore if there be any spark of grace in them, let them set themselves to give satisfaction by word of writing, or both. But if they will not, but continue their cruel courses as they have done, let them remember that they must come to judgment, and have the abominations set in order before them.

This appeal is signed by "Christ's unworthy witnesses, his majesty's faithful subjects, commonly (but most falsely) called Anabaptists." So there were thousands of Baptists in England at this time and many of them had never been out of the country for they describe their condition as in prison and in persecution. They declare they were falsely called Anabaptists, and this appeal was long afterwards published by the Baptists in the hours of persecution as a suitable historical document setting forth their position. The supplication exposed by several excellent arguments the great sin of persecution; they



rejected the baptism of infants, as being a practice which had no foundation in Scripture; and all baptisms received either in the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, they looked upon as invalid, because received in a false church and from antichristian ministers. They denied succession to Rome and declared succession not necessary to baptism. They affirmed “That any disciple of Christ, in what part of the world soever, coming to the Lord’s way, he by the word and Spirit of God preaching that way unto others, and converting, he may and ought also to baptize them.” They asserted that every man had a right to judge for himself in matters of religion; and that to persecute on account. of religion is illegal and antichristian.

They acknowledged magistracy to be God’s ordinance, and that kings and such as are in authority ought to be obeyed in all civil matters, not only for fear, but also for conscience sake.

They allowed the taking of an oath to be lawful; and declared that all of their profession were willing in faithfulness and truth to subscribe the oath of allegiance.

They own that some called Anabaptists held several strange opinions contrary to them; and endeavored to clear themselves from deserving censure on that account, by showing, that it was so in some of the primitive churches; as some in the church of Corinth denied the resurrection of the dead; some in the church of Pergamos held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and yet Christ and his Apostles did not condemn all for the errors of some. But that which they chiefly inveigh against is the pride, luxury and oppression of the lordly bishops, and the pretended spiritual power by which, they say, many of them were exposed to the confiscation of goods, long and lingering imprisonment, hanging, burning, and banishment. “All of which,” they say, “In our Confession of Faith in print, published four years ago.”

This is a memorable document. “The enlarged and accurate views which this pamphlet,” says Price, “broached, evince an astonishing progress in the knowledge of religious freedom, and fully entitle its authors to be regarded as the first expounders and most enlightened advocates of this best inheritance of man. Other writers, of more distinguished name, succeeded, and robbed them of their honor; but their title is so good, and the amount of service they performed on behalf of the common interests of humanity is so incalculable, that an impartial posterity must assign to them due meed of praise. It belonged to the members of a calumniated and despised sect, few in, numbers and poor in circumstances, to bring forth to the public view, in their simplicity and omnipotence, those immortal principles which are now universally recognized as of divine authority and universal obligation” (Price, *History of Protestant Nonconformity in England*, I. 520, 523. London, 1836-1838).

There was an event which happened in the year 1614 which was of more importance than all of the decrees of the bishops. It was a book written by an humble Baptist, a citizen of London. An old letter throws much light upon his history (in the Mennonite Library, Amsterdam). Mark Leonard Busher, the author, was in the prime of a ripe manhood, being at that date fifty-seven years of age. He wrote the first book which appeared in England advocating liberty of conscience. It cannot be read without a throb. The style is simple and rather helpless, but one comes upon, some touching passages (Masson, *The Life of Milton*, III. 102). He was still living in 1641, in Leyden, poor, old, and forsaken. Whether he returned with Helwys and his church, or at another date, is not known, but he was in London in 1614. The probability is that on the publication of his book he was compelled to flee the country for at a later date he was again in Holland. The book was to receive no favor from the cruel and persecuting Church of England. The rigid Presbyterians and the Church of England would not tolerate the principles it contained. Nevertheless, the good seed was planted. In after years Locke and Milton heard the voice of Busher with rapture.

The main contention of the book is “except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”; that regeneration is the result of faith in Christ; and that no king or bishop is able to command faith. Persecution, therefore, is irrational, and must fail of its object; men cannot be made Christians by force. To this he adds another appeal: Even Turks, infidels, and the heathen tolerate those of other beliefs than their own. Therefore he says:

How much more ought Christians, when as the Turks do tolerate them? Shall we be less merciful than the Turks? or shall we learn the Turks to persecute the Christians? It is not only unmerciful, but unnatural and abominable; yea, monstrous for one Christian to vex and destroy another for difference and questions of religion.

He pleads for this liberty to be granted to the Romanists — the first Englishman who had the courage to do so — and argues that this could be done with entire safety to the state. This was an unheard of stretch of generosity. He also advocated the freedom of the press. He says:

That for the more peace and quietness, and for the satisfying of the weak and simple, among so many persons differing in religion, it be lawful for every person on persons, yea, Jews and papists, to write, dispute, confer, and reason, print and publish any matter touching religion, either for or against whomsoever, always provided they allege no Fathers for proof of any point of religion, but only the holy Scriptures (Busher, *Religious Peace: or, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, 51).

Slowly but surely the debt to the Baptists for religious liberty is being acknowledged. Says Stoughton:

The Baptists were foremost in the advocacy of religious freedom, and perhaps to one of them, Leonard Busher, citizen of London, belongs the honor of presenting, in this country, the first distinct and broad plea for liberty of conscience (Stoughton, Ecclesiastical History of England, II. 232).

The Baptists from the beginning stood for liberty of conscience for all.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

FROUDE, History of England. 12 volumes.

GILBERT BURNET, History of the Reformation of the Church of England. 3 volumes.

J. H. BLUNT, Reformation of the Church of England. 2 volumes.

THOMAS CROSBY, A History of the English Baptists. 4 volumes.

## CHAPTER 16 — THE EPISODE OF JOHN SMYTH

He was an Unusual Man — The Material for His Life Rare and Complicated — Lincoln — Gainsborough — The Crowle Documents — Animosity Against Him — He is Baptized — His Great Ability — The Anabaptists in Holland — Baptist Succession — The Question of His Se-Baptism — The Position of Baptist Writers — His Own Words — His Immersion — No difficulty to obtain Immersion in Holland — Ashton — The Mennonites — B. Evans — Muller — Robert Barclay — P.B. — R.B. — Thomas Wall — tiles Shute — Crosby — Ivemey — Taylor — Masson — Bishop Hall — Clyfton — Baillie — I.H. — Mark Leonard — Busher — Helwys — John Norcott — John Morton — I. Graunt — Smyth His Own Witness — Excluded From the Baptists Church — He differs From the Mennonites — The Testimony of Helwys — Helwys Returns to England.

It is now necessary to return and consider a movement which has made a great noise in the world. It is a review of the Rev. John Smyth and his work in Holland, and the connection of the English Baptists with that work.

John Smyth has been the occasion of many violent controversies. An episode in his life, for it can scarcely be called more than that, has been the provocation for the writing, of many books and to this day authors find a perennial interest in his doings. Some assert that while he lived in Gainsborough, in 1606, he turned Baptist, and was baptized by John Morton in the river Don; others assert that the manuscript which gives this account is a forgery; some assert that, at a later date, in Holland, he baptized himself; others declare that he was baptized by Helwys; some say that the first General Baptist churches of England originated with him and his company; while others declare that there were Baptist churches in England long previous to this date. Such are some of the contradictions which arise in the investigation of the details of the life of this singular and gifted man.

The date and place of his birth have not been ascertained. It is certain that he was educated at Cambridge. He entered the University, March 15, 1586, in Christ's College, and graduated as Master of Arts, 1593 (Burgess, *Smyth the Se-Baptist*, 42. London, 1911). He was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England by William Wickham, in 1594. He was elected preacher of the City of Lincoln, September 27, 1600 (Lincoln Records, f 5b) and ended his services there October 13, 1602. It is certain that while in this place he rejected the doctrines of the Anabaptists and believed the slanders alleged against them (Smyth, *a paterne of true Praye, Works*, I. 164. Cambridge, 1915).

He remained in Lincoln till 1606, when he became pastor of an Independent Church in Gainsborough. He remained there to some date preceding March,

1608, when he removed to Holland (Smyth, *The Character of the Beast*, 71. Bodleian Library, n p Pamp.). While he was pastor at Gainsborough a manuscript which purports to be the minutes of the Baptist Church at Epworth and Crowle (Dr. John Clifford, *The General Baptist Magazine*, London, July, 1879, vol. 81), was found. It records:

1606, March 24. This night at midnight Elder John Morton baptized John Smith, vicar of Gainsborough, in the River Don. It was so dark we were obliged to have torch lights. Elder Brewster prayed, Mr. Smith made a good confession; walked to Epworth in his cold clothes, but received no harm. The distance was over two miles. All of our friends. were present. To the triune God be praise.

The occasion for the publication of these extracts was the reopening of the chapel at Crowle, June 8, 1879. Many more of these records were printed at the time.

On its publication this document was violently assailed in the United States as a forgery; because of the alleged immersion of Smyth by Morton.

There are many things recorded in these minutes of Epworth and Crowle which are not easily understood, other things which are improbable, and still others which seem to be impossible. But when one remembers that there was a veil of secrecy thrown over all of the doings of the Separatists; that some of the most influential men secretly sympathized with and possibly be longed to them; the deeper one reads into the history of those times the more clearly he is convinced that dissent was widespread. When one remembers all of this he is not likely to be dogmatic in his assertions. It is possible that these minutes were compilations, but one had better not lean too heavily on unauthenticated manuscripts.

Shortly after Smyth arrived in Holland he repudiated his former baptism. This was probably about the year 1609. He remained a Baptist a short time and was then excluded by the church which he had organized and Thomas Helwys became pastor and leader. At a later date Smyth applied to the Mennonites for membership, but after much discussion and disturbance among them, his application was rejected. It was the occasion of a great debate and much acrimony among the Mennonites. Letters were written by many parties and some of the Mennonite churches went so far as to formally condemn the union in severe terms. Two Mennonite preachers, Ris and Gerritz (L. F. Reus, *Aufrichtige Nachrichten Mennoniten*, 93, A.D. 1748), wrote Confessions which were favorable to the Mennonites and had Smyth and others to sign them. The Confessions only dissatisfied both parties and failed to bring union. Of the forty-two English who signed one of them, eleven erased their names, and the gravest dissatisfaction arose over it among the Mennonites themselves.

The result was that Smyth was not received by the Mennonites and the remnant of his company was only received after years of waiting, and then not without friction.

The subject of Anabaptism was not new among the Separatists in Holland. Francis Johnson testified in 1606 that a little while after 1593, when his church emigrated “divers of them fell into the heresies of the Anabaptists (which are too common in these countries), and so persisting were excommunicated by the rest.” John Payne (Payne, *Royall Exchange, Haarlem, 1597*) mentions the English Baptists bred in the Low Countries; and Henoeh Clapham, the same year, had trouble with some Anabaptists in his Separatist church in Amsterdam (Clapham, *Little tractate entituled the Carpenter, dated July 7, 1597*).

Extraordinary animosity has been developed by a discussion on the point whether Smyth baptized himself or was baptized by Helwys. He was surrounded by the Dutch Baptists but he did not apply to them for baptism. The Pedobaptist story goes that he first baptized himself, then Helwys, and then the remainder of the company. He has since been called a Se-Baptist. The story has been used with uncommon gravity by the opponents of Baptist principles, and replied to with no small amount of indignation as a calumny on the man (Hanbury, *Historical Memorials, I. 179*). Baptist writers have usually taken strong ground against Smyth having baptized himself. It is difficult to see what difference it makes whether Smyth baptized himself or was baptized by Helwys. It is certain) that Smyth and his church thought they had the right to originate baptism among themselves and quoted the example of John the Baptist to sustain it. Their real trouble was not baptism, but church succession. Smyth was led to doubt whether there were any baptized churches in the world and hence any true succession.

It may be of moment to remark that the baptism of Smyth did not affect the baptism of the Baptist churches of England. It has been affirmed that the General Baptist churches of England originated with this church of Smyth’s; that this was the mother church of Baptists; and even that the Baptist denomination originated here in the year 1609. After prolonged investigation, we are unable to find the evidence that any Baptist church grew out of this one. We are able to find that after Helwys settled with this church in London, some churches affiliated with it in a certain correspondence with some Mennonites in Holland; but that they had a common origin is nowhere manifest. If such proof exists it has escaped our attention.

The Baptist historians of England are singularly unanimous on this point. “If he (Smyth) were guilty of what they charge with hike,” says Crosby, “‘tis no blemish on the English Baptists; who neither approved any such method, nor

did they receive their baptism from him” (Crosby, History of the English Baptists, I. 99).

Ivimey had no such an opinion. Referring to the origin of the Particular Baptist churches in the reign of Charles I, he says:

It was during this reign that an event took place among the Baptists, which has been commonly, but erroneously considered as the commencement of their history in this country. This was the formation of some Churches in London, which many have supposed to be the first of this denomination in the kingdom. But could it be proved that there were no distinct Baptist churches till this period, it would not follow that there were no Baptists, which however has been confidently stated. We have shown that persons professing similar sentiments with these of the present English Baptists, have been found in every period of the English church; and also that as early as the year 1589, from the testimony of Dr. Some, there were many churches of this description in London and in the country. During the reign of James, we have produced unexceptional proof that there were great numbers of Baptists who suffered imprisonment in divers counties, and that a petition to the king was signed by many of their ministers. It is thought that the General Baptist church in Canterbury has existed for two hundred and fifty years, and that Joan Boucher who was burnt in the reign of Edward the sixth was a member of it (Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, I. 137, 138).

Adam Taylor, who wrote the history of the General Baptists, has a chapter upon: “The History of the English General Baptists, from the Reformation to the commencement of the eighteenth century” (Taylor, A History of the General Baptists, I. 65). A little further on he says: “This (church of Smyth’s) appears to have been the first Baptist church composed of Englishmen, after the Reformation” (p. 70). Taylor is doubtless wrong in this statement that this was the first church composed only of *Englishmen*. As to the General Baptists, Taylor affirms and traces their history from the Reformation.

It has been assumed by some that Smyth was baptized by affusion. The point has been made that he was surrounded by the Dutch Mennonites, who invariably, it is claimed, practised sprinkling, and that Smyth learned his practice from them. Smyth was not a Dutchman but an Episcopalian from the North of England. It was the Presbyterians, and not the Church of England, who, from Scottish influences, introduced sprinkling into England. At the very time, and before Smyth left England, the Church of England was using radical measures to prevent the growth of affusion in that country. Proof must be introduced to show that Smyth differed from his fellow Churchmen in this practice. Such proof is unknown.

The difficulty in the mind of Smyth was not to obtain immersion in Holland, for there were those who immersed there, but the proper succession. The

authors who have been the most persistently quoted to prove that Smyth was baptized by affusion are Ashton, the editor of the Works of John Robinson; Evans, the author of a History of the Baptists; Muller, a Mennonite, and Barclay, a Quaker. Ashton was a Congregationalist, a partisan for pouring, who invariably gave the worst reason for Smyth and the best for Robinson. Muller was a Mennonite who never passed an opportunity to justify pouring. Barclay was a Quaker, who did not believe in baptism at all, and his effort was to invalidate all baptism, especially as practised by the Baptists. Evans is conservative and pronounces no decided opinion.

Ashton offers no proof in favor of his position. He thinks there are “incidental allusions” which would indicate “that the baptism which Mr. Smyth performed on himself, must have been rather by affusion or pouring” than by immersion. This cautious statement of an author who advocated pouring, and who was dogmatic on most subjects, is a slender basis for any presumptive proof that Smyth was in the practice of sprinkling.

It is curious, however, that those who have been so careful to quote Dr. Ashton in the above guarded statement that Smyth poured water on himself have been equally careful to pass over the strong statement that the Dutch Baptists, of the time of Smyth, practised dipping. In one instance he speaks with uncertainty; in the other positively. The first fits the preconceived views of those who find pouring everywhere and is always quoted; the last is fatal to such views and is left unquoted.

It is worth while to see what Ashton does say. His words are as follows:

It is rather a singular fact as zealous as were Mr. Smyth and his friends for believers' baptism, and earnest as were their opponents in behalf of infant baptism, the question of the mode of baptism was never mooted by either party. Immersion for baptism does not appear to have been practised or pleaded by either Smyth or Helwys, the alleged founder of the General Baptist denomination in England. Nothing appears in these controversial writings to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of administering that ordinance. Incidental allusions there are, in their own works, and in the replies of Robinson, that the baptism which Mr. Smyth performed on himself, must have been rather by affusion or pouring. Nor is this supposition improbable, from the fact that the Dutch Baptists, by whom they were surrounded, uniformly administered baptism by immersion (Robinson, Works, III. 461).

If silence was worth anything it would prove immersion as readily as pouring. An honest man ought not to quibble. An elaborate statement has been made that all of the Mennonites practised pouring and that in 1612 immersion was unknown among them; that immersion began in Holland in 1619, among the Collegiants, at Rynsburg. Therefore, it is said, Smyth practised pouring. As an



argument, this is illogical. If Smyth desired to practise pouring, why did he not go to the Mennonites if they possessed the thing he wanted? Smyth was an Englishman, starting baptism on his own account, because he believed all succession was lost, and he did not go to the Dutch for baptism.

It is further claimed: That when the company of Smyth, after it had been expelled by Helwys and the Baptist contingent, applied for membership among the Mennonites that the form of baptism was not raised; and that therefore Smyth performed pouring upon himself. A marvelous argument. Why should the Mennonites raise the question? Why raise the question if the Mennonites practised pouring and Smyth had been immersed? There are those now-a-days who practise affusion and they are quite content to receive persons who have been immersed into their fellowship and raise no questions. Generally, it is those who have been immersed who raise the question of the validity of pouring. As a matter of fact, the Mennonites did not receive Smyth into their church, and it was more than three years (1615) after his death, before the remainder of his company was received into that body. All of this was preceded by a violent controversy, which stirred the Mennonite body throughout Holland. If there was such harmony between Smyth and the Mennonites it would be difficult to explain this extraordinary proceeding. Ashton, as a witness, is not faithful to those who quote him.

Evans has been quoted in the same manner, but he is cautious. On the existence of immersion in Holland, in 1608/1612, he is particularly clear. After quoting Ashton, he says on his own account:

The remark of the editor is equally true of a considerable period of the controversy in this country (England). The all but universal practice in the English Church, rendered the discussion of the mode unnecessary. In Tombes' replies to his many opponents, the claims of infants are the points in dispute. Upon the mode of Smyth's baptism, we shall have more to say presently; and we only add that there was a portion of the Dutch Baptists who uniformly administered baptism by immersion (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I. 203 note).

On the same page he adds:

There were Baptists in Holland, those who administered baptism by immersion, as well as those who adopted the mode at present practised by our brethren of the Netherlands.

It is clear from both Ashton and Evans that had Smyth desired immersion from the Mennonites there were those in the practice who could have immersed him. Smyth was probably immersed in infancy; if the Crowle Records be true, he was immersed in 1606; and was now immersed again. It was the validity of baptism over which he stumbled.

Muller is freely quoted by Evans. He was a Mennonite. The Mennonite brethren are most excellent people, but they are nervous on the subject of baptism. They are unusually anxious to justify their practice of pouring. But even Muller says Smyth was immersed. He thought the Mennonites of the period were in the practice of affusion, but that Smyth immersed himself. Since Muller has been freely quoted, this declaration is of interest. He says:

I, myself, add the following remarks: It appears to me that the persons mentioned in the memorial, who were not yet baptized, were admitted to the Waterlanders by the baptism not of immersion, but of sprinkling. This mode of baptism was, from the days of Menno, the only mode used among them, and still amongst us. The Waterlanders, nor any other of the various parties of the Netherlands *Dooptsgezinden*, practised at that time baptism by immersion. Had they made an exception, in that use, on behalf of the English, who in their country had not yet received baptism, it is more than probable that the memorial would have mentioned the alteration. But they cared only for the very nature of the baptism (as founded in full ages), and were therefore willing to admit those who were baptized by a mode different from theirs, just as they are wonted to do now-a-days (Evans, I. 224).

The other witness is a Quaker, and Barclay always belittles baptism, and takes special delight in his endeavors to invalidate the claims of the English Baptists. He was compelled to admit that the question of the manner of baptism does not come up (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Societies of the Commonwealth*, 70).

When Professor Masson was asked his opinion in regard to this book of Barclay's, he said:

Yes, I know the book well. I was much interested and read the book as soon as it came from the press. Robert Barclay belonged to a family which had long been connected with the religious history of England, and I was led to expect great things of his book; but I was disappointed. It seems to me that he failed to catch the trend of the religious life of the times of which he wrote. The work is in nowise equaled to the subject with which he deals; or with what we might have expected from him. I suppose he collected some useful information, but the work is not especially valuable.

These are the witnesses and this is the testimony produced to prove that all of the Mennonites practised sprinkling and that John Smyth was baptized by affusion. All of these are recent writers and they do not pretend that there is a word in the writings of Smyth, his friends, or even his enemies, that would prove that he practised affusion. They all declare that the act of baptism never comes upon the boards. It is the old Pedobaptist argument of silence. But these authors do not sustain the position assumed. From one or the other of the authors it will be found that all of the Mennonites practised dipping, some of them practised dipping, and further that Smyth was dipped. The overwhelming

majority, however, of the historians, including many who have given the subject most careful consideration, never intimate that Smyth was baptized in any other way save by immersion.

Since Smyth did not apply to the Dutch Baptists for baptism, had no connection with them till a period after his baptism, and was never in their fellowship, the form of baptism as practised by the Mennonites had no bearing on Smyth and his baptism. Therefore, at this place, though there is much material on the subject, the form of baptism among the Mennonites is not discussed at length. The two Mennonites with whom Smyth especially dealt were Hans de Ris and Lubbert Gerritz, who belonged to the Waterlander congregations. There are two witnesses at hand, Abram a Doorslaer, and Peter Jacob Austro-Sylvium, writing under date of 1649, by the authority of the North Holland Synod, mentions these persons by name and declares they practised “baptism by immersion or sprinkling with water” (Grondige ende Klare Wertooninghe vanhet oderscheyd in the voozamste Hooftstrucken, 464). This sets at rest the idea that the Waterlanders did not Practise dipping; and Smyth could not have been immersed if he so desired. There is no date between Simon Menno and the year 1700 that immersion was not practised by some of the Dutch Baptists and by some congregations exclusively. The trouble in the mind of Smyth was not immersion, but the succession of the churches.

In the century in which the baptism occurred, the seventeenth, no writer mentions any form of baptism of Smyth other than immersion. Three authors who reflect the mind of the century are quoted. Beginning with the year 1641, there occurred a controversy on the subject of baptism. The Baptists after the arrest of Archbishop Laud and the destruction of the High Court of Commission came from their hiding places in great droves. It is not the purpose, in this place, to discuss that controversy only so far as it relates to the baptism of John Smyth. The boldness of the Baptists mightily stirred the Pedobaptists. In a measure liberty of speech had been ranted to the Baptists and they took advantage of the privilege. Their enemies thought they must be crushed at once.

The first to attack the Baptists was one P.B., who wrote, in 1641. Edward Barber, who printed his own book in that year, says that the work of P.B. came to his hand while his own was in press. P(raise God) B(arbon) says the Baptists were new, which R. B(arrow) (Briefe Answer to a discourse, lately written by one P.B. London, 1642. Library of Dr. Angus, Regents Park College) resented and said that their form of baptism was old. P.B. refers to some of the Baptists as those “who baptized themselves” “beyond seas” in “the Netherlands.” Their trouble, he said, was the want of a proper administrator. He declared that they

would not go to the Dutch Baptists, who did not practise “total dipping.” He says:

But now very lately some are mightily taken, as having found out a new defect in baptism, under the defection, which maketh such a nullity of baptism in their conceit, that it is none at all, and it is concerning the manner of baptizing; wherein they have espied such a default, as it maketh an absolute nullity of all persons’ baptism, but as have been so baptized, according to their new discovery, and so partly as before, in regard to the subject, and partly as regard to the great default in the manner. ... They want a dipper, that hath authority from heaven, as had John, whom they please to call a dipper, of whom it is said, that it. might be manifested his baptism was from heaven (P. B., A Discourse tending to prove the Baptisme in or under the Defection of Antichrist to be the Ordinance of Jesus Christ).

Then the position of the Baptists on the subject of dipping is stated at length. A resume of these statements may be given. Smyth and his company rejected the Roman Catholic Church as Antichrist and would not go to it for baptism, though it practised dipping; they were troubled on the subject of the succession of churches and held that rather than take any chances they would institute baptism among themselves, and claimed the authority of John the Baptist to begin the rite; they refused to be baptized by the Welsh, though they practised dipping; they did not go to the Dutch Baptists, though they had a succession of more than an hundred years, because they did not always practise total dipping. Such is the testimony of Praise God Barbon to the baptism of Smyth. Barbon was answered by a number of Baptists who discussed the question of succession and the right to originate baptism, but not one in the remotest manner intimated that Smyth was not immersed.

Thomas Wall, A.D. 1691, was an opponent of the Baptists. In explaining the immersion of Smyth, he says:

A third devise these people have found to deprive infants to water baptism, persuading people of years they were not baptized at all, if not dipped or plunged in water (Wall, Baptism Anatomized, 107).

Giles Shute, in 1696, wrote in a venomous manner against the Baptists. He says:

Now let the wise judge in what an abominable disorder they retain their baptism ever since from Mr. Smyth; and whether it stinketh not in the nostrils of the Lord ever since as the ministry of Corah and his company did. In his table of particulars, wherein this passage is directed to it, is queried, who began baptism by way of dipping among English people calling themselves Baptists? The answer is, John Smyth, who baptized himself. Thus you may see upon what a rotten foundation the principles of the Anabaptists are built and what door that anti-covenant doctrine came in among us in England;

therefore it is of the earth, and but a human innovation, and ought to be abhorred and detested by all Christian people (Shute, *A General Challenge to all Pedobaptists*).

The English Baptist historians mention immersion as the form of baptism of Smyth. Crosby refers to Smyth as “among the first restorers of immersion” (Crosby, *the History of the English Baptists*, I. 97).

Ivimey says:

Upon a further consideration of the subject, he saw reason to conclude that immersion was the true and proper meaning of the word baptize and that it should be administered to those only who were capable of professing faith in Christ (Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, I. 114).

Taylor says:

In reviewing the subject of the separation, Mr. Smyth discovered that he and his friends acted inconsistently in rejecting the ordination received from the Church of England, because they esteemed her a false church, and yet retained her baptism as a true baptism. This led him to examine the nature and ground of baptism; and he perceived, that neither infant baptism nor sprinkling had any foundation in Scripture. With his usual frankness he was no sooner convinced of this important truth than he openly professed and defended his sentiments (Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, I. 68).

A long list of Pedobaptist writers could be quoted who state that Smyth was immersed. The following are thoroughly representative: Daniel Neal (*History of the Puritans*, II. 29. London, 1732); Thomas Price (*The History of Protestant Nonconformity in England*, I. 495); Walter Wilson (*History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches*, I. 29); Punchard (*The History of Congregationalism from about the year 250 to 1616*, 318, 319); Ahead (*The Progress of Religious Sentiment*, xix. London, 1852); and W.M. Blackburn (*History of the Christian Church*).

Room must be given for the testimony of Prof. Masson, of the University of Edinburgh. This brilliant scholar, in the preparation of his great *Life of Milton*, carefully and laboriously went through the mass of material bearing on the subject. He says:

Smyth had developed his Separatism into the form known as Anabaptism, not only requiring the rebaptism of the members of the Church of England, but rejecting the baptism of infants altogether, and insisting on immersion as the proper Scriptural form of this rite (Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, II. 540).

In Professor David Masson, A.M., LL.D., we have an exceptional expert. He was Professor in Edinburgh University for thirty years, having previously

served thirteen years as Professor in University College, London. He put in fortythree years in active service in the study of English Literature. Perhaps no English speaking scholar gave so much study to the period of the Civil Wars (A.D. 1640-1660), as he did. His great work on The Life of Milton cost him thirty years of exacting study. He has told something of his studies and processes of work in the British Museum. He says

Of the multiplicity and extent of the researches that were required, any general account may be tedious. Perhaps, however, I may allude specially to my obligations to the State Paper Office in London, where there were printed calendars of the State Papers; the task of consulting them is easy:

Unfortunately, when I began my readings in the great national repository, the domestic papers of the period which most interested me—from 1640 to 1643—were utterly uncalendered. They had, therefore, to be brought to me in bundles and inspected carefully, lest anything useful should be skipped. In this way I had to persevere at a slow rate in my readings and note papers; but I believe I can now say for much the greater part for the time embraced in the present volume—1640 to 1643 there is not a single domestic document extant of those that used to be in the State Paper Office, which has not passed through my hands and been scrutinized (Masson, Life of Milton, Preface to Vol. III).

He gave especial attention to the point of dipping among English Baptists. When he was visited at his home at Gowanlea, Juniper Green, Midlothian, he was asked the following question:

Does your reading lead you to believe that the English Baptists before A.D. 1641, practised immersion? or do you think they were in the practice of sprinkling, and about the date indicated changed their minds and are since immersionists?

A look of surprise came over his face and he queried: “Does any one believe anything like that?” Then he continued:

Well, I am always open to new light. These gentlemen may know something that I do not in support of their theory; but all my reading is in the direction that the Baptists in England were immersionists in practice. Of course, among the early Anabaptists of Germany, when all kinds of people were called Anabaptists, and the term covered all sorts of religious beliefs, there may have been some who were called Anabaptists who practised sprinkling, but I know 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 of the literature of the times is in favor of the dipping theory. When I wrote my book I tried to guard every point with ample authority. I had good reason for what I did, much has passed out of my mind and is very dim to me now.

At once he proceeded to mention many well-known authorities and to refer readily to the original sources.

We now turn from the historians to a consideration of the facts concerning the baptism of Smyth gathered from himself and his contemporaries.

The avowed enemies of Smyth affirm that the form of baptism was immersion. Bishop Hall, who was an open opponent of Smyth, points to the form of baptism by immersion. In his *Apology against the Brownists*, he speaks of Smyth as one “who had washed off the font water as unclean”; and further on he says: “He had renounced our Christendom with our Church, and has washed off his former water with new” (Hall, Works, IX. 384). Bishop Hall, an Episcopalian, unquestionably refers to immersion. It is impossible to think that these allusions are to pouring, for he would not say that affusion would wash off a former baptism in a font. Such a figure of speech is impossible in the mouth of a Church of England bishop of that period. Hall was keen to catch a point; and was severe on the Brownists when they opposed Smyth. He says:

You cannot abide a false church, why do you content yourself with a false sacrament? especially since your church, not being yet gathered to Christ, is no church, and therefore her baptism a nullity. ... He (Smyth) tells you true; your station is unsafe; either you must go forward to him, or back to us. All your rabbis cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother. ... If your baptism be good, then is your constitution good. ... What need you to surfeit of another man’s trencher? ... Show me where the Apostles baptized in a basin (Ibid, 25).

These remarks of Bishop Hall to the Brownists in regard to Smyth as “your rebaptized brother” are significant. In scornful sarcasm he demands of the Brownists, “Show me where the Apostles baptized in a basin.” “What need you surfeit of another man’s trencher?” The point of the thrust implies that Smyth had dipped himself, contrary to their practice, and that he had apostolic precedent for his dipping. It further implies that the meat on myth’s trencher had nauseated them, because, like the Apostles, he had discarded the basin (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 458).

A statement has been quoted by Dr. Whitley from Joseph hall to prove that Smyth was in the practice of sprinkling He says:

Joseph Hall challenged Robinson next year. “If your partner, M. Smyth, should ever persuade you to rebaptize, your fittest gesture (or any other at full age) would be to receive that Sacramentall water, kneeling. ... Shew you me where the Apostles baptized in a Basin ... as your Anabaptists now do (Common Apologie, XXXVI, XXXVII) (Whitley, works of John Smyth, I. xciv).

Turning to the works of Bishop Hall (X., 69-71, Oxford, 1837), we are scarcely impressed that he said that the Anabaptists baptized in a basin. On page 69 is the following statement:

This, therefore, I dare boldly say that if your partner, M. Smyth. should ever, which God forbid, persuade you to rebaptize, your fittest gesture, or any others at full age, would be to receive that Sacramental water kneeling.

Hall said Robinson (not Smyth) received the Lord's Supper kneeling, and it would be well if he received baptism in like fashion. The remainder of the quotation from Dr. Whitley is removed more than two pages and further challenges the statements of Robinson. Bishop Hall further says:

Show you me, where the Apostles baptized in a basin; or where they received women to the Lord's Table; for you *ho anthropos*, 1 Corinthians 11. will not serve: shew me, that the Bible was distinguished into chapters and verses in the Apostles' time: shew me, that they ever celebrated the Sacrament of the Supper at any other time than evening, as your Anabaptists now do: shew me, that they used one prayer before the Sermons always, another after; that they preached even upon a text; where they preached over a table; or lastly, show me where the Apostles used that, which you used before your last prophecy; and a thousand such circumstances.

Nowhere in this passage is it intimated that John Smyth, or the Anabaptists, baptized in a basin, or practised sprinkling. What is affirmed of the Anabaptists is that they celebrated the Lord's Supper at other times than the evening. That and nothing more is said. And that is about as good proof as has ever been offered that Smyth practised sprinkling. It is none at all.

Clyfton, A.D., 1610, speaks of Smyth's church "as a new washed company" (Clyfton, A Plea for Infants, Epistle to the Reader).

This is not compatible with the idea of pouring. Clyfton practised affusion and would not have used these words if Smyth had agreed with him.

Robert Baillie, in speaking of the ease in which Brownists turned Anabaptists, alluded to Smyth and his company, "as burning into such as readily as snow and ice turn into water" (Baillie, Dissuasive, 30). This language is not consistent with pouring.

I. H., in 1610, wrote a book against this congregation, in which he declares: "For tell me, shall every one that is baptized in the right form and manner (for which ye stand much on) upon the skin be saved?" (I. H., A Description of the Church of Christ, 27). The Baptists differed from their opponents upon "the form and manner" of baptism. The form of the Puritans was pouring; the form of the Baptists was immersion. He further asks: "Has the water of Holland



washed ye all so clean?" (Ibid, 25). Such a question is inconsistent with pouring.

Those associated with Smyth declare that the form of baptism was dipping. Mark Leonard Busher was in some wise connected with Smyth and was in Holland at the time. On the subject of dipping he is clear. He says:

And therefore Christ commanded his disciples to teach all nations, and baptize them; that is, to preach the word of salvation to every creature of all sorts of nations, that are worthy and willing to receive it. And such as gladly and willingly receive, he has commanded to be baptized in the water; that is, dipped for dead in the water (Busher, Plea for Religious conscience, 50).

Such was the practice of the Amsterdam congregation "dipped for dead in the water" those who believed. Effort has been made to dissociate Busher from the Baptists, but Christopher Lawne bears witness that he was an Anabaptist (Lawne, Prophane Schisme, 56. A.D. 1612),

Another of this company, scarcely second to Smyth, was Thomas Helwys. In A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining in Amsterdam in Holland, printed in the year 1611 (York Münster Library, xxi. o 15), supposed to have been written by Helwys, Article 14, is the following language

The baptism of washing with water is the outward manifestation of dying unto sin, and walking in the newness of life. ~~4500~~ Romans 6:2, 3. And therefore in no wise appertaineth to infants.

The allusion to the burial and resurrection; of Christ would indicate immersion; and affusion cannot be described as "a washing with water." There is a like expression which occurs in a letter written by Helwys and others, Amsterdam, March 12, 1610, which is as follows:

And whosoever shall now be stirred up by the same Spirit to preach the same word, and men being thereby converted, may, according to John his example, wash them with water, and who can forbid? (MSS. in Amsterdam Library, No. 1351).

The evidence all points to the immersion of Helwys. The historians are quite unanimous in regard to his baptism. Brook says: Helwys received baptism by immersion (Brook, Lives of the Puritans, II. 279).

Prof. Masson says:

For this Helwys returning to England shortly after 1611, drew around him, as we saw, the first congregation of General or Arminian Baptists in London; and this obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of Liberty of Conscience expressed in the Amsterdam Confession as distinct from the more stinted principle

advocated by the general body of the Independents. Not only did Helwys' folk differ from the Independents on the subject of Infant Baptism and Dipping; they differed also in the power of the magistrate in matters of belief and conscience (Masson, *The Life of Milton*, II. 544).

John Norcott was associated with Smyth; and he wrote a book to substantiate dipping. Many editions of this book were printed (Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*. III. 299). He succeeded Spilsbury in the pastorate of Gravel-lane. He was associated with Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and other heroes of those times. His funeral sermon was preached by Benjamin Keach. The book was dedicated to the church at Wapping. An edition of this book was edited and published by Charles H. Spurgeon. He used a reprint of the fifth London Edition. This edition has an introduction by Kiffin. The first edition has as yet escaped our attention. A portion of Chapter IV is as follows:

**1.** The Greek word *baptizo* means to plunge, to overwhelm. Thus Christ was plunged in water, <sup><40816></sup>Matthew 3:16. Thus he was plunged or overwhelmed in his sufferings, <sup><21250></sup>Luke 12:50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and now I am straightened till it be accomplished."

**2.** The Dutch translation reads, In those days came John the Dipper, <sup><40801></sup>Matthew 3:1. And in <sup><43823></sup>John 3:23, that version reads, John was dipping in anon because there was much water there. What need much water were it not for dipping.

**3.** They did baptize in rivers. They came to John, and were baptized in Jordan, <sup><40806></sup>Matthew 3:6. John was baptizing in Ænon because there was much water there, <sup><43825></sup>John 3:25. What need it be in a river, and where there was much water? Would not a little water in a basin serve to sprinkle the face?

**4.** Baptism signifies the burial of Christ. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, <sup><45004></sup>Romans 6:4. Buried with him in baptism, <sup><51012></sup>Colossians 2:12. Now we do not reckon a man buried when a little earth is sprinkled on his face, but he is buried when covered; we are buried in baptism.

**5.** Christ's sufferings are called a baptism, <sup><42120></sup>Luke 12:50. I have a baptism to be baptized with; and now am I straightened till it be accomplished. When Christ suffered he was plunged into pains. Did his sufferings lie only on his head or his forehead? No, no; there was not one part free; he was from head to foot in pain; his head was crowned with piercing thorns, his hands and feet were nailed to the cross; and his whole person was so stretched on the cross that a man might have told all of his bones, <sup><492217></sup>Psalms 22:17. There was not one part free. Man hath sinned body, soul and spirit, therefore the whole Christ must suffer for sin. Christ was baptized into pain, plunged into sorrow, not any part free; this he called his baptism. Thus one baptized is plunged under water, to show how Christ was plunged into sorrow for our sakes.

6. Baptism is the putting on of Christ. As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, <sup><4027></sup>Galatians 3:27. The text means as a servant wears his Lord's livery, a garment which demonstrates him to be a servant to such a great personage, do in baptism we put our Lord's livery on, and he himself clothes us from head to foot. It is thus that by baptism we put on Christ.

7. When Christ was baptized, he came up out of the water, <sup><4016></sup>Matthew 3:16. Was his baptism performed by having a little water thrown on his face? Then he had not been plunged in the water, and could not have come out of it; but because he was baptized in the water, therefore, being baptized he came up out of the water. Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, (and being there in the water) Philip baptized the Eunuch. Both of them went up out of the water, <sup><4039></sup>Acts 8:39; but to what end had they gone down if Philip did merely sprinkle the Eunuch, or pour water upon his head?

Thus you see the place where these persons were baptized was a river, or a certain water; their action was on this wise—they went down into the water, they were baptized. This was done in places where there was much water. The end was to show Christ's burial; but now if there be not a burial under water to show Christ's burial, the great end of the ordinance is lost; but burial is well set forth by dipping under water (Norcott, Baptism Discovered Plainly and Faithfully, according to the Word of God, 28-41).

Then there follows some questions and answers to show that sprinkling is "strange fire" on the altar of God.

John Morton was a member of this church and subscribed to many of the articles. He practised dipping. Benjamin Brook says of him:

John Morton was one of John Smyth's disciples at Amsterdam from whom he received baptism by immersion. He afterwards came to England, was a zealous preacher of the sentiments of the General Baptists, etc. (Brook, The Lives of the Puritans, III. 517).

In the Bodleian Library is a copy of the book of E. Jessop and there are marginal notes supposed to have been made by John Morton. Jessop says:

That the baptism of children neither is nor can be the mark of the Beast spoken of in <sup><6136></sup>Revelation 13:16, for that ... is such a thing (indeed) as young children are not capable of.

To this Morton rejoins:

(Ye) baptisme of Christ is (such a) thing whereof (infant)s are not capable. (If) it were (use) d and practised on them they wold (be dro caned as many (have) been in historys (not)es thereof a new (mo)tion is found for them (name)ly to sprinkle theyr (head) instead of dipping (which) ye word baptisme (signi) fieth (Burgess, John &myth, the SeBaptist, 327).

John Robinson, the Pilgrim Father, in reply to Morton, affirms that the latter and his congregation practised dipping. He says:

In the next place they come to baptism, in which they think themselves in their element, as filth in water. And beginning with John's baptism, etc. (Robinson, Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by the Synod of Dort, 147).

Here is a positive assertion that Morton and his church practised dipping.

Morton testifies to his own belief. He declares that John baptized his disciples in the Jordan, and adds:

This was indeed the practice of the primitive churches, it cannot be destroyed (Morton, A Description of what God hath wrought, 129. A.D. 1620).

I. Graunt is another witness to the position of Morton. He declared that Morton differed from some on Free Grace, but he agreed with the rest of the Baptists on immersion. His words are in the form of a conversation. He says:

*Heres.* But we have found a rule of truth in God's word, plainly directing us to the making matter of the Church of Christ, none but such as are qualified by faith, are fit subjects of baptism, which faith is wrought by teaching and then baptism of dipping admits and gives entrance unto such believers to have communion in church fellowship with us in the holy ordinances of God; which church ordinances are not understood, but neglected and contemned of all the heretics you have named and conferred with before, therefore we are the true church, for we profess but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. ~~☞~~ Ephesians 4:5.

*Truth.* Sir, I perceive you are an Anabaptist, and therefore I shall speedily make good my late promise, and indeed, some thirty years since, Mr. Morton, a teacher of a church of the Anabaptists, in Newgate, then his confession comprehended all the errors of the Arminians which now of late, many that go under your name, in and around London dissent from, as seems to you (I. G(raunt), Truth's Victory, 19).

The affirmation is that Morton, in 1615, was in the practice of dipping. He differed with some on Free Grace, but not on the act of baptism.

Smyth is himself a witness to the practice of dipping. The extract from the Confession, as quoted above from Helwys, described baptism as "a washing with water" and a burial and a resurrection was likewise signed by Smyth. In a Short Confession of Faith (MSS. in the Amsterdam Library, No. 1352), signed by Smyth, and some forty others, Article 30, he says of baptism

The whole dealing in the outward visible baptism of water, setteth before the eyes, witnesseth and signifieth, the Lord Jesus doth inwardly baptize the repentant, faithful man, in the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, washing the soul from all pollution and sin, by the virture and merit of

his bloodhead; and by the power and working of the Holy Ghost, the true, heavenly, spiritual, living water, cleanseth the inward evil of the soul, and maketh it heavenly, spiritual, living, in true righteousness or goodness.

Therefore, the baptism of water leadeth us to Christ, to his holy office in glory and majesty; and admonisheth us not to hang only upon the outward, but with holy prayer to mount upward, and to beg of Christ the good thing signified.

By no proper exegesis can this be interpreted to mean anything but immersion. In another Confession of Faith signed by Smyth (Amsterdam Library, No. 1348), he says:

That baptism is the external sign of the remission of sins, of dying, and being made alive, and therefore does not belong to infants.

In the Confession of himself and friends, published after his death, article 38, he says:

That all men in truth died and are also with Christ buried by baptism into death (<sup><5064></sup>Romans 6:4; <sup><510212></sup>Colossians 2:12), holding their Sabbath with Christ in the grave.

And article 40 says:

That those who have been planted with Christ together in the likeness of his death and burial shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

These articles savor of immersion. In a book (Amsterdam Library, No. 1354), by John Smyth, not generally known, written in Latin, the following occurs:

He preaches to deaf ears who sets forth to children the doctrine of the church. And thus he consults a blind man about colors, who washes children in baptismal waters. ... Do they not misuse their labor who plunge (*tingent*) infants in baptismal waters, before they instruct them in the knowledge of the church. ... Hence it is surely established that repentance is the condition of baptism, so thus a comparison between the sign and the thing signified is set forth, for repentance in the mind is the same thing as washing in water is of the body. Baptism cleanseth filth from the body, and so real repentance washes away sin. Baptism is the symbol of the remission, and destruction of sin, for as the washing of water taketh away the filth of the flesh, so the sin of the soul is purged, remitted, destroyed.

He quotes <sup><58102></sup>Hebrews 10:22, 23, and clearly distinguishes between the dipping of the body and the sprinkling of the heart. He says:

Both the sign and the thing signified are coupled by the Apostle and in turn united in one another. The sign is the washing of the body in the element of water, the thing signified is the sprinkling, that is, the cleansing of the heart from an evil conscience through the blood of Christ, where the comparison

must be seriously observed, the analogy of the figure and of the truth, or of the sacrament and of the thing of the sacrament.

This is a clear distinction. He further says:

Baptism, however, does not signify the remission of another's imputed sin, because not the filth of others, but their own filth is washed from the bodies of those baptized.

Another statement (Amsterdam Library, No. 1364), says that "the critic casts into my teeth the proverb, He washes his garment of sin, he does wet it, says he." Surely this refers to dipping. There are two additional manuscripts (Nos. 1556A and 1556B), which have not been hitherto quoted. They were written by Smyth or some member of the company against infant baptism. If the writer did not understand immersion to be the form of baptism it is impossible to comprehend the argument he is making. Every reference is to immersion. The author is discussing original sin and that on that account the baptism of infants is not needed. He remarks that "water does not wash away the uncleanness of other persons from already cleansed bodies, but his own." "Cleansing by water belongs to baptism." "The washing softens." "Baptism is the symbol of communion with Christ, for God has not seen fit to baptize the babes but the adult believers, partly that he might lift them by this outward token, when, they are so apt to fall into so many sins, that he might comfort them, that he might strengthen them for the struggle, partly to exhort them to surrender to sin considering baptism as a symbol of the washing of sin, partly because never does God do anything in vain, which they should have done, if they had imparted baptism to children, who do neither receive the token nor that which is signified, nor the meaning of it, nor the use, nor the profit." That such passages refer to immersion is plain even to the casual reader.

It has been vigorously asserted, as already noticed, that Smyth owed his change of views to the Mennonites, and that he was influenced by them to baptize himself by pouring, since the Mennonites practised affusion. Very great emphasis has been placed upon this point by some writers. It has been, regarded by some as eminently conclusive that Smyth practised affusion. As a matter of fact, the Mennonites widely differed from Smyth in many things.

If this had been true Smyth would have applied for baptism to the Mennonites in the first instance. Taylor says:

There were indeed, many churches, in Holland who practised immersion; but, as they differed widely in sentiment from him, he did not choose to receive baptism from them. This completely refutes Dr. Mosheim's supposition that the English Baptists derived their origin from the German and Dutch Mennonites; and that in former times, they adopted their doctrines in all of its points (Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, I. 70).

Taylor mentions many differences between Smyth and the Mennonites. Smyth himself indignantly denied that he learned his doctrines from Menno. Some persons of the Reformed Church had criticised Smyth and said that he imitated the doctrines of Menno. In a document (Amsterdam Library, No. 1364), not hitherto mentioned, he makes answer:

In this article the opinion of Menno is presented to us as if we echoed the sentiments of any master you please. Perhaps the critic notes down our contradiction and opposition. Why are you Reformed ones unanimous in all of your dogmas? Is it not with them as many heads, so many senses. Is it right for us to depart from Menno, when Menno departs from the truth?

Previous to his baptism, so far as the evidence goes, he never attracted the attention of the Mennonites. It was only after his baptism and a discussion had sprung up between Smyth and his opponents, Clyfton and Ainsworth, that the attention of the Dutch Baptists was directed to him. They were greatly pleased with his brilliant and scholarly defense of believers' baptism, and after that they began to court his approval. Bradford says this in so many words. He says:

But he (Smyth) was convinced of his errors by the pains and faithfulness of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ainsworth and revoked them; but afterwards was drawn away by some of the Dutch Anabaptists, who finding him a good scholar and unsettled, the easily misled the most of the people, and others of them scattered away (Young, *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, 451).

There were divisions, rather than harmony, in Amsterdam, among the many English people who were there. Every little group had its own opinions, and no two of them agreed. This could be illustrated at great length. Only two competent authorities are here quoted.

Howell (*Familiar Letters*, 26. See Evans, *Early English Baptists*, II. 24) says:

I am lodged in a Frenchman's house, who is one of the deacons of our English Brownist Church here. I believe in the street where I lodge there be well near as many religions as there be houses; for one neighbour knows not, nor cares not much, which religion the other is of: so that the number of conventicles exceed the number of churches here.

Brereton (*Travels*, 1634, p. 13. Cheetham Society), says:

Here also is a French church (Dort); Arminian, Brownists, Anabaptists, and Mennonites do lurke here and also swarm, but not so much tolerated here as at Rotterdam.

The differences between the Baptists and Smyth on the one hand, and the Mennonites on the other, are set forth in a book probably written by Helwys (*An Advertisement or Admonition unto the Congregations, which Men Call*

the New Fryerlings, in the Lowe Countries, written in Dutch, published in English and printed in 1611). The book was addressed to Hans de Ris, Reynier Wybranson, and the Congregation whereof they are. The book forever dispels any illusion that the Baptists and Mennonites in Amsterdam were agreed. The whole book of about one hundred pages is taken up with the differences.

Helwys says:

Having long desired to publish our faith unto this nation and in particular unto the congregations which you are, (as we have formerly done to our nation); and also to make known the things wherein you, and we differ, and are opposite. We have now through the mercies of God, thus far, brought our desires to pass, being only unsatisfied for our own insufficiency that we are no better able to manifest your errors unto you. We have divers causes from good grounds to do this. First, because we are bound to discover the mystery of iniquity, by all good means that we can; and in the cup that she hath filled for us, to fill her the double. Secondly, that we might through the grace of God (if your willing minds be thereunto) be instruments of good in discovering divers of our errors unto us, which we acknowledge to the praise of God, and with thankful hearts to you. Now in that we do this by way of opposition and reproof publicly, which you did by instruction privately; for our defense herein, we answer; You came publicly amongst us, and advanced your error of succession and order, from the proportion of the Scriptures, and have destroyed the faith of many thereby, who for sinister respects were willing to follow you: we have dealt divers times with divers of you privately, but you have lightly regarded our loving admonitions esteeming all as nothing we have said; some of you going on in your sin seeking to make this people one with you, who are justly cut off from God and his people for their falling away from grace. We have written privately to the whole congregation. You are of them to prevent you in this evil, we have written particularly unto you H(ans) de R(is) but all in vain, in that you esteem the truth we profess, as us herein as vain. Thus we are constrained (for the defense of the truth of God we profess and that we may not seem to justify you in your evils, and to make it known unto all that we have good cause to differ from you) to publish these things in the number as we do; and that it may appear unto all, and to your consciences that we have strong grounds for these things wherein we differ from you, though we be weak in the maintaining of them. If any shall oppose part or all that is here written, we desire this equal kindness, that it may be set over into English for all of your understandings, as we have caused this to be set over in Dutch for all yours, and if there be any cause of reply, we will by the assistance of God answer with all of the ability wherewith God shall make us able.

As troublesome as Smyth was to all parties he was conscientious. In the latter days of August he fell on sleep and was buried in the New Church, Amsterdam, September 1, 1612, as the records of that church show.



After the exclusion of Smyth, in 1609, Helwys became pastor and leading man of the Baptist church in Amsterdam. There was no effort at reconciliation between Smyth and Helwys, for they considered their differences vital. Between Helwys and the Mennonites there was never an effort for union.

Thomas Helwys, Elwes, Helwisse, Helwas, as the name was variously spelt, was probably the son of William Helwys. He seems to have been born about the year 1550, and was a man of some wealth. He had long been associated with Smyth. He had cared for Smyth when he was a young man. He worked with Smyth before he left England and accompanied him to Holland. He was by far the most active man among the Separatists (Robinson, Religious Communion, Works III. 159).

Helwys became convinced that the English sectaries ought not to have left England for Holland to avoid persecution; and he returned to England late in the year 1611 or early in 1612, accompanied by a greater part of the church. He established his church in London (Flight in Persecution by John Robinson. Works, III. 160). Shortly after his return he justified his course in a book which he wrote. The church met for worship in Pinner's Hall. Helwys was extremely successful as a preacher, attracted large congregations and made many converts. This church has sometimes been called the first General Baptist congregation in England; but it has been abundantly shown that there were many Baptists in England before the return of this congregation to England.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

E. ARIAS, The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers.

JOHN WADDINGTON, Congregational History. 4 volumes.

## CHAPTER 17 — ORIGIN OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES.

The General Baptists Numerous — Calvinistic Views Among Baptists — The Rise of the Particular Baptists — The Independent Church of Henry Jacob — Crosby — Underhill — Crosby Sometimes Misleading — The Opinion of Lewis — The MS. of William Kiffin — The Sending to Holland for Baptism — The Statement of Hutchinson — John Spilsbury — The Right to Begin Baptism — The Administrator of Baptism — The Continuance of Baptist Churches — William Kiffin — Daniel King — A Notable Introduction — Henry D’Anvers — the Confession of Somerset — Thomas Grantham — Joseph Hooke — Samuel Stennett — The Baptist Magazine — Thomas Pottenger — James Culross — The Story of Blount Going to Holland — The Mistakes of the So-called Kiffin Manuscript — Two Kiffin Manuscripts — The So-called Practice of Sprinkling — Hanserd Knollys — The Jacob Church Often in Trouble on the Subject of Dipping — The Practice of Spilsbury — Of Eaton — Of Kiffin — Of Henry Jessey — The Church of Hubbard — John Canne — The Broadmead Church — Samuel Howe — Paul Hobeon — Thomas Kilcop — The Practice of Dipping Called “New” — The Answer of the Baptists — Samuel Richardson — Thomas Collier — Hanserd Knollys — John Tombes — Jeffrey Watts — The Confession of 1648 — The Form of Baptism Dipping — Jesse B. Thomas — The Practice of the General Baptists — Masson — Featley.

THUS far only the history of the General Baptist churches of England has been considered. This body constituted by far the larger portion of the Baptists of that country, and their history runs on in an uninterrupted stream from generation to generation. On the subject of the administrator of baptism Baptists held, as has been seen, that they had the power to originate baptism, but that it took at least two persons to begin the act; and that these two could institute the rite. This was the method of Smyth and was the general theory held by them. To understand this history this position must be kept sharply in mind. They were mildly Arminian in their views, and forcefully impressed free will.

It is now time to consider the history of another body of Baptists, who if not so numerous were at least highly influential. They were called Particular Baptists, since they held to Calvinistic views. Two views of the administrator of baptism prevailed among them. The first and oldest was that every Christian man could, without himself having been baptized, immerse a candidate upon a profession of faith. Later there were those who held that an administrator should have a succession from a previously baptized administrator. At times

these views came into conflict and caused much troublesome discussion. The Particular Baptists had a wholly different origin from the General Baptists.

It must not be thought that either of these parties were new. Crosby says:

It may be proper to observe here, that there have been two parties of the English Baptists ever since the beginning of the reformation; those that have followed the Calvinistical scheme of doctrines, and from the principal points therein, personal election, and have been termed Particular Baptists: And those that have professed the Arminian or remonstrant tenets; and have also from the chief of those doctrines, universal redemption, been called General Baptists (Crosby, I. 173).

There were likewise many Baptists in England who did not choose to assume either name, "because they receive what they think to be truth, without regarding with what human schemes it agrees or disagrees" (Crosby, I. 174).

But some of the Particular Baptist churches originated in the Independent church of Henry Jacob. There is no proof that all of the seven Particular Baptist churches of London originated in this manner. "The Seven Churches of London, however," says Cutting, "are not to be supposed as comprising the whole of the Particular Baptist denomination at that time. There were certainly several churches besides these, and their increase at a period immediately succeeding was very rapid."

Dr. Underhill, after years of investigation, very ably discusses the entire problem. He says:

It has been seen that their (the Baptist) idea, the true archetypal idea, of the church, was the grand cause of the separation of the Baptists, as individuals and communities, from all the various forms of ecclesiastical arrangement adopted by the reformers and their successors. There could be no harmony between the parties; they were antagonistic from the first. Hence the Baptists cannot be regarded as owing their origin to a secession from the protestant churches; they occupied an independent and original position, one which unquestionably involved suffering and loss from its unworldliness, and manifested contrariety to the political tendencies and alliances of the reform movement (Underhill, *The Records of the Church of Christ meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687*).

The first company went out from Jacob about the year 1633. A want of recognition of this origin, and just discrimination between these bodies, has caused much confusion and led to many erroneous conclusions. Crosby indeed states this fact, but he nowhere gives a separate history of the two bodies, and this is the chief fault of his invaluable history. In this he has unfortunately been followed by some other historians. The General and Particular Baptists were not only distinct in origin and in history, but were often in debate one with the

other. Very many of the misunderstandings of Baptist history, in the reign of Charles I, have their basis in the confounding of the history of these distinct and separate Baptist bodies.

The first statement that Crosby makes concerning the organization of the Particular Baptist church under the ministry of John Spilsbury is misleading, since it apparently ascribes to all Baptists, only what actually took place in the one congregation of Henry Jacob. The mistake of Crosby consists in making a general statement of a specific instance. He says:

In the year 1633, the Baptists, who had hitherto been intermixed among the protestant Dissenters, without distinction, and so consequently shared with the Puritans in all the persecutions of those times, began now to separate themselves, and form distinct societies of those of their own persuasion (Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, I. 147).

Lewis, a Church of England man, reviewed on its appearance Crosby's *History*. After quoting the above statement he says:

Here seems to me to be two mistakes —

1. — That the Anabaptists till 1633 were intermixed among Protestant Dissenters, viz., The Puritans, Brownists, Barrowists and Independents. Since they all disclaimed them.
2. That the English Anabaptists began in 1633 to separate themselves. The writer of this ignorant and partial history owns, etc. etc. (Rawlinson MSS., C 409).

In his contentions Lewis was right and Crosby was wrong. Crosby continues:

Concerning the first of which I find the following account collected from a manuscript of Mr. William Kiffin.

“There was a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the Independent persuasion in London, gathered in the year 1616, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor; and after him succeeded Mr. John Lathrop, who was their minister at this time. In this society several persons, finding that the congregation kept not to their first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but such only as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation, in such order as was agreeable to their own sentiments.

“The church considered that they were now grown very numerous and so more than could in these times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that these persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed the 12th of Sep. 1633.

And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received in that age as invalid; whereupon most or all of them received a new baptism. Their minister was Mr. John Spilsbury. What number there were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of the names of about twenty men and women, it is added, with divers others.

In the year 1638, Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. Thomas Wilson, and others being of the same judgment, were upon their request, dismissed to the said Mr. Spilsbury's congregation.

In the year 1639, another congregation of Baptists was formed, whose place of meeting was in Crutched Fryars: the chief promoters of which were Mr. Green, Mr. Paul Hobson, and Captain Spencer (Crosby, I. 149).

Upon the organization of Spilsbury's church the question of a lawful administrator of baptism came up. There were Baptists among these Dissenters already and it does not follow that they had received their baptism from Pedobaptist sources. But a line of action must be established. Two possible sources were open to them. Crosby says:

The former of these was to send over to the foreign Anabaptists, who descended from the ancient Waldenses in France or Germany, that so one or more received baptism from them, might become proper administrators of it to others. Some thought this the best way and acted accordingly.

After giving a quotation from Hutchinson, Crosby continues:

This agrees with an account given of the matter in an ancient manuscript, said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin, who lived in those times, and was a leader among those of that persuasion.

This relates, that several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were that believers were the only proper subjects of baptism, and that it ought to be administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of burial and resurrection, according to ~~51022~~Colossians 2:12. and ~~45034~~Romans 6:4. That they often met together to pray and confer about the matter, and consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in the primitive purity. That they could not be satisfied about any administrator in England, to begin this practice; because though some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion: But hearing that some in the Netherlands practised it, they agreed to send over one Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language: That he went accordingly, carrying letters of recommendation with him, and was kindly received both by the church there, and Mr. John Batte their teacher: That upon his return, he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these

two baptized the rest of the company, whose names are in the manuscript, to the number of fifty-three.

So that those who followed this scheme did not derive their baptism from the aforesaid Mr. Smith, or his congregation at Amsterdam, it being an ancient congregation of foreign Baptists in the Low Countries to whom they sent.

But the greatest number of English Baptists, and the more judicious looked upon all of this as needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old Popish doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession, which neither the Church of Rome, nor the Church of England, much less the modern dissenters, could prove to be with them. They affirmed (Persecution for religion judged and condemned, 41) therefore, and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, any unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation (Crosby, I. 100-103).

John Spilsbury' did not believe he was under obligation to send anywhere for baptism; but that he had a right to baptize like John the Baptist did. He had nothing to do with this Blount scheme. He says:

And because some make it such an error, and so, far from any rule or example, for a man to baptize others who is himself unbaptized, and so think thereby to shut up the ordinance of God in such a strait, that none can come by it but through the authority of the Popedom of Rome; let the reader consider who baptized John the Baptist before he baptized others, and if no man did, then whether he did not baptize others, he himself being unbaptized. We are taught by this what to do upon like occasions.

Further, I fear men put more than is of right due it, and so prefer it above the church, and all other ordinances besides; for they can assume and erect a church, take in and cast out members, elect and ordain officers, and administer the Supper; and all a-new, without any looking after succession, and further than the Scriptures: But as for baptism, they must have that successively from the Apostles, though it come through the hands of Pope Joan. What is the cause of this, that men do all from the Word but only baptism? (Spilsbury, Treatise on Baptism, 63, 65, 66).

“Nor is it probable,” says Crosby, “that this man should go over sea to find an administrator of baptism, or receive it at the hands of one who baptized himself?” (Crosby, I. 144). The position was defended with ingenuity by the Particular Baptists. John Tombes was one of the most learned men of his times; an unwearied opponent of infant baptism; and frequently in public debates with Baxter and others. He defended this position (Tombes Apology for two Treatise, 10), and such was likewise the view of Henry Laurence, Esq. (Laurence, Treatise on Baptism, 407).

The position was finally assumed by the Particular Baptists as the correct one. Says Crosby:

It was a point much disputed for some years. The Baptists were not a little uneasy at first about it; and the Paedobaptists thought to render all of the baptisms among them invalid, for want of a proper administrator to begin their practice: But by the excellent reasoning of these and other learned men, we see their beginning was well defended, upon the same principles on which all other Protestants built their Reformation (Crosby, I. 106).

The position of the Particular Baptists meant that for an administrator of baptism they did not go beyond the authority of the New Testament. They declared that it was not necessary to prove a succession of Baptist churches. This body of Baptists have, however, been singularly clear in affirming the long continued existence of the Baptists of England, and elsewhere. They even claim, if it were at all necessary to prove it, that they have a succession more ancient and purer, if humbler than that of the Roman Catholic Church. The witnesses on this point are numerous and weighty. William Kiffin, A.D., 1645, wrote:

It is well know to many, and especially to ourselves, that our congregations as they now are, were erected and framed according to the rule of Christ before we heard of any Reformation, even at the time when Episcopacy was at the height of its vanishing glory.

This was after the Confession of Faith of 1643 was written and published. Kiffin affirmed that their churches as they are now erected and framed preceded the Reformation of the Episcopacy. Mr. Joseph Richart, who says he wrote the queries to which Kiffin replied, affirmed that he understood the Episcopal and not the Presbyterian Reformation. "You allege," he says, "your practise, that your congregations were erected and framed in the time of Episcopacy, and before you heard of any Reformation" (Richart, A Looking Glass for Anabaptists, 6, 7. London. 1645).

Here were Baptist churches, according to Kiffin, before the times of Henry VIII, and this fact was well known to the Baptists. Further on Kiffin makes the claim that the Baptists outdated the Presbyterians. He says:

And for the second part of your query. That we disturb the great work of Reformation now in hand; I know not what you mean by this charge, unless it be to discover your prejudice against us in Reforming ourselves before you, for as yet we have not in our understanding, neither can we conceive any thing of that we shall see reformed by you according to truth, but that through mercy we enjoy the practice of the same already; 'tis strange this should be a disturbance to the ingenious faithful reformer; it should be (one would think) a furtherance rather than a disturbance, and whereas you tell us of the work of Reformation now in hand, no reason able men will force us to desist from the practice of that which we are persuaded is according to Truth, and wait for

that which we know not what it will be; and in the meantime practise that which you yourselves say must be reformed (Kiffin, 12-14).

The year 1650 marked the appearance of a distinguished book by Daniel King (A Way to Zion, sought out and found, for Believers to walk in; or, a Treatise, consisting of three parts). In the first part it is proved:

1. That God hath had a people on earth, ever since the coming of Christ in the flesh, throughout the darkest days of Popery, which he hath owned as saints, and as his people.

Here is a distinct claim that the Baptists have existed since the days of Christ. King further says:

2. That the saints have power to re-assume and to take up as their right, any ordinance of Christ, which they have been deprived of by the violence and tyranny of the Man of Sin.

This was the ordinary position of the Particular Baptists. In the third part King says:

Prove that outward ordinances, and among the rest the ordinance of baptism is to continue in the church, and this Truth cleared up from intricate turnings and windings, clouds and mists that make the way doubtful and dark.

Four of the most prominent Baptists of those times, Thomas Patience, John Spilsbury, William Kiffin and John Pearson wrote an introduction for the book. These men declare that the assertion that “there are no churches in the world” and “no true ministers” has “been of singular use in the hands of the Devil.” These old Baptists carefully guarded every historical statement. A part of the introduction is as follows:

The devil hath mustered all of his forces of late, to blind and pester the minds of good people, to keep them from the clear knowledge and practice of the way of God, either, in possessing people still with old corrupt principles; or if they have been taken off them, then to persuade them, that there are no true churches in the world, and that persons cannot come to the practice of ordinances, there being no true ministry in the world; and others they run in another desperate extreme, holding Christ to be a shadow, and all his Gospel and Ordinance like himself fleshy and carnal. This generation of people have been of singular use in the hand of the Devil to advance his kingdom, and to make war against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Now none have been more painful than there have been of late, to poison the city, the country, the army, as far as they could. Inasmuch as it lay upon some of our spirits as a duty, to put our weak ability for the discovering of these gross errors and mistakes; but it hath pleased God to stir up the spirit of our Brother, Daniel King, whom we judge a faithful and painful minister of Jesus Christ, to take this work in hand before us; and we judge he hath been much assisted of God in the work



in which he hath been very painful. We shall not need to say much of the Treatise; only in brief: It is his method to follow the Apostles' rule to prove everything by the existence of Scripture-light, expounding Scripture by Scripture, and God hath helped him in this discourse, in proving the truth of churches, against all such as that have gone under the name of Seekers, and hath very well, and with great evidence of Scripture-light answered to all, or most of their objections of weight, as also those above, or beyond ordinances.

This is the endorsement of five of the leading Baptists in the world in their day, "that God hath a people on earth, ever since the coming of Christ in the flesh." They further believed that these people were the Baptists.

Henry D'Anvers was a man of great celebrity among the Baptists. He was born about the year 1608. He was a colonel in the Parliamentary army and governor of Strafford. While governor he embraced Baptist principles and was baptized probably by Henry Haggar. He wrote a book on baptism, in which he greatly stirred up the Pedobaptists. It is a vigorous defense of believers' baptism by dipping. He traces the history of the Baptists century by century back to the apostles. After referring to the existence of Baptists in England for long periods, he says:

In the 16th year of King James, 1618, That excellent Dutch Piece, called *A very plain and well-grounded Treatise* concerning Baptism, that with so much authority both from Scripture and Antiquity, proves the baptizing of Believers, and disproves that of Infants, was printed in English.

Since when (especially in the last 30 or 40 years) many have been the Conferences that have past, and many the Treatises that have, been written Pro and Con upon that subject, and many have been the Sufferings both in old and new England, that people of that persuasion have under gone, whereby much Light hath broken forth thereon, that not only very many Learned men have been convinced thereof, but very many Congregations of Baptists have been, and are daily gathered in that good old way of the Lord, that hath so long lain under so much obloquy and reproach, and been buried under so much Antichristian rubbish in these Nations (D'Anvers, *A Treatise of Baptism*, 308. London, 1674, second edition).

He further says:

By all which you see by plentiful Evidence, that Christ hath not been without his Witnesses in every Age, not only to defend and assert the true, but to impugn, and to reject (yea, even to Death itself) the false Baptism. Insomuch that we are not left without goods Testimony of a Series of Succession, that by God's providence hath been kept afoot, of this great Ordinance of Believers-Baptism ever since the first times (Ibid, 321, 322).

The Confession of Faith of several Congregations of Christ in the county of Somerset, and some churches in the counties near adjacent, A.D., 1656, has

always been an important document. On this subject it is very clear. The Confession says:

Article XXIX. That the Lord Christ Jesus being the foundation and cornerstone of the gospel church whereon his apostles built. <sup><4121></sup>Ephesians 2:20. <sup><8113></sup>Hebrews 2:3. He gave them power and abilities to propagate, to plant, to rule and order. <sup><412819></sup>Matthew 28:19 <sup><41016></sup>Luke 10:16. For the benefit of that his body, by which ministry he did shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, by his kindness towards it in the ages to come, <sup><41017></sup>Ephesians 2:7, which is according to his promise.

Article XXX. That the foundation and ministration aforesaid, is a sure guide, rule and direction, in the darkest time of the anti-christian apostacy, or spiritual Babylonish captivity, to direct, inform, and restore us in our just freedom and liberty, to the right worship and order belonging to the church of Jesus Christ. <sup><41314></sup>1 Timothy 3:14, 15, <sup><51315></sup>2 Timothy 3:15, 16, 17. <sup><41721></sup>John 17:20. <sup><23921></sup>Isaiah 59:21. <sup><6124></sup>Revelation 2:24. <sup><24021></sup>Isaiah 40:21. <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 2:5. <sup><61437></sup>1 Corinthians 14:37. &c. (Crosby, I. 52, 53).

Another mighty Baptist of this century was Thomas Grantham. He says:

From all which testimonies (and many more that might be brought) It is evident, beyond all doubt, (our opposers being judges) that whether we respect the signification of the word baptize, that many of the learned have much abused in this age, in telling them the Anabaptists (i.e. the Baptized Churches) are of late edition, a new sect, etc. when from their own writings, the clean contrary is so evident (Grantham, Christianismus Primitivus, 92, 93. London, 1678).

Joseph Hooke, who styled himself “a servant of Christ and a lover of all men,” was a noted Baptist of this century. He wrote with great fulness on the continuation of the Baptists through the ages. He says:

The people to whom John Woodward is joined, called Anabaptists are not rightly so called, and are no new sect (Hooke, A Necessary Apology for the Baptized Believers, Title page. London, 1701).

Again he says:

Thus having shewed negatively, when this sect called Anabaptists did not begin; we shall shew in the next place affirmatively; when it did begin; for a beginning it had, and it concerns us to enquire for the fountain head of this sect; for if it was sure that it were no older than the Münster fight. ... I would resolve to forsake it, and would persuade others to do so too.

That religion that is not as old as Christ and his Apostles, is too new for me.

But secondly, Affirmatively, we are fully persuaded, and therefore do boldly though humbly, assert, that this sect is the very same sort of people that were first called Christians in Antioch, <sup><41126></sup>Acts 11:26. But sometimes called

Nazarenes, ~~4245~~ Acts 24:5. And as they are everywhere spoken against now, even as they were in the Primitive Times.

And sometimes anciently they were called Anabaptists, as they have been of late times, and for the same cause, for when others innovated in the worship of God, and changed the subject in baptism, they kept on their way, and men grew angry, and for mending an error, they called them Anabaptists, and so they came by this name, which is very ancient ... (Hooke, 66).

Many more such statements occur in the book, but the following must end his testimony:

But we think it sufficient, that we can prove all we teach by the infallible Records of God's Word, and if all histories and monuments of antiquity had been overlaid, or burnt, as many have been, so that we had never been able to shew from any book but the Bible, that there were ever any of our persuasion in the world, till within a few years, yet we should think that book enough to prove the antiquity of our persuasion, that we are not a new sect, seeing that we can make it appear by that one book, that our persuasion is as old as Christ and the Apostles. And on the contrary, if we could show from approved history, that multitudes of all ages and nations since the Apostles' days have been of our persuasion, yet if we could not prove by the word of God, that our persuasion is true, it would signify very little. Therefore in the next place, we shall demonstrate that our doctrine is according to the Holy Scriptures, the Standard of Truth (Hooke, 32).

Samuel Stennett was one of the most accomplished scholars of his day, and was for forty-seven years pastor of the Little Wild Street Baptist Church, in London. His father, grandfather and greatgrandfather were all Baptist ministers. His greatgrandfather was born before the Civil Wars. He was in position to judge of the claims of the Baptists to antiquity. On this point he says:

And from these (Piedmont) we have traced the truth for which we contend, amidst the notable testimonies of renowned martyrs and confessors in favor of it, seven hundred years before the Reformation, down to the present times (Stennett, Answer to a Christian Minister's Reasons, 295. London, 1775).

*The Baptist Magazine* was founded in London in 1809. The very first number in this magazine, after the introduction, was "A Miniature History of the Baptists," in which it was claimed that the Baptists had always practised adult baptism by immersion. The Editor further says:

The Baptists have no origin short of the Apostles. They arose in the days of John the Baptist, and increased largely in the days of the Apostles, and have existed, under the severest oppressions, with intervals of prosperity, ever since.

Again, in 1817, the same magazine says:

The Baptists in England trace their origin, as a separate *denomination*, to the period of the Reformation, in the reign of Henry VIII; though there is good evidence that persons of the same sentiments, on the subject of believers' baptism, were found among the Wickliffites and Lollards, who were the Protestant dissenters from the Church of Rome before that period; and also, that all of the British Christians, till the arrival of Austin at the close of the sixth century were ignorant of the practice of infant baptism (*Baptist Magazine*, IX. 411).

One of the best posted English Baptists was Thomas Pottenger. Writing in 1845, of English Baptists, he says:

Writers have stated, though erroneously, that the first Baptist church in England was formed at the commencement of the seventeenth century, soon after Charles I. ascended the throne. This is a mistake. It is contrary to facts. History tells another tale. Courts of justice, registers of prisons, annals of martyrdom, lead to a different conclusion. Centuries before this period Baptists lived in various parts of the land, though the ignorance and cruelty of the times did not permit them to enjoy a visible and denominational organization like their successors of the present day. Moreover, there were Baptist societies in the kingdom long before the light of the reformation dawned upon it, and those societies were composed of men and women who regarded immersion on a profession of faith in Christ essential to the due administration of baptism (Pottenger, *The Early English Baptists*. In *The Baptist Magazine*, XXXVII. 283. London, 1845).

This is not an antiquated opinion among the English Baptists, for many of the most intelligent Baptists of that country believe that the Baptists date back to the Apostles. The Rev. George P. Gould, ex-President of Regents Park College, edited and published a series of Baptist Manuals, historical and biographical. In 1895 he published one on Hanserd Knollys, by James Culross, ex-President of Bristol Baptist College. After stating that Knollys became a sectary in 1631, Culross says:

Had Baptists thought anything depended on it, they might have traced their pedigree back to New Testament times, and claimed Apostolic succession. The channel of succession was certainly purer, if humbler, than through the apostate church of Rome. But they were content to rest on Scripture alone, and, as they found only believers' baptism there, they adhered to that (Culross, Hanserd Knollys, 39 note).

The story of the sending of Blount to Holland to obtain immersion is a blind account, and rests solely on the authority of the so-called Kiffin Manuscript.. This is a document which has been shown to be utterly worthless (Christian, Baptist History Vindicated. Louisville, 1899). The Kiffin Manuscript has

generally been discredited by Baptist authors. Crosby can only affirm that it “was said to be written by William Kiffin” (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I. 101). Evans says: “This statement is vague. We have no date and cannot tell whether the facts refer to the Separatists under Mr. Spilsbury or to others” (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, II. 78). Cathcart says this transaction may have happened, but “we would not bear heavily on the testimony adduced by these good men” (Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopaedia*, I. 527).

Armitage says:

A feeble but strained attempt has been made to show that none of the English Baptists practised immersion prior to 1641, from the document mentioned by Crosby in 1738, of which he remarks it was “said to be written by William Kiffin.” Although the Manuscript is signed by fifty-three persons, it is evident that its authorship was only guessed at from the beginning, it may or may not have been written by Kiffin (Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, 440).

Dr. Henry S. Burrage, who gave much time and attention to this subject, after a somewhat lengthy discussion of the Jersey Church Records and the Gould Kiffin Manuscript, is constrained to say:

It will be noticed in our reference above to the Jersey Church Records, we say “if they are authentic.” We have not forgotten the Crowle and Epworth records. These made their appearance about the same time as the Jersey Church Records, and it is now known that they are clumsy forgeries. The Jersey Church Records may be genuine, but their genuineness has not yet been established (*Zion’s Advocate*, September, 1896).

Pedobaptist writers have rejected the Kiffin Manuscript, and pronounced its testimony untrustworthy. John Lewis, in his reply to Crosby, ridicules the Kiffin Manuscript. After quoting the story of Blount and Blacklock, taken from Crosby, he says:

This is a very blind account. I can’t find the least mention made anywhere else of these three names Batte, Blount and Blacklock, nor is it said in what town, city or parish of the Netherlands those Anabaptists lived who practised this manner of baptizing by dipping or plunging the whole body under water (Rawlinson MSS. C 409. Bodleian Library).

Lewis, in referring to this “ancient Manuscript,” mentioned by Crosby, says: “How ignorant” (Ibid). Elsewhere he says:

But it is pretty odd, that nobody should know in what place this ancient congregation (a congregation much about the same antiquity with the ancient manuscript) was, and that John Batte, their teacher, should never be heard of before or since (Rawlinson MSS).

Again:

Others say it (baptism) was first brought here by one Richard Blount, but who and what he was I don't know.

Once more

But we have no authority for this account but a manuscript said to have been written by William Kiffin.

The document was so untrustworthy that Dr. Dexter, though it was in line with his contention, rejected it. He says:

On the other hand, had not Kiln — as it is supposed — made the statement, it would be suspicious for its vagueness, and for the fact that none of the historians, not even Wilson, Calamy, Brook, or Neal, know anything about Blount, or Blacklock, beyond what is here stated (Dexter, True Story of John Smyth, 54).

This manuscript, in which almost every statement in it can be shown to be false, which is rejected by the most of Baptists, and by controversial Pedobaptist writers, is the only authority to prove this story of Blount going to Holland, and that the Baptists were in the practice of sprinkling. Not one contemporary author mentions the journey of Blount, or the names of Blount or Blacklock. There is no proof that either man ever lived. Edwards does indeed mention a Blount who was a Baptist, but his given name is not mentioned and no circumstance connects him with Holland. The Blount mentioned by Edwards was a General and not a Particular Baptist, and could not have been connected with this enterprise.

The first reference that has been found to the Baptists sending to Holland for baptism is in an account by Hutchinson, who wrote in 1676, and he declares the point of the trouble was not immersion, but a proper administrator. He says:

When the professors of these nations had been a long time wearied with the yoke of superstition, ceremonies, traditions of men, and corrupt mixtures in the worship and service of God, it pleased the Lord to break these yokes, and by a very strong impulse of his Spirit upon the hearts of his people, to convince them of the necessity of Reformation. Divers pious, and very gracious people, having often sought the Lord by fasting and prayer, that he would show them the pattern of his house, the goings-out and the comings-in thereof, etc. Resolved (by the grace of God), not to receive or to practise any piece of positive worship which had not precept or example from the word of God. Infant baptism coming of course under consideration, after long search and many debates, it was found to have no footing in the Scriptures (the only rule and standard to try doctrines by); but on the contrary a mere innovation, yea, the profanation of an ordinance of God. And though it was proposed to be laid aside, yet what fears, tremblings, and temptations did attend them, lest

they should be mistaken, considering how many learned and godly men were of an opposite persuasion. How gladly would they have had the rest of their brethren gone along with them. But when there was no hope, they concluded that a Christian's faith must not stand in the wisdom of men; and that every one must give an account of himself to God; and so resolved to practise according to their light. The great objection was, the want of an administrator; which, as I have heard was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied (Hutchinson, *A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism Dialogues*. Epistle to the Reader. London, 1676).

Hutchinson knows nothing of Blount, Blacklock or Batte. The people he mentions were all Pedobaptists, who had just been converted to Baptist views. This is hearsay testimony years after without any details. The first man mentioned, who was sent to Holland to get immersion, was John Spilsbury, but Crosby says this was not true. The date of the going of Blount to Holland is as mythical as the person of Blount. A Baptist writer, who published a history of the Baptists, supplementary to Neal's *History of the Puritans*, says that Blount went to Holland in 1608. Barclay says he went in 1633. Other writers have been impressed with the date of 1640. One writer mentions three dates, 1640, 1641 and 1644. The Kiffin Manuscript mentions both 1640 and 1644. One date is just as good as another, for there is no authority to substantiate any of them. Not one prominent Baptist received his baptism from this source. William Kiffin, John Spilsbury, Samuel Richardson and Paul Hobson did not.

We are confronted with the amazing proposition that there were two Kiffin Manuscripts, differing from one another in most important respects. The one by Crosby has already been referred to; the other is known as the Gould edition. In the year 1860, Rev. George Gould had a lawsuit in regard to certain chapel property. After the suit was over, Mr. Gould presented his side of the question to the public in a volume entitled: *Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*. He also left a volume of manuscripts. Through the kindness of Rev. George P. Gould, ex-President of Regents Park College, an opportunity was granted the author to examine these papers. There were some thirty documents, with other miscellaneous papers, copied into a large book, under the general title *Notices of the Early Baptists*. These papers were copied into this book about the year 1860. It has recently been announced that these papers have been found; but what became of the originals is a mystery. Information was sought in vain. The Kiffin Manuscript as copied in this book differs in a radical manner from the quotations made by Crosby from the so-called Kiffin Manuscript. The Gould Kiffin Manuscript has been shown in almost every detail to be contrary to well authenticated records, such for example, as sworn depositions in the courts of the land. Some who were described as men were women, some who were pronounced alive were dead, some who were declared to be in prison were free, etc., etc. Records in the book profess to be the

minutes of the church of which Henry Jacob was pastor, and yet not one date or fact connected with his life is correctly given. Take a single incident from the minutes:

About eight years H. Jacob was Pastor of ye said Church & when upon his importunity to go to Virginia, to which he had been engaged before by their consent, he was remitted from the said office, 1624, & dismissed ye congregation to go thither, where in after years, he ended his dayes. In the time of his Service much trouble attended that State and People within and without.

This is the so-called minute of the church, and yet every statement is contrary to the facts in the case. Mr. Jacob did not serve the church eight years, but only six years; he did not go to Virginia in 1624, but in 1622; and he did not die in Virginia, but he returned to England in 1624, and died there in April or May of that year, and was buried from St. Andrew Hubbard's Parish, Borough of Canterbury. All of this is found in the last will and testament of Henry Jacob, which may be consulted at Somerset House, London. The will was probated by his wife, Sarah Jacob.

From the Gould Kiffin Manuscript, of 1860, the following is taken:

1640. 3rd. Mo: The Church became two by mutuall consent half being with Mr. P. Barebone, & ye other halfe with Mr. H. Jessey. Mr. Richard Blunt with him being convinced of Baptism yt ought to be by dipping in ye body into ye water, resembling Burial and rising again. ~~<510212>~~ Colossians 2:12, ~~<45004>~~ Romans 6:4 had sober conference about in ye Church, & then with some of the forenamed who also were so convinced; and after prayer & conference about their so enjoying it, none having then so practised it in England to professed Believers & having heard that some in ye Netherlands had so practised they agreed and sent over Mr. Richard Blunt (who understood Dutch) with letters of Commendation, and who was kindly received there; and returned with letters from them Jo: Batte & Teacher there and from that Church to such as sent him.

They proceed therein, viz. Those persons that were persuaded Baptism should be by dipping ye body had met in two Companies, and did intend so to meet after this, all those agreed to proceed alike together And then manifesting not any formal words (A Covenant) Wch word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutual desires each Testified:

Those two Companies did set apart one to Baptize the rest; so it was solemnly performed by them.

Mr. Blunt baptized Mr. Blacklock yt was a teacher amongst them and Mr. Blunt being baptized, he and Mr. Blacklock baptized ye rest of their friends that were so minded, and many being added to them, they increased much.



Upon these eleven words “none having then so practised it in England to professed Believers” treatises have been written to prove that the English Baptists did not practise immersion before 1641. If his document were genuine it would prove no such fact. All that could be claimed for it is, that so far as the writer knows, there had been no practise of believers’ immersion previous to that date. The document does not say they received baptism in Holland from Batte, but that they received letters and Blunt baptized Blacklock and Blacklock baptized Blunt and they baptized the rest. All this took place in England and not in Holland.

In 1850 Charles H. Spurgeon did not know that any one in England practised immersion. It was a surprise and joy to him to find that there were in England, those whose existence he had not anticipated, who observed the New Testament teaching in regard to baptism. He proceeded to become one of them, and soon filled the world with his fame (Spurgeon, Sermon on God’s Pupil. <sup><9717></sup>Psalm 71:17). Because a certain man, who was not a Baptist, did not know of the practice of believers’ immersion in 1640, no more proves that such a baptism was not practised than the want of knowledge in 1850, on Spurgeon’s part proved that no believers then immersed in England. Besides they had facilities of information in 1850 far beyond what they had in 1640. But Crosby leaves out these words altogether. If these words were in the Kiffin Manuscript then he deliberately falsified the record to suit his purpose and left out the most important words in the manuscript. He did this with the full knowledge of the fact that he had loaned this manuscript to Mr. Neal, who in several instances quoted from it, and could easily have exposed Crosby. Crosby stands above reproach in candor and honesty.

Whoever compiled the Gould manuscripts, repeatedly, in the thirty documents, recorded these eleven words in connection with documents which do not naturally mention baptism in any form. It was a pet phrase of the compiler of the Gould Kiffin Manuscript. How did these words get into the Gould Kiffin Manuscript?

No. 18 of the Gould collection is an example of how the compiler made use of these words. Effort has been made to prove that the Gould collection was made by Edward Bampfield, but this is a failure since this number was written after Bampfield was dead, and his autobiography is mentioned. He died in 1683. This collector believed that the Baptists obtained immersion from somewhere, so he puts it in all of the documents. Therefore we read in No. 18:

An account of ye methods taken by ye Baptists to obtain a proper administrator of Baptism by Imersion, when that practice had long been disused, yt then was no one who had been so baptized to be found.

The same statement is found in document No. 4. How did these statements get into, the Gould Kiffin Manuscript 4 They are not in Crosby's edition. They are in a number of the documents in the Gould collection. There is not a single instance known in this period, where a Baptist church practised sprinkling, or where any Baptist church changed its practice.

Fortunately it is not necessary to turn to a confused and misleading manuscript for an account of the organization of the Particular Baptist Churches. Hanserd Knollys was one of the principal actors of those times, and he gives an account of their organization. He rejected infant baptism in 1631 (John Lewis, Appendix to the History of the Anabaptists. Rawlinson MSS. CCCCIX, 62), and probably became a Baptist in the same year (Kiffin, Life and Death of Hanserd Knollys, 47. London, 1812). He tells in simple language (A Moderate Answer unto Dr. Baswick's Book. London, 1645), the story of the planting of these churches in the days of persecution before 1641. He relates:

I shall now take the liberty to declare, what I know by mine own experience to be the practice of some Churches of God in this City. That so far both the Dr. and the Reader may judge how near the saints who walk in the fellowship of the Gospell, do come to their practice, to those Apostolicall rules and practice propounded by the Dr. as God's method in gathering churches, and admitting Members. I say that I know by mine own experience (having walked with them), that they were thus gathered; viz. Some godly and learned men of approved gifts and abilities for the Ministry, being driven out of the Countries where they lived by the persecution of the Prelates, came to sojourn in this great City, and preached the word of God both publicly and from house to house, and daily in the Temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ; and some of them having dwelt in their own hired houses, and received all that came unto them, preached the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. And when many sinners were converted by the preaching of the Gospel, some of them believers consorted with them, and of professors a great many, and of the chief women not a few. And the condition which those Preachers, both publicly and privately propounded to the people, unto whom they preached, upon which they were to be admitted into the Church was by Faith, Repentance, and Baptism, and none other. And whosoever (poor as well as rich, bond as well as free, servants as well as Masters), did make a profession of their Faith in Jesus Christ, and would be baptized with water, in the Name of the Father, Sonne, and Holy Spirit, were admitted Members of the Church; but such as did not believe, and would not be baptized, they would not admit into Church communion. This hath been the practice of some Churches of God in this City, without urging or making any particular covenant with Members upon admittance, which I desire may be examined by the Scripture cited in the Margent, and when compared with the Doctor's three conclusions from the same Scriptures, whereby it may appear to the judicious Reader, how near the Churches some of them come to the practice of the Apostles rules,

and practice of the primitive churches, both in gathering and admitting members.

This is a rational, genuine, straightforward account of the organization of the Particular Baptist churches.

The Independent church, of which Henry Jacob was the first pastor, and of which Mr. Lathrop was the second, was often troubled on the subject of immersion. In 1633, during the pastorate of Mr. Lathrop, there was a division in the church on the subject of dipping, and a Baptist church was organized under the pastorate of John Spilsbury. This church of Spilsbury's practised dipping. Spilsbury immersed Sam Eaton between the dates of April 14, 1634, and May 5, 1636. Eaton also became a preacher and immersed others. This information was given by John Taylor, who put in rhyme as follows:

*Also one Spilsbury rose up of late,  
(Who doth or did dwell over Aldersgate)*

*He rebaptiz'd in Anabaptist fashion  
One Eaton (of the new found separation)  
A zealous button maker, grave and wise,  
And gave him orders others to baptize:  
He was so apt to learn that in one day,  
He'd Do't as well as Spilsbury weigh'd Hay.  
This true Hay-lay man to the Bank side came  
And there likewise baptized an impure dame.*

This book was written in 1638 (Taylor, A Swarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiques). It is interesting to note Spilsbury's idea of immersion. He says:

As is recorded by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of God; even so it is the judgment of the most and best learned in the land, so far as I have seen, or can see by any of their writings. As in all of the common dictionaries, which with one joint consent affirm, that the word baptize or *baptizo*, being the original word, signifies to dip, wash, to plunge one into the water though some please to mock and deride, by calling it a new fangled way, and what they please. Indeed it is a new found way, in opposition to an old grown error; and so it is a new thing to such, as the Apostles doctrine was to the Athenians (Spilsbury, A Treatise concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptism. London, 1653).

In regard to the enemies calling baptism "a new fangled way," Spilsbury remarks: "Yet truth was before error." He evidently thought immersion was the old way. The Lathrop church had continual trouble on dipping. A book called "To Zion's Virgins," was written by an ancient member of the congregation. An edition was printed in 1644, but it had been in use for several years and was in fact a Catechism. The date can be approximated. It was written after

September 18, 1634, for it declared that Mr. Lathrop was now pastor in America. It was before 1637 when Mr. Jessey was called as pastor, for the church was engaged in prayer for a pastor. The date was then between 1634 and 1637. The church at that date had already experienced disturbances on the subject of believers' immersion. The writer exhorts the members that they avoid "that that makes divisions," and continues:

I desire to manifest in defense of the Baptisme and forme we have received, not being easily moved, but as Christ will more manifest himself, which I cannot conceive to bee in the dipping of the head, the creature going in and out of the water, the forme of baptism doth more or lease hold forth Christ. And it is a sad thing that the citizens of Zion, should have their children born foreigners and not to be baptized, &c.

Again:

Then sayes such as be Called Anabaptists, &c. This answer is given in part: Wherefore let such as deny infants baptisme, as goe into the water and dip down the head and come out to show death and buriall, take heede they take not the name of the Lord in vain, more especially such as have received baptisme in their infancy.

This ancient member of the Independent church testifies directly to the immersion of believers, and the date was before 1637.

Spilsbury immersed Eaton; and Eaton immersed others. Moreover Eaton had been a member of Lathrop's church, and so Spilsbury did not recognize the baptism administered by Lathrop. The date of the baptism of Lathrop can be approximately fixed by the records of the High Court of Commission. Eaton died in prison August 25, 1639 (Calendar of State Papers, CCCCXXVII. 107). He was in jail from May 5, 1636, continuously to his death, therefore he was immersed before 1636; and he was likewise a preacher and practised immersion before that date. The Court Records show that April 29, 1632, he was a member of Lathrop's church. He continued in jail until April 24, 1634, when he was released from prison under the same bond that Lathrop was (Ibid, CCLXI. 182). After that date and before May 5, 1636, he joined the Baptist church and was dipped by Spilsbury. At a later date he was again cast into prison (Ibid, CCCXXIV. 13), and while in prison he attacked the baptism of the Churchmen (Ibid, CCCCVI. 64). He died on Sunday, August 25, 1639 (Ibid, CCCCXXXVII. 107), and not less than two hundred persons accompanied the corpse to the grave.

There was another secession from the Jacob church in 1638, when William Kiffin and five others united with the church of Spilsbury. (Ivimey, *The Life of William Kiffin*, 16, London, 1833).

Of this event Goadby says:

Five years after the above date (i.e. 1638), a further secession from the original church strengthened their hands. Among the seceders were William Kiffin and Thomas Wilson. Kiffin, to whose pen we are indebted for the account of the origin of the first Calvinistic Baptist church of England, thus speaks of the reasons which led him to join Mr. Spilsbury: I used all of my endeavors, by converse with such as were able, also by diligently searching the Scriptures, with earnest desire to God that I might be directed in a right way of worship; and, after some time, concluded that the safest way was to follow the footsteps of the flock, namely, that order laid down by Christ and his Apostles, and practised by the primitive Christians in their time, Which I found to be, after conversion they were baptized, added to the church, and continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers (Goadby; Bye-Paths in Baptist History 351).

Spilsbury was in the practice of immersion; but Kiffin was more strict in his views than was his pastor. Spilsbury permitted pulpit affiliation; Kiffin would have none of it. He believed that only an immersed man should occupy a Baptist pulpit. Crosby gives this account of Kiffin:

He was first of an Independent congregation, and called to the ministry among them; was one of them who were concerned in the conferences held in the congregation of Mr. Henry Jessey; by which Mr. Jessey and a greater part of the congregation became proselytes to the opinions of the Baptists. He joined himself to the congregation of Mr. John Spilsbury, but a difference arising about permitting persons to preach amongst them that had not been baptized by immersion, they parted by consent (Crosby, History of the English Baptists, III. 3, 4).

Kiffin, in the year 1639, or 1640, withdrew from the church of Spilsbury and Organized the Devonshire Baptist Church, of London, on a strict immersion line. This honored church has continued to this day.

After the organization of the church under Spilsbury, the subject of dipping still troubled the Independent church of Lathrop. He removed to America in 1634 with a part of his church, which brought on a great debate on baptism in this country.

We are not yet done with this church of Jacob's for one of its most distinguished pastors, Rev. Henry Jessey, became a Baptist. He was one of the most noted men of his times. He was born September 3, 1601, entered Cambridge University in 1622, and became a minister in 1626, and became pastor of the Jacob church in 1637. The frequent debates on baptism soon unsettled his mind. In 1642 he freely declared to the church his convictions on the subject of dipping, and proposed that those baptized in the church thereafter be baptized by that form. In 1644 he held frequent debates on the

subject of infant baptism, and in June, 1645, he was baptized by Hanserd Knollys.

This Independent church, organized by Jacob, had a most wonderful record for making Baptists, and encouraging the practice of dipping. There were repeated secessions from it on that account. Out of it came a number of the great leaders of the Particular Baptists, all of whom were in the practice of dipping. Henry Jessey received his baptism from Hanserd Knollys, who had been a Baptist since 1631. Eaton was immersed by John Spilsbury, and Eaton in turn dipped others. William Kiffin was the strictest of them all and would not permit those who had not been immersed to preach in Baptist pulpits. Even those who emigrated to America precipitated a great debate on the subject of dipping.

There was another Independent church which at least had two distinguished pastors who were Baptists. It was organized by Mr. Hubbard, about the year 1621. He was a Pedobaptist minister, but the immediate successors in the pastorate were Baptists. The church worshipped at Deadman's Place, and contained many Baptists in its membership. It is probable that by 1640 a majority of its members were Baptists and had been immersed. They were arrested in January, 1640, and brought before the House of Lords. So greatly did Baptist sentiment prevail among them that they were called Anabaptists (Journal of the House of Lords, IV. 133). There were more than sixty-six of them. The House of Lords, on the 16th of January, reprimanded them. This action on the part of the House of Lords directed much sympathy to the church.

Some of the persons before the House of Lords on this occasion signed the great Confession of Faith of 1643. Just when John Canne became minister is not known certainly, but he resigned and went to Holland in 1633. He was in Amsterdam in 1634, at which time he wrote his celebrated book: "The Necessity of Separation," which had a wide circulation with important results. At that time he was an Anabaptist (Breton, Travels, 65). Stovell makes it perfectly plain that while pastor of the Hubbard church he was a Baptist. He was still, in 1638, in Amsterdam and heavily fined for his activities (Evans, Early English Baptists, II. 108). He probably returned in that year to London, where he labored with success. He went, in 1640, larger liberty being granted of preaching, to Bristol, where he preached in public places, at other times in the open air, and founded a church. Being a Baptist, he was described as a "baptized man," meaning an immersed man. Already, in 1640, a Baptist was known as an immersed man.

The Broadmead Records give an account of his arrival and work in that city. The Records say:

At this juncture of time (1640) the providence of God brought to this city one Mr. Canne, a baptized man; and it was this Mr. Canne that made notes and references upon the Bible. He was a man very eminent in his day of godliness, and for reformation in religion, having great understanding in the way of the Lord (Broadmead Records, 18, 19).

Mr. Canne attempted to preach in a suburb of the city and a wealthy woman placed some obstructions in his way. The Broadmead Records say:

The obstruction was by a very godly great woman, that dwelt in that place who was somewhat severe in the profession of what she knew, hearing that he was a baptized man, by them called Anabaptists, which was to some sufficient cause of prejudice, because the truth of believers' baptism had been for a long time buried, yea, for a long time by popish inventions, and their sprinkling brought in room thereof. And (this prejudice existed) by reason (that) persons in the practice of that truth by baptism were by some rendered very obnoxious; because, about one hundred years before, some beyond sea, in Germany, that held that truth of believers' baptism, did, as some say, some very singular actions; of whom we can have no true account what they were but by their enemies; for none but such in any history have made any relation or narrative of them (Ibid, 19, 20).

Canne, in 1640, was a baptized man, such a man was called an Anabaptist, and there is no record that any time since his conversion he had changed his mind on the subject of baptism.

The third pastor of the Hubbard church was Samuel Howe, a Baptist. He died about 1640, while pastor of the church. He had been pastor about seven years. He was much lamented. He was persecuted, denied Christian burial, and was finally interred at Agnes-la-deer. He wrote a famous book, called Howe's Sufficiency of the Spirit's Teaching. His contemporaries bore high praise to his ability and zeal for his work. It was Samuel Howe who greatly impressed Roger Williams; and it was probably from Howe that Williams learned some of his lessons of soul liberty and dipping in baptism (Howe, Sermon, xii. xiii).

It has been shown that Taylor said Spilsbury practised dipping. He bears the same testimony to Howe. Taylor says the Baptists of England date back to the "reign of Henry 8," and affirms that "in these, our days, the said Anabaptisticall sect is exceeding rife, for they do swarm here and there without fear of either God or man, law or order" (Taylor, A Cluster of Coxcombes. London, 1642). Here follows the relation of the preaching cobbler, Sam Howe:

*This reverend translating brother (Howe)  
Puts both his hands unto the spiritual-plow,  
And the nag's head, near the Coleman-Street,  
A most pure crew of Brethren there did meet,  
Where their devotions were so strong and ample,  
To turn a sinful Tavern to a Temple,  
They banished Bacchus there, and some small space  
The drawers and the Bar-boy had some grace*

(Taylor, A Swarme of Sectaries, 8).

Taylor makes Howe a Baptist and a dipper. He represents him in the title page standing in a tub filled with water as a pulpit, and marks the picture "Sam How." This was in 1638. The above book of Taylor's was answered by Henry Walker. Of the tub in which Howe was standing, Walker says:

Of the picture in the title of his book. I did first conceive that fellow in the tub to be John Taylor the Poet, having stayed so long with the Bishop of Canterbury, until at last he saw one vessel of sack drawn dry, and then break out the head of the tub tumble in and fallen asleep was almost stifled in the lees; crying to Sam the vinter's boy in the Tower, to help him; crying Sam Howe come and help me out, and all the people flocked about him. See how he stands like a drowned mouse (Henry Walker, An Answer to a foolish Pamphlet entitled a Swarme of Sectaries and Schismatics, 3, 4. London, 1641).

Taylor thereupon reads a lecture and pronounces Walker also an Anabaptist. He likewise represents Walker as standing in a tub and makes him an Anabaptist dipper (Taylor, A seasonable Lecture).

Thus were John Canne and Samuel Howe, the pastors of this Independent church, both practising dipping. Both of these were Baptists. Two other parties connected with this church, Thomas Gunn and John Webb, were baptists, who signed the Confession of Faith of 1643. Thus can the opinions of the most of the Baptists be accounted for.

There is yet another Baptist who signed the Confession of Faith of 1643, for whose practise we can give an account. His name was Paul Hobson. Of him Ivimey says:

He is mentioned among the rejected ministers. Dr. Calamy supposed he was chaplain of Eaton College, and that he had a place of command in the army; but observes, that if he had conformed afterwards it would have made some atonement, as was the case in other instances. In addition to these circumstances, we find that he was engaged as early as 1639, as one of the chief promoters of founding a Baptist church in London. He was one of the pastors who signed the Confession of Faith of the seven churches in London in 1644 (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, I. 88).



The above statements in regard to Paul Hobson are confirmed by Edwards (Edwards, Gangraena, I. 33), who was a contemporary. Edwards wrote in 1645, and he says that Hobson had been a tailor, but was now in the army. He had been a great while a Baptist preacher. An Anabaptist in the mouth of Edwards was always one who immersed.

Thomas Kilcop was another of the Baptists who signed the Confession of Faith of 1643. He had long been a Baptist minister. When Praise God Barbon. in 1641, attacked the Baptists he was answered by Edward Barber for the General Baptists; and by Thomas Kilcop for the Particular Baptists. This Barbon had been a member of the church of Jacob, and had become pastor of an Independent organization of his own. He was a rabid Pedobaptist, and is variously described as a leather seller and a politician. He became a distinguished member of the Long Parliament and his Parliament was called the Praise God Barbon Parliament. He was born, probably, in 1596, and died in 1679. Like many of the members of Jacob's church, he became a Baptist. The date we do not know, but in the "Declaration" of the Baptists, issued in 1654, twenty-two names signified to it as "of that church which walks with Mr. Barbon" (National Dictionary, III. 151). The book of Kilcop appeared early in 1641. On the subject of immersion, he said:

By baptism is meant the baptism of water, <sup><41R2></sup>John 3:22, 23. Baptism is a Greek word, and most properly signifies dipping in English, and therefore the parties baptized are said to be baptized not at but in Jordan, <sup><41016></sup>Mark 1:5, 9, 10, and in Ænon, <sup><41R2></sup>John 3:23. <sup><41038></sup>Acts 8:38, 39. <sup><41016></sup>Matthew 3:16. Then note that the baptizing of dipping belongs to Christ's disciples, and none else (Kilcop, A Short Treatise of Baptisme. London, 1641).

There is no intimation that he ever recognized any other form of baptism save immersion. On the subject of succession he held the views of the other Particular Baptists of his times.

Those who have read the literature of the seventeenth century cannot fail to have been impressed with its harsh controversial tone. This is true on well nigh all subjects. The remark especially applies to those who wrote on the form and subjects of baptism. The harshest of the opponents of the Baptists were the Presbyterians. They had separated more widely from the New Testament practice, and they felt called upon to justify the acts of the Westminster Assembly; and their radical changes in the fundamental law of England in enacting affusion. Naturally their most determined opponents were the Baptists. What the Presbyterians lacked in argument they made up in assertion. They never tired, of calling the Baptist practice of dipping "new fangled, a novelty of recent occurrence, and soured leaven." An illustration could be secured from almost any year of the century. For example, Richard Burthogge, A.D., 1684, says of the Baptists: "Your opinion is but a novelty" (Burthogge,

An Argument for Infant Baptism, 122). Richard Baxter, A.D. 1670, says: “These and many more absurdities follow upon this new conceit” (Baxter, *The Cure of Church Divisions*, 49).

The word “new,” however, in the mouth of writers of the period was a relative term and meant from one to sixteen hundred years. In the main they meant to deny the affirmation of the Baptists that immersion was “the good old way” and had the mark of “antiquity upon it” (Watts, *A Scribe, Pharisee and Hypocrite*, iv. London, 1657). Samuel Richardson is a good witness. He answered Daniel Featley, in the year 1645, who had affirmed that the Baptists were new. Richardson says:

The Papists pretend antiquity, and brag of their universality against the truth. We know error is ancient; and spreading; but truth was before error, and baptizing by dipping was before baptizing by sprinkling; he may name to us as many as he pleaseth, but he must tell us where it is written in the scriptures, as we may read it, before we shall believe them (Richardson, *Some Brief Considerations*, 14).

William Allen, another Baptist, writing in 1855, says to call it “new baptism,” as the enemies call it, is to “miscall it, being indeed the old way of baptizing” (William Allen, *An Answer to J.G., his XL Queries*, 72).

Thomas Collier, a famous Baptist, A.D., 1651, affirms that dipping was the old practice. He says:

Sir, you are maliciously mistaken, and the Ignorance is In yourself. In calling them Anabaptists, for the practising baptism, according to the scripture, that grieve you it seems; but you have learnt a new way, both for matter and manner, babies instead of believers; for manner, sprinkling at the holy font, Instead of baptizing in a river: you are loth to go in with your long gowns, you have found a better way than ever was prescribed or practised; who now sir are the ignoramuses (Collier, *Pulpit Guard Routed*, 89).

Hanserd Knollys, in answer to John Saltmarsh, a Quaker, who affirmed that immersion was new (Saltmarsh, *The Smoke in the Temple*, 16. London, 1646), declares that immersion is not new. He says:

Paul’s doctrine was called new, although he preached Jesus and the resurrection <sup><44179></sup>Acts 17:19. Also when our saviour preached with authority, and confirmed his doctrine with miracles, they questioned among themselves saying, What new thing is this? What new doctrine is this? (Knollys, *The Shining of a Flaming Fire in Zion, or a Clear Answer to 13 exceptions, against the ground of the New Baptism; so called In Mr. Saltmarsh’s Book*, 1. London, 1646).

John Tombes answered the charge of Mr. Marshall, that he was “itching after new opinions.” Of this, Mr. Tombes says:

As for Master Marshall’s reasons, they are not convincing to me, nor is the holding of rebaptization such a new opinion as he would make it (Tombes, *An Apology or Plea for the two Treatises*, 53. London, 1646).

The announcement from a Baptist that immersion was the good old way, and as ancient as the times of the Apostles, brought a violent outbreak from Jeffrey Watts. He says:

Only, I wonder at the iron brow, and brazen face of novel impudence, and new light, that whereas it is every seventh day at least, in its chimney house conventicles, prating against the old, laudable, and ancient practices of this our, and other Reformed Churches, it dares to pretend to antiquity (so contradicting itself) and glory of it in this point, of their immersing and dipping, (calling it the old way), who scorn it, and scoff at the same, and all old light, in their other tenets and opinions (Watts, *A Scribe, Pharisee and Hypocrite*, v).

The Baptists claimed to have “the good old way” when they practised immersion; Watts calls it “a new way” since he affirmed that immersion was not taught in the New Testament. He mentioned two things the Baptists did which he pronounced new. The first was that in 1642 or 1643, they immersed nude women in the rivers. “I hope,” said he, “you see, that your dipping of women in their clothes, is a new business in the church” (Ibid, 19). He takes up much time in elucidating the old slander. The second thing he affirms about dipping is that it is not found in the Scriptures. He said that it had been of long continuance in England and gives many examples, and then he affirms that it is new among Baptists, since they had practised it only since 1524. He says:

And thus (as I said) in your purest and perfected Western churches, for these five or six hundred years last past (I think, I am rather within, than without my compass) there have been none dipped or immerged, no not in the old, once good way of the former times, publicly, authoritatively nay scarce presumptuously; untill those Africans (I will not say monsters) new men; for (*Africa semper aliquid aportat nove*) who were your progenitors and predecessors, the first dippers and immergers in the West (the very place where they are you arose), is another argument to prove their and your business of dipping, a novelty, a new thing, as coming from Africa originally. I say until those Africans new men, those Egyptian frogs, that love to be paddling and dipping in rivers and ponds, began to spread themselves and slip up and down to bring forth rivers and ponds (as the rivers and ponds brought forth them) or rather to bring their perverts to ponds and rivers to be baptized. The which bold and presumptuous attempt, against the constant and uniform custom of the Western Church, began in the year 1524, and so is not above an

hundred and two and thirty years since, which is time enough, and little enough to make it novelty in comparison of antiquity (Watts, A scribe, 63).

According to Watt, the Baptists of England had been in the practice of immersion one hundred and thirty-two years. John Goodwin took precisely the same view. He called the immersions of the Baptists new. He said it had only been in existence among Baptists since the time of Nicholas Storch. His words are:

That that was a case of necessity, wherein Nicholas Storch (with his three comrades) in Germany about the year 1521, or whoever he was that first, himself being in his own judgment and conscience unbaptized, presumed to baptize others after that exotique mode in this nation (Goodwin, Water Dipping no Firm Footing for Church Communion, 40. London, 1653).

The Particular Baptists, in 1643, prepared a Confession of Faith, which was published the following year. The XL Article of the Confession of Faith of those churches which “are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists” is as follows

That the way and manner of dispensing this ordinance is dipping or plunging the body under water; it being a sign, must answer the thing signified, which is, that interest the Saints have in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ: and that as certainly as the body is buried under water, and rises again, so certainly shall the bodies of the saints be risen by the power of Christ in the day of the resurrection, to reigne with Christ.

There is a note appended, as follows:

The word *baptizo* signifies to dip or plunge yet so as convenient garments be both upon the administrator and subject, with all modesty.

Perhaps in a Confession of Faith, it would be impossible to state the practice of the Baptists more plainly. It has been asserted that this Confession of 1643, was the declaration of their change of doctrine on the subject; and that this Confession of Faith was the first Baptist document which affirmed immersion. As a matter of fact, according to all psychological principles and all history, this Particular Baptist Confession, of 1643, was simply the expression of the doctrines this body of Baptists had held all of the time.

If one will read the Confession he will find that not only did the Baptists not change their doctrines, but they further declared that they had long groaned under persecution; and that only from the meeting of the Long Parliament, in 1640, had they had any redress. All of this and more is stated in Article L, which is as follows;

And if God should provide such a mercy for us, as to incline the magistrates hearts so far as to tender our consciences, as that we might be protected by

them from wrong injury, oppression and molestation, which long we have formerly groaned under by the tyranny and oppression of the Prelatical Hierarchy, which God through his mercy hath made this present King and Parliament wonderfully honorable, as an instrument in his hand, to throw down and we thereby have had some breathing time, we shall, we hope, look at it as a mercy beyond our expectation and conceive ourselves further engaged for ever to bless God for it.

They looked into the future as they had a retrospect of the past. The persecutions of the past, they say in Article LI, inspired them with the courage for the future. They expressed themselves as willing to give up all and that they did not count their lives dear that they might finish their course with joy. They had endured persecution in the past, they were willing to suffer affliction in the future. The God of our fathers had been true to us in the past, he will not forsake us now. This is a heroic statement.

It is impossible to conceive that men of a mould like this would change their minds on a fundamental doctrine over night. Professor J.B. Thomas, late Professor of Church History, in Newton Theological Institution, concisely states the argument, when he says:

Let it be noted that the first edition of “the Confession of the Seven Churches” was issued in 1643, affirming immersion to be the only true baptism. Now Baillie, a jealous and sagacious contemporary witness, affirms that this Confession expressed the already matured faith of forty-six churches, “as I take it, in and about London.” Featley, an important figure in this discussion, reckoned them, as I remember, at fifty-two, and Neal distinctly’ affirms that there were at the date, “54 congregations of English Baptists in England who confined Baptism to dipping,” their illiterate preachers going about the country, and “making proselytes of all who would submit to their immersion.” We are required then to believe, either that one congregation of “immersers” organized in 1641, there had grown this great company in two years, or that in the same time fifty or more existing Baptist congregations had simultaneously repudiated a custom to which they were traditionally attached and which was in universal use, in behalf of another custom which nobody among them had ever practised or even heard of: they without any newly assigned or intelligent motive, suddenly ceased wholly to do what they had always and uniformly been accustomed to, and began exclusively to do what they had never done at all. So toppling a hypothesis surely needs massive support.

I am not persuaded that this support has been furnished. I recognize no important evidence that was not apparently accessible to Crosby in his day, and see no satisfactory reason for abandoning his opinion that immersion in England long preceded the date named by Neal, and now (that is in 1643) reaffirmed (*Western Recorder*, December 17, 1896).

The Confession of Faith was equally clear on the proper administrator of baptism. The view of Spilsbury prevailed. He held that if baptism was lost, any disciple could begin it again, and quoted John the Baptist in proof of his position. They declared it was not necessary to send anywhere for an administrator. Article XLI is as follows:

The person designed by Christ to dispense baptism, the Scriptures hold forth to be a disciple, or a person extraordinarily sent, the commission enjoining the administration, being given to them who were considered disciples, being men able to preach the Gospel.

The Baptists of 1643 did not have an “agent extraordinarily sent” to Holland to obtain baptism. They believed in and practised no such thing.

The Confession of Faith was made by the representatives of seven churches and was signed by the following persons William Kiffin, Thomas Patience, John Spilsbury, George Tipping, Samuel Richardson, Thomas Skippard, Thomas Munday, Thomas Gunn, John Mabbatt, John Webb, Thomas Kilcop, Paul Hobson, Thomas Goare, Joseph Phelpes and Edward Heath.

The Confession of Faith was clear and orthodox, enough to allay suspicion, and ought to have saved the Baptists from further annoyance and persecution. The impartial Masson says of it:

In spite of much persecution continued even after the Long Parliament met, the Baptists of these congregations propagated their opinions with such zeal that by 1644 the sect had obtained considerably larger dimensions. In that year they counted seven leading congregations in London, and forty seven in the rest of England, besides which they had many adherents in the army. Although all sorts of impieties were attributed to them on hearsay, they differed in reality from the Independents mainly on the subject of baptism. They objected to the baptism of infants, and they thought immersion or dipping under water the proper mode of baptism; except in these points and what they might involve they were substantially at one with the Congregationalists. This they made clear by the publication, in 1644, of a Confession of their Faith in 52 Articles, a document which, by its orthodoxy in all essential matters shamed the more candid of their opponents (Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, II. 585).

Their adversaries took no such view of the Confession of Faith. They could not be satisfied or induced to give the Baptists credit for common honesty. It was greeted by an outburst of passion from the Pedobaptist world.

Dr. Featley, who wrote with no small prejudice, says:

If we give credit to this Confession, and the preface thereof, those who among us are branded with that title, are neither heretics nor schismatics, but tender hearted Christians, upon whom, through false suggestions, the hand of

authority fell heavily whilst the hierarchy stood; for they neither teach free will, nor falling from grace, with the Arminians; nor deny original sin, with the Pelagians, nor disclaim magistracy, with the Jesuites; nor maintain plurality of wives, with the Polygamists; nor community of goods, with the Apostles; nor going naked, with the Adamites; much less ever the mortality of the soul, with Epicures and Psychopannychists (Featley, Dippers Dipt, 177).

Nevertheless, the Confession of Faith exerted a powerful and favorable influence for the Baptists. It was orthodox, evangelical and free from objectional errors. “The Baptists never did anything that more effectually cleared them from the charge of being dangerous heretics, than did this” (Crosby, I., 170).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*. 4 volumes.

Adam Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*. 2 volumes.

J. H. Wood, *A Condensed History of the General Baptists of the New Connection*.

## CHAPTER 18 — A GREAT DEBATE ON BAPTISM.

Charles I Brought Disaster — William Laud — The Prevalence of Baptists — Persecutions — Search For The Baptists — Lord Robert Brooke — The High Commission Court Destroyed — The Boldness of the Baptists — The Church of England Tries to Enforce Immersion — Articles to be Enquired of — Baptisteries — Thomas Blake — Walter Craddock — Daniel Featley — Denne — John Floyer — Schaff — Greek Lexicons — The Edinburgh Encyclopedia — William Wall — The Westminster Assembly — John Lightfoot — The Action of Parliament — The Book of Vellum — The Beginning of the Great Debate — The Practice of the Baptists — W.H. King — George C. Lorimer — Joseph Angus — Daniel Featley — Thomas Collier — Lewes Hewes — Thomas Lamb — John Goodwin — Edward Barber — William Jeffrey — Clem Writer — Goadby — Featley and Four Particular Baptists Tombes and Henry Vaughan and John Cragge — William Russell and Samuel Chandler.

THE reign of Charles I, A.D. 1625-1649, brought almost unlimited disaster upon England. The claim that the king was above law came in with the Stuarts. "He had inherited from his father," says Macaulay, "political theories, and was much disposed to carry them into practice. He was like his father, a zealous Episcopalian. He was, moreover, what his father had never been, a zealous Arminian, and, though no Papist, liked a Papist much better than a Puritan" (Macaulay, History of England, I., 64). Dr. Humphrey Gower, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, accurately stated the contention. He says:

We still believe and maintain that kings derive not their titles from the people; but from God. That to him only they are accountable. That it belongs not to subjects, either to create or to censure; but to honor and obey their Sovereign; who comes to be so by a fundamental hereditary Right of Succession; which no religion, no law, no fault or forfeiture, can alter or diminish.

Account must be taken of another person who was the most intelligent, unscrupulous, and tyrannical enemy that the Baptists of England ever had. Abbot, at the beginning of the reign, was Archbishop of Canterbury; but he was to be succeeded by William Laud the growing Churchman of the times. Macaulay says of him:

Of all the prelates of the Anglican Church, Laud had departed farthest from the principles of the Reformation, and drawn nearest to Rome. His theology was more remote than even that of the Dutch Arminians from the theology of the Calvinists. His passion for ceremonies, his reverence for holy days, vigils, and sacred places, his ill-concealed dislike for the marriage of ecclesiastics, the ardent and not altogether disinterested zeal with which he asserted the



claims of the clergy to the reverence of the laity, would have made him an object of aversion to the Puritans, even if he had used only legal and gentle means for the attainment of his ends. But his understanding was narrow, and his commerce with the world had been small. He was by nature rash, irritable, quick to feel his own dignity, slow to sympathize with the suffering of others, and prone to the error, common in superstitious men, of making his own peevish and malignant moods for emotions of pious zeal. Under his direction every corner of the realm was subjected to a constant and minute inspection. Every little congregation of separatists was tracked out and broken up. Even the devotions of private families could not escape the vigilance of his spies. Such fear did his rigor inspire that the deadly hatred of the Church, which festered in innumerable bosoms, was generally disguised under an outward show of conformity. On the very eve of troubles, fatal to himself and his order, the bishops of several extensive dioceses were able to report that not a single dissenter was to be found within his jurisdiction (Macaulay, I. 68).

By persecution and imprisonment Laud was to press his views till the whole country was brought into a state of insurrection and the King and Laud were both to lose their lives in the conflict.

Every year, in the former reign, marked the growth of the Baptists in England. This is likewise true of this reign. "The prevalence of Baptist principles," says Evans, "and the moral heroism of many who held them in the past reign, have already been noticed, yet only glimpses of their organization can be gathered from the records of those times. Their existence is certain, but beyond this we can scarcely affirm" (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, II. 20). There are more instances than Evans supposed (Evans, II. 54). The names of some of these Baptist churches are: Ashford, Maidstone, Biddenden and Eythorne, and probably others in Kent (Taylor, *History of the General Baptists*, I. 281, 283); in London there were probably several; Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry, Tiverton (Amsterdam Library, No. 1372); Newgate, Stoney Stratford (Evans, II. 54); Amersham, in Buckinghamshire (Taylor, I. 96); and certainly one in Southwark. Dr. Angus adds the following churches to this list: Braintree, Sutton, Warrington, Crowle and Epworth, Bridgewater, Oxford and Sadmore. Here are the names of twenty-one General Baptist churches in existence in 1626. In 1633 we can add the following churches: King, Stanley, Newcastle, Kilmington (Devonshire), Bedford, Cirencester, Commercial Street (London), Dorchester and Hamsterly. Such is the statement of Dr. Angus. A small Baptist church was supposed to have been organized in Olchon, Wales, in this year (Thomas, *History of the Baptists in Wales*, 3).

Early in his reign Laud gave the Baptists a taste of his cruelty. Three of their most popular ministers in Kent, Thomas Brewer, Turner and Fenner were arrested and placed in prison, where Brewer remained no less than fourteen

years. Two years later, 1627, Laud mentions to the King these persons in prison and says:

I must give your Majesty to understand, that at about Ashford, in Kent, the Separatists continue to hold their conventicles, notwithstanding the examination of so many of them as have been discovered. They are all of the poorer sort, and very simple, so that I am utterly to seek what to do with them (History of the Troubles and Trials of William Laud. Written by himself, 535).

The King endorsed the above with his own hand and wrote “Keep these particular persons fast, until you think what to do with the rest.” The malignant hatred of the Baptists almost surpasses belief. “If I hate any,” says a courtier of these times, “it is those schismatics that puzzle the sweet peace of the church; so that I could be content to see an Anabaptist go to hell on a Brownist’s back” (Howell, Letters, 270).

Search was everywhere made for them. Complaint was made, A.D. 1631, that

All God’s true children had continual cause of lamentation and fear, in respect of the daily growing and far spreading of the false and blasphemous tenets of the Anabaptists against God’s grace and providence, against the godliest assurance and perseverance, and against the merits of Christ himself (Life of Sir D’ Ewes, II. 64).

There were in London alone eleven congregations. Bishop Hall writing to Archbishop Laud, June 11, 1631, says

I was bold last week to give your lordship information of a busy and ignorant schismatic lurking in London; since which time, I hear to my grief, that there are eleven several congregations (as they call them) of Separatists about the city, furnished with their idle-pretended pastors, who meet together in brew houses and ‘such other meet places of resort every Sunday (Letter in State Paper Office).

Repeated enquiries revealed the presence of the Baptists throughout the kingdom. Many of them were in prison and others vehemently suspected. Credible information was given that there were present in London and other parts Baptists

who refuse on Sundays and other festival days to come to their parish churches, but meet together in great numbers on such days, and at other times, and in private houses, and places, and there keep conventicles and exercises of religion, by the laws of this realm prohibited. For remedy whereof, taking with him a constable and such other assistance as he shall think meet, he is to enter into any house where such private conventicles are held, and search for such sectaries, as also for unlawful and unlicensed books and papers; and such persons, papers, and books so found, to bring forthwith before the writers to

be dealt with as shall be thought fit (Calendar of State Papers, Feby 20, 1635-1636. Lambeth, CCCXIV. 242, 243).

That the Baptists of 1641 were hated and persecuted cannot be doubted. They were called “devilish and damnable.” It is refreshing in the midst of all of this scandal to find one high authority who spoke well of them. Lord Robert Brooke says:

I will not, I cannot, take on me to defend that men usually call Anabaptism: Yet, I conceive that sect is twofold: Some of them hold free will; community of all things; deny magistracy; and refuse to baptize their children. Truly such are heretics (or Atheists) that I question whether any divine should honor them so much as to dispute with them, much rather sure should Alexander’s sword determine here, as of old the Gordian knot, where it requires this motto, *Quia solvere no possum, dissecabo*.

There is another sort of them, who only deny baptism to their children, till they come to years of discretion; and then they baptize them but in other things they agree with the Church of England.

Truly these men are much to be pitied; and I could heartily wish, that before they be stigmatized with the opprobrious brand of schismatic, the truth might be cleared to them. For I conceive, to those that hold we may go farther than Scripture, for doctrine or discipline, it may be very easy to err in this point in hand; since the Scripture seems not to have clearly determined this particular (Lord Robert Brooke, A Discourse opening the Nature of the Episcopacie, which is Exercised in England, II. 99, 100. London, 1641).

There was now a turn for the better. Soon after the convocation of the Long Parliament, early in January, 1640, Archbishop Laud was impeached for high treason. Parliament June 24, 1641, put down the High Commission Court of the Star Chamber. With the impeachment and final execution of their greatest enemy in the person of Laud; and the abolishment of the infamous courts which had so sorely pressed them the Baptists appeared in England in incredible numbers. The year 1641 was the year of liberty. Previous to this date they had been hunted and persecuted, and in every way possible they concealed their numbers and meeting places. Now they sprang into publicity with amazing rapidity, they had so many preachers, and won converts with such ease, their baptisms in the rivers were so frequent and so open, their preaching was such a novelty, and their boldness so daring, that their enemies were thrown into consternation. They made mention of the baptizing as a novelty, their doctrine as sour leaven, their pretentious as impudence, and their numbers as nothing less than a public calamity. Heretofore they had suppressed them with the sword, by the stake and the High Commission Court; now as these were abolished, they made up in the fury of their declarations what they had formerly expressed in blood. The enemies of the Baptists

literally filled the world with sound. The incredible number of books and pamphlets which were hurled against them was only surpassed by the horrible things said about them. Controversies raged and England was turned into debating clubs.

To a complete understanding of the great debate on baptism which began in 1641 it will be necessary to trace the history of the form of baptism from the accession of Charles I. Even the Puritans provided for the baptism of adults. A work for the Wisely Considerate (pp. 24, 25), in 1641, has a form "for the administration of the sacrament of baptism." It provides that "the persons of years to be baptized are noted to be such as believe and repent." Provision was made by these Pedobaptists equally for adults and infants.

The Church of England everywhere tried to enforce the rite of immersion. The bishops were diligent in rooting out the basins which were substituted in some places instead of the font. The font was for immersion; the basin was used for affusion. The enquiries were for the purpose of obtaining information on any departure from the custom of the Church, and on no point were they more particular than this.

The Bishop of London, 1627, enquired concerning the clergy.

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? Concerning the Church he enquires: Whether have you in your church or chapel a font of stone set up in the ancient usual place?

Like enquiries were made by the Bishop of Exeter, in 1638; the Bishop of Winchester, in 1639; the Bishop of London, in 1640; and the Bishop of Lincoln, in 1641.

The activity of the bishops put fonts in nearly all of the church houses in England, and vast numbers of these fonts and baptisteries may be seen to this day in these churches. Take for example the City of Canterbury. The Church of St. George the Martyr has the ancient octagonal font, the basin being upheld by eight small shafts and a thick center one. The Church of St. Magdalene and St. Thomas, the Roman Catholic Church, both have beautiful baptisteries. St. Martin's Church was the place of the immersion of ten thousand converts at one time. There is an immense baptistery in St. John's. In 1636 this baptistery was in ruins and the want of a font in the Cathedral was regarded as a scandal. Bishop Warner presented one to the Church with great ceremony (*The Antiquity of Canterbury*, by William Sumner. London, 1840), and when it was destroyed in the troublesome times of 1641 it was rebuilt in 1660. Several persons were baptized by immersion in this font from 1660 to 1663 (*Archaeology*, XI. 146, 147). These fonts were large enough for immersion

(Paley, Illustrations of Baptismal Fonts, 31). Samuel Carte says of the fonts of England: “Give me leave to observe, that anciently at least the font was large enough to admit of an adult person being dipped or immersed therein.”

The bishops of the Church of England stood squarely against the innovation of affusion in the reign of Charles I. They accounted it a bad practice.

There are those who mention the practice of dipping in those days. Thomas Blake writing in 1645 relates:

I have been an eye witness of many Infants dipped and know it to have been the constant practice of many ministers in their places, for many years together (Blake, Infants Baptisms Freed from Antichristianisme, 1, 2).

Another witness is Walter Craddock who organized in 1638, in Llanvaches, Wales, an Independent Church. Joshua Thomas in his History of the Welsh Baptists says that “the history of this church says that it was composed of Independents and Baptists mixed, but that they united in the communion, and that it had two ministers, and that they were co-pastors, Mr. Wroth an Independent and Mr. William Thomas a Baptist (J. Spinther James, History of the Welsh Baptists). Craddock himself was not a Baptist. On July 21, 1646, he preached before the House of Commons, at St. Margaret’s, Westminster. In that sermon he gives valuable information to the practice of immersion in England. He says:

There is now among good people a great deal of strife about baptism; as for divers things, so for the point of dipping, though in some places In England they dip altogether. How shall we end the controversy with those godly people, as many of them are. Look upon the Scriptures, and there you shall find *bapto* (to baptize), it is an ordinance of God, and the use of water In the way of washing for a spiritual end, to resemble some spiritual thing. It is an ordinance of God, but whether dipping or sprinkling, that we must bring the party to the river, or draw the river to him, or to use water at home, whether it must be in head and foot, or be under the water, or the water under him, it is not proved that God laid down an absolute rule for it. Now what shall we do? Conclude on the absolute rule that God hath laid down in Scripture, and judge of the rest according to expediency (Craddock, Sermon, 100).

Daniel Featley is also a good witness (Clavis Mystica, 1636). He says:

Our font is always open, or ready to be opened, and the minister attends to receive the children of the faithful, and to dip them in the sacred laver.

William Walker, a Pedobaptist, who wrote in 1678, says:

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 (Walker, The Doctrines of Baptisms, 146. London, 1678).

Rev. Henry Denne, who was one of the foremost Baptist preachers of the century, is a good witness of the practice of immersion in England previous to 1641 for he mentions that date. In a discussion with Mr. Gunning, A.D. 1656, he says:

Dipping of infants was not only commanded by the Church of England, but also generally practised in the Church of England till the year 1600; yea, in some places it was practised until the year 1641 until the fashion altered. ... I can show Mr. Baxter, an old man in London who has labored in the Lord's pool many years; converted by his ministry more men and women than Mr. Baxter has in his parish; yea, when he hath labored a great part of the day in preaching and reasoning, his reflection hath been (not a sackporrit or a candle), but to go into the water and baptize converts (Denne, *A Contention for Truth*, 40. London, 1656).

Sir John Floyer, a most careful writer, says:

That I may further convince all of my countrymen that immersion in baptism was very lately left off in England, I will assure them that there are yet persons who were so immersed; for I am so informed by Mr. Berisford, minister of Sutton, that his parents immersed not only him but the rest of the family at his baptism (Floyer, *The History of Cold Bathing*, 182. London, 1722).

Alexander Balfour says:

Baptizing infants by dipping them in fonts was practised in the Church of England, (except in cases of sickness or weakness) until the Directory came out in the year 1644, which forbade the carrying of children to the font (Balfour, *Anti-Pedobaptism Unveiled*, 240. London, 1827).

Dr. Schaff, himself a Presbyterian, says

In England immersion was the normal mode down to the middle of the seventeenth century. It was adopted by the English and American Baptists as the only mode (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VII. 79).

All of these writers affirm that immersion was the common practice in England; they mention many persons who were immersed and that affusion did not prevail till the introduction of the Directory in 1644. The most splendid English divines spoke out in no uncertain words. The bishops by their visitation articles were opposing the innovation, as sprinkling was called, and the English scholars by their writings were sustaining them. They were opposed by "the love of novelty, and the niceness of parents, and the pretense of modesty." With these facts in mind the authorities here presented may be interpreted.

The Greek lexicons used in England in the first half of the seventeenth century were Scapula, Stevens, Micaeus and Leigh. These all define baptizein as dipping or submerging. A Greek lexicon is unknown prior to 1644 which gives sprinkle as a definition of baptizein; and the few that have since given such definitions appear to have been under the influence which shaped the action of the Westminster Divines.

Joseph Mede, A.D., 1586-1638', a learned divine, says:

There was no such thing as sprinkling or rantism in baptism in the Apostles' days, nor many ages after them (Mede, Diatribe on ~~ACTS~~ Titus 3:2).

Henry Smith, of Husbands, Borneswell, A.D., 1629, preached a sermon at the installation of Mr. Brian Cane, high sheriff of Leicestershire. He said:

First the word baptism according to the true meaning of the Greek text. Baptism doth signify not only a dipping, but such a dipping in water as doth cleanse the person dipped; and for it the primitive church did use to put the party quite under the water. ... Baptism is called a regeneration, and yet baptism Is a dipping of our bodies in water; but regeneration Is the renewing of our minds to the image wherein we are created.

Dr. John Mayer, Pastor of the Church in Reydon, Suffolk, says:

The Lord was baptized, not to get purity to himself, but to purge the waters for us, from the time he was dipped in the waters, the waters washed the sins of all men (Mayer, A Commentary on the Four Evangelists, V. 76).

An important book of the times was written by Daniel Rogers, a Church of England man. He says:

Touching what I have said of sacramental dipping to explain myself a little about it; I would not be understood as if schismatically I would instill a distaste of the Church into any weak minds, by the act of sprinkling water only. But this (under correction) I say: That ought to be the churches part to cleave to the institution, especially It being not left arbitrary by our Church to the discretion of the minister, but require to dap or dive the Infant more or less (except in cases of weakness), for which allowance In the Church we have cause to be thankful; and suitably to consider that he betrays the Church (whose officer he is) to a disordered error, if he cleaves not to the institution; to dip the infant In water. And this I do aver, as thinking it exceedingly material to the ordinance and no slight thing; yea, with both antiquity (though with some slight addition of a threefold dipping; for the preserving of the impugned Trinity entire) constantly without exception of countries cold or hot, witnesseth unto: and especially the constant word of the Holy Ghost, first and last, approveth, as a learned critic upon ~~ACTS~~ Matthew 3:11, hath noted, that the Greek tongue wants not words to express any other act as well as dipping, if the institution could beat it (Rogers, A Treatise of the two

Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptisms and the Supper of the Lord, 77. London, 1633).

The Baptists never failed to quote Rogers in support of their practice of dipping.

Stephen Denson, 1634, says:

The word translated baptizing doth most properly signify, dipping over head and ears, and indeed this was the most usual manner of baptizing in the primitive church; especially in hot countries, and after this same manner was Christ himself baptized by John (Denson, *The Doctrine of both Sacraments*, 39, 40. London, 1634).

A little in advance he had said of the Baptists

And the use of all that hath been spoken serves especially for the condemning of the practice of such as turn to Anabaptism, who though they know and do not deny, but that they were once baptized in the Church of England, or other where; yet require to be baptized again, making no better than a mockery of their first solemn baptism.

Edward Elton, 1637, says:

First, in sign and sacrament only, for the dipping of the party baptized in water, and abiding under the water for a time, doth represent and seal unto us the burial of Christ, and his abiding in the grave; and of this all are partakers sacramentally (Elton, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colossians*, 293. London, 1637).

John Selden was regarded as the most learned Englishman of his times. He says:

The Jews took the baptism wherein the whole body was not baptized to be void (Selden, *De Jute Nat.*, c. 2).

Bishop Taylor, 1613-1677, says:

If you would attend to the proper signification of the word, baptism signifies plunging into the water or dipping with washing (Taylor, *Rule of Conscience*, I. 3, c. 4).

There is no great amount of evidence of the practice of the Catholics of England on the subject of dipping, but that which is at hand is singularly interesting and clear. Thomas Hall, in an attack which he made on a Baptist preacher, A.D. 1652, by the name of Collier, declared that Anabaptism is “a new invention not much above an hundred years old,” and then he declared that the Catholics themselves were great dippers. His words are:



If dipping be true baptizing, then some amongst us that have been dipped, should be rightly baptized. The Papists and the Anabaptists like Samson's foxes, their heads look and lie different ways, yet they are tied together by the tails of dipping (Hall, *The Collier in his Colours*, 116; also, Hall, *The Font Guarded*, 116. London, 1652).

It was the Presbyterians who changed the practice of dipping in England. The rise of sprinkling for baptism in England is traced by Dr. Schaff who was a Presbyterian. He says:

King Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth were immersed. The first Prayer Book of Edward VI. (1549), followed the Office of Sarum, directs the priest to dip the child in water thrice: "first, dipping the right side; secondly, the left side; the third time, dipping the face toward the fonte." In the second Prayer Book (1552) the priest is simply directed to dip the child discreetly and warily; and permission is given, for the first time in Great Britain, to substitute pouring if the godfathers and godmothers certify that the child is weak. "During the reign of Elizabeth," says Dr. Wall, "many fond ladies and gentlewomen first, and then by degrees the common people, would obtain the favor of the priests to have their children pass for weak children too tender to endure dipping in water." The same writer traces the practice of sprinkling to the period of the Long Parliament and the Westminster Assembly. "This *change* in England and other Protestant countries from immersion to pouring, and from pouring to sprinkling, was encouraged by the authority of Calvin, who declared the mode to be a matter of no importance; and by the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643-1652), which decided that pouring and sprinkling are "not only lawful, but also sufficient." The Westminster Confession declares: 'Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person (Schaff, *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 51, 52).

It was largely through, the authority of Calvin that sprinkling came into general use in England. Sir David Brewster is unquestioned authority. His account is as follows:

During the persecution of Mary, many persons, most of whom were Scotchmen, fled from England to Geneva, and there greedily imbibed the opinions of that church. In 1556 a book was published in that place containing "The Form of Prayer and Ministration of the Sacraments, approved by the famous and godly learned man, John Calvin," in which the administrator is enjoined to take water in his hand and lay it upon the child's forehead. These Scotch exiles, who had renounced the authority of the Pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of Calvin; and returning to their own country, with Knox at their head, in 1559, established sprinkling in Scotland. From Scotland this practice made its way in the reign of Elizabeth, but was not authorized by the established Church. In the Assembly of Divines, held at Westminster in 1643, it was keenly debated whether immersion or sprinkling

should be adopted; 25 voted for sprinkling, and 24 for immersion; and even this small majority was obtained at the earnest request of Dr. Lightfoot, who had acquired great influence in that Assembly. Sprinkling is therefore the general practice of this country. Many Christians, however, especially the Baptists, reject it. The Greek Church universally adheres to immersion (Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, III. 236).

Wall says of the Presbyterians who introduced affusion into England:

So (parallel to the rest of their reformations) they reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in had always been used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of popery, and ever since churches were built: but that sprinkling for the common use of baptizing, was really introduced (in France first, and then in other popish countries) in times of popery (Wall, History of Infant Baptism, I. 583).

He also says:

For sprinkling, properly so called, It seems that it was in 1645 just then beginning, and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times after 1641; for Mr. Blake had never used it, nor seen it used.

For a long time a revolution had been brewing in England, and it came with the Civil Wars of 1641. The result of the war was not only the overthrow of the King and Laud, but it overthrew the Church of England as well. The Presbyterians took charge of the ecclesiastical affairs of the kingdom. They set out to reform everything. The Westminster Assembly convened and put forth the Confession of Faith and the Form of Church Government which bears that name. One of the things which they reformed was baptism, and they substituted sprinkling, for immersion as the law of the land. The Reformed Churches of Calvin practised pouring, and so must the Reformed Church of England. They took hold of the matter with a bold hand and in time succeeded. Thus pouring, through the Westminster Assembly, triumphed for a time in England. With all of the prestige of Calvin it was no easy task to accomplish. There was stubborn opposition, and when a vote was taken for the exclusion of dipping there was a tie vote, and Dr. John Lightfoot, who had acquired great influence in the Assembly, secured the deciding ballot. There was no particular sentiment in England in favor of affusion outside of the Westminster Assembly in 1645.

Dr. Lightfoot gives an interesting account of the debate in the Westminster Assembly. He says:

Then we fell into the work of the day, which was about baptizing “of the child, whether to dip him or to sprinkle.” And this was the proposition, “It is lawful and sufficient to be-sprinkle the child,” had been canvassed before our

adjourning, and was ready now to vote; but I spake against it., as being very unfit to vote; that it is lawful to sprinkle when every one grants it. Whereupon it was fallen upon, sprinkling being granted, whether dipping should be tolerated with it. And here fell we upon a large and long discourse, whether dipping were essential, or used in the first institution, or in the Jews' custom. Mr. Coleman went about, in a large discourse, to prove *tbiilh* to be dipping overhead. Which I answered at large. After a long dispute it was at last put to the question, whether the Directory should run thus, "The minister shall take water, and sprinkle or pour it with his band upon the face or forehead of the child;" and it was voted so indifferently, that we were glad to count names twice; for so many were so unwilling to have dipping excluded that the votes came as an equality within one; for the one side were twenty four, the other 25, the 24 for the reserving of dipping and the 25 against it; and there grew a great heat upon it, and when we had done all, we concluded upon nothing in it, but the business was recommitted.

Aug. 8th. But as to the dispute itself about dipping, it was thought safe and most fit to let it alone, and to express it thus in our Directory "He is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing is not, only lawful, but also sufficient, and most expedient to be by pouring or sprinkling of water on the face of the child, without any other ceremony (Lightfoot, Works, XIII. 299. London, 1824).

On this particular 7th day of August, when this matter of pouring was introduced, complaints were brought into the Assembly of the increase of the Anabaptist conventicles in divers places" (Baillie, Journal, II. 215). This was an opportune item to the anti-dippers in the Assembly.

The action of the Westminster Assembly was followed by acts of Parliament which fully confirm the contention of Wall that sprinkling began in England "in the disorderly times of 1641," and that in 1645 it was "used by very few." The Presbyterians were not satisfied with an ecclesiastical law to govern the church, but now as they had authority they followed it with the laws of Parliament to control State action. These acts of Parliament have been summed up by Rev. J.F. Bliss as follows:

The original law of 1534 enforced immersion, and those who were not baptized were to be treated as outlaws. The law was passed when the Roman Catholic Church was abandoned and the present Established Church inaugurated in its stead. However, this law was repealed by an act of Parliament in 1644, at least so much of the old law as enforced immersion, and they passed an act enforcing sprinkling in its stead, and left the original penalty annexed to outlaws, being deprived of the inheritance of the state, the right of burial, and in short, of all of the rights to other sprinkled citizens of the realm. ... After 1648 immersion was prohibited and for many years made penal (Bliss, Letters on Christian Baptism).

The laws that the Presbyterians enacted to exclude immersion and to establish pouring are exceedingly strong. They may be found in Scobell's Collection of Acts of Parliament, Anno 1644. It was decreed that "the Book of Common Prayer shall not henceforth be used, but the Directory for Public Worship." The Book of Common Prayer prescribed immersion; the Directory prescribed pouring. It was ordered that under penalty the Directory should be used throughout the United Kingdom. In order that none might escape and no other form of baptism be used it was decreed that "a fair Register Book of vellum, to be kept by the minister and other officers of the Church; and that the names of all children baptized, and of their parents, and of the time of their birth and baptizing, shall be written and set down by their minister," etc.

This infamous law was intended as a check upon every Baptist in the land, and all that was needed for a conviction was to turn to the Register Book. That there might be no mistake in the form of baptism it was decreed:

Then the minister is to demand the name of the child, which being told him, he is to say (calling the child by name)

I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As he pronounceth the words, he is to baptize the child with water; which for the manner of doing it is not only lawful but sufficient and most expedient to be, by pouring or sprinkling of the water on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony.

This law directly replaced immersion by pouring and it was passed January 3, 1644-45. It was not, however, till 1648, that the Presbyterians were enabled to enact the "gag law." They had already substituted pouring for dipping, but they went further and enacted a law to punish the Baptists as "blasphemers and heretics." It was enacted that any person who said "the baptism of infants is unlawful, or such baptism is void, or that such persons ought to be baptized again, or in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized," shall be placed in prison and remain there until they "shall find two sufficient sureties" that "they shall not publish the same error any more." Under this infamous law four hundred Baptists were thrown into prison. This was the triumph of pouring in England, and reached its culmination in 1648. Pouring began in 1641, became ecclesiastical law in 1643, civil law in 1644-45, and was vigorously pushed in 1648; and those who held to dipping were punished as heretics and blasphemers. Thus did pouring prevail in England. This law was repealed with the fall of the Presbyterians, and the old law for immersion was reenacted by the Church of England.

The Presbyterians brought in with their reforming two novelties. One was that baptism came in the room of circumcision and hence that an infant ought to be

baptized on the faith of its parent. The other was that pouring was baptism, and that it was commanded by the Scriptures. This was a novelty. The Baptists forthwith replied that immersion alone was taught in the New Testament. They did not change their position but they did change the accent. Previous to this time there had been no occasion for this emphasis. They were practical men, and only combated error when it appeared. It is remarkable how speedily they detected this new error of the Presbyterians.

There grew up in the reign of Charles I one of the most tremendous debates on baptism known in history. It raged continuously from about the year 1641 to the close of the century. The Presbyterians had brought in the innovation of pouring, and the Baptists, now for the first time permitted legally to speak, answered boldly. It has been sometimes said that the Baptists had just adopted immersion, but the evidence is to the contrary. There is no proof that in those days one English Baptist was in the practice of sprinkling. What really happened was that an occasion occurred, in the judgment of the Baptists, for a discussion of the act of baptism, and the Baptists seized the opportunity.

The views of some experts on the practice of the Baptists is here given. Dr. W.H. King, London, who made an extensive investigation of the pamphlets in the British Museum, says:

I have carefully examined the titles of the pamphlets in the first three volumes of this catalogue, more than 7,000 in number, and have read every pamphlet which has seemed by its title to refer to the subject of baptism, or the opinions and practices of the Baptists, with this result: that I can affirm, with the most unhesitating confidence, that in these volumes there is not a sentence or a hint from which it can be inferred that the Baptists generally, or any section of them, or even any individual Baptist, held any other opinion than that immersion is the only true and Scriptural method of baptism, either before the year 1641 or after it. It must be remembered that these are the earliest pamphlets, and cover the period from the year 1640 to 1646 (The Western Recorder, June 4, 1896).

Dr. George C. Lorimer, who gave much attention to Baptist history, said in an address September 14, 1896, before the students of Newton Theological Institution:

I insist that it is due our Baptist churches and their action on the world's progress should not be ignored. As a rule they do not receive the recognition they deserve. Dr. Dexter in his True Story of John Smyth has, let us believe unintentionally, put them in an entirely false light; and his representation that Edward Barber originated the practice of immersion in England, and that before the publication of his book (1641) the Baptists poured and sprinkled, is, to put it mildly, incorrect. I have just returned from the British Museum,

where I went over the documents which are supposed to substantiate such a view, and I solemnly declare that no such evidence exists.

Dr. Joseph Angus, former President of Regents Park College, London, member of the Committee who translated the Revised Version of the Bible, says:

During this period, very little is said about immersion, and the silence of the writers on the mode is said to be deeply significant. But it is overlooked that in that age immersion was the generally accepted mode of baptism in England. The Prayer Book has all along ordered the child “to be dipped warily” in the water. The practice of dipping was familiar in the days of Henry VIII., and both Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth were dipped in their childhood. In that century it was not necessary to lecture on the meaning of the word, or to insist on the mode of baptizing, which is still described in the English service as “dipping.” ... That there was no such delay in forming Baptist churches as our American friends have supposed, is proved by the dates of the formation of a number of them. Churches were formed, chapels built and doctrines defended long before 1641, and others, down to the end of the century, owing probably to the discussions of that year (*The Western Recorder*, October 22, 1896).

Daniel Featley states that the Baptist churches were in the practice of dipping. He was born at Chariton, Oxfordshire, March 15, 1582, and died at Chelsea, April 17, 1645. He had, in 1641, a debate in Southwark with four Baptists. Shortly afterwards he published an account of the debate in his book “The Dippers Dipt.” In the Dedication to the Reader he says “I could hardly dip my pen in anything but gall.” He was a personal witness to the acts of the Baptists of that period. He says for twenty years writing in 1644, they had lived near his residence and had been in the practice of dipping.

The words of Featley are especially significant. He spoke of the Baptists from personal knowledge, and there are no reasons to believe that he exaggerated the facts. However loosely he may have used the phrase, twenty years, it would refer to about the years 1621-4. He nowhere intimates that the Baptists or the form of baptism by dipping were a novelty. In his Epistle Dedicatory he says:

Now, of all the heretics and schismatics, the Anabaptists in three regards ought to be most carefully looked into, and severely punished, if not utterly exterminated and banished out of the church and kingdom.

His reasons are as follows:

**First**, In regard to their affinity with many other damnable heretics, both ancient and later, for they are allied unto, and may claim kindred with ...

**Secondly**, In regard to their audacious attempts upon the Church and State, and their insolent acts committed in the face of the sun, and in the eye of the High Court of Parliament.

Under this second head he says:

They preach, and print, and practise their heretical impieties openly and hold their conventicles weekly in our chief cities, and suburbs thereof, and there prophesy in turns; and (that I may use the phrase of Tertullian) *aedificantur in ruinam*, they build one another in the faith of their Sect, to the ruin of their souls; they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both sexes enter the river, and are dipt after their manner, with a kind of spell containing the heads of their erroneous tenets, and their engaging themselves in their schismatical covenants, and (if I may so speak) combination of separation. And as they defile our rivers with their impure washings, and our pulpits with their false prophecies, and fanatical enthusiasms, so the presses sweat and groan under the load of their blasphemies. For they print not only Anabaptism, from whence they take their name; but many other most damnable doctrines, tending to carnal liberty, Familism, and a medley and hodge-podge of all religions.

**Thirdly**, In regard to the peculiar malignity this heresy hath to magistrates, etc.

He then proceeds to say that he had known these heretics near his own home for twenty years. His words are:

As Solinus writeth, that in Sardinia there is a venomous serpent called Solifuga, (whose biting is present death) there is also at hand a fountain, in which they who wash themselves after they are bit, are presently cured. This venomous serpent (vera Solifuga) flying from, and shunning the light of God's word, is the Anabaptist, who in these later times first shewed his shining head and speckled skin, and thrust out his sting near the place of my residence for more than twenty years.

He distinctly says the Baptists had practised immersion near his residence for more than twenty years. This was first said in the debate with Kiffin in 1641. A little later he traces the Baptists to Germany in the time of Storch at the Reformation; that this man was a blockhead and kindled the fires from the chips of the block; that the fire burned in England in the times of Elizabeth and other sovereigns; and lately the fires burned very brightly.

This Southwark church was located in the borough where Spurgeon's church is found. It has always been a great Baptist center. It is in the old district called Horsleydown. It is here the debate occurred. The Baptists had here a great baptizing place (Wall, History of Infant Baptism, II. 459). A baptisterion was finally erected here for the use of a number of Baptist churches, and it registered according to an act of Parliament, in the year 1717 (Crosby, History of the English Baptists, IV. 189). Manning and Bray (History of Surrey, III. 613) speaking of the early and later history of this place say:

It seems that the anabaptists had fixed themselves here in considerable numbers. In the year 1775 there were four meeting houses of that persuasion.

Featley not only affirms there had been Baptists long in England but he connects them with the Baptists of 1641. He says:

Of whom we may say, as Irenaeus sometime spake of the heretic Ebon, the father of the Ebonites, his name in the Hebrew signifies silly, or simple and such God was he: So we may say, the name of the father of the Anabaptists signifieth in English a senseless piece of wood or block, and a very blockhead was he; yet out of this block were cut those chips that kindled such a fire in Germany, Halsatia, and Swabia that could not be fully quenched, no not with the blood of 150,000 of them killed in war, or put to death in several places by magistrates.

This fire in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James and our gracious sovereign, till now, was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrate, it was soon put out. But of late since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the temporal sword being in other ways employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect among others, hath so far presumed upon the patience of the state that it hath held weekly conventicles, rebaptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight in rivulets, and some arms of the Thames and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defense of their heresy, yea and challenged some of our preachers to disputation. Now although my bent hath been hitherto against the most dangerous enemy of our Church and State, the Jesuit, to extinguish such balls of wild fire as they have cast in the bosom of the Church, yet seeing this strange fire kindled in the neighboring parishes and many Nadab's and Abihu's offering it to God's altar, I thought it my duty to cast the waters of Siloam upon it to extinguish it.

In another place he calls the rebaptizing of the Baptists "a new leaven," and that their position "is soured with it," but this is to be read not as a detached statement, but in the light of what is said about it. He explains there are two kinds of old Anabaptists and one kind of new Anabaptists. These new, Anabaptists began in 1525. This he fully explains:

They first broached their doctrine about the year 250 which was this: That all of those who had been baptized by Novatus, or any other heretics, ought to be rebaptized by the orthodox pastors of the church.

The second broached theirs about the year 380, which was this: That none were rightly baptized but those that held with Donatus, and consequently, that all others had received baptism in the Catholic Church, by any other save those of his party, ought to be rebaptized.



The third broached theirs In the year 1525, which was this: That baptism ought to be received by none, but such as can give a good account of their faith; and in case any have been baptized in their infancy, that they ought to be rebaptized after they come to years of discretion, before they are to be admitted to the church of Christ.

The first tenet which he says is “peculiar to this new sect,” which had their origin in 1525, was “that none are rightly baptized but who are dipped.” Featley declares there were Baptists in his neighborhood prior to 1625; that they had existed in England during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, James I; and of his own personal knowledge they had dipped in rivers for more than twenty years previous to 1644.

There is a fine statement made by William Ames who was a Brownist. He had a controversy with Bishop Morton. In the year of his death, 1633, he wrote a book (A Fresh Suit against Ceremonies in God’s Worship), which made a Nonconformist out of Richard Baxter. In his book he points out the attitude of the Baptists toward dipping. He says:

I will easily grant the Catabaptists, and confess that the strife which they made about baptism, hath been not altogether without benefit; for hence it comes to pass that those things which the foolish superstition of human reason had added thereto, being brought into question, are now become vain and unprofitable.

Christ Jesus who instituted baptism with such simplicity and purity as knowing better than all men; what arrogance to add, alter or detract, on the part of man.

Dipping is preferred to sprinkling for dipping is not a human ceremony.

Calvin’s devise of a new washing, was an idle vanity, he added to the washings which God had set.

In vain do they worship me teaching the doctrines and precepts of men i.e., such things as men set up themselves against the commandment of God.

Christ is the only teacher of his church, therefore there may be no means of teaching or admonishing but Such as be ordered.

When Christ himself Instituted baptism he required it to be used; Is It a very hard question whether it be lawful for men to add other than the above. As if what Christ himself prescribed were not fit enough. In divine institutions as we must take nothing from, so we must not alter, so we must add nothing to them. What rites he would have used he himself appointed.

Sprinkling of water upon the people for baptism, an Apist imitation.

The Anabaptists hold fanatically about rites and formalities (they say) it is not lawful to worship God with other external worship save that which is in Scripture prescribed us. And human inventions without warrant from God in Scripture are to be reprehended. It is well known that Anabaptists have certain times and places of meeting for worship; certain order of preaching and praying; may in baptizing of grown-men, as even bishops can scarce be ignorant of.

One of the foremost Baptists of those times was Thomas Collier, of Whitley, in the parish of Godalming. He was described by his enemies as of obstinate demeanor, refusing to pay all tithes into the Church where his estate lies (Calendar of State Papers, January, 1635. CCLXXXII. 82). He preached through the counties of West England in Surrey and Hampshire. He wrote books, traveled as a missionary, and immersed many converts (Edwards, *Gangraena*, III. 41. London, 1646). For more than twelve years he had labored in this field and prospered under the fiercest persecutions. He was an intense Baptist and held firmly to the faith in 1646 as he had previously done in 1635.

He linked the word Anabaptists with “baptized Christians,” which was understood in those days to mean immersed believers. His words are: “They, these persecutors, would say as much of the Anabaptists, or rather of the baptized Christians of this nation.” He further remarks that these “persecutors are maliciously mistaken,” and show their ignorance “in calling them Anabaptists, for the practicing baptism, according to Scripture, that grieves you it seems; but you have learnt a new way, both for matter and manner, babies instead of believers; for manner, sprinkling at the font, instead of baptizing in a river; you are loth to go with your long gowns, you have found a better way than was ever prescribed or practised; who now Sir are the Ignoramuses?”

Lewes Hewes, who describes himself as a minister of God’s Word, attacked the follies of infant sprinkling, affirms adult baptism by immersion, addressed, A.D. 1640, to the Parliament on the abuses of Popery introduced into religion. The book is in the form of a dialogue between a Minister and a Gentleman. Some of the passages are:

*Gent.* Many do say, that the manner of administering the holy sacrament of baptism prescribed in the Service Book is very absurd, and full of Popish errors, and so ridiculous as that they cannot but laugh at it. I pray you tell me, what do you find in it so absurd and ridiculous, as they cannot but laugh at it?

*Min.* The interrogatories ministered to infants that have no understanding and the answers of the godfathers are so absurd and ridiculous, as they cannot but laugh at them: as first, the minister must first examine the infant and ask him, if he doth forsake the devil and his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, the covetous desires of the same, the carnal desires of the flesh, so as

he will not follow nor be led by them: he must also ask him, if he doth believe all the Articles of the Christian faith, and if he will be baptized in that faith.

*Gent.* Were not these interrogatories administered to infants do the primitive church?

*Min.* No, these or the like were then administered to such as were of years, when they were converted and came to be baptized, and afterwards commanded by the Pope to be administered to infants.

In another prayer thanks is given to God for regenerating the infant with the Holy Spirit, that the children of God do receive the Spirit of God to regenerate them, not by sprinkling of water in baptism, but by having the Gospel preached, <sup><4108></sup>2 Corinthians 3:8, <sup><4104></sup>Acts 10:44 (Lewes Hewes, Certain Grievances, well worthy of the serious consideration of the right honorable and High Court of Parliament, 12-15. London, 1640).

One of the striking Baptist preachers of those times was Thomas Lamb. His occupation was that of a soap boiler. He was an active minister from the earliest days of Charles I (Wood, History of the Baptists, 109). After he came to London he was pastor in Bell-alley, Coleman Street. He was soon cast into prison and he was released on bail June 25, 1640 (Acts of the High Court of Commission, CCCXXXI. 434), with the injunction “not to preach, baptize or frequent any conventicle.” About October 15, of the same year, he was in Gloucestershire preaching and immersing his converts. The people of that section had largely departed from the Church of England and the Baptists had a great following (Wynell, The Covenants Plea for Infants, Oxford, 1642). Here he was opposed by Mr. Wynell the rector. It was from this congregation that Richard Baxter, about 1639, became acquainted with the Baptists, and the practice of dipping greatly shocked him (Baxter, Life and Time, I. 41). As a result of the controversy the Baptists had sent to London for Mr. Lamb. He came and baptized many converts in the River Severn. He brought with him Clem Writer, who was also a Baptist preacher. Wynell says Lamb held his services in a private house “and by preaching there he subverted many, and shortly afterwards in an extreme cold, and frosty time, in the night season, diverse men and women were rebaptized in the great River Severn in the City of Gloucester.” These immersions took place in the early winter of 1640.

John Goodwin was one of the most interesting men in London. He was rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Coleman Street, and was a near neighbor of Thomas Lamb, of Bell-alley. One of Goodman’s members, Mr. William Allen, turned Baptist and united with Lamb’s Church. This made Goodwin furious and he attacked the “new mode of dipping.” Allen replied (An Answer to Mr. J.G.) and affirmed that dipping was the old form. Lamb took up the quarrel and expressed indignation at the attack of Goodwin. He had himself been for some years in the practice of dipping. His opinion of Goodwin’s book was expressed

in vigorous English (Truth Prevailing, 78. London, 1655). Mr. Goodwin in the meantime had opportunity for reflection and he wrote another book (Water Dipping no Firm Footing for Church Communion) and apologized for his “grasshopper expression” calling dipping new. He, in this new place, says the Baptists had practised dipping since the Reformation of Luther. His language is:

First we understand by books and writings of such authority and credit; that we have no ground at all to question their truth that that generation of men, whose judgments have gone wandering after dipping and rebaptizing, have from the very first original and spring of them since the late Reformation.

Edward Barber was a merchant tailor of London, a gentleman of great learning, at first a minister of the Church of England, but long before the Civil Wars he became a Baptist (National Biography, III. 146.). He was the agent in convincing many that infant baptism had no foundation in Scripture. He soon gathered a numerous congregation which met in Spital in Bishopgate Street. In his book (A Small Treatise on Dipping) he says he was cast into prison for “denying the sprinkling of infants.” He was cast into prison in 1639 and on Wednesday, June 20, of that year, he appeared before the King’s Commission (Tanner MSS. LXVII. 115. Bodleian Library). So that Edward Barber denied infant sprinkling before 1639. While in prison in 1639 Barber discussed immersion with Dr. Gouge who was a prominent man in the Church of England, and Barber made him admit that sprinkling “was a tradition of the Church” (Blackwell, Sea of Absurdities concerning Sprinkling driven back, 6. London, 1650).

This corresponds with the statement of Wall that sprinkling did not prevail till 1644 and began as a policy of the government in the troublesome times of 1641.

Dr. Gouge discussed the subject of immersion with Barber. The latter affirmed that immersion was the proper act of baptism, and Gouge admitted that sprinkling was only a tradition. This corresponded exactly with the statement of Barber that he was imprisoned for denying the sprinkling of infants. This date was before June 20, 1639. Barber makes it perfectly plain in his book that the Baptists had long been in the practice of dipping.

Among other objections urged was that the Baptists immersed women and that the clothes were immersed as well as the person. Barber answered that these objections did not avail since immersion had long been the practice. He said he was chosen of God to divulge immersion. The word “divulge” in those days simply meant to publish without reference to the order of time. For example, Henry Denne, who was baptized in 1643, and from that date was a preacher, was sent on a special mission by the church at Fenstanton, October 28, 1653,

and it was said of him: “On that day he was chosen and ordained, by imposition of hands, a messenger to divulge the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (Taylor, History of the General Baptists, I. 150). Barber was a great preacher and he divulged the Gospel of Immersion.

William Jeffery was born of pious parents in the year 1616, in the parish of Penhurst, and afterwards lived in Bradbourn, Seven Oaks, Kent, where he and his brother David were great supporters of a meeting (Crosby, The History of English Baptists, III. 97). It is probable that he was engaged in the propagation of the Baptist faith several years prior to the Civil Wars (Taylor, History of the General Baptists, I. 109). He was a minister of a congregation about Orpington which increased greatly under his ministry. He was a successful, and unwearied supporter of the Baptist interest, and suffered with great patience. He had several debates with men of the Church of England, and also with the Independents and Quakers. He was much valued for steady piety and universal virtue.

Clem Writer, or A. R(itter), was a prominent Baptist in London. He originally came from Worcester and was formerly a member of the Church of England. He became a Baptist about the year 1637. He was a man of education, attended public meetings, and on several occasions drew up petitions to Parliament and transacted other business. Edwards abused him on all occasions, and even pronounced him an atheist. He “is now an arch-heretic,” says Edwards, “and fearful apostate, an old wolf, and a subtle man, who goes about corrupting and venting his errors” (Edwards, Gangraena, I. 27).

His works on the Vanity of Childish Baptism are the most scholarly of all the books written on the baptismal controversy of 1641. The first volume was written against the position of the Church of England, in 1641, and the next year, the second volume appeared against the position of the Independents. On the subject of dipping he states his position in words that imply that it had always been the Baptist practice. He says:

The institution of Christ requireth that the whole man be dipped all over in water. ... The Greek authors account *bapto* and *baptizo* to signify that the Latins use *mergere*, *immergere* (*tingere immergendo*) (that is to say) to dip, to plunge, to douse overhead or under water (A.R., A Treatise on the Vanity of Childish Baptisme, I. 10).

He concludes that for a thousand years there was no other practice except dipping in the Christian world. Among Baptists it had been the practice since Luther’s time. Says he:

And if any shall think it strange and unlikely that all of the godliest divines and best churches should be thus deceived on this point of baptism for so many yeares together, let him consider that all Christendome (except here and

there one, or some few, or no considerable number) was swallowed up in grosse Popery for many hundred yeares before Luthers time, which was not until about 100 yeares agone.

This scholarly Baptist had an opponent. It is really interesting to note how closely his antagonist resembles the Pedobaptist controversialist of to-day.

The Baptists of the middle part of the seventeenth century were controversailists. They were compelled to debate. The Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Brownists and Independents agreed with each other only in one particular of hating the Baptists.

“Various methods were adopted,” says Goadby, “for removing this general dislike, and answering the wicked, accusations made against them. They issued pamphlets in defence of their opinions. They subscribed to numerous Confessions of Faith. They were ready, in season and out of season, to meet their opponents. They challenged them to public disputations; now in London, now in the country. Ordinary buildings proved too small and inconvenient for the excited and eager crowds who attended these disputations; and the largest accommodation being afforded by the parish church, to the parish church they commonly hurried. The occasion of these discussions was often fierce opposition of local clergymen, but was sometimes the uneasy consciences on the subject of baptism of some members of the congregations. The victory, as in all such public discussions, was usually claimed by both sides. The disputations themselves illustrate the habits and the ferment of a former age” (Goadby, Bye-Paths in Baptist History, 139).

The report of the debates were usually published by the opponents of the Baptists. There was large room for partiality and unfairness. These one sided accounts were published often with marginal commentaries, and one at least published a scandalous frontispiece which depicted fifteen different sorts of Anabaptists.

The first of these debates occurred in 1641 between Dr. Featley and four Particular Baptists. It was “somewhere in Southwark,” probably in the parish church. Sir John Lenthall was present, “with many knights, ladies and gentlemen.” There were also present some of the illiterate sort, upon whom Dr. Featley looked with disdain. The discussion was held in the year that Charles I. had broken with Parliament. Two months before it began the royal standard was unfurled at Nottingham, and a week after it had closed Charles fought his first battle.

The disputants were hardly fairly matched. Dr. Featley was a veteran debater, and had won many encounters with the Jesuits. His intimate friend had said the Catholics “contemned him for that he was low of stature, yet admired him for

his ready answers and shrewd distinctions.” Yet this friend of thirty-seven years had found him “meek, gracious, affable, merciful.” This would not be suspected from reading this debate. In European seminaries he was regarded as “the Sagacious and Ardent” Doctor.

His opponents were four Baptists. One of them was described as “a Scotchman,” another was called “Cuffin.” This was none other than William Kiffin, for two years past the pastor of Devonshire Baptist Church. He was now only thirtysix years of age, and yet had before him fifty-nine years of pastoral and checkered life. Of the other two disputants there is no information.

The version of the debate as given by Featley is a long drawn out rambling discussion on baptism. Featley was insulting, but not convincing. At the conclusion, says Featley, “it grew late, and the Conference broke off.” Featley was selfcomplacent. He says:

The issue of the Conference was, first, the Knights, ladies and gentle men gave the doctor great thanks, secondly, three of the Anabaptists went away discontented, the fourth seemed in part satisfied, and desired a second meeting; but the next day, conferred with the rest of that sect, he altered his resolution, and neither he, nor any other of that sect ever since that day troubled the doctor, or any other minister in this borough with a second challenge.

Featley’s version of the debate was published two years and one-half after the debate under the title: *The Dippers Dipt, or, the Anabaptists duck’d and plung’d over head and ears at a Disputation in Southwark. London, 1645.* The debate was not printed until Featley was in prison suspected of being a spy. The most exciting political events had in the meantime taken place, and all recollection of the debate had passed from the mind of “the auditors.” While in prison he had a debate with Henry Denne, who was there for preaching the word. He and Denne debated the issues at stake in baptism. The result was that on January 10, 1644, Featley printed his book. In a little less than a month Denne had his reply under the title of *Antichrist Unmasked.* Samuel Richardson took up the challenge and gave Featley a severe handling in a book entitled *Some Brief Considerations on Dr. Featley’s Book.* With a chuckle Richardson says:

The knights and ladies thanked him, but he cannot say he deserved it. The Anabaptists went away discontented and grieved. It seems they were sorrowful to see his great blindness and hardness of heart. He saith, none of them ever after that troubled him; it seems they could do him no good, and so they resolved to leave him to God, till he should please to open his eyes.

Many and notable were the debates of the period. The Presbyterians now being in power tried to dismiss the subject of baptism. But debates would not down. A great debate, between Richard Baxter and John Tombes occurred at Bewdley, January 1, 1649. The debate continued throughout the day without intermission until the disputants were exhausted. Both sides claimed the victory; but Wood declares: "That all the scholars then and there present, who knew the way of disputing and managing arguments, did conclude that Tombes got the better of Baxter by far."

Tombes had a more celebrated debate in 1653, in St. Mary's Church, Abergavenney, with Henry Vaughan and John Cragge. The writer who records the discussion, speaks in no very complimentary terms of the Baptists. "They inveigled the poor, and simple people especially." "Women, and inferior tradesmen, which in seven years can scarce learn the mystery of the lowest profession, think half seven years enough (gained from their worldly employments) to understand the mysteries of divinity, and whereupon meddle with controversy, which they have no more capacity to pry into than a bat to look into the third heaven." The writer also gives his version of the public discussions of Tombes elsewhere. "The disputes at Bewdley, Hereford, and Ross, have ben successful to astonishment; and in this last, at Abergavenny (though tumultuary, and on a sudden), hath appeared the finger of God. He hath, with spittle and clay, opened the eyes of the blind, overthrown the walls of Jericho with the second ram's horns; with these weak means hath wrought strong effects, that no creature may glory in an arm of flesh."

Mr. Tombes had been heard with much amazement. Some persons were highly offended. Others were "staggered or scrupled; and some, not knowing what to think of their own, their childrens', or their ancestors' salvation." Many well learned, heard Mr. Tombes, and heard with amazement. Among them were Vaughan, "schoolmaster of the town, formerly fellow of Jesus College, Oxford," and Mr. Bonner, an aged clergyman of the neighborhood. No one spoke after the service in answer to the challenge of Tombes; but Bonner "closed with him on the way to his lodging." "That night, and especially the next morning, the Anabaptists triumphed, saying, Where are your champions now?"

The next day excitement ran high. Cragge, Vaughan and Bonner went to the house where Tombes was staying, and a public debate was arranged. The church house was overflowing with people. Bonner was preparing "to give an onset," but he was dissuaded "lest in his aged and feeble state he should impair his health." The debate continued with much heat for six hours.

The century closed with a famous debate at Portsmouth. Mr. Samuel Chandler, a Presbyterian minister of Fareham, established a lectureship at Portsmouth. In



the course of his lectures he defended infant baptism. His remarks were reported to Mr. Thomas Bowes, the General Baptist minister. He conferred with Mr. Webber, the Particular Baptist minister of the town. A debate was arranged between the parties. William Russell, M.D., the well-known General Baptist minister of London, was chosen to defend the Baptist cause. With Dr. Russell in the position of “junior counsel” and “moderator,” were John Williams, of East Knowle, and John Sharpe, of Frome, both Particular Baptist ministers. The Presbyterians selected Samuel Chandler, Mr. Leigh, of Newport, and Mr. Robinson, of Hungerford. The debate occurred in the Presbyterian meeting house February 22, 1698-9. The assembly was worthy of the debate. The governor and lieutenant-governor, the mayor and magistrates of Portsmouth were all present. The military were also there. The debate continued nine hours. The debate came to an end between six and seven o’clock.

A few days after the discussion an article appeared in the *Postman* newspaper, from the pen of Colonel John Gibson, the Lieutenant-Governor, as follows:

Portsmouth, Feb. 23. — Yesterday the dispute between the Presbyterians and the Anabaptists was held in the Presbyterian meeting-house. It began at ten o’clock in the morning, and continued till six in the afternoon, without intermission. The theme of the dispute was, the subject of baptism, and the manner in which it is to be performed. Russell and Williams were the opponents for the Anabaptists, and Mr. Chandler and Mr. Leigh for the Presbyterians; Mr. Sharpe was moderator for the former, and Mr. Robinson for the latter. Mr. Russell opposed infant baptism with all the subtilty and sophistry of the schools; and it was answered with good reason and learning. Upon the whole, it was the opinion of all the judicious auditory, the Presbyterians sufficiently defended their doctrines, and worsted their adversaries, when they came to assume the place of opponents.

Another article appeared in the *Flying Post*, which was onesided and unfair. Dr. Russell published an account of the debate which brought an answer from the Presbyterians. The debate and these various articles and replies brought on much bitterness.

All of the Baptist historians record their pleasure that this was the last debate of the kind that ever occurred in that country.

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE:**

Macaulay, The History of England. 4 volumes.

Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans. 5 volumes.

Herbert S. Skeats, A History of the Free Churches of England.

William A. Shaw, *A History of the Church of England during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth*. 2 volumes.

## CHAPTER 19 — THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF BAPTIST INSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOMS.

Baptist Associations — They Originated With the Particular Baptists — The General Baptists the First to Organize — J.M. Davis — The Great Authority of the Associations — Business — Number — Date — The Custom of Appeal — The Office of Messenger — The Organization of the Particular Baptists — A Letter From Ireland — The Midland Association — The Circular Letter — Objects of the Union — Support of the Ministry — Education — Hebrew, Greek and Latin — Bristol College — Mile End Academy — Pastor and Deacons — The Permanency of the Pastoral Relation — The Support of the Ministry — Ordination — Discipline — Amusements — Marrying — Laying on of Hands and Anointing of the Sick-Singing.

THE formation of Baptist Associations may be traced to the period of the Civil Wars and they were developed in the last half of the seventeenth century. They formed a source of healthful and pleasant intercourse to many. The Baptists were persecuted, the churches were often weak and widely separated, and intercourse was not easy. Roads existed more in name than in fact. No means of public transit existed, and commerce called individuals but rarely from their homes, or only to the next market town. These annual gatherings of the brethren were hailed as seasons of holy festivity. Men of note, both of piety and of action, were brought together, and by their counsel and preaching greatly aided the churches of God (Evans, Early English Baptists, II. 223).

It must be carefully remembered that the Particular and General Baptists did not act in concert nor did they always hold the same views on organization. The idea of an association seems to have originated with the Particular Baptists. The London Confession of Faith of 1643, article XLVII seems to anticipate an association. At least the germinal idea is there. That document says:

And although the particular Congregations be distinct (<sup><40417></sup>1 Corinthians 4:17, & 14:33, 36. & 16:1) and severall Bodies, every one a compact and knit Citie (<sup><40230></sup>Matthew 28:20) in itself; yet are they all to walk by one and the same (<sup><54015></sup>1 Timothy 3:15. & 6:13, 14) Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsell (<sup><6214></sup>Revelation 22:14, 19) and help one of another in all needful affairs of the (<sup><51006></sup>Colossians 2:6, 19, & 4:16) Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their onely head.

The day this was declared was the birthday of the modern association. The distinctiveness of the idea is seen in the fact that church order is made to rest on the principle of voluntariness under the authority of Christ, the only Head. But the times were too changeable and threatening for organization. The power

of Charles I had been bridled but the Presbyterians were, in power and they were as hostile to the Baptists as ever the Episcopalians had been. In 1649 Charles I was put to death, and the Baptists under Cromwell had an extension of liberty. So the time was ripe for the organization of associations.

But while the idea of associations originated with the Particular Baptists, the General Baptists were the first to organize. They were not connected with the Independents or Brownists. Many of the General Baptists were royalists and favored a strong government. There was incorporated in their early meetings an authority invested in associations which would not now be tolerated among Baptists. Says Professor J.M. Davis, of the Baptist College, Cardiff, Wales:

The General Baptists, like the Particular Baptists, held the idea of the Independency of the Churches, but their General Conference was more Presbyterian in its legislation. By their connection with the Anabaptists and the Mennonites of the Continent, and their stay at Amsterdam, they obtained knowledge of the Presbyterian Synods of the churches of Luther and Calvin. Also they acknowledged an order of officers, which they called "Messengers," corresponding to the apostolic order, which they supposed continued partly in the church. "The Messengers" were appointed by the General Conference. Their work was to plant new churches and to confirm those that were already in existence; ordain ministers; and visit churches to advise them and to confirm them, and to report their condition to the General Conference. They were a kind of "Baptist Bishops," with power of superintendency. They differed from the Bishops of the Church of England, in that they were appointed by the General Conference and were, under their authority. At first their power was moderate, but it was enlarged from the end of the 17th century on (The Western Recorder, September 21, 1910. Translation by J.T. Griffith).

Many of the ideas of strong government and of church order were incorporated into the early association of churches. As a reaction from this monarchial idea many Baptists in this country favored the idea of a convention, where no power was lodged with the general body save that of voluntariness. It has, therefore, followed in this country that many Baptist general bodies have taken the name and form of conventions rather than that of associations, and where the associational name has been retained the idea of organization is not far removed from that of a convention. The conception of a convention appeals to a liberty loving people, rather than the stronger idea of an association. Generally the older bodies, from custom, have retained the name of association, while the newer organizations have adopted the name convention. Gradually, in England, these objectionable features have been eliminated.

The Particular Baptists, on the other hand, were more conservative, more independent of authority, more jealous of delegated rights, and consequently were much slower in forming associations.

Adam Taylor (*The History of the English General Baptists*, I. 457) gives the origin of associations among General Baptists and his account is here mainly followed.

As soon as any number of General Baptist churches were gathered, in any county or district, they united to support a periodical meeting, to consult for the common welfare. Such a meeting was called an Association, and was usually held at the principal place of the district, quarterly, half yearly, or annually, according to the convenience of the congregations supporting it. It was composed of two or more representatives from each church in the district, elected to this office by the church which sent them. The messenger or elder was more frequently chosen, and was joined to one or more respectable private brethren, who had equal rights with the ministers to deliberate and vote.

The business usually transacted at these Associations was — the reformation of inconsistent or immoral conduct, whether in ministers or private Christians — the prevention or suppression of heresy — the reconciling of differences between members and churches — the giving of advice in difficult cases, whether respecting individuals or societies — the proposing of plans of usefulness — the recommending of cases that required pecuniary support — and, in short, the devising of the most effectual means of promoting the prosperity of religion in the world at large, but especially in their own churches.

The first four of these particulars would scarcely come under the purview of an Association to-day. They occupied a large place in the proceedings of those early days.

It is not easy to ascertain the number of Associations into which the English General Baptists were divided; new unions being frequently formed, and old ones dissolved. During this period there are found traces of Buckinghamshire, Cambridge, Dorsetshire, the Isle of Ely, the Kentish, the Lincolnshire, the London, the Northamptonshire, the Western and Wiltshire Associations. These all existed at the close of the seventeenth century; and appear then to have been, in a greater or less degree, flourishing. Several of them were composed of a considerable number of prosperous churches.

These Associations in different parts of the nation, maintaining only a local union, a more general co-operation became desirable. To effect this, occasional meetings were held, usually in London, as the center of the kingdom, which they styled General Assemblies. They were composed of representatives of the

various Associations, and from such churches as chose to send deputies; which might be either ministers or private brethren.

It is not easy to ascertain the exact date of the first introduction of General Assemblies among these churches; but it can be placed with great probability, under the Protectorate. Mr. Grantham, in 1671, speaks of them as generally established and approved (Grantham, *Sigh of Peace*, 130-132); and, in 1678, having mentioned the assembly recorded in Acts fifteen, he says:

According to this precedent, the baptized churches in this age and nation have kept an Assembly-general for many years, for the better settlement of the churches to which they are related (Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 137. London, 1678).

This system of Associations and General Associations gave rise to a custom of Appeal from the decisions of churches. When any member thought himself aggrieved by the proceedings of his church, he might appeal to two or more neighboring churches, and require them to judge and hear the case. If the appeal was received, a meeting of deputies from each of the societies to which the appeal was made was appointed; and, both parties having been heard at length, judgment was given. But if either party remained dissatisfied, the business might be brought before the Association to which they belonged; and have another investigation. And from the decision of the Association, there yet lay a final appeal to the General Assembly. For some time, the discontented persons appear to have been considered as having a right to claim a hearing; but this was found to protract altercations, and nourish a captious spirit. The Assembly therefore resolved, that no case of this nature should be received by them, without the mutual consent and request of all the parties concerned (*Minutes of the General Assembly for 1711*, I. 113. London, 1909).

Furthermore they introduced an officer into their system whom they called a bishop or messenger. He was generally chosen by an Association of the representatives of the churches; and was ordained of those of his own order with great solemnity. Sometimes a particular church chose a messenger, but in that instance his business was to preach the gospel and regulate the churches which he founded. "They were appointed," says Jeffrey, "for the gathering of churches, and the establishment of them."

At the Lincolnshire Association, held at Coningsly, May 30, 1775, the office is thus defined:

The messenger, who is chosen by the unanimous consent and approbation of the churches, which stand in a close connection together, hath full liberty and authority, according to the gospel, to freely enquire into the state of the churches respecting both pastor and people, to see that the pastors do their duty in their places, and the people theirs; be is to exhort, admonish, and

reprove both the one and the other, as occasion calls for. In virtue of his office, he is to watch over the several flocks committed to his care and charge — to see that good order and government be carefully and constantly kept up and maintained in the churches he is called and appointed to look after and to watch over; to labor and to keep out innovations in doctrine, worship, and discipline, and to stand up in the defense of the gospel.

This right of appeal and appointment of messengers for the government of the churches was inconsistent with the independence of a church which these Christians strenuously asserted. The question was constantly raised: How far agreements made by a General Assembly do obligate the churches concerned by their representatives? Grantham answers as follows:

To ascribe infallibility to any Assembly since the Apostles' days, must in nowise be allowed. Wherefore, though we ought to consider with great respect what is concluded by a general council of Christ's true ministers; yet we may lawfully doubt of what they deliver, unless they confirm it by the word of the Lord (Grantham, *Christianises*, 139).

The General Baptists were then in an experimental state in regard to organization and have long since discarded these views.

Although the Particular Baptists were slower in organizing Associations than the General Baptists, they had, as we have seen, in 1643, anticipated such a union. The especial cause for the organization of the first Particular Baptist Association occurred some ten years later. The churches in Ireland wrote a special letter to the churches in London. In this letter they say:

That their beloved and faithful brother, John Vernon, the bearer of the letter, will, through the blessing of God, be suddenly with you. ... His conversation hath been with zeal and faithfulness; the Lord having put it into the hearts of all his congregations in Ireland to have a more revived correspondence with each other by letter and loving epistles, in which practice we found great advantage, not only by weakening Satan's suggestions and jealousies, but it hath brought a closer union and knitting of heart; and, which is not an inferior consideration, we have hereby been enabled feelingly and knowingly to present each others wants and conditions before God. In the same manner, we shall be enabled to answer our duty towards you, and you towards us, and so bear each others burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ in our very near relation. We hereby earnestly request the same brotherly correspondence with you and from you; and, by your means, with all of the rest of the churches in England, Scotland, and Wales, whom we trust will be provoked to the same things, which we hope may be mutually obtained once in three months.

The same letter asks for a "perfect account of the churches of Christ owned in communion with them;" and offers "one request more," "if it hath not been lately practised," namely:

That they would send two or more faithful brethren, well acquainted with the discipline and order of the Lord's house, able to speak seasonable words, suited to the necessities of the people, to visit, comfort, and confirm all the flock of our Lord Jesus, that are, or have given up, their names to be under his rule, and government in England, Scotland and Ireland.

This letter greatly moved the Particular Baptist churches of England and doubtless resulted in the organization of the London Baptist Association. The circular letter sent out was the occasion, in November following, of an Association of Particular Baptist churches in the west of England. One of the questions of debate was: Whether laying on of hands on baptized believers was an ordinance of Christ? The majority agreed that there was no warrant for it, and that the question should not disturb the communion of the churches. The circular letter was signed by Thomas Collier, one of the many Baptist ministers singled out for abuse by Edwards. "Tie is a mastersectary," says Edwards, "and a man of great power amongst them. He had emissaries under him, whom he sends abroad to several parts." In other words he was the general superintendent and messenger of the churches.

The Midland Association of Particular Baptist Churches was formed, in 1655, at Warwick. After adopting a Confession of Faith of sixteen articles, after the manner of the Confession of 1643, the Association determined the objects of the union They were as follows:

The churches were to be helpful to each other: first, in giving advice, after serious consultation and deliberation, in matters and controversies remaining doubtful to any particular church, according to the plain example of the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch. (~~<41523>~~ Acts 15:23. &c.)

**Secondly**, in sending their gifted brethren to use their gifts for the edification of the churches that need the same, as they shall see it to be reasonable, as the Church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. ~~<41522>~~ Acts 15:22.

**Thirdly**, in giving and receiving also, in case of the poverty and want of any particular church, as plainly doth appear in the approved and due acting of the Churches of the Gentiles towards the Church at Jerusalem. ~~<45136>~~ Romans 15:26.

**Fourthly**, in a joint carrying on of any part of the work of the Lord, as is commanded to the churches, as they shall have opportunity to join therein, to the glory of God. See ~~<47819>~~ 2 Corinthians 8:19-23.

**Fifthly**, in watching over each other and considering each other for good, in respect of purity of doctrine, exercise of love and good conversation, being all members of the same body of Christ (~~<461212>~~ 1 Corinthians 12:12), who, therefore, ought to have care for one another (ver. 25) especially considering how the glory of God is concerned in their standing and holy conversation.



The churches now associated are desired to take these things into consideration, and to signify by their messengers, at their next meeting, how far they close with the same, and what they judge expedient to be further considered and done, for the glory of God and the good of the people.

The first General Assembly of the Particular Baptist Churches, the greatest of the Assemblies, as Harlow calls it, was the one called by a letter from the London churches, the year after the landing of William of Orange. The meeting was called to assemble in London, 1689, “of two principal brethren of every church of the same faith with us, in every county respectively.” Letters of acceptance of this invitation were to be sent to H. Knollys or W. Kiffin. “Brother Kiffin lives in White’s Alley, Little Moorfields.” The Assembly continued its sittings for eight or nine days, was pervaded by a solemn, earnest and united spirit, and transacted business of real importance to the welfare and prosperity of the churches. The first day was spent in humbling themselves before the Lord. The second day they agreed upon certain preliminaries, as the foundation or rules of their Assembly, in order to guard against any misapprehensions in the minds of the members of their respective churches, declaring that “they disclaimed all manner of superiority, or superintendency over the churches, having no authority or power to prescribe or impose anything upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ, their whole intendment being to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice.”

Differences in individual churches “in point of communion” were to be left undisturbed; and differences between one church and another were not allowed to be debated, “until the rule that Christ had given in the matter (Matt. xviii. 15) be first answered.” Even their advice is regarded as not binding “to any one church till the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves.” Moreover, “all things offered by way of counsel and advice were to be proved out of the Word of God, and the (particular) Scripture annexed.” The “breviates” of the meeting were to be transcribed and sent to every particular church, with a letter. Each person was to present to the Assembly his letter of recommendation from the church to which he belonged, and none were to be permitted to speak without the general consent of the Assembly. After the letters from the several churches were read, and prayer offered, the meeting adjourned (Goadby, *Bye Paths of Baptist History*, 203).

Out of these meetings particular and general as devised and organized by Thomas Grantham, Thomas Collier, William Kiffin, Benjamin Keach, and others, have grown, with additions and subtractions and modifications, Baptist organizations. They have assumed their peculiar form on account of the fundamental conception that each church is an independent body, and its connection with other churches of the same faith and order, or general bodies

was purely optional. It was recognized that some form of union and co-operation was desirable. At first there were cross-currents of opinion arising out of the fact that the Baptists while holding democratic principles were citizens of a monarchy. They were feeling after liberty. It is remarkable with their surroundings, with limited experience, under persecution, that they devised a system of organizations that not only became the bulwark of freedom but presented a method of co-operation and effective work.

It has frequently been assumed that the General Baptists did not encourage the support and education of the ministry. Most of the General Baptist ministers had secular employments and made their own living. But it is true that they did take steps to support and educate their ministry. Joseph Hooke, an elder among them in the last days of Charles II says of human learning:

It is nowhere said in the Word of God, "Let a bishop be an academic, a rhetorician, a logician, a graduate;" but it is said, "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, vigilant, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, &c." And when we find them thus qualified according to the mind of God, we choose them to the ministry, whether they have or not been bred in the University. . . . Let none mistake me, as though I should despise human learning, as some have done in a passionate zeal, because of its abuses, and others through sottish ignorance, being themselves strangers to it. No! I love and honour human learning, and give it my approbation; only, I would not have more ascribed to it than is due; nor, by any means, that it should be preferred above Divine learning, but only attended upon as a servant (Hooke, Necessary Apology, 58-62).

At first the ministers only received traveling expenses, and then often on the narrowest scale. Afterwards, in 1656, it was decreed that the churches should defray the charges of their families, and "that our beloved brethren shall have ten shillings a week for themselves and their families." This was to cover their own traveling expenses, and the cost of their families' maintenance during their absence (Goadby, 225).

Francis Stanley, who long labored among the General Baptists, "without being chargeable to any," tells of his own knowledge:

That some ministers had spent the greater part of their outward substance in the service of the churches; some their all; and some more than their all, many being reduced to the affecting straight, either to neglect the worthy work of the Gospel, or else to be reputed worse than infidels (~~5408~~ 1 Timothy 5:8).

Thomas Grantham took up the charge of Stanley and gently suggested:

Let the baptized churches be exhorted to consider that, whilst others have exceeded, they have been too short, in caring for their ministers, who, though they have generally with great cheerfulness served them in the Gospel of God

freely, yet that will not justify the churches' neglect of their duty. And besides, the ministry are rendered, by this neglect, less capable to serve them, being generally much diverted by worldly employments from that serious study and exercise of reading which ordinarily conduces much to the furtherance of the Gospel, in the more ample preaching thereof.

The General Assembly gave the matter a practical turn in 1704. The churches in Kent said to the Assembly that "they were in a sinking and languishing condition;" and one reason assigned was, "the want of making provision for a Gospel ministry." The Assembly therefore advised:

That able and gifted persons be chosen and appointed to inform the churches in general of the duty, according to the Scriptures, to make provision for a Gospel ministry, and that the ministers be strictly enjoined in their respective churches to be diligent in this work.

That every congregation choose and appoint a person, or persons, to collect or gather at his, her, or their discretion, such moneys as shall be given for the use aforesaid, once a month, or as often as convenient.

That all such moneys so collected shall be delivered into the hands of a treasurer, or treasurers, as are chosen by the Association, or other churches distinct, according as they think convenient; and that such a treasurer or treasurers, by and with the consent and direction of the aforesaid Association, or churches distinct, shall apply or dispose of the said moneys for encouraging and supporting a Gospel ministry, as aforesaid, and to no other uses whatsoever; and that the said collections shall not hinder or prevent raising a Stock to be brought to the General Assembly, for the messengers, or traveling ministers (Minutes of the General Assembly, 1).

The Particular Baptists were explicit on this subject. In the first General Assembly of the Particular Baptists, in 1689, it is affirmed of the pastors:

It is incumbent on the Churches to whom they Minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as that they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in Secular Affairs; and this is required by the Law of Nature, and by the Express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.

They provided a fund which was to be devoted to the following purposes:

To help the weaker churches in the maintenance of their ministers, so that they (the ministers) might give themselves wholly to the preaching of the Gospel.

To send ministers that are ordained, or at least solemnly called to preach, both in city and country, where the Gospel hath, or hath not been preached, and to visit the churches.

Such ministers were to be selected by at least two churches in London or the country. The fund was further devoted to:

Assist those members that shall be found in any of the churches that are disposed for study, have an inviting gift, and are sound in fundamentals, in attaining to the knowledge and understanding of the languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

In replying to a number of questions it was affirmed that it was an unquestionable advantage:

For our brethren now in the ministry, to obtain a competent knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin tongues, that they may be the better capable of defending the truth against opposers.

Already had the Baptists anticipated the action of the Particular Baptist Assembly in 1689. Many of their ministers had been educated in the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1675 the Baptist ministers of London invited their brethren throughout the country to meet in the following May in the metropolis with a view to form “a plan for providing an orderly standing ministry who might give themselves to reading and study and so become able ministers of the New Testament.”

Four years later, or in 1679, Edward Terrell, who was an elder in the Broadmead Church, Bristol, executed a deed to considerable property, in trust to the pastor of that church, under the following conditions:

Provided he be a holy man, well skilled in the Greek and Hebrew tongues, in which the Scriptures were originally written; and devote three afternoons in the week to the instruction of any number of young students, not exceeding twelve, who may be recommended by the churches, in the knowledge of the original languages, and other literature (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, II. 339).

This fund became available in 1717 and since that date Bristol College, the oldest of Baptist institutions of learning, in England, has had an honorable career.

After the New Connection of General Baptists was formed, June 6, 1770, steps were taken to organize an academy. A manuscript found among the papers of Dan. Taylor, under date of 1779, is entitled a plan for assisting in studies of preachers. The writer adds: “The design has annually obtained credit and reputation, since it was first begun by a poor blind brother in Wadsworth church and myself. As the churches increased in number and respectability, the necessity for such an institution became more apparent: the subject, therefore, became the frequent topic of conversation among individuals, and on public occasions. The Boston Association in 1796, recommended the churches to

adopt measures for facilitating the design, and to open subscriptions for the purpose. This recommendation prepared the churches for the consideration of the subject at the ensuing Association. At that meeting funds were established and the books were opened for subscriptions. In January, 1798, an Academy was opened under the superintendence of Dan. Taylor at Mile End, London.

It is thus manifest that both the General and Particular Baptists of England fostered education. They differed in methods, details and ideals; but they did not differ in regard to the necessity of education. The primary, and at first the only reason for fostering schools among the English Baptists, was the education of the ministry. Their insistence was that a minister should be an educated man. It was furthermore determined that this education should include a knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

The earliest Confessions of both sections of the Baptists recognized only two officers in the churches — ministers and deacons. The Confession of Faith of certain English People, living in Amsterdam, contained, Article 76, the following statement:

That Christ hath set in his outward church two sorts of ministers viz., some who are called pastors, teachers or elders, who administer in the word and sacraments, and others who are called Deacons, men and women: whose ministry is, to serve tables and wash the saints feet (<sup><408D></sup>Acts 6:2-4; <sup><3010I></sup>Philippians 1:1; <sup><543D></sup>1 Timothy 3:2, 3, 8, 11 and chap. 5.).

The London Confession, Article XXXVI., says:

That being thus joined, every Church has power given them from Christ for their better well-being, to choose to themselves, meet persons into the office of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons, being qualified according to the Word, as those which Christ has appointed in his Testament, for the feeding, governing, serving, and building up of his Church, and that none other have power to impose them, either these or any other.

In many churches two, or even four, ministers were associated. In fact a plurality of pastors was very common among the General and Particular Baptists in the time of the Stuarts. When such a union was once formed between an elder and a church, it was regarded as indissoluble as marriage, and only to be severed by death, or the apostasy of the preacher. The following resolution was passed in the Lincolnshire General Baptist Association in 1696.

That there is nothing which we can justly fix upon that can warrant an elder to forsake his people; nor can any elder, who has gone away from his own people, be established as an elder over another people in another place (Goadby, 224).

An elder might be displaced from a church on account of an erring life, or false teaching. The wife of the elder must like-wise be a member of the church. The church looked out young men with appropriate gifts, and often arranged meetings where they could exercise their gifts for preaching.

The deacons were “helps in government,” and they were to assist in the spiritual development of the church and to care for the poor. Such was the declaration of Grantham (Christianus Primitivus, 126). Many of the churches had deaconesses. The Broadmead Church, in 1678-9, elected four sisters who were widows as deaconesses (Broadmead Records, 187, 188).

Grantham claimed for “the baptized churches” “the only true ordination” both of bishops and deacons; since “they only have true baptism;” and “they only have due election of officers;” they only have “the true form, or order, of ordination.” The right of the people to elect their officers, he says, has been invaded “by great personages and magistrates,” and “by the rich and strong.”  
But

now this privilege is restored and maintained in the baptized churches, where none are elected messengers, bishops or deacons without the free choice of the brotherhood where such elections are made. And after such election of persons of known integrity and competent ability, we proceed to ordination, with fasting, and prayer, and the laying on of hands ... all which apostolic practices are religiously observed in the baptized churches, without any devised adjuncts or ceremonies of our own or others (Grantham, 129).

The discipline of the churches was strict and persistent. “Their general conduct,” says Goadby, “their domestic life, their business, their connections in civil society, their recreations, and even their dress, were all deemed legitimate subjects for the strictest supervision.” They were required to be strictly orthodox. A pertinent example is that of a man who had been treasurer of the General Assembly who was expelled from the Petty France Church, London. The account is as follows:

Mr. Robert Bristow was rejected and cast out of the communion, after much patience exercised towards him, and strenuous endeavors used to recover him out of dangerous errors he was fallen into; namely, the renunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly the deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and so rooting up the very foundation of the Christian religion.

A certain Mr. Ingello, one of the early pastors of the Broadmead Church, Bristol, “offended divers members of his congregation with his flaunting apparel; for he, being a thin, spare, slender person, did goe very neate, and in costly trimm, and began to exceed in some garments not becoming ye Gospel, much lesse a minister of Christ.” He was accordingly dealt with. One John Bowes, a minister, attended a foot ball game, which was adjudged “a great

evil,” and was accordingly dealt with by the church. This did not end the matter. The brethren resolved:

Some debate was had about the matter that seeing he had, first, dishonored the Lord; secondly, grieved the people of God; thirdly, given great occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully, he should not be suffered to preach, until further fruits meet for repentance did appear.

The General Assembly of the Particular Baptists, 1689, answered the query: “Whether it were not necessary to take note of those excesses that were found in their members, men and women, with respect to their apparel,” affirmatively. Their sober reply was:

It is a shame for men to wear long hair, or long perriwigs, and especially ministers (<sup><del>6114</del></sup> 1 Corinthians 11:14), or strange apparel. That the Lord reproves the daughters of Zion for their bravery, haughtiness, and pride of their attire, walking with stretched out necks, wanton eyes, mincing as they go (<sup><del>2316</del></sup> Isaiah 3:16), as if they effected tallness, as one observes of their stretched-out necks; though some in these times seem, by their high dresses, to outdo them in that respect.

Great stress was laid on marrying “in the society.” A solemn meeting was held in the Cambridge Church, 1655, to determine an answer to the query: “Whether, or no, it is lawful for any member of the congregation to marry with any one out of the congregation?” The query provoked debate, but the church adhered to the answer that “it was not.”

The records of the churches of those times contains all kinds of charges preferred against members. Some of them were “for beating his wife,” drunkenness, not keeping a promise, not speaking the truth, “borrowing money and making no sign of paying it again,” “backbiting and idleness.”

Dr. Wall commends their discipline in the highest manner. This is all the more complimentary when his well-known dislike for the Baptists is taken into account. He says:

They have their way of adjusting differences that arise among them selves on account of trespasses, dues, or other money matters; which I recite as being worthy of imitation. If any one of them does wrong to another, or refuse to do or to pay what is equitable in any case; if he will not be brought to reason by a private arguing of the matter, nor by the verdict of two or three neighbors added; the plaintiff brings the case before the congregation, when they with their elder are assembled in the nature of a vestry. And in difficult cases, there lies an appeal from a particular congregation, to some fuller meeting of their church under a messenger. And he of the two that will not stand to the ultimate determination of the assembly by their usage appointed, is no longer acknowledged by the rest as a brother.

And this is very much according to our Saviour's and Paul's direction in such cases; so I have been told that it has the good effect to prevent abundance of lawsuits, and end many quarrel's; very few of them offering to withstand the general verdict and opinion of all of their brethren. And there is no reason to doubt but that a like course would, if it were put in practice have a like good effect among other societies of Christians.

The discipline (of renouncing brotherhood) they use against such of their communion as are known to be guilty of any such immorality, as is a scandal to the Christian profession of a sober and godly life; for which care of their members there is no man but will commend them (Wall, History of Infant Baptism, I. 560).

For a period the imposition of hands upon the baptized, fasting as a religious duty, washing the feet of the disciples and anointing of the sick were practised in some congregations. It was their custom in the election of officers, pastors and deacons, to cast lots. Their marriage and funeral services were of the simplest character.

The Baptists were much divided on the subject of singing. They were not altogether a songless people. They were opposed to "human composures," and the strictness of their ideas on church membership caused a reluctance in having congregational singing. But singing slowly prevailed in the congregations. Benjamin Keach introduced singing into his church at Horselydown. Isaac Marlow was much distressed and published, in 1690, a Discourse Concerning (against) Singing. Very gravely and soberly does Keach, his picture would indicate that he had no sense of humor, answer Marlow. He says there are various kinds of voices; "namely,

- (1) a shouting noise of the tongue;
- (2) a crying noise;
- (3) a preaching voice, or noise made that way;
- (4) a praying, or praising noise; and
- (5) lastly, a singing voice."

"All of these are distinct from each other. Singing is not a simple heart singing, or mental singing; but a musical melodious modulation, or tuning of the voice. Singing is a duty performed always with the voice, and cannot be done without the tongue" (Keach, Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or, Singing Psalms, 'Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an holy ordinance of Jesus Christ). There was a long discussion on singing. But singing soon became the custom in all Baptist churches.



## **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES:**

The Works of Andrew Fuller, John Gill, John Rippon, John Foster, Abraham Booth, Charles H. Spurgeon, Alexander Maclaren, etc., etc.

## CHAPTER 20 — THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

Opportunity for Growth — Robert Baillie — Thomas Edwards — Daniel Featley — An Epitome of the Period — William R. Williams — The High Attainments of the Baptists — Dr. Hawes — Mackintosh — Hugh Price Hughes — Chalmers — The Price of Human Liberty — Persecutions — An Act of Parliament — The “Gag Law” — The Cruelty of Infant Baptism — Oliver Cromwell — Prominent Baptist Preachers in Prison — Cromwell Casts His Influence Against the Baptists — Liberty of Conscience — Confession of the Particular Baptists — Of the General Baptists — John Milton — John Bunyan — William Kiffin — James II. — William and Mary — The Baptists Brought Liberty of Conscience John Locke — Price — Charles Butler — Herbert S. Skeats — Phillip Schaff — A Time of Paralysis — Antinomianism — John Gill — John Rippon — Baptist Publications — Abraham Booth — John Howard — Andrew Fuller — Moderate Calvinism — The Missionary Movement — William Carey — Joseph Hughes and the Bible Society — Sunday Schools — Robert Raikes — W. Fox The Relation — of the Baptists to the Young — Regents Park College — Great Authors and Able Preachers — Hymn Writers.

THE troubled times of the Civil Wars gave the Baptists an opportunity to make great growth. This is affirmed by all parties. Robert Baillie, who was an enemy to them, says:

Under the shadow of Independency, they have lifted up their heads and increased their number above all sects in the land. They have forty-six churches in and about London; they are a people very fond of religious liberty, and very unwilling to be brought under bondage of the judgment of any other.

Thomas Edwards says, in 1646, that the Anabaptists stand “for a toleration of all religions and worship.” He says:

“They have grown to many thousands in the city and country,” “keep open meetings in the heart of the city,” and that “they increase and grow daily” even while Parliament is in session (Edwards, *Gangraena*, I. Epistle Dedicatory).

Dr. Featley, their opponent, accuses them of holding the following opinions:

That it is the will and command of God, that since the coming of his Son the Lord Jesus, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Anti-christian Consciences and worships be granted to all men in all Nations and Countries; that Civil States with their Officers of justice are not Governors or Defenders of the Spiritual and Christian state and worship; That the doctrine

of Persecution in case of Conscience (maintained by Calvin, Beza, Cotton, and the Ministers of the New England Churches) is guilty of the blood of the souls crying for vengeance under the Altar (Featley, *The Dippers Dipt*. The Epistle Dedicatory).

In the margin he continues their plea:

That the Parl. will stop all proceedings against them, and for future provide that as well particular and private congregations as publike, may have publike protection, that all statuetes against the Separatists be reviewed and repealed; that the Presse may bee free for any man that writes nothing scandalous or dangerous to the State; and this Parliament prove themselves loving Fathers to all sorts of good men, bearing respect unto all, and so inviting an equall assistance and affection from all.

A dissatisfied officer wrote to Cromwell:

Have they not filled your towns, your cities, your provinces, your islands, your castles, your navies, your tents, your armies, your courts? Your very council is not free; only we have left your temples for you to worship in.

So strongly were they attached to liberty that when Cromwell made himself Protector, and intimated his intention of removing all Baptists from his army, one of the officers, a Baptist, said to him:

I pray do not deceive yourself, nor let the priests deceive you, for the Baptists are men that will not be shuffled out of their birthright as free born people of England (Baptist Magazine, XXXV. 295, A.D. 1843).

Probably the best epitome which has appeared of this period was written by Dr. William R. Williams, of New York. He says

To the Baptists then, the age ... is a memorable one. The period of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate was the season in which our distinguishing sentiments, heretofore the hidden treasures of a few solitary confessors, became the property of the people. Through weary years they had been held by a few in deep retirement, and at the peril of their lives; now they began rapidly working their way and openly into the masses of society. The army that won for Cromwell his "crowning mercies," as he called those splendid victories which assured the power of the Parliament, became deeply tinged with our views of Christian faith and order. They were not, as military bodies have so often been, a band of mercenary hirelings, the sweepings of society, gleaned from the ale-house and the kennel, or snatched from jail and due to the gallows; but they were composed chiefly of substantial yeomanry, men who entered the ranks from principle rather than for gain, and whose chief motive for enlistment was that they believed the impending contest one for religious truth and for the national liberties, a war in the strictest sense *pro aria et focis*. Clarendon himself allows their superiority, in morals and character, to the royalist forces. In this army the officers were many of them

accustomed to preach; and both commanders and privates were continually busied in searching the Scriptures, in prayers, and in Christian conference. The result of the biblical studies and free communings of these intrepid, highprincipled men was that they became, a large portion of them, Baptists. As to their character, the splendid eulogy they won from Milton may counterbalance the coarse caricatures of poets and novelists, who saw them less closely, and disliked their piety too strongly, to judge dispassionately their merits.

Major General Harrison one of their most distinguished leaders was a Baptist. He was long the bosom friend of Cromwell; and became alienated from him only on discovering that the Protector sought triumph, not so much from principle, as for his own personal aggrandizement. Favorable to liberty, and inaccessible to flattering promises of power, he became the object of suspicion to Cromwell, who again and again threw him into prison. On the return of the Stuarts, his share in the death of Charles I among whose judges he had sat, brought him to the scaffold, where his gallant bearing and pious triumph formed a close not unsuitable to the career he had run. Others of the king's judges, and of the eminent officers of the army, belonged to the same communion. Some of these sympathized only, it is true, with their views of freedom, and seem not to have embraced their religious sentiments. Among this class was Ludlow, a major-general under Cromwell, an ardent republican, and who, being of the regicides, sought a refuge, where he ended his days, in Switzerland. He was accounted the head, at one time, of the Baptist party in Ireland. Such was their interest, that Baxter complains, that many of the soldiers in that kingdom, became Baptists, as the way to preferment. (Orme, I. 135). The chancellor of Ireland under Cromwell was also of our body; Lilburne, one of Cromwell's colonels, and brother of the restless and impracticable John Lilburne, was also of their number. Overton, the friend of Milton, whom Cromwell in 1651 left second in command in Scotland, was also ranked as acting with them, as also Okey and Alured. Col. Mason, the governor of Jersey, belonged to the Baptists, and still others of Cromwell's officers. Penn, one of the admirals of the English navy, but now better known as the father of the celebrated Quaker, was a Baptist. Indeed, in Cromwell's own family their influence was formidable; and Fleetwood, one of his generals and his son-in-law, was accused of leaning too much to their interests as a political party. The English matron, whose memoirs form one of the most delightful narratives of that stirring time, and who in her own character presented one of the loveliest specimens of Christian womanhood, Lucy Hutchinson, a name of love and admiration wherever known, became a Baptist. She did so, together with her husband, one of the judges of Charles I. and the governor of Nottingham Castle for the Parliament, from the perusal of the Scriptures. Of no inferior rank in society, for Hutchinson was a kinsman of the Byrons of Newstead, the family whence sprung the celebrated poet, their talents, and patriotism, and Christian graces, and domestic virtues, throw around that pair the lustre of a higher nobility than heralds can confer, and a

dignity, compared with which the splendor of royalty, and the trappings of victory are poor indeed.

The ministry of our denomination comprised, too, men of high character; some, unhappily, but too much busied in the political strife of the age, but others whose learning and talent were brought to bear more exclusively on their appropriate work. Tombes, the antagonist of Baxter, Bampfled, Gosnold, Knollys, Denne and Jessey, all Baptist preachers had held priestly orders in the English established church; Gosnold being one of the most popular ministers in London, with a congregation of 3,000; and Jessey, a Christian whose acquirements and talents, piety and liberality won him general respect. Kiffin, a merchant whose wealth and the excellence of his private character had given him influence among the princely traders of London, and introduced him to the court of the Stuarts, was pastor of a Baptist church in that city. Cox, another of our ministers at this time, is said by Baxter to have been the son of a bishop; and Collins, another pastor among us, had in his youth been a pupil of Busby. De Veil, a convert from Judaism, who had, both with the Romish church of France, and in the Episcopal church of England, been regarded with much respect, and, in the former, been applauded by no less a man than the eloquent and powerful Bossuet, became a Baptist preacher, and closed his life and labors in the bosom of our communion. Dell, a chaplain of Lord Fairfax, and who was, until the Restoration, head of one of the colleges in the university of Cambridge, was also a Baptist minister. Although they deemed literature no indispensable preparation for the ministry (nor did the church of the first six centuries), the Baptists under Cromwell, and the Stuarts, were not destitute of educated men. Out of the bounds of England, Vavasor Powell, the Baptist, was evangelizing Wales with a fearlessness and activity that have won him, at times, the title of its apostle; and, on our own shores, Roger Williams, another Baptist, was founding Rhode Island, giving of the great doctrine of religious liberty, a visible type. Our sentiments were also winning deference from minds that were not converted to our views. Milton, with a heresy ever to be deprecated and lamented, had adopted most fully our principles of baptism. Jeremy Taylor, a name of kindred genius, in a work which he intended but as the apology of toleration, stated so strongly the arguments for our distinguishing views, that it cost himself and the divines of his party much labor to counteract the influence of the seasonings: while Barlow, afterwards also a bishop, and celebrated for his share in the liberation of Bunyan, addressed to Tombes a letter strongly in favor of our peculiarities. Such progress in reputation and influence was not observed without jealousy. Baxter laments that those who, at first, were but a few in the city and the army, had within two or three years grown into a multitude (Works, xx. 297); and asserts that they had so far got into power as to seek for dominion, and to expect, many of them, that the baptized saints should judge the world, and the millennium to some. And Baillie, a commissioner from Scotland to Westminster Assembly, a man of strong sense, and the ardor of whose piety cannot be questioned, though he was a bitter sectarian, complained that the Baptists were growing

more rapidly than any sect in the land; while Lightfoot's diary of the proceedings of the same assembly proves that similar complaints were brought before that venerable body.

Some would naturally, as in the history of the early Christians, be attracted to a rising sect, who were themselves unprincipled men. Lord Howard, the betrayer of the patriotic Russell, was said to have been at one period of his shifting and reckless course, a Baptist preacher. Another whose exact character it is difficult to ascertain, perverting, as royalist prejudices did, even his name for the purposes of ridicule, Barebones, the speaker of Cromwell's parliament, is said to have been a Baptist preacher in London. Others, again, of the body were tinged with extravagances; some joined with other Christians of the time in the confident expectation of what they termed the Fifth Monarchy, Christ's personal reign on the earth. In the changes of the day, and they were many and wondrous, they saw the tokens of Christ's speedy approach to found a universal empire, following in the train of the four great monarchies of the prophet's vision. It is to the credit of Bunyan, that he discerned and denounced the error. Then, as in all ages of the church, it was but too common for the interpreters of prophecy to become prophets. Others, again, were moved from their steadfastness by Quakerism, which then commenced its course; while others adopted the views of the Seekers, a party who denied the existence of any pure and true church, and were waiting its establishment yet to come. In this last class of religionists was the younger Sir Henry Vane, the illustrious patriot and statesman so beautifully panegericed in a sonnet of Milton, and from his talents dreaded alike by Cromwell and the Stuarts, and the friend of Roger Williams. The founder of Rhode Island seems himself, in later life, to have imbibed similar views.

Yet with all of these mingled disadvantages, and they are but such heresies and scandals as marked the earliest and purest times of Christianity, that era in our history is one to which we may turn with devout gratitude, and bless God for our fathers. In literature, it is honor enough that our sentiments were held by the two great men who displayed, beyond all comparison, the most creative genius in that age of English literature, Milton and Bunyan. In the cause of religion and political freedom, it was the lot of our community to labor, none the less effectively because they did it obscurely, with Keach, doomed to the pillory, or, like Delaune, perishing in the dungeon. The opinions, as to religious freedom, then professed by our churches, were not only denounced by statesmen as rebellion, but by grave divines as the most fearful heresy. Through evil and through good report they persevered, until what had clothed them with obloquy became, in the hands of later scholars and more practised writers, as Locke, a badge of honor and a diadem of glory. Nor should it be forgotten, that these views were not with them, as with some others, professed in the time of persecution, and virtually retracted when power had been won. Such was, alas, the course of names no less illustrious than Stillingfleet and Taylor. But the day of prosperity and political influence was, with our churches, the day of their most earnest dissemination. Their

share, in storing up the falling liberties of England, and in infusing new vigor and liberality into the constitution of that country, is not yet generally acknowledged. It is scarce even known. The dominant party in the church and in the state, at the Restoration, became the historians; and “when the man, and not the lion, was thus the painter,” It was easy to foretell with what party all the virtues, all the talents, and all the triumphs, would be found. When our principles shall have won their way to more general acceptance, the share of the Baptists in the achievements of that day will be disinterred, like many other forgotten truths, from the ruins of history. Then it will, we believe, be found, that while dross, such as has alloyed the purest churches in the best ages, may have been found in some of our denomination, yet the body was composed of pure and scriptural Christians, who contended manfully, some with bitter sufferings, for the rights of conscience, and the truth as it is in Jesus: that to them English liberty owes a debt it has never acknowledged; and that among them Christian freedom found its earliest and some of its staunchest, its most consistent, and its most disinterested champions. Had they continued ascending the heights of political influence, it had been perhaps disastrous to their spiritual interests; for when did the disciples of Christ long enjoy power of prosperity, without some deterioration of their graces? He who, as we may be allowed to hope, loved them with an everlasting love, and watched over their welfare with a sleepless care, threw them back, in the subsequent convulsions of the age, into the obscure lowly stations of life, because in such scenes he had himself delighted to walk, and in these retired paths it has ever been his wont to lead his flock (Life and Times of Baxter. The Christian Review, VIII. 5-11. March, 1843).

It is generally admitted that these Baptists possessed the highest attainments and the most exalted character. The opinions of a few competent authorities, and certainly they were not prejudiced in favor of the Baptists, are here quoted. Dr. Hawes says:

Whoever properly estimates the doctrines and practices of the Baptists, must allot them a place among the faithful, notwithstanding their views of baptism. In all other things they are united with their reforming brethren. They are exemplary in their zeal for the salvation of souls, and exhibit respectable specimens of those who follow Christ as their example.

The historian Mackintosh says:

The Baptists are a simple and pious body of men, generally unlettered, obnoxious to all other sects for their rejection of infant baptism, as neither enjoined by the New Testament, nor consistent with reason. These suffered more than any other persuasion under Charles II. They had publicly professed the principles of religious liberty (Mackintosh, ch. VI. 167).

Some years ago Hugh Price Hughes, the foremost Methodist preacher of England, said:

I assert with a full sense of the responsibility, that I believe that the great battle of the twentieth century will be the final struggle between the Jesuit Society in the full possession of the authority of Rome and the individual human conscience; and when, like Oliver Cromwell, I look around to see where I shall find Ironsides, who will vindicate the rights of the human conscience, my eyes fall upon the Baptists. The anvil on which the Jesuit hammer will break to pieces is the Baptist conscience. I should like all the world through to pit the Baptist conscience against the Jesuit.

One other quotation will be given in this place. It is from the celebrated Dr. Chalmers. He says:

Let it never be forgotten of the Particular Baptists of England, that they form the denomination of Fuller and Carey and Ryland and Hall and Foster; that they have originated among the greatest of all missionary enterprises; that they have enriched the Christian literature of our country with authorship of the most exalted piety, as well as of the first talent and the first eloquence; that they have waged a very noble and successful war with the hydra of Antinomianism; that perhaps there is not a more intellectual community of ministers in our island, or who have put forth to their number a greater amount of mental power and mental activity in the defence and illustration of our common faith; and, what is better than all the triumphs of genius or understanding, who, by their zeal and fidelity and pastoral labour, among the congregations which they have reared, have done more to swell the lists of genuine discipleship in the walks of private society — and thus to uphold and to extend the living Christianity of our nation (Chalmers, Lectures on Romans, 76).

The price of human liberty in England was the blood of the Baptists. They stood ever for soul liberty. They struggled for it through blood and fire. At the beginning of the Civil Wars the animosity against the Baptists was very great. Edwards, who fairly represented the hostility of those times against the Baptists, says:

I here declare myself, that I could wish there were a public Disputation, even in the point of Paedobaptisme and of Dipping, between some of the Anabaptists, and some of our Ministers; and had I an interest in the Houses to prevaile to obtaine it (which I speak not as to presume of any such power, being so mean and weak a man) it should be one of the first Petitions I would put up to the Honorable Houses for a public Disputation, as was at Zurick, namely, that both Houses would give leave to the Anabaptists to chuse for themselves such a number of their ablest men, and the Assembly leave to chuse an equall number for them, and that by Authority of Parliament publike Notaries sworne, might be appointed to write down all, some Members of both Houses, present to see to the Peace kept, and to be Judges of the faire play and liberty given the Anabaptists, and that there might be severall dayes of Disputation, leave to the utmost given the Anabaptists to say what they



could, and if upon such faire and free debates it should be found the Anabaptists to be in the Truth, then the Parliament only to Tolerate them, but to Establish and settle their way throughout the whole Kingdoms., but if upon Disputation and debate, the Anabaptists should be found in Error (as I am confident they would) that then the Parliament should forbid all Dipping, and take some severe course with all Dippers, as the Senate of Zürich did after the ten severall Disputations allowed the Anabaptists (Edwards, Gangraena, III. 177).

Plainly the advice of Edwards was to drown the Baptists. The Presbyterian party, which was now fully in the saddle, did something more than use words. Various petitions, from many sources, were sent up to Parliament asking that severe laws should be enacted against all sectaries who would not come into the Presbyterian establishment.

The first law passed by Parliament in this direction was an ordinance silencing all preachers who were not ordained ministers either of the English or of some Foreign Church. It bore date April 26, 1645, and was as follows:

It is this day ordained and declared by the Lords and Commons assembled in parliament, that no person be admitted to preach, who is not ordained a minister, either in this or some other reformed church, except such, as intending the ministry, shall be allowed for the trial of their gifts, by those who shall be appointed thereunto by both houses of parliament (Crosby, History of the Baptists, I. 193).

The law was ordered printed, that it should be enforced in the army as well as elsewhere, and due punishment inflicted upon any who violated it. It was found however upon the test that many of the Baptists had formerly been ordained, when they belonged to the State Church, and the magistrates could make little out of the matter. Another ordinance was therefore passed December 26, 1646, to the following effect:

The commons assembled in parliament do declare, that they do dislike and will proceed against all such persons as shall take upon them to preach, or expound the scriptures in any church, or chapel, or any other public place, except they may be ordained, either here or in some other reformed church, as it is already prohibited in an order of both houses of the 26th of April, 1645, and likewise against all such ministers, or others, as shall publish or maintain, by preaching, writing, or any other way, any thing against, or in derogation of church government which is now established by authority of both houses of parliament; and all justices of the peace, sheriffs, mayors, bayliffs, and other head officers of corporations, aid all officers of the army, are to take notice of this declaration, and by all lawful ways and means, to prevent offenses of this kind, and to apprehend the offenders, and give notice thereof to this house, that thereupon course may be speedily taken, for a due punishment to be inflicted on them (Crosby, I. 195).

This law would have given the Baptists great trouble only the disturbed condition of the country directed the officers to other tasks. There seems to have been a favorable turn toward the Baptists for on March 4, 1647, a declaration was published by the Lords and Commons to the following effect:

The name of Anabaptism hath indeed contracted much odium, by reason of the extravagant opinions and practices of some of that name in Germany, tending to the disturbance of the government and peace of all states, which opinions and practices we abhor and detest: But for their opinion against the baptism of infants, it is only a difference about a circumstance of time in the administration of an ordinance, wherein in former ages, as well as this, learned men have differed both in opinion and practice. And though we could wish that all men would satisfy themselves, and join with us in our judgment and practice in this point; yet herein we held it fit that men should be convinced by the word of God, with great gentleness and reason, and not beaten out of it with force and violence (Crosby, I. 196).

This promised well, but this very Parliament, the next year, May 2, 1648, enacted: An ordinance of the lords and commons assembled in parliament, for the punishing of blasphemies and heresies (Crosby, I. 197).

It was one of the worst and most cruel laws passed since the early days of the Reformation. Heresy, in some instances was classed with felony, and was to be punished with the pains of death, without benefit of clergy. Others were subject to conviction before two justices of the peace and to be imprisoned upon conviction. Such a person was required to give surety that he would not any longer maintain such errors. Among the errors mentioned was the following:

That the baptizing of infants is unlawful, or that such baptism is void, and that such persons ought to be baptized again, and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized: That the church government by presbytery is antichristian or unlawful.

Infant baptism has always led its advocates to persecute. Thus did the Presbyterians carry out their cruel ideas. The ordinance would have produced much more suffering than it did, but the Baptists and other sectaries were in such members, and were increasing so rapidly, that it was not always convenient to execute such a law. One John Bidle was arrested, tried and convicted before a magistrate. Cromwell could not afford to have him punished too strenuously, so he was banished for three years. It was a good occasion for the Baptists to protest against the violation of conscience, and so they petitioned the Protector for the privilege of soul liberty. Among other things they said:

That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (tho' differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publickly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, &c. Art. 37. That all laws, statutes, ordinances, &c. to the contrary of the aforesaid liberty, shall be esteemed as null and void. Art 38.

The persecutions, however, as might have been expected, were more particularly directed against the Baptists, since they denied the necessity of infant baptism. Almost every prominent Baptist preacher was sooner or later committed to prison. The Presbyterians were now supreme in Parliament, and they favored the administering of the laws for persecution. But Cromwell perceived that the Long Parliament was odious to the people, so he put, without ceremony, an end to their power, April 20, 1653.

Cromwell owed much to the Baptists. After he became Protector, the Baptists on account of their views of religious liberty, were not in his favor. But it was under the profligate Charles II and James II that they suffered most of all. The Baptists were the outspoken advocates of liberty of conscience.

In their letter to Charles II, dated A.D. 1655, presented to him at Bruges, they call upon him to pledge his word "that he will never erect, nor allow to be erected, any such tyrannical, popish, and antichristian Hierarchy (episcopalian, presbyterian, or by what name soever called) as shall assume power over, or impose a yoke upon, the conscience of others; but that every one of his subjects should be at liberty to worship God in such a way as shall appear to them agreeable to the mind and will of Christ" (Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, III. 359). The same spirit animated them during the reign of James II.

The Confession of the Particular Baptists, 1689, Article XXI says:

God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it. So that to Believe such Doctrines, or to obey such Commands out of Conscience, is to betray true liberty of Conscience; and requiring of an implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also.

The General Baptists also in An Orthodox Creed, 1679, Article XLV, of the Civil Magistrates, say:

And subjection in the Lord ought to be yielded to the magistrates in all lawful things commanded by them, for conscience sake, with prayers for them, &c.

In Article XLVI, Of Liberty of Conscience, it is said:

And the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute blind obedience, destroys liberty of conscience, and reason also, it being repugnant to both, and that no pretended good end whatsoever, by any man, can make that action, obedience, or practice, lawful and good, that is not grounded in, or upon the authority of holy scripture, or right reason agreeable thereunto.

The most rigid laws were enacted against the Baptists, and executed with terrible severity. The jails were filled with them. They could be convicted by one magistrate, without trial by jury; and the law forbade their meetings in their conventicles.

It was the battle of the fire and faggot against liberty of conscience.

It brought to the fore great men. The two original minds of the century were essentially Baptist — John Milton and John Bunyan. Lord Macaulay says:

We are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the *Paradise Lost*, the other the *Pilgrim's Progress* (Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, 140. Boston, 1879).

Of the ability of John Milton there is no question. Macaulay says of him:

We turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English literature (*Ibid*, 2).

Macaulay places him as one of the greatest of the poets, It is not probable that Milton belonged to a Baptist church. In his last days he did not appear to be connected with any religious society. In all distinguishing views he was in accord with the General Baptists of his day. He had a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Like the Baptists, he professed to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of Scriptural texts is certainly one of the best that has appeared. No Baptist writer of any age has more thoroughly refuted infant baptism (Milton, *Christian Doctrines*, II. 115). Many of the biographies of Milton, however, class him with the Baptists. Featley gives this slant to both Roger Williams and John Milton (Featley, *The Dipers Dipt. The Epistle Dedicatory*). John Lewis quotes Featley and numbers Milton as a Baptist (Lewis, *A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of Anabaptism in England*, 87). John Toland, who wrote the first life of Milton, 1699, says:

Thus lived and died John Milton, a person of the best accomplishments, the happiest genius and the vastest learning which this nation, so renowned for producing excellent writers, could ever yet show. ... In his early days he was

a favorer of those Protestants then opprobriously called by the name Puritan. In his middle years he was best pleased with the Independents and Anabaptists, as allowing of more liberty than others and coming the nearest to his opinion to the primitive practice. But in the latter part of his life he was not a professed member of any particular sect among Christians; he frequented none of their assemblies, nor made use of their peculiar rites in his family. Whether this proceeded from a dislike of their uncharitable and endless disputes, and that love of dominion or inclination to persecution, which, he said, was a piece of popery inseparable from all Churches, or whether he thought one might be a good man without subscribing to any party, and that they had all in some things corrupted the institutions of Jesus Christ, I will by no means adventure to determine; for conjectures on such occasions are very uncertain, and I have never met with any of his acquaintance who could be positive in assigning the true reasons for his conduct (Toland, *Life of Milton*, 152, 153).

He was persecuted to the grave. There is no sadder picture than that of Milton in his last days. Macaulay says of him:

If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equitable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every, calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die (Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, 13).

The other original mind of the century was John Bunyan. "The history of Bunyan," says Macaulay, "is the history of a most excitable mind in the age of excitement." The *Pilgrim's Progress*, next to the Bible, has been read by more people than any other book. Macaulay says of it:

That wonderful book, while it obtains admiration from the most fastidious critics, is loved by those who are too simple to admire it. Doctor Johnson, all whose studies were desultory, and who hated, as he said, to read books through, made an exception in favour of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. That work was one of the two or three works which he wished longer. It was by no common merit that the illiterate sectary extracted praise like this from the most pedantic of critics and the most bigoted of Tories. In the wildest parts of Scotland the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the delight of the peasantry. In every nursery the *Pilgrim's Progress* is a greater favorite than Jack the Giant-killer.

Every reader knows the straight and narrow path as well as he knows a road in which he has gone backward and forward a hundred times. This is the highest miracle of genius, that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imagination of one mind should become the personal recollection of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought (Macaulay, 134).

For denying infant baptism and being “a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the disparagement of the Church of England,” he was, in 1660, committed to prison, where he remained twelve years, or till 1672. Bunyan says of his imprisonment:

I found myself a man encompassed with infirmities: the parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was likely to meet with, should I be taken from them; especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all besides. Oh the thoughts of the hardships my poor blind one might undergo. would break my heart to pieces. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou to have for my portion in this world. Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, recalling myself, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you.

In describing his sufferings, Macaulay says:

It may be doubted whether any English Dissenter has suffered more severely under the penal laws than John Bunyan. Of the twenty-seven years which have elapsed since the Restoration, he had passed twelve in confinement. He still persisted in preaching; but, that he might preach, he was under the necessity of disguising himself like a carter. He was often introduced into meetings through back doors, with a smock frock on his back, and a whip in his hand. If he had thought only of his own ease and safety, he would have hailed the Indulgence with delight. He was now, at length, free to pray and exhort in open day. His congregation rapidly increased; thousands hung upon his words; and at Bedford, where he ordinarily resided, money was plentifully contributed to build a meeting-house for him. His influence among the common people was such that the government would willingly have bestowed on him some municipal office, but his vigorous and stout English heart were proof against all delusion and all temptation. He felt assured that the proffered toleration was merely a bait intended to lure the Puritan party to destruction; nor would he, by accepting a place for which he was not legally qualified, recognize the validity of the dispensing power. One of the last acts of his virtuous life was to decline an interview to which he was invited by an agent of the government (Macaulay, *The History of England*, II. 177, 178).

The place of Bunyan is secure. "Bunyan is, indeed," says Macaulay, "as decidedly the first of allegorists, as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakespeare the first of dramatists."

The most widely known and the most beloved Baptist of the times was William Kiffin, the merchant preacher. At this time he was about seventy-five years of age, and he lived unto the last year of King William's reign. His portrait does not bear out the once current impression concerning the Baptists of that age. With skull-cap and flowing ringlets, with moustache and "imperial", with broad lace collar and ample gown, he resembled a gentleman cavalier rather than any popular ideal of a sour-visaged and discontented Anabaptist. Though one of the cleanest men he was called to suffer for his religious convictions. Macaulay has recorded something of his sufferings. He says:

Great as was the authority of Bunyan with the Baptists, that of William Kiffin was still greater. Kiffin was the first man among them in wealth and station. He was in the habit of exercising his spiritual gifts at their meetings: but he did not live by preaching. He traded largely; his credit on the Exchange of London stood high; and he had accumulated an ample fortune. Perhaps no man could, at that conjuncture, have rendered a more valuable service to the court. But between him and the court was interposed the remembrance of one terrible event. He was the grandfather of the two Hewlings, those gallant youths who, of all the victims of the Bloody Assizes, had been the most generally lamented. For the sad fate of one of them James was in a peculiar manner responsible. Jeffreys had respited the younger brother. The poor lad's sister had been ushered by Churchill into the royal presence, and had begged for mercy; but the king's heart had been obdurate. The misery of the whole family had been great; but Kiffin was most to be pitied. He was seventy years old when he was left destitute, the survivor of those who should have survived him. The heartless and venal sycophants of Whitehall, judging by themselves, thought that the old man would be easily propitiated by an alderman's gown, and by some compensation in money for the property which his grandsons had forfeited. Penn was employed in the work of seduction, but to no purpose. The king determined to try what effect his own civilities would produce. Kiffin was ordered to attend at the palace. He found a brilliant circle of noblemen and gentlemen assembled. James immediately came to him, spoke to him very graciously, and concluded by saying, "I have put you down, Mr. Kiffin, for an Alderman of London." The old man looked fixedly at the king, burst into tears, and made answer, "Sir, I am worn out; I am unfit to serve sour Majesty or the City. And, sir, the death of my poor boys broke my heart. That wound is as fresh as ever. I shall carry it to my grave." The king stood silent for a minute in some confusion, and then said, "Mr. Kiffin, I will find a balsam for that sore." Assuredly James did not mean to say any thing cruel or insolent; on the contrary, he seems to have been in an unusually gentle mood. Yet no speech that is recorded of him gives so an unfavorable a notion of his

character as these few words. They are the words of a hard-hearted and low-minded man, unable to conceive any laceration of the affections for which a place or a pension would not be a full compensation (Macaulay. *The History of England*, II. 178, 179).

The happy succession of William and Mary to the throne of England, February 13, 1689, and the passage of the Toleration Act, on May 24 following, secured comparative liberty to the Baptists. They were tolerated but still under the power of the State. Great had been their sufferings; but they had remained consistent in their advocacy of the rights of conscience. Their views had prevailed at tremendous sacrifice. "The Baptists were the first and only propounders of absolute liberty," says the celebrated John Locke, "just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty" (Locke, *Essay on Toleration*, 31, 4 to ed.).

The part the English Baptists played in obtaining soul liberty is now conceded by the historians. Price says:

It belonged to the members of a calumniated and despised sect, few in numbers and poor in circumstances, to bring forth to public view, in their simplicity and omnipotence, those immortal principles which are now universally recognized as of Divine authority and of universal obligation. Other writers of more distinguished name succeeded, and robbed them of their honor; but their title is so good, and the amount of service they performed on behalf of the common interests of humanity is so incalculable, that an impartial posterity must assign to them their due meed of praise (Price, *History of Protestant Nonconformity*, I. 222).

Charles Butler, Roman Catholic, says:

It is observable that this denomination of Christians, — now truly respectable, but in their origin as little intellectual as any — first propagated the principles of religious liberty (Butler, *Historical Memoirs respecting the English, Irish, and Scottish Catholics*, I. 325. London, 1819).

Herbert S. Skeats says:

It is the singular and distinguished honour of the Baptists to have repudiated, from their earliest history, all coercive power over the consciences and actions of men with reference to religion. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with those principles of Christian liberty and willinghood which are now equally dear to all the free Congregational Churches of England. They were the proto-evangelists of the voluntary principle (Skeats, *A History of the Free Churches of England*, 24. London, 1869).



In a foot note he says he is not connected with the Baptist denomination and therefore, “perhaps, greater pleasure in bearing this testimony to undoubted historical fact” belongs to the author.

Dr. Schaff says:

For this change of public sentiment the chief merit is due to the English Non-conformists, who in the school of persecution became advocates of toleration, especially to the Baptists and Quakers, who made religious liberty (within the limits of the golden rule) an article of their creed, so that they could not consistently persecute even if they should have a chance to do so (Schaff, *Creeks of Christendom*, I. 802, 803).

The period which followed was not one of prosperity for Baptists. There was a world reaction which had set in against Christianity. Infidelity for the next one hundred years was to occupy a large place in the world. This general spirit of unrest and unbelief wrought havoc in empires as well as in individuals. No just history of these times can be written that does not take into account this trend in human affairs. It was a period of stagnation. Worldliness was common in the churches, and piety was at a low ebb.

There were moreover internal troubles among the Baptists. The General Baptists were paralyzed by dissensions and alienations. The Particular Baptists had made their Confession on the lines of the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians. There was a constant tendency in the discussion of election and predestination toward hyper-Calvinism, and in the debates which arose over the doctrines of Wesley many Baptist preachers became Antinomians. There was a blight upon the churches and much of their religion took a most repulsive form.

John Gill was by far the ablest man among the Baptists. He was born in Kettering, in 1679, and became a superior scholar in Greek, Latin and logic. After many years of study he became a profound scholar in the Rabbinical Hebrew and a master of the Targum, Talmud, the Rabboth and the book of Zohar, with their ancient commentaries. He was a prolific writer as is attested by his *Body of Divinity*, his *Commentary on the Bible* and many other works.

Toplady, who was his intimate friend, gives the following just estimate of him:

If any man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. Gill. ... It would, perhaps, try the constitutions of half the literati in England, only to read with care and attention the whole of what he said. As deeply as human sagacity enlightened by grace could penetrate, he went to the bottom of every thing he engaged in. ... Perhaps no man, since the days of St. Austin, has written so largely in defense of the system of grace, and, certainly, no man has treated that momentous subject, in all its branches, more closely, judiciously and successfully.

He was also a great controversialist as well as a great scholar. On this subject Toplady adds:

What was said of Edward the Black Prince, that he never fought a battle that he did not win; what has been remarked of the great Duke of Marlborough, that he never undertook a siege which he did not carry, may be justly accommodated to our great philosopher and divine.

Toplady further says:

So far as the doctrines of the gospel are concerned, Gill never besieged an error which he did not force from its strongholds; nor did he ever encounter an adversary to truth whom he did not baffle and subdue. His doctrinal and practical writings will live and be admired, and be a standing blessing to posterity, when their opposers are forgotten, or only remembered by the refutations he has given them. While true religion and sound learning have a single friend remaining in the British Empire, the works and name of John Gill will be precious and revered.

With all of his learning, while he did not intend it, he fell little short of supralapsarianism. He did not invite sinners to the Saviour, while preaching condemnation, and asserted that he ought not to interfere with the elective grace of God. When his towering influence and learning are taken into account, some estimate may be formed of the withering effect of such a system of theology.

There were forces at work, already which meant a revolution in Baptist affairs. These forces were finally to culminate in the great foreign mission work of Carey. The preaching of Wesley and Whitefield had profoundly stirred the nation. The Arminian theology of Wesley was opposed by Toplady and Gill, nevertheless the people felt a great quickening power. It may properly be said that while the Arminian theology could not withstand the sledge-hammer blows of Gill, the result was that practical religion resolved itself into a matter of holy living rather than into a system of divinity.

Dr. Gill was succeeded in the pastorate by Dr. John Rippon. Rippon filled the same pastorate as Gill had done in London for sixty-three years, or until 1832. His preaching was full of affection and power. He compiled a hymn book and founded the *Baptist Annual Register*, a monthly, from 1790 to 1802. In 1809 *The Baptist Magazine* was established. These were the first distinct Baptist newspapers. During the Commonwealth several newspapers, such as *The Faithful Post*, *The Faithful Scout*, *Murcurius Politicus*, and others, had Baptist editors and contributors, but they were political rather than religious papers. The Baptists, previous to the founding of *The Baptist Magazine*, had maintained a friendly correspondence in the columns of the *Evangelical Magazine*. This was unsatisfactory. On account of controverted points which

needed ample discussion and the growing importance of the mission work in India, Booth, Ryland, and others, felt a Baptist periodical was imperative. The Baptists were likewise active in writing books and pamphlets. Among such books was the famous *Pedobaptism Examined* by Abraham Booth.

Booth was for thirty-seven years pastor of the Prescott street Church, London. He was a prolific writer, and was justly reputed as one of the greatest scholars of his day. His *Grace Abounding* is to-day read with delight. Dr. Newman, a personal friend, says of him:

As a divine he was a star of the first magnitude, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist denomination to which he belonged. Firm in his attachment to his religious principles, he despised the popular cant about charity, and cultivated genuine candor, which is alike remote from the laxity of latitudinarians and the censoriousness of bigots.

Another movement which must have had a beneficial effect upon the Baptists was prison reform under John Howard. He was born September 2, 1726. At first he was a Congregationalist, but later became a Baptist. He was made sheriff of Bedfordshire. He visited the prison where Bunyan was incarcerated for twelve years. Everything in it was shocking, and appealed to his whole humanity to remove the horrid evils that reigned all over the place. From that moment he seems to have concentrated himself to tight prison abuses and the powers of the plague throughout the world. How he traveled, how he suffered, how he labored with kings, emperors, empresses, parliaments, and governors of jails; how he gave his money to relieve oppressed prisoners and victims of the plague; how he risked his life times without number, it is not here possible to tell.

The eloquent Edmund Burke says of him: “He visited all Europe and the East, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur; nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depth of dungeons — to plunge into the infection of hospitals — to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain — to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt — to remember the forgotten — to attend to the neglected — to visit the forsaken, and to compare and to collate the distresses of men of all countries. His plan is original, and as full of genius as it is of humanity” (*Baptist Magazine*, IX. 54, 55. London, 1817).

It is sufficient to say that the name of Howard stands high above every other philanthropist to whom our race has given birth. The Howard Associations of all lands show the extent and duration of his fame.

At the time of his death he had long been a member of the Little Wild Street Baptist Church, London. The great prison reform movement had its origin in the imprisonment of a Baptist preacher and was carried out by another great Baptist. His funeral sermon was preached by the famous Dr. Samuel Stennett. Dr. Stennett, in that discourse, said of his friend:

Nor was he ashamed of those truths he heard stated, explained, and enforced in this place. He had made up his mind, as he said, upon his religious sentiments, and was not to be moved from his steadfastness by novel opinions obtruded on the world. Nor did he content himself with a bare profession of these divine truths. He entered into the spirit of the gospel, felt its power, and tasted its sweetness. You know, my friends, with what seriousness and devotion he attended, for a long course of years, on the worship of God among us. It would be scarcely decent for me to repeat the affectionate things he says, in a letter writ me from a remote part of the world, respecting the satisfaction and pleasure he had felt in the religious exercises of this place (Stennett, Works, III., 295. London, 1829).

The entire letter is printed in the same volume (p. 459). In it he expresses his adherence to the faith. He says:

But, Sir, the principal reason of my writing is most sincerely to thank you for the many, many pleasant hours I have had in reviewing the notes I have taken of the Sermons I had the happiness to hear under your ministry; these, Sir, with many of your petitions in prayer, have been, and are, the songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

With unabated pleasure I have attended your ministry; no man ever entered more into my religious sentiments, or more happily expressed them. It ever was some little disappointment when any one occupied your pulpit; oh, Sir, how many Sabbaths have I ardently longed to spend in Wild Street; on those days I generally rest, or if at sea, keep retired in my little cabin. It is you that preach; and I bless God I attend with renewed pleasure; God in Christ is my rock, the portion of my soul. I have little more to add, but, accept my renewed thanks.

There was another great force working for the betterment of the Baptist denomination. It was represented by Andrew Fuller. He was born February 6, 1754. His spiritual struggles if less interesting than John Bunyan were equally deep. He was long under conviction. He says of himself:

In March, 1770, I witnessed the baptizing of two young persons, having never seen that ordinance administered before, and was considerably affected by what I saw and heard. The solemn immersion of a person, on a profession of faith in Christ, carried such a conviction with it, that I wept like a child on the occasion. ... I was fully persuaded that this was the primitive way of baptizing, and that every Christian was bound to attend to this institution of

our blessed Lord. About a month after this I was baptized myself, and joined the church at Soham, being then turned of sixteen years (Fuller, Works, I. 7).

October, 1783, he became pastor at Bettering, and there he spent the remainder of his useful life. He was a determined opponent of error in all forms. He entered the lists “a mere Shamgar, as it might seem, entering the battle-field with but an ox-goad against the mailed errorists of his island,” but he produced an impression that his enemies could not overcome. In appearance he was “tall, broad-shouldered, and firmly set. His hair was parted in the middle, the brow square and of fair height, the eyes deeply set, overhung with large bushy eyebrows. The whole face had a massive expression.”

The man who encountered him generally bore the marks of a bludgeon. He was the determined foe of hyper-Calvinism. He said in his strong way “had matters gone on but a few years the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill.” His work entitled: “The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation: or, The Obligation of Men fully to credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known; wherein is considered the Nature, of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of those where the Gospel comes in that matter,” was an epoch making book.

The book provoked a controversy, but the result of the controversy was that it cleared the ground and opened up the way for the preaching of the gospel to the whole world. Fuller became the first great Missionary Secretary of modern times.

Dr. Joseph Belcher gives the following description and estimate of him:

Imagine a tall and somewhat corpulent man, with gait and manners, though heavy and unpolished, not without dignity, ascending the pulpit to address his fellow mortals on the great themes of life and salvation. His authoritative look and grave deportment claim your attention. You could not be careless if you would; and you would have no disposition to be so, even if you might. He commences his sermon, and presents to you a plan, combining in a singular manner the topical and textual methods of preaching, and proceeds to illustrate his subject, and enforce its claim on your regard. You are struck with the clearness of his statements; every text is held up before your view so as to become transparent; the preacher has clearly got the correct sense of the passage, and you wonder that you never saw it before as he now presents it; he proceeds, and you are surprised at the power of his argument, which appears to be irresistible. You are melted by his pathos, and seem to have found a man in whom are united the clearness of Barrow, the scriptural theology of Owen, an” the subduing tenderness of Baxter and Flavel.

Andrew Fuller was providentially raised up at a period when coldness benumbed some parts of the Christian church, and errors obscured the glory of others. Untaught in the schools, he had to work his way through all kinds

of difficulty; to assume the attitude of a controversialist even against his own section of the church, as well as against the enemies of the common faith; and to contend against prejudices of every sort, that truth might spread, and Christian zeal be roused into action. The wonder rather is, that one short life should have accomplished so much, than so little was effected (Fuller, Works, I. 107 note).

This missionary movement really began in 1784 in a conference for prayer established by Carey. Only two years previous to this date Carey and Fuller became acquainted; when the latter, “a round headed, rustic looking” young man preached “On being men in Understanding” and heard him read a circular letter at the association on “The Grace of Hope.” Carey had fasted all day “because he had not a penny to buy a dinner.” He enjoyed the sermon and the two men became fast friends.

At a meeting held in Kettering, October 2, 1792, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and the first collection for its treasury amounting to £13 2s 6d, was taken up. Mr. Fuller was appointed the first Secretary, and while others nobly aided, Andrew Fuller was substantially the Society till he reached the realms of glory. Speaking of the mission to India, he says:

Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, “Well, I will go down if you will hold the rope.” But before he went down he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, that while “ice lived, we should *never* let go the rope” (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, IV. 529).

Carey perhaps had the greatest facility of learning languages of any man who ever lived. In seven years he learned Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and Dutch. Carey and Thomas, a Baptist surgeon of India, were appointed missionaries. They first attempted to sail in the Earl of Oxford, but were prevented by the East India Company. Carey finally sailed in the Danish East Indianman, the Kron Princessa Maria, June 13, 1793.

On his missionary work in India it is not necessary, in this place, to linger. He prepared grammars, dictionaries and most of all translated the Scriptures. Of his books it is said:

The versions of the Sacred Scriptures, in the preparation of which he took an active and laborious part, including Sanscrit, Hindu, Brijbhassa, Mahratta, Bengali, Oriya, Telinga, Karnata, Maldivian, Gurajatee, Bulooche, Pushtoo, Punjabi, Kashmeer, Assam, Burman, Pali, or Magudba, Tamul, Cingalese, Armenian, Malay, Hindostani, and Persian. In six of these tongues the whole Scriptures have been translated and circulated; the New Testament has

appeared in 23 languages, besides various dialects in which smaller portions of the sacred text have been printed. In thirty years Carey and his brethren rendered the Word of God accessible to onethird of the world.

Even that is not all; before Carey died 212,000 copies of the Scriptures were issued from Serampore in forty different languages, the tongues of 330,000,000 of the human family. Dr. Carey was the greatest tool maker for missionaries that ever labored for God. His versions are used to-day by all denominations of Christians throughout India.

Carey, Marshman and Ward gave during their stay in India nearly \$400,000.00 for the spread of the gospel. Frederick VI, of Denmark, sent them a gold medal as a token of appreciation for their labors. At the death of Carey the learned societies of Europe passed the most flattering resolutions.

Dr. Southey says of Carey, Marshman and Ward:

These low-born, low-bred mechanics have done more to spread the knowledge of the Scriptures among the heathen than has been accomplished, or even attempted, by all the world beside.

William Wilberforce said in the House of Commons of Carey:

He had the genius as well as the benevolence to devise the plan of a society for communicating the blessings of Christian light to the natives of India. To qualify himself for this truly noble enterprise he had resolutely applied himself to the study of the learned languages; and after making considerable proficiency in them, applied himself to several of the oriental tongues, and more especially to the Sanscrit, in which his proficiency is acknowledged to be greater than that of Sir (William Jones, or any other European.

With the defeat of Antinomianism, and under the impulse of the missionary propaganda, there was a renewed desire to read and study the Bible. With this there began another movement which was destined to exercise the most beneficial influence upon the human race in every part of the globe. Towards the close of the eighteenth century a great want of Welsh Bibles was felt by ministers of religion in that country. Few families were in possession of a single copy of the Holy Scriptures. So urgent was the need, of a supply, that the Rev. Thomas Charles came to London to place the matter before some religious people. Having been introduced to the committee of the Religious Tract Society, of which Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist Minister was Secretary, that there might be a similar dearth in other parts of the country, and that it would be desirable to form a society for the express purpose of circulating the Scriptures. Inquiries were made throughout England, as well as upon the Continent, and it was found that the people everywhere were destitute of the

Bible. The result was the formation of The British and Foreign Bible Society. Mr. Hughes was elected secretary.

“I am thankful for my intimacy with him,” said his friend Leifchild. “My esteem of him always grew with my intercourse. I never knew a more consistent, correct, and unblemished character. He was not only sincere, but without offense, and adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. His mind was full of information, singularly instructive, and very edifying; and while others talked of candor and moderation, he exemplified them” (Leifchild, Memoir of the Rev. J. Hughes, 143).

Mr. Hughes prepared a prize essay on: “The Excellency of the Holy Scriptures, an Argument for their more General Dispersion.” The circulation of this essay led to the formation of the Society, May 4, 1804, at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. Mr. Hughes originated the Society, gave it a name, and became its first secretary. At this meeting it was agreed:

(1) A Society shall be formed with this designation, The British and Foreign Bible Society, of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider dispersion of the Holy Scriptures.

(2) This Society shall add its endeavors to those employed by other Societies for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions, and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, and Pagan, &c.

The institution was thus established and. more than seven hundred pounds were subscribed for its maintenance. The first historian, John Owen, says:

Thus terminated the proceedings of this extraordinary day, a day memorable in the experience of all who participated in the transactions by which it was signalized; a day to which posterity will look back, as giving to the world, and that in times of singular perturbation and distress, an institution for diffusing, on the grandest scale, the tidings of peace and salvation; a day which will be recorded as peculiarly honorable to the character of Great Britain, and as fixing an important epoch in the history of mankind (Owen, *The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, I. 16, 17. London, 1816).

The institution of Sunday Schools also dates from this period. It was the year 1780 that Robert Raikes, the proprietor and editor of the *Gloucester Journal*, had his attention drawn to the ignorance and depravity of the children of Gloucester. The streets of the lower part of the town, he was informed, were filled on Sunday with “multitudes of these wretches, released on that day from employment, spent their time in noise and riot, playing at chinck, and cursing and swearing.” Raikes at once conceived the idea of employing persons to



teach these children on Sunday. The idea was carried into execution, and at the end of three years he wrote to a friend:

It is now three years since we began; and I wish you were here, to make inquiry into the effect. A woman who lives in a lane, where I had fixed a school, told me, some time ago, that the place was quite a heaven on Sundays, compared with what it use to be. The numbers who have learned to read, and say their catechism, are so great that I am astonished at it. Upon the Sunday afternoon the mistresses take their scholars to church, — a place into which neither they nor their ancestors ever entered with a view to the glory of God (Watson, History of the Sunday School Union, 5, 6).

The school of Raikes was not a Sunday School, but a school which taught reading and catechism of the Church of England and marched the children to Church on Sunday. Mr. Raikes does not appear to have expected that his system would be generally adopted. William Fox, a Baptist deacon, of London, had the honor of giving universality to the Sunday School. He became interested in the movement and proposed the Sunday School Society. "I am full of admiration at the great," writes Mr. Raikes to Mr. Fox, "and the noble design of the society you speak of forming. If it were possible that my poor abilities could be rendered in any degree useful to you, point out the subject, and you will find me not inactive" (*Baptist Magazine*, XIX. 251. London, 1827). The Sunday School Society, which has been of such signal use in England, was organized in the Prescott Street Baptist Church, London, September 7, 1785. Fox placed the Sunday School under voluntary instead of paid teachers, and had the Bible taught instead of secular studies. The modern Sunday School in its development originated with a Baptist.

It has sometimes been said that on account of their opposition to infant baptism the position of the Baptists included a harsh attitude toward the young. But they are not indifferent to the conversion of their children. The covenants of Baptist churches as far back as they can be traced, pledge each member to bring up his offspring in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This was manifested in the lives of these English Baptists. Benjamin Keach (born 1640) suffered at the pillory by order of the judges for writing and publishing a book entitled "The Child's Instructor," and he was placed in prison for two months and forced to pay a fine of one hundred pounds. He was converted at eighteen and was pastor in London at the age of twenty-eight. John Gill (born 1697), the great commentator, was converted when he was twelve years of age, and at twenty-three was the successor of Keach. John Rippon (born 1751), the successor of Gill, was converted when he was sixteen, was a licensed preacher in Bristol College when he was seventeen, and was chosen to succeed the great Gill at twenty years of age. John Ryland (born 1755) was converted when he was fourteen and ordained when he was eighteen. Joseph Stennett (born 1692),

was converted at fifteen and was ordained as pastor of Little Wild Street when he was twenty-two. Samuel Stennett (born 1727), son and successor of the above, was converted and baptized when he was quite young. Robert Hall (born 1764), was converted at nine years of age, began to preach at fifteen and was assistant pastor of Broadmead Church, Bristol, before he reached his majority. Andrew Fuller (born 1754) was converted at fourteen years of age, baptized at sixteen, and ordained at twenty-one." This list of distinguished Baptist preachers, converted when young, could be indefinitely extended.

Out of the same general awakening Stepney College, now Regents Park College, owes its origin. Its foundation is due entirely to Abraham Booth. No institution has done more service for the Baptists of England than has this one. For more than thirty years the celebrated Joseph Angus was its president. He was a profound scholar, a forceful writer and a member of the Committee that Revised the New Testament. At the age of twenty-two he was pastor of the church honored by the ministrations of Dr. Gill and Rippon, and that was in later days to receive additional fame from the ministry of Charles H. Spurgeon. The work of Revision occupied much of his best thought and labor for ten years (1870-1880), and to the enthusiasm which so congenial a task inspired was added the delight of intercourse with scholars from almost every section of the religious community. He was always distinctively a Baptist.

Besides Bristol and Midland Colleges, the foundation of which have already been mentioned, the Baptists of England have Rawdon College, A.D. 1804, the Pastors College, 1861, and Manchester College, 1866.

English Baptists have abounded in able authors. Note can be made of only two or three here. John Foster was a writer of essays. Sir James Mackintosh declares that he was "one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced." Aubrey, in his "Rise of the English Nation" makes this reference to John Foster: "The *Eclectic Review* for a length of time swayed literary and political opinions; mainly through the splendid articles, nearly 200 in number, contributed by John Foster. His famous essays showed their author to be, according to Mackintosh, one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced. His "Life and Correspondence" by Ryland ranks among the classics. No song book would be complete that did not contain "Blest be the tie," by John Fawcett; and "How Firm a Foundation," by George Keith.

The English Baptists have always had able, cultured and eloquent preachers. They have produced three of the greatest preachers of all time. Robert Hall has been pronounced the greatest preacher that ever used the English tongue. And no generation will forget Charles H. Spurgeon and Alexander Maclaren.

## **BOOKS FOR FURTHER REFERENCE:**

The Works of Andrew Fuller, John Gill, John Rippon, John Foster, Abraham Booth, Charles H. Spurgeon, Alexander Maclaren, etc., etc.

## CHAPTER 21 — THE ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

The Date of the First Baptists in America Uncertain — Many of the Early Settlers Baptists — Cotton Mather — Plymouth — Roger Williams and Samuel Howe — The Fear of Anabaptism — A Disturbance on Account of Immersion — Governor Winthrop — Governor Bradford — A Debate on Baptism — President Chauncey — Scituate — The Lathrop Church — Henry Dunster — Hanserd Knollys — The General Court of Massachusetts Takes Part — Weymouth — Lady Moody — Painter — Persecutions — Roger Williams — At Salem — At Providence — The Form of His Baptism Immersion — Richard Scott — William Coddington — Williams Himself Testifies Joseph B. Felt — George P. Fisher — Philip Schaff — William Separates From the Baptists — Apostolic Succession — The Baptists do not Derive Their Baptism From Williams — The First Democracy — The Provisions For the Charter of Rhode Island — Religious Liberty — Arnold — Hough — Bancroft — Judge Story — Gervinus — Straus — The Persecutions of the Baptists in Massachusetts — John Clark — Obadiah Holmes — Virginia a Battle Ground for Freedom — Severe Laws — Sir W. Berkeley — The Destruction of the Establishment — The Testimony of Hawks — James Madison — Thomas Jefferson — Bishop Meade — George P. Fisher Sums up the Case — The Revolutionary War — William Pitt — Fox — Burke — Robert Ryland — No Tories Among the Baptists — The Continental Congress — The Philadelphia Association — A Memorial to Congress — The Baptists in the Army — The Chaplains — James Manning — John Hart — Thomas Jefferson — John Leland — Safeguarding the Liberty of the Land — The First Amendment to the Constitution — The Eulogy of the Baptists by George Washington.

THE exact date of the arrival of the first Baptists in America, and their names are uncertain. There are traces of immersion and the rejection of infant baptism at an early date. Governor Winslow wrote of the Baptists, in 1646, "We have some living among us, nay, some of our churches, of that judgment." Cotton Mather states that "many of the first settlers of Massachusetts wore Baptists, and they were as holy and watchful and faithful and heavenly people as any, perhaps in the world" (Mather, *Magnalia*, II. 459). He further says:

Some few of these people have been among the Planters in New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our churches, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinions unto themselves. But at length it came to pass, that while some of our *churches* used it, it may be, a little too much of *cogency* towards their brethren, which would weakly turn their hacks when *infants* were brought forth to be *baptized*, in the congregation, there were some of these brethren who in a day of

temptation broke forth into *schismatical practices*, that were justly offensive unto all of the churches in this wilderness (Ibid, II. 459. Hartford, 1820).

Speaking of these statements of Mather the Baptist historian Crosby says: “So that Antipaedobaptism is as ancient in those parts as Christianity itself” (Crosby, I. 111).

Baptist views were broached at Plymouth. Roger Williams came in 1631. He had attended the preaching of Samuel Howe, the Baptist preacher in London who practised immersion. Williams himself paid a high tribute to Howe. It is not certain that Williams, at this time, had fully adopted Baptist principles. “When it is recollected,” says Ivimey, “that so early as the year 1615, the Baptists in England pleaded for liberty of conscience as the right of all Christians, in their work entitled, ‘Persecution judged and condemned:’ — and this appears to have been the uniform sentiment of the denomination at large, and that Mr. Williams was very intimate with them at a very early period, which is evident from the manner in which he speaks of Mr. Samuel Howe of London: It is highly probably that these principles which rendered him such a blessing to America and the world were first maintained and taught by the English Baptists (Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, I. 219, 220).

It is probable that Williams already believed in immersion and rejected infant baptism. In 1633 he was “already inclined to the opinions of the Anabaptists” (Publications of the Narragansett Club, I. 14). For on requesting his dismissal to Salem in the autumn of 1633, Elder Brewster persuaded the Plymouth Church to relinquish communion with him, lest he should “run the same course of rigid Separation and Anabaptistry which Mr. John Smith, the Se-Baptist of Amsterdam had done” (Publications of the Narragansett Club, I. 17). Anabaptism was a spectre which haunted the imaginations of the early American settlers. The word possessed a mysterious power of inspiring terror, and creating odium. It “can be made the symbol of all that is absurd and execrable, so that the very sound of it shall irritate the passions of the multitude, as dogs have been taught to bark, at the name of a neighboring tyrant.”

William Gammell, after stating the immersion of Roger Williams, further says:

The very mention of the name of Anabaptism called up a train of phantoms, that never failed to excite the apprehensions of the early Puritans. Hence it was, that when Mr. Brewster suggested even the remotest association of Roger Williams with this heresy, the church at Plymouth was easily induced to grant the dismissal which he had requested. A considerable number of its members, however, who had become attached to his ministry were also dismissed at the same time, and removed with him to Salem (Gammell, Life of Roger Williams, 27. In Sparks’ American Biography, IV).

There was an Anabaptist taint about Plymouth. There is therefore this singular circumstance that the Rev. Charles Chauncy, who was an Episcopal clergyman and brought with him the doctrine of immersion, made for Plymouth. Felt says he arrived "a few days before the great earthquake on the 1st of June," 1638.

The account of the disturbance on account of immersion is related by two governors who were eye witnesses. Governor Winthrop of the Colony of Massachusetts, under date of 1639, says:

Our neighbors of Plymouth had procured from hence, this year, one Mr. Chancey, a great scholar, and a godly man, intending to call him to the office of a teacher; but before the fit time came, he discovered his judgment about baptism, that the children ought to be dipped and not sprinkled; and, he being an active man, and very vehement, there arose much trouble about it. The magistrates and the other elders there, and most of the people, withstood the receiving of that practice, not for itself so much, as for fear of worse consequences, as the annihilation of our baptism, &c. Whereupon the church there wrote to all the other churches both here and in Connecticut, &c., for advice, and sent Mr. Chancey's arguments. The churches took them into consideration, and returned their several answers, wherein they showed their dissent from him, — and clearly confuted all his arguments, discovering withal some great mistakes of his about the judgment and practice of antiquity (Winthrop, History of New England, I. 330, 331).

Governor Bradford of Plymouth Colony took up the matter likewise and showed that not only Chauncy was an immersionist but that the whole of New England was agitated on the subject of immersion. Thus there is the record of two governors on the subject. Governor Bradford says:

I had forgotten to insert in its place how ye church here had Invited and sent for Mr. Charles Chansey, a reverend, godly and very learned man, intending upon triall to chose him pastor of ye church hear, for ye more comfortable performance of ye ministrie with Mr. John Reinor, the teacher of ye same. But ther fell out some difference aboute baptising, he holding that it ought only to be by dipping, and putting ye whole body under water, and that sprinkling was unlawful. The church yeilded that immersion, or dipping, was lawful, but in this could countrie not so conveniente. But they could not nor durst not yeeld to him in this, that sprinkling (which all ye churches of Christ doe for ye most parte at this day) was unlawfull & humane invention, as ye same was prest; but they were willing to yeel to him as far as they could, & to the utmost; and were contented to suffer him to practise as he was perswaded; and when he came to minister that ordinance he might so doe it to any yt did desire it in yt way, provided he could peacably suffer Mr. Reinor, and such as desired to have theirs otherwise baptized by him, by sprinkling or powering on of water upon them; so ther might be no disturbance in ye church hereaboute. But he said he could not yeeld hereunto. Upon which the church procured some other ministers to dispute ye pointe with him publickly; as Mr.

Ralfe Patrick, of Duxberie, also some other ministers within this governmente. But he was not satisfied; so ye church sent to many other churches to crave their help and advise in this matter, and with his will & consente, sent them his arguments written under his owne hand. They sente them to ye church at Boston in ye Bay of Massachusetts, to be communicated with other churches ther. Also they sent the same to ye churches of Conightecutt and New-Haven, with sundrie others; and received very able & sufficient answers, as they conceived, from them and their larned ministers, who all concluded against him. But himself was not satisfied therwth. Their answers are too large hear to relate. They conceived ye church had done what was meete in ye things, so Mr. Chansey having been ye most parte 3 years here, removed himself to Sityate, wher he now remains a minister to ye church ther (Bradford, Of Plimoth Plantation, 382, 384).

This was the first debate on the American continent on the subject of immersion. This was possibly before there was a Baptist church in this country, certainly before there was more than one, namely, the First Providence. The whole of New England was agitated on the subject of immersion.

The Church at Boston and other churches returned answers (Bradford, History of New England, I.). As much as Chauncy was admired at Plymouth the church did not employ him on account of his views on the subject of immersion. This is set forth by Hooker in a letter to his son-in-law, Shepherd, November 2, 1640. He says:

I have of late had intelligence from Plymouth. Mr. Chauncy and the church are to part, he to provide for himself, and they for themselves. At the day of fast, when a full conclusion of the business should have been made, he openly professed he did as verily believe the truth of his opinion as that there was a God in heaven, and that he was as settled in it as that the earth was upon the center. If such confidence find success I miss my mark. Mr. Humphrey, I hear, invites him to providence, and that coast is moat meet for his opinions and practice (Felt, Ecclesiastical History, I. 443).

It will be seen from this letter of Hooker's that Mr. Chauncy was invited on leaving Plymouth to go to Providence, for "that coast is most meet for his opinions and practice." That is to say the Providence men believed in immersion. It cannot mean anything else since Chauncy still believed in infant baptism. This is perfectly plain for Felt says of Chauncy, July 7, 1642:

Chauncy at Scituate still adheres to his practice of immersion. He had baptized two of his own children in this way. A women of his congregation who had a child of three years old, and wished it to receive such an ordinance, was fearful that it might be too much frightened by being dipped as some had been. She desired a letter from him, recommending her to the Boston church, so that she might have the child sprinkled. He complied and the rite was

accordingly administered (Felt, Ecclesiastical History, I. 497. See also Winthrop, History of New England, II. 72).

So there was no difference between the Providence men and Chauncy on the form of baptism. So Chauncy settled at Scituate. But the practice of dipping had long been known in that town. In 1634 after Spilsbury had drawn out of the Jacob Church, in London, and he was in the practice of dipping, Lathrop, then pastor of that church and some of his followers, removed from London, and settled at Scituate, Massachusetts. Even after the removal the old question of immersion would not down. Deane, who was an able historian and editor of the publications of the Massachusetts Historical Society, says:

Controversy respecting the mode of baptism had been agitated in Mr. Lathrop's church before he left England, and a part had separated from him, and established the first Baptist (Calvinistic) church in England in 1633. Those that came seem not all to have been settled on this point, and they found others in Scituate ready to sympathize with them.

Lathrop remained in Scituate till 1639. The immersion trouble still pursued him, and in 1639 he and the portion of the church that practised sprinkling, who were in the minority, removed to Barnstable. Deane further says that a majority of those left in Scituate believed in immersion, but "nearly half the church were resolute in not submitting to that mode." One party "held to infant sprinkling; another to adult immersion exclusively; and a third, of which was Hr. Chauncy, to immersion of infants as well as adults." So when Chauncy came to Scituate he found a people of his own mode of thinking.

Dr. Henry S. Burrage asks:

How came Mr. Chauncy to hold such an opinion, if immersion was unknown among the Baptists of England until 1641? And certainly if Mr. Chauncy in 1638 rejected sprinkling and insisted upon immersion as scriptural baptism, why may not Roger Williams and his associates at Providence have done the same in the following year? [or the year before].

Not only did all the churches consider and respond to the appeal of the Plymouth church to its position on the question of immersion, but almost every man who could wield a pen, seems to have used it against the prevailing Anabaptist errors. John Lathrop, in 1644, published "A Short Form of Catechisme of the Doctrine of Baptisme. In use in these Times that are so full of Questions". In the same year, Thomas Sheppard went to press, urged by the "increase of the Anabaptists, rigid Separatists, Antinomians and Familsts." In 1645, George Phillips, of Watertown; in 1647, John Cotton of Boston and Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich; in 1648, Thomas Cobbett, of Lynn; and in 1649, Thomas Hooker, all published treatises dealing with the question of baptism and its proper candidates, and aimed at the Anabaptists, 'in which the severest



epithets were employed. And these are but samples which have been preserved of a vigorous literature, called forth by the supposed exigencies of the times” (King, *The Baptism of Roger Williams*, 52. Providence, 1897).

In 1654 Chauncy was elected President of Harvard University. Consistent with his former position, he still held to immersion. Pierce, the historian of Harvard, says:

The town to which President Dunster retired after his resignation had the singular fortune to supply the college with a successor in the person of the Rev. Charles Chauncy. He “was of the contrary extreme as to baptism from his predecessor; it being his judgment not only to admit infants to baptism, but to wash or dip them all over” (Pierce, *History of Harvard University*, 18. Cambridge, 1833).

The third pastor of Scituate was Henry Dunster. He was the first President of Harvard. He came to America in 1640 and was immediately elected President of the College. Hubbard says of him:

Under whom, that which was before but at best *schola illustra*, grew to the stature and perfection of a College, and flourished in the profession of all liberal sciences for many years.

And Prince says:

For a further improvement it (*The New England Psalm Book*) was committed to the Rev. Mr. Henry Dunster, president of Harvard College; one of the great masters of the oriental languages, that hath been known in these ends of the earth (Prince, *Preface to New England Psalm Book*).

He had brought the College to the highest standard of usefulness. He was present in Boston at the trial of Clarke, Holmes and Crandall for worshipping God. He had long had scruples on the subject of infant baptism and now he was convinced that it was wrong. He boldly preached against the same in the church at Cambridge. This greatly frustrated Mr. Jonathan Mitchell, the pastor of the church. He said:

I had a strange experience; I found hurrying and pressing suggestions against paedobaptism, and injected scruples and thoughts whether the other way might not be right, and infant baptism an invention of men, and whether I might with good conscience baptize children, and the like. And these thoughts were darted in with some impression, and left a strange confusion and sickliness upon my spirit (Mitchell’s *Life*, 69, 70).

This action against infant baptism, in 1653, forced his resignation as President of Harvard. Quincy, the historian of Harvard, says:

Dunster's usefulness however was deemed to be at an end and his services no longer desirable, in consequence of his falling in 1653, as Cotton Mather expresses it, "into the briars of anti-paedobaptism," and of having borne "public testimony in the church at Cambridge against the administration of baptism to any infant whatever" ... Indited by the grand jury for disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism on the Cambridge church, sentenced to a public admonition on lecture day, and laid under bonds for good behaviour, Dunster's martyrdom was consummated by being compelled In October, 1654, to resign his office as President (Quincy, History of Harvard University, I. 15-18).

He now goes to Scituate as pastor and Chauncy went to Harvard as President. Thus did Baptist sentiments prevail. The opposition was strongest against their views of infant sprinkling.

Hanserd Knollys arrived in Boston, in 1638, and in a brief time moved to Dover, then called Piscataway, New Hampshire. There has been much dispute as to whether he was at the time a Baptist. He died September 19, 1691. On his return to England in 1641 he was certainly a Baptist. Mather, who was a contemporary, and evidently acquainted with his opinions in America says he was a Baptist. He says:

I confess there were some of these persons whose names deserve to live In our book for their *piety*, although their particular opinions were each as to be disserviceable unto the declared and supposed interests of our churches. Of these there were some godly Anabaptists; as namely Mr. Hanserd Knollys (whom one of his adversaries called *Absurd Knowles*), of Dover, who afterwards moved back to London, lately died there a good man, in a good old age (Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, I. 243. Hartford, 1855).

However that is he was apparently pastor of a mixed congregation of Pedobaptists and Baptists at Dover. There was nothing strange about this for even Isaac Backus, the Baptist historian, was once pastor of such a church before he became a regular Baptist. There was soon in the church a disturbance on the subject of infant baptism. Mr. Leckford, an Episcopalian, visited Dover in April, 1641, and he describes a controversy between Mr. Knollys and a ministerial opponent about baptism and church membership. "They two," says he, "fell out about baptizing children, receiving of members, etc." The Baptists, taught by Knollys, in order to escape persecution removed, in 1641, to Long Island. After Long Island fell into the power of the Episcopalians they moved again to New Jersey and called their third home Piscataway. This has long been a flourishing Baptist church.

Manifestly the Anabaptist peril was regarded as great so the General Court of Massachusetts, March 3, 1636, ordered:

That all persons are to take notice that this Court doth not, nor will hereafter, approve of any such companies of men as shall henceforth join in any pretended way of church fellowship, without they shall first acquaint the magistrate and the elders of the greater part of the churches in this jurisdiction with their intentions, and have their approbation therein. And further it is ordered, that no person being a member of any such church which shall hereafter be gathered without the approbation of the magistrates and the greater part of the said churches, shall be admitted to the freedom of this commonwealth (Massachusetts Records).

In 1639, it seems, there was an attempt to found a Baptist church at Weymouth, a town about fourteen miles southeast of Boston. This was frustrated by interposing magistrates. The crime charged was:

That only baptism was the door of entrance into the visible church; the common sort of people did eagerly embrace his opinion (Lenthal), and labored to get such a church on foot, as all baptized ones might communicate in, without any further trial of them (Massachusetts Records).

John Smith, John Spur, Richard Sylvester, Ambrose Morton, Thomas Makepeace, and Robert Lenthal, were the principal promoters of the design. They were all arraigned before the General Court at Boston, March 13, 1639, where the most of them were fined (Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, I. 356. Boston, 1813).

The same year in which Mr. Chauncy came over, a female of considerable distinction, whom Governor Winthrop calls Lady Moody, and who, according to the account of that statesman and historian, was a wise, amiable, and religious woman, “was taken with the error of denying baptism to infants” (Winthrop, II. 123, 124). She had purchased a plantation at Lynn, ten miles Northeast of Boston, of one Humphrey, who had returned to England. She belonged to the church in Salem, to which she was near, where she was dealt with by many of the elders and others; but persisting in her error, and to escape the storm which she saw gathering over her head, she removed to Long Island and settled among the Dutch. “Many others infested with Anabaptism removed thither also.” Eleven years after Mrs. Moody’s removal (1651), Messrs. Clarke, Holmes, and Crandall, went to visit some Baptists at Lynn, by the request of an aged brother. This circumstance makes it probable, that although many Anabaptists went off with this lady, yet there were some left behind (Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, I. 358).

In 1644, we are informed by Mr. Hubbard, that “a poor man, by the name of Painter, was suddenly turned Anabaptist, and having a child born would not suffer his wife to carry it to be baptized. He was complained of for this to the court, and enjoined by them to suffer his child to be baptized. But poor Painter had the misfortune to dissent from the church and the court. He told them that

infant baptism was an antichristian ordinance, for which he was tied up and whipt. He bore his chastisement with fortitude, and declared that he had divine help to support him. The same author who records this narrative, intimates that this poor sufferer, “was a man of very loose behavior at home.” This accusation was altogether a matter of course; it need no further facts to substantiate it; for was it possible for a poor Anabaptist to be a holy man? Governor Winthrop tells us he belonged to Hingham, and says he was whipt “for reproaching the Lord’s ordinance” (Winthrop, II. 174, 175). Upon which Mr. Backus judicially enquires: “Did not they who whipped this poor, conscientious man, reproach infant sprinkling, by taking such methods to support it, more than Painter did?” (Backus, I. 357, 358).

By this time Winthrop tells us the “Anabaptists increased and spread in Massachusetts” (Winthrop, II. 174). This is confirmed in many ways.

Thomas Hooker of Connecticut wrote to Thomas Sheppard of Cambridge as follows:

I like those Anabaptists and their opinion every day worse than the other ... unlesse you be very watchful you will have an army in the field before you know how to prepare or to oppose.

When John Wilson, the colleague of John Cotton, was near his end, he was asked for what sins the land had been visited by God’s judgments, and his answer was, “Separatism, Anabaptism and Korahism.”

Persecutions had begun against the Baptists in 1635, and were inflicted subsequently in the name of the law in many places, in Dorchester, Weymouth, Rehobeth, Salem, Watertown, Hingham, Dover, N.H., and Swampscott. So numerous were the offenders that on November 13, 1644, the General Court, passed a law for the suppression of the Baptists. The law was as follows:

Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully and often proved, that since the first rising of the Anabaptists, about one hundred years since, they have been the incendiaries of the commonwealths, and the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places where they have been, and that they who have held the baptizing of infants unlawful, have usually held other errors or heresies together therewith, though they have (as other heretics use to do) concealed the same till they spied out a fit advantage and opportunity to vent them, by way of question or scruple; and whereas divers of this kind have since our coming into New England appeared amongst ourselves, some whereof (as others before them) denied the ordinance of magistracy, and the lawfulness of making war, and others the lawfulness of magistrates, and their inspection into any breach of the first table; which opinions, if they should be connived at by us, are like to be increased amongst us, and so must necessarily bring guilt upon us, infection

and trouble to the churches, and hazard to the whole commonwealth; it is ordered and agreed, that if any person or persons, within this jurisdiction, shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, or shall deny the ordinance of magistracy, or their lawful right and authority to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to the court wilfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment (Backus, History of the Baptists in New England, I. 359, 360)

Speaking of this law, Hubbard, one of their own historians says:

But with what success is hard to say; all men being naturally Inclined to pity them that suffer, how much soever they are incensed against offenders in general. Natural conscience and the reverence of a Deity, that is deeply engraven on the hearts of all, make men more apt to favor them that suffer for religion, true or false (Massachusetts Records, 373).

The next year in March an effort was made at a General Court “for suspending (if not abolishing) a law against the Anabaptists the former year.” It did not prevail for “some were much afraid of the increase of Anabaptism. This was the reason why the greater part prevailed for the strict observation of the aforesaid laws, although peradventure a little moderation as to some cases might have done very well, if not better.”

Roger Williams was born about the year 1600. He was educated in the University of Cambridge under the patronage of the celebrated jurist, Sir Edward Coke. He was sorely persecuted by Archbishop Laud, and on that account he fled to America. He arrived in Boston, February, 1631. He was immediately invited to become pastor of that church, but he found that it was “an unseparated church” and he “durst not officiate to” it. The Salem church extended him an invitation to become pastor, but he was prevented from remaining in that charge by a remonstrance from Governor Bradford. He was gladly received at Plymouth, but he gave “vent ... to divers of his own singular opinions,” and he sought “to impose them upon others.”

Hence he returned to Salem in the Summer of 1633 with a number of persons who sympathized with his views; and in 1634 he became pastor of that church. There had already been a good deal of discussion on certain phases of infant baptism. He was finally banished from that colony in January, 1636. His radical tenets demanded the separation of the church and state, and that doctrine was unwholesome in Salem.

After many adventures in passing through the trackless forests in the midst of a terrific New England winter, he arrived in Providence with five others, in June

of the same year. In 1638 many Massachusetts Christians who had adopted Baptist views, and finding themselves subjected to persecution on that account, moved to Providence (Winthrop, *A History of New England*, I. 269). Most of these had been connected with Williams in Massachusetts and some of them were probably Baptists in England. Williams was himself well acquainted with Baptist views, and had already expounded soul liberty. Winthrop attributed Williams' Baptist views to Mrs. Scott, a sister of Ann Hutchinson. Williams was acquainted with the General Baptist view of a proper administrator of baptism, namely that two believers had the right to begin baptism. On his adoption of Baptist views, previous to March, 1639 (Winthrop says in 1638, I. 293), Williams was baptized by Ezekiel Holliman, and in turn Williams baptized Holliman and some ten others. At this time there was not a Baptist preacher in America unless Hanserd Knollys was such a man.

The form of baptism on the occasion was immersion (Newman, *A History of Baptist Churches in the United States*, 810. New York, 1894). In a footnote Dr. Newman says:

Contemporary testimony is unanimous in favor of the view that immersion was practised by Williams. As the fact is generally conceded, it does not seem worth while to quote the evidence.

That evidence is clear and explicit. Reference has already been made to the immersion views of Chauncy, and that on November 2, 1640, at Providence, "that coast is most meet for his opinion and practice."

In the person of Richard Scott there was an eye witness of the baptism of Roger Williams. He was also a Baptist at the time. He says:

I walked with him in the Baptists' way about three or four months, in which time he brake from the society, and declared at large the ground and reason of it; that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle. After that he set about a way of seeking (with two or three of them that had dissented with him) by way of preaching and praying; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three left him (Scott, *Letter in George Fox's answer to Williams*. Backus, *History of the Baptists of New England*, I. 88).

This was written thirty-eight years after the baptism of Williams. Scott had turned Quaker. There is no question that the "Baptists' way" was immersion; and there is no intimation that the Baptists had ever changed their method of baptizing.

There was another contemporary witness in the person of William Coddington. He had likewise turned Quaker and could not say too many things against Williams. In 1677 he wrote to his friend Fox, the Quaker, as follows:

I have known him about fifty years; a mere weathercock; constant only in inconsistency; poor man, that doth not know what should become of his soul, if this night it should be taken from him. ... One time for water baptism, men and women must be plunged into the water (Backus, History of the Baptists of New England, I. 333).

The testimony of Williams to the form of baptism is singularly clear. He declares that it is an immersion. In a tract which for a long time was supposed to be lost, "Christenings Make not Christians," 1645, he says:

Thirdly, for our *New-England* parts, I can speake uprightly and confidently, I know it to have been easie for myselfe, long ere this, to have brought many thousands of these Natives (the Indians), yea the whole country, to a far greater Antichristian conversion then was ever yet heard of in *America*. I have reported something in the Chapter of their Religion, how readily I could have brought the whole Country to have observed one day in seven; I adde to have received a *Baptisme* (or washing) though it were in *Rivers* (as the first *Christians* and the Lord Jesus himselfe did) to have come to a *stated church meeting*, maintained priests and forms of prayer, and the whole forme of antichristian worship in life and death (p. 11).

In a letter which is found among the Winthrop papers, dated Narragansett, November 10, 1649, Williams says:

At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clark and our Providence men about the point of new baptism, and the manner by dipping, and Mr. John Clark hath been there lately, (and Mr. Lucar), and hath dipped them. I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of the great Founder Christ Jesus, then any other practices of religion do (Publications of the Narragansett Club).

A great many Baptist writers could be quoted to prove that Williams practised immersion. A statement from a few Pedobaptist writers is sufficient.

Joseph B. Felt says:

Having become an Anabaptist, through the influence of a sister to Mrs. Hutchinson and wife to Richard Scott, he went to live at Providence the preceding year, Williams, as stated by Winthrop, was lately immersed. The person who performed this rite was Ezekiel Holliman, who had gone to reside there from Salem. Williams then did the same for him and ten others, and thus they formed a church (Felt, Ecclesiastical History of New England, I. 402).

Professor George P. Fisher, Yale University, says:

At Providence, in 1639, a layman named Holliman baptized him by immersion, and then Williams in turn baptized Holliman, and "some ten more." This was not a strange step, for Roger Williams had been anticipated in his favorite tenet of "soul liberty" by the Baptists, who were pioneers in the

assertion of the doctrine of religious freedom (Fisher, History of the Christian Church, 472).

Professor Fisher further says:

In 1638 Williams was immersed by an Anabaptist named Holliman and ten others. There was thus constituted the first Baptist church in America (Fisher, The Colonial Era, 123).

Dr. Philip Schaff says:

In 1638 he became a Baptist; he was immersed by Ezekiel Holliman and in turn immersed Holliman and ten others (Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, I. 851).

The act of baptism by immersion never seemed to trouble Williams. He had doubts in regard to any authorized administrator of baptism on account of the corruption in the world, there being no valid church. He continued only three or four months in connection with the Providence church, and then he departed from them and turned Seeker. Under this point Governor Winthrop, under date of June or July, 1639, says:

At Providence, matters went on after the old manner. Mr. Williams and many of his company, a few months since, were in all haste rebaptized, and denied communion with all others, and now he has come to question his second baptism, not being able to derive the authority of it from the apostles, otherwise than by the ministers of England, (whom he judged to be ill authority) so as he conceived God would raise up some apostolic power. Therefore he bent himself that way, expecting (as was supposed) to become an apostle; and having a little before, refused communion with all, save his own wife, now he would preach to and pray with all comers. Whereupon some of his followers left him and returned back from whence they went (Winthrop, I. 307).

Having been an Episcopalian, apostolic succession was the rock upon which he split. Cotton Mather says of him:

Upon the sentiment of the court, Mr. Williams with his party going abroad (as one says) to "seek their providences," removed into the Southern part of New England, where he, with a few of his own sect, settled a place called Providence. Then they proceeded not only into the *gathering* of a thing like a church, but into the renouncing of their *infant-baptism*; and at this further step, of *separation* they stopped not, but Mr. Williams quickly told them, "that being himself misled, he had led them likewise out of the way," he was now satisfied that there was none upon earth that could administer baptism, and so that their last baptism, as well as their first, was a *nullity*, for the want of a *called administrator*; he advised them thereupon to *forego* all, to *dislike* everything, and wait for the coming of a new apostle: whereupon they



dissolved themselves, and became that sort of sect that we term Seekers, &c. (Mather, *Magnalia*, I. 498).

A very curious sidelight is thrown on this subject by Hornius, a contemporary writer of Holland. There was a very close religious and political relation between Holland, England and America at this time. This Dutch writer (Georgii Hornii, *Historia Eccles. Ludg. Bat.*, 1665, p. 267) directly mentions Roger Williams, and traces the origin of "the Seekers" to America. As to the English Baptists, he bears a testimony of which their descendants need not be ashamed. He says: "That of the Anabaptists there were two classes. The first holding the Free Will and a community of goods, and denying the lawfulness of magistracy and infant baptism. Of these there were at that time in England few or none. The second class were orthodox in all but their denial of infant baptism."

As a matter of fact, he remained a Baptist in principle all of his life. Mather says "The church came to nothing." On this point there has been much debate, and the authorities are divided. The church has no records for more than one hundred years after 1639, they being probably burned in King Philip's War, and its history on this account is incomplete. Benedict admits that "the more I study on this subject, the more I am unsettled and confused" (Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America*, 443. See King, *The Mother Church in America*, 1896). It is a matter, however, of no particular moment to the general historian. Nothing depends on it. In any event, the Baptists of America did not derive their origin from Roger Williams. Benedict (p. 364) mentions the names of fifty-five Baptist churches, including the year 1750, in America, not one of which came out of the Providence church.

"From the earliest period, of our colonial settlements," says J.P. Tustin, "multitudes of Baptist ministers and members came from Europe, and settled in different parts of this continent, each becoming the center of an independent circle wherever they planted themselves" (Tustin, *A Discourse delivered at the Dedication of the Baptist Church and Society in Warren, R.I.*, 38). Mr. Tustin continues: "It is a fact generally known, that many of the Baptist churches in this country derived their origin from the Baptist churches in Wales, a country which has always been a nursery for their peculiar principles. In the earlier settlements of this country, multitudes of Welsh emigrants, who left their fatherland, brought with them the seeds of Baptist principles, and their ministers and members laid the foundation of many Baptist Churches in New England, and especially in the middle states." The churches, therefore in this country, were for the most part made up of members directly from England and Wales.

James D. Knowles (Memoir of Roger Williams, 169 note. Boston, 1834), has raised this question and answered it as follows:

The question which has been asked, with some emphasis, as if it vitally affected the Baptist churches in this country; "By whom was Roger Williams baptized?" has no practical importance. All whom he immersed were, as Pedobaptists must admit, baptized. The great family of Baptists in this country did not spring from the First Church in Providence. Many Baptist ministers and members came, at an early period, from Europe, and thus churches were formed in different parts of the country, which have since multiplied over the land. The first Baptist church formed in the present State of Massachusetts, is the church at Swansea. Its origin is dated in 1663, when the Rev. John Myles came from Wales, with a number of the members of a Baptist church, who brought with them its records. Of the 400,000 communicants now in the United States, a small fraction only have had any connection, either immediate or remote, with the venerable church at Providence, though her members are numerous, and she has been honored as the mother of many ministers.

This was the beginning of the settlement of Rhode Island. The first declaration of democracy, in America, was here formulated March, 1641. The Author of the History of American Literature says:

It was ordered and unanimously agreed upon, that the government which this body politic doth attend unto in this island and the jurisdiction thereof, in favor of our prince, is a Democracy, or popular government; that is to say, it is in the power of the body of freemen, orderly assembled, or major part of them, to make or constitute just laws, by which they will be regulated, and to despute from among themselves such ministers as shall see them faithfully executed between man and man.

And the following acts secured religious liberty there:

It was further ordered, by the authority of this present Court, that none be accounted a delinquent for doctrine, provided, it, be not directly repugnant to the government or laws established.

On September, 1641, it was ordered:

That the law of the last Court made concerning liberty of conscience in point of doctrine, be perpetuated.

It was decreed at Providence, in 1647, that since:

Our charter gives us power to govern ourselves, and such other as come among us, and by such a form of civil government as by the voluntary consent, etc., shall be found most suitable to our estate and condition It is agreed by this present Assembly thus incorporate, and by this present act declared, that the form of government established in Providence Plantations is

Democratical; that is to say, a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all of the greater part of the free inhabitants (Rhode Island State Papers).

The state was not to dictate to or disturb the church. In the charter the word “civil” everywhere defines the jurisdiction of the Court. Religion and the State were divorced. Arnold says:

The use of the word civil is everywhere prefixed (to the charter) to the terms “government” or “laws” wherever they occur ... to restrict the operation of the charter to purely political concerns. In this apparent restriction there lay concealed a boon of freedom such as man had never known before. They (the Rhode Islanders) held themselves accountable to God alone for their religious creed, and no earthly power could bestow on them a right which they held from heaven. At their own request their powers were limited to civil matters (Arnold, History of Rhode Island, I. 200).

Hough, commenting upon the provisions of the charter of Rhode Island, says:

This broad and liberal grant of liberty of opinion in matters of religious faith is among the earliest examples of that toleration which now prevails in every state in the American Union; but at the time it was asked and obtained, it formed a striking and honorable contrast with the custom and laws of the neighboring colonies (Hough, American Constitutions, II. 246. Lauer, Church and State in New England, 48. Tenth Series, II., III. Johns Hopkins University Studies. Baltimore, 1892).

The service that the Baptists have rendered to the world in bringing religious liberty to this continent has been fully acknowledged by the greatest authorities in the world. Only the statements of a few representative men are here given.

Bancroft, the historian of the United States, says of Williams:

He was the first person in modern Christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law. ... Williams would permit persecutions of no opinion, of no religion, leaving heresy unharmed by law, and orthodoxy unprotected by the terrors of penal statutes. ... We praise the man who first analyzed the air, or resolved water into its elements, or drew the lightning from the clouds; even though the discoveries may have been as much the fruits of time as of genius. A moral principle has a much wider and nearer influence on human happiness; nor can any discovery of truth be of more direct benefit to society, than that which establishes a perpetual religious peace, and spreads tranquility through every community and every bosom. If Copernicus is held in perpetual reverence, because, on his death-bed, he published to the world that the sun is the centre of our system; if the name of Kepler is preserved in the annals of human excellence for his sagacity in detecting the laws of the planetary motion; if the

genius of Newton has been almost adored for dissecting a ray of light, and weighing heavenly bodies in the balance — let there be for the name of Roger Williams at least some humble place among those who have advanced moral science, and made themselves the benefactors of mankind (Bancroft, History of the United States, I. 375-377).

Judge Story, the eminent lawyer, says:

In the code of laws established by them in Rhode Island, we read for the first time since Christianity ascended the throne of the Caesars, the declaration that conscience should be free, and that men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they were persuaded he requires.

The German Philosopher, Gervinus, says:

In accordance with these principles, Roger Williams insisted, in Massachusetts, upon allowing entire freedom of conscience, and upon entire separation of the Church and State. But he was obliged to flee, and in 1636, he formed in Rhode Island, a small and new society, in which perfect freedom in matters of faith was allowed, and in which the majority ruled in all the civil affairs. Here, in a little state, the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed, before they were ever taught in any of the schools of philosophy in Europe. At that time people predicted only a short existence for these democratical experiments — Universal suffrage; universal eligibility to office; the annual change of rulers; perfect religious freedom — the Miltonian doctrine of schisms. But not only have these ideas and these forms of government maintained themselves here, but precisely from this little State, have they extended themselves throughout the United States. They have conquered the aristocratic tendencies in Carolina and New York, the High Church in Virginia, the Theocracy in Massachusetts, and the monarchy in all America. They have given laws to a continent, and formidable through their moral influence, they lie at the bottom of all the democratic movements which are now shaking the nations of Europe (Gervinus,, History of the Nineteenth Century. Introduction).

He not only sought liberty for his own people, but to all persons alike. Hitherto the Jews had been proscribed. He especially plead for them. No persons have more fully recognized the worth of religious liberty than have the Jews; and they have paid eloquent tribute to his memory. In this direction Straus says:

The earliest champion of religious freedom, or “soul liberty,” as he designated that most precious jewel of all liberties, was Roger Williams. ... To him rightfully belongs the immortal fame of having been the first person in modern times to assert and maintain in its fullest plenitude the absolute right of every man to “a full liberty in religious concerns,” and to found a State wherein this doctrine was the key-stone of its organic laws (Straus, Origin of Republican Form of Government in the United States, 47-50. New York, 1885. See Religious Liberty of Henry M. King, 1903).

It is now time to return to the persecutions of the Baptists in the other colonies. Note has already been taken of the activity of the Massachusetts colony against the Baptists, and the persecuting laws that they passed and executed. On October 18, 1649, this Colony urged drastic measures against the Baptists of Plymouth. The General Court wrote to the Plymouth brethren as follows:

Honored and beloved Brethren: We have heard heretofore of divers Anabaptists arisen up in your jurisdiction, and connived at; but being but few, we well hoped that it might have pleased God, by the endeavors of yourselves and the faithful elders with you, to have reduced such erring men again into the right way. But now, to our great grief, we are credibly informed that Your patient bearing with such men hath produced another effect, namely, the multiplying and increasing of such errors, and we fear may be of other errors also, if timely care be not taken to suppress the same. Particularly we understand that within this few weeks there have been at sea Cunke thirteen or fourteen persons rebaptized ( a swift progress in one town), yet we hear not if any effectual restriction is intended thereabouts (Massachusetts Colonial Records, III. 173).

This Sea Cunke (now Swansea and Rehoboth), was to be the location of the third Baptist church in America, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Myles.

The persecuting spirit of Massachusetts was soon further put to the test. John Clarke was the pastor of the Newport Baptist church, founded somewhere between 1638 and 1644. This John Clarke was the father of American Baptists. He had much to do, in connection with Roger Williams, with procuring the second charter of Rhode Island in 1668. There was at Lynn, Massachusetts, an aged disciple by the name of William Witter. He had been cut off from the Salem church, June 24, 1651, "for absenting himself from public ordinances nine months or more and for being rebaptized" (Felt, Ecclesiastical History of New England, II. 25-46). He had previously become a member of the church in Newport. On July 19, 1651, John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes and John Crandall, "being the representatives of the Baptist church in Newport, upon the request of William Witter, of Lynn, arrived there, he being a brother in the church, who, by reason of his advanced age, could not undertake so great a journey as to visit the church" (Newport Church Papers).

While they were expounding the Scriptures they were arrested by two constables. They were watched over that "night (in the ordinary) as Thieves and Robbers," by the officers, and on the second day they were lodged in the common jail in Boston. On July 31 they were brought to public trial in Boston, without trial by jury and at the will of the magistrates. Governor Endicott charged them with being, Anabaptists. Clarke replied he was "neither an

Anabaptist, nor a Pedobaptist, nor a Catabaptist.” At this reply the Governor stepped up:

And told us we denied infant baptism, and being somewhat transported, told me I had deserved death, and said he would not have such trash brought into his jurisdiction. Moreover he said, You go up and down and secretly insinuate into those that are weak, but you cannot maintain it before our ministers. You may try and dispute with them (Clarke, Narrative).

Clark was about to make reply when he was remanded to prison. Holmes says:

What they laid to my charge, you may here read in my sentence, upon the pronouncement of which, as I went from the bar, I expressed myself in these words: — I bless God, I am counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Whereupon John Wilson (their pastor, as they call him) struck me before the judgment seat, and cursed me, saying, The curse of God or Jesus go with thee (Backus, History of the Baptists in New England, I. 189).

From the prison Clarke accepted the proposition to debate the subjects involved and suggested by the Governor (Massachusetts Archives, X. 212). It was supposed that John Cotton would represent the ministers. But the Governor allowed the debate to come to naught, though he had proposed it. Clarke and Crandall were not long afterward released “upon the payment of their fines by some tender-hearted friends” without their consent and contrary to their judgment. Holmes not accepting the deliverance was publicly whipped. He said:

The man striking with all his strength (yea spitting in (on) his hands three times as many affirmed) with a three corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, You have struck me as with roses (Backus, I. 192).

The whipping was so severe that Governor Jenckes says:

Mr. Holmes was whipt thirty stripes, and in such an unmerciful manner, that in many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest but as he lay on his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay (See Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders, by Henry M. King, 1896).

The trial and whipping of Holmes was the occasion of the conversion of Henry Dunster, the President of Harvard, to the Baptists. The immediate cause of the organization of the church in Boston was a sermon Dunster preached there on the subject of infant baptism. The church was much delayed in its organization, but this finally took place May 28, 1665. The magistrates required them to attend the Established Church. The General Court disfranchised them, and committed them to prison, and pursued them with fines and imprisonments for

three years (Backus, I. 300). In May, 1668, the General Court sentenced Thomas Gould, William Turner, and John Farnum to be banished; and because they would not go, they were imprisoned nearly a year; and when petition for a release of the prisoners was presented to the General Court, some who signed the petition were fined for doing so, and others were compelled to confess their fault for reflecting on the Court.

The complete separation of Church and State was not guaranteed by the Constitution of Massachusetts until 1833.

Virginia was the great battle ground for religious freedom. The Colony was founded by members of the Church of England, and none others were tolerated in its jurisdiction. The charter, 1606, provided

The presidents, councils and ministers should provide that the true word and service of God should be preached and used according to the rites and doctrines of the Church of England.

The bloody military code of 1611, the first published for the government of the Colony, required every man and woman in the Colony, or who should afterwards arrive, to give an account of their faith and religion to the parish minister, and if not satisfactory to him, they should repair often to him for instruction; and if they refuse to go, the Governor should whip the offender for the first offense; for the second refusal to be whipped twice and to acknowledge his fault on the Sabbath day in the congregation; and for the third offense to be whipped every day till he complied (Howell, *Early Baptists of Virginia*, 38. Laws, &c., Strasbury. London, 1812).

The tyrannical Sir W. Berkeley had passed, December 14, 1662, the following law:

Whereas many schismatical persons out of their averseness to the orthodox established religion, or out of new fangled conceits of their own heretical inventions, refused to have their children baptized. Be it therefore enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that all persons that, in contempt of the divine sacrament of baptism, shall refuse when they may carry their child to a lawful minister in that country to have them baptized shall be amerced two thousand pounds of tobacco, half to the publique (Henning, *Statutes at Large, Laws of Virginia*, II. 165).

These statutes were put into execution. The Baptists were democrats from principle and naturally did not love the Establishment. Hawks, the historian of the Episcopal Church of Virginia, says:

No dissenters in Virginia experienced, for a time, harsher treatment than did the Baptists. They were beaten and imprisoned; and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance. The usual consequences

followed; persecution made friends for its victims; and the men, who were not permitted to speak in public, found willing auditors in the sympathizing crowds who gathered around the prisons to hear them preach from grated windows (Hawks, Contributions to Ecclesiastical History in the United States, I. 121. New York, 1836-9).

He further says:

Persecution had taught the Baptists not to love the Establishment, and they now saw before them a reasonable prospect of overturning it entirely. In their Association they calmly discussed the matter, and resolved on their course; in this course they were consistent to the end; and the war which they waged against the Church, was a war of extermination. They seem to have known no relentings, and their hostility never ceased for seven and twenty years. They revenged themselves for their sufferings by the almost total ruin of the Church; and now commenced the assault, for, inspired by the ardours of patriotism which accorded to their interests ... they addressed the convention, and informed that body that the religious tenets presented no obstacle to their taking up arms and fighting for the country; and they tendered the services of their pastors in promoting the enlistment of the youth of their persuasion. ... A complimentary answer was returned to their address; and the order was made that the sectarian clergy should have the privilege of performing divine service to their respective adherents in the army, equally with the chaplains of the Established Church. This, it is believed, was the first steps towards placing the clergy of all denominations, upon an equal footing in Virginia (p. 138).

The intense opposition to the Baptists in Virginia, in 1772, may be gathered from a letter written by James Madison to a friend in Pennsylvania. He says:

That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such Purposes. There are at this time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox.

In 1775 the Baptists of Virginia met in regular session in their General Association. "This was," says their historian, Robert Semple, "a very favorable season for the Baptists. Having been much ground under the British laws, or at least by the interpretation of them in Virginia, they were, to a man, favorable to any revolution by which they could obtain freedom of religion. They had known from experience, that mere toleration was not a sufficient check, having been imprisoned at a time when the law was considered by many as being in force. It was therefore resolved at this session, to circulate petitions to the Virginia Convention or General Assembly, throughout the State, in order to obtain signatures. The prayer of these was, that the church establishment should be abolished, and religion left to stand upon its own merits; and, that all



religious societies should be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of their own religious principles.”

Accordingly, in 1776, the Baptists were enabled to place upon their records that the bill had been passed and in their judgment that religious and civil liberty were duly safeguarded. This simply suspended the old laws of persecution.

An Assessment Bill was passed, in 1784, by the General Assembly of Virginia, through the influence of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The bill provided that a tax be levied upon all persons for the support of religion, and the money be divided among the leading sects. The Baptists would come in for a large share of the patronage. The legislature declared that “a general assessment for the support of religion ought to be extended to those who profess the public worship of the Deity” (Journal of the House of Delegates, October, 1784, 32). Madison, writing of this struggle, under date of April 12, 1785, says:

The Episcopal people are generally for it (the tax). ... The Presbyterians seem ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out. ... I do not know a more shameful contrast than might be found between their memorials on the latter and the former occasion (Rives, *Life and Times of Madison*, I. 630).

In this contest the Baptists stood alone and won. They were supported by individuals of all denominations. “It is a matter of record,” says Howell, “in their proceedings that when, in 1785, they had repeated their Declaration of Principles, the General Committee placed them in the hands of Mr. Madison, with the request that he would embody them in their behalf, in a memorial to the legislature, praying for the passage of the law” (Howell, *Early Baptists of Virginia*, 92). His voice and that of Jefferson sounded the sentiments, which were victorious.

Mr. Jefferson prepared the “Act for Religious Freedom” which passed the General Assembly of Virginia in the year 1786. The Act says:

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened In his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare the act irrevocable, would be of no effect in law, yet we

are free to declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such an act will be an infringement of natural rights (Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 379, 382).

Thus was liberty of soul secured in Virginia by the Baptists. The Establishment was finally put down. Dr. Hawks says:

The Baptists were the principal promoters of this work, and in truth aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment (Hawks, Ecclesiastical Contributions, 152).

Bishop Meade, another Episcopalian, says:

The Baptist Church in Virginia took the lead in dissent, and was the chief object of persecution by the magistrates and the most violent and persevering afterward in seeking the downfall of the Establishment (Meade, Old Parishes and Churches in Virginia, I. 52. Philadelphia, 1872).

And he again says:

The warfare begun by the Baptists, seven-and-twenty years before was now finished: The Church was in ruins, and the triumph of her enemies complete (Meade, II. 449, 450).

In the period ending with the Revolutionary War religious tests were everywhere. They were consistently opposed by the Baptists. As a result the Baptists were persecuted and came under the heavy hand of the law. Only in Rhode Island was liberty of conscience maintained. The Baptists in bringing liberty of conscience to a Continent had undertaken a supreme task, but they were equal to the occasion. Professor George P. Fisher, has given a fine statement of the case. He says:

At the beginning of the American Revolution, the Episcopal Church was established in the Southern colonies. In New Jersey and New York, it enjoyed the special favor of the government officials. In Massachusetts and Connecticut there had never been an establishment, in the strict sense of the term. Every town was obliged to sustain public worship and support a minister. There was an assessment upon the inhabitants for this purpose. As the people were for a long time almost exclusively Congregationalists, the worship was of this character. As other denominations arose, the laws were so modified as to allow the tax to be paid by each of the organizations to the support of its own worship. Such an act was passed in Connecticut in reference to the Episcopalians in 1727, shortly after the founding of Christ Church in Stratford, for their first religious society in the State; and in 1729 the same right was extended to Quakers and Baptists. In places where no congregations had been gathered by dissidents from the prevailing system, individuals, whatever their religious beliefs might be, were compelled to

contribute to the support of the Congregational worship there existing. This requirement was more and more counted a hardship. It is believed that in all the colonies there were religious tests in some form. Even in Pennsylvania and Delaware, none could vote save those who professed faith in Christ. When the revolutionary contest began, it was natural that there should spring up movements to abolish the religious inequalities which were a heritage from the past. The Baptists, who were outnumbered by none of the religious bodies except the Congregationalists, and who had felt themselves especially aggrieved, at once bestirred themselves in Massachusetts and Virginia to secure the repeal of obnoxious restrictions. A Baptist committee laid their complaints before the Massachusetts delegates in the first Continental Congress at Philadelphia. The support which the Baptists lent to the patriotic cause, and the proclamation of human rights which was made on every hand, won a hearing for their demands, and rendered them, after tedious delays, successful. In Virginia, Patrick Henry, Jefferson, and Madison enlisted in their favor. In 1785, the statute of religious freedom was adopted, of which Jefferson deemed it a great honor to have been the author, by which intervention in matters of faith and worship was forbidden to the State. All denominations were put thus on a level, and none were taxed for the support of religion. In New England, the release from this last requirement, or from the payment of a tax for a particular form of religion to be chosen by the citizen, was accomplished later. It took place in Connecticut in 1818; and the last of the provisions of this character did not vanish from the statute-book in Massachusetts until 1833, when Church and State were fully separated. In that State, from 1780 to 1811, a religious society had to be incorporated in order to have its members exempted from taxation for the parish church (Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, 559, 560).

Up to this date, as has been seen, the Baptists had been persecuted in the colonies, and their labors had been directed toward the overthrow of the iniquitous laws. The Revolutionary War opened up possibilities to overthrow the entire system of persecution. The Baptists were not slow to seize and improve the opportunity thus presented. They were everywhere the friends of liberty.

The American War was brought on by the Episcopal Party in England who were opposed to freedom. The soldiers who fought against this country were mainly Irish Catholics. The foremost British statesmen thought the War unjustifiable. William Pitt, May 30, 1788, said in the House of Commons:

The American war was conceived in injustice, and matured in folly, and that it exhibited the highest moral turpitude and depravity, and that England had nothing but victories over men struggling in the holy cause of liberty, or defeat which filled the land with mourning for the lose of dear and valuable relations slain in a detested and impious quarrel.

Six months after this date, when the surrender of Cornwallis was published in England, in the House of Commons, Fox adopted the words of Chatham, uttered at the beginning of the Revolution, and said:

Thank God that America has resisted the claims of the mother country (Hume, Smollett and Farr, *History of England*, III. 155, 102).

Burke and other noted Englishmen expressed themselves in the same manner. The Baptists of England were on the side of America. When Robert Hall was a little boy, he heard Rev. Robert Ryland, the commanding Baptist preacher of Northampton, say

If I were General Washington I would summon all the American officers; they should form a circle around me, and I would address them, and we would offer a libation in our own blood, and I would order one of them to bring a lancet and a punch-bowl; and he should bleed us all, one by one, into this punch-bowl; and I would be the first to bare my arm; and when the bowl was full, and we had all been bled, I would call upon every man to consecrate himself to the work, by dipping his sword into the bowl, and entering into a solemn covenant engagement by oath, one to another, and we would swear by him that sits upon the throne, and liveth forever and forever, that we would never sheath our swords while there was an English soldier in arms in America (Hall, *Works*, IV. 48-49. New York, 1844).

The opinion of the English Baptists is set forth in a letter from, Dr. Rippon, the London Baptist preacher, to President Manning of Brown University. He says:

I believe all of our Baptist ministers in town, except two, and most of our brethren in the country, were on the side of the Americans in the late dispute. ... We wept when the thirsty plains drank the blood of your departed heroes, and the shout of a King was amongst us when your wellfought battles were crowned with victory. And to this hour we believe that the Independence of America will for a while secure the liberty of this country; but that if the continent had been reduced, Britain would not have long been free (Guild and Manning, *Brown University*, 324. Boston, 1864).

There was not a tory among the Baptists of America. Rhode Island was largely Baptist. "The Baptists have always been more numerous," says Morgan Edwards, "than any other sect of Christians in Rhode Island; two thirds of the inhabitants, at least, are reputed Baptists. The governors, deputy-governors, judges, assemblymen and officers, civil and military, are chiefly of that persuasion" (*Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, VI. 304). May 4, 1776, just two months before the Declaration of Independence, Rhode Island withdrew and repudiated the rule of George III. This was thirty-two days before Virginia renounced allegiance (Howison, *History of Virginia*, II. 133). In large numbers they sent their sons to the army. Bancroft speaks of Rhode Island at the Revolution "as enjoying a form of government, under its charter,

so thoroughly democratic that no change was required beyond a renunciation of the king's name in the style of its public acts" (Bancroft, History of the United States, IX. 563). When the Constitution of the United States was adopted Rhode Island had long enjoyed freedom. Arnold says:

Rhode Island for more than a century and a half has enjoyed a freedom unknown to any of her compeers, and through more than half of that period her people had been involved with rival Colonies in a struggle for political existence and for the maintenance of those principles of civil and religious freedom which are now everywhere received in America (Arnold, History of Rhode Island, II. 583).

The Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, and in eight days there was a Committee of Baptists, headed by Rev. Isaac Backus, who solemnly recognized its authority. They bore the following memorial from the Warren Association of the Baptist churches of New England:

Honorable Gentlemen: As the Antipaedobaptist churches of New England are most heartily concerned for the preservation and defence of the rights and privileges of the country, and are deeply affected by the encroachments upon the same, which have lately been made by the British parliament, and are willing to unite with our dear countrymen, vigorously to pursue every prudent measure for relief, so we would beg leave to say that, as a distinct denomination of Protestants, we conceive that we have an equal claim to charter-rights with the rest of our fellow subjects; and yet have long been denied the free and full enjoyment of those rights, as to the support of religious worship. Therefore we, the elders and brethren of twenty Baptist churches met in Association at Medfield, twenty miles from Boston, September 14, 1774, have unanimously chosen and sent unto you the reverend and beloved Isaac Backus as our agent, to lay our case, in these respects, before you, or otherwise to use all the prudent means he can for our relief.

John Gano, Moderator.  
Hezekiah Smith, Clerk.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association, the oldest in America, likewise sent a Committee to assist the appeal from New England. Dr. Samuel Jones, in a Centenary Sermon, in 1807, before the Philadelphia Association, says:

When Congress met in this city, I was one of the committee under the appointment of your body, that, in company with the late Rev. Isaac Backus, of Massachusetts, met the delegates in Congress from that State, in yonder State House, to see if we could not obtain some security for that liberty, for which we were then fighting and bleeding by their side. It seemed unreasonable to us, that we should be called upon to stand up with them in the defence of liberty if, after all, it was to be liberty for one party to oppress another (Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, 459, 460).

The constant plea of the Baptists was for liberty of conscience. To this memorial Congress gave a faithful hearing and a sympathetic reply as follows:

In provincial Congress, Cambridge, December 9, 1774. On reading the memorial of the Rev. Isaac Backus, agent to the Baptist churches in this government, Resolved: That the establishment of civil and religious liberty, to each denomination in the province, is the sincere wish of this Congress. But being by no means vested with the powers of civil government, whereby they can redress the grievances of any person whatsoever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist churches, that when a General Assembly shall be convened in this colony, they lay the real grievances of said churches before the same, when and where their petition will most certainly meet with all that attention due to the memorial of a denomination of Christians so well disposed to the public weal of their country. By order of Congress,

John Hancock, President.

A true extract from the minutes.

Benjamin Lincoln, Secretary.

(Backus, II. 202).

John Adams had said: "We might as well expect a change in the solar system, as to expect they would give up their establishment." The Baptists did not at this time gain their cause but progress was made toward true liberty.

The Baptists everywhere enlisted in the army. The Baptist General Association notified the Convention of Virginia that they had considered what part it would be proper to take in the unhappy contest, and had determined that they ought to make a military resistance to Great Britain in her unjust invasion, tyrannical oppression, and repeated hostilities" (Headley, Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution, 250. New York. 1864). They proclaimed that "they were to a man favorable to any revolution, by which they could obtain freedom of religion" (Semple, History of Virginia Baptists, 62. Richmond, 1890).

Baptist preachers became chaplains in the army. The Baptist General Association sent, in 1775, Rev. Jeremiah Walker and John Williams to preach to the soldiers. These were the most popular Baptist preachers in the Old Dominion. McClanahan raised a company chiefly of Baptists whom he commanded as captain and preached to as chaplain. Rev. Charles Thompson of Massachusetts served as chaplain three years and Rev. Hezekiah Smith was from the same State. Rev. Samuel Rogers of Philadelphia was one of the foremost preachers of the day. He was appointed chaplain of a brigade by the Legislature. Rev. David Jones followed Gates through two campaigns. Rev. John Gano had great mental powers and as "a minister he shone like a star of the first magnitude in the American churches" (Sprague, Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit, 66). He was the foremost chaplain in the army. Headley says of him

In the fierce conflict on Chatterton's Hill he was continually under fire, and his cool and quiet courage in thus fearlessly exposing himself was afterwards commented upon in the most glowing terms by the officers who stood near him (Headley, Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution, 255).

Other Baptists served the Revolutionary cause in many ways. James Manning, the President of Brown University, was the most popular man in Rhode Island. He filled for the government many delicate positions and was elected unanimously to Congress. John Hart, a member of the old Hopewell Baptist church, was one of the signers of The Declaration of Independence. Col. Joab Houghton was a valuable officer in the army. It was thought by many that the Baptists were too patriotic.

For their patriotic endeavors they received the highest praise. Thomas Jefferson, writing to the Baptist church, of Buck Mountain, Albemarle County, Virginia, neighbors of his, in reply to a letter which they had sent him, says:

I thank you, my friends and neighbors, for your kind congratulations on my return to my native home, and on the opportunity it will give me of enjoying, amidst your affections, the comforts of retirement and rest. Your approbation of my conduct is the more valued as you have best known me, and is an ample reward for my services I may have rendered. We have acted together from the origin to the end of the memorable Revolution, and we have contributed, each in a line allotted us, our endeavors to render its issue a permanent blessing to our country. That our social intercourse may, to the evening of our days, be cheered and cemented by witnessing the freedom and happiness for which we have labored, will be my constant prayer. Accept the offering of my affectionate esteem and respect (Jefferson, Complete Works, VIII. 168).

In his complete works there are replies to congratulatory addresses from the Danbury, Baltimore and Kettocton Associations; and from the representatives of six Baptist Associations which met at Chesterfield, Va., November 21, 1808. The last body was the General Meeting of the Baptists of Virginia. To them he says:

In reviewing the history of the times through which we have passed, no portion of it gives greater satisfaction than that which presents the efforts of the friends of religious freedom with which they were crowned. We have shown, by fair trial, the great and interesting experiment whether freedom of religion is compatible with order in government and obedience to the laws. And we have experienced the quiet as well as the comfort which results from leaving one to profess freely and openly those principles of religion which are the inductions of his own reason (Jefferson, Complete Works, VIII. 139).

When the Constitution of the United States was presented to the States for ratification it was doubtful whether it would pass. Massachusetts and Virginia were the pivotal States. Massachusetts was evenly divided and it was only

through the labors of Manning, Stillman and Backus that the Constitution was adopted by that State. The majority was nineteen votes. There were 187 yeas and 168 nays on the last day of the session, and “before the final question was taken, Governor Hancock, the president, invited Dr. Manning to close the solemn convocation with prayer. The prayer was one of lofty patriotism and every heart was filled with reverence.”

The vote of Virginia was equally in doubt. John Leland, the Baptist preacher, and James Madison were candidates, in Orange County for the Legislature. Orange was a Baptist county and the probabilities were that Leland would be elected. He withdrew in favor of Madison, and Madison was elected and in the Legislature he was just able to save the Constitution. J.S. Barbour, of Virginia, in 1857, in an eulogy of James Madison said:

That the credit of adopting the Constitution of the United States properly belonged to a Baptist clergyman, formerly of Virginia, by the name of Leland. ... If Madison had not been in the Virginia Convention, that Constitution would not have been ratified by the State, and as the approval of nine States was required to give effect to this instrument, and as Virginia was the ninth, if it had been rejected by her, the Constitution would have failed (the remaining States following her example), and that it was by Elder Leland’s influence that Madison was elected to that Convention (Sprague, *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, 179).

One thing more must be done to secure soul-liberty in this country beyond peradventure. There was an open question whether the Constitution in the form adopted safeguarded liberty. A General Committee of the Baptists of Virginia met in Williams’ meeting-house, Goochland County, March 7, 1788. The first question discussed was

Whether the new federal constitution, which had now lately made its appearance in public, made sufficient provision for the secure enjoyment of religious liberty; on which, it was argued unanimously, that, in the opinion of the general committee it did not (Semple, *History of the Virginia Baptists*, 76, 77).

Upon consultation with Mr. Madison the Committee addressed General Washington. The next year, within four months after Washington had become President, this address was formally presented, in which they expressed the fear “that our religious rights were not well secured in our new Constitution of government.” They solicited his influence for proper legislation, and he returned a favorable answer. As a result, an amendment to the Constitution was made the next month, September 25, which says:



Congress shall make no law, establishing articles of faith, or mode of worship or prohibiting the free exercise of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition to the general government for a redress of grievances.

No more fitting conclusion can be had to this volume than to quote the language of the Father of his Country. The days of persecution, of blood and of martyrdom were passed. Civil and soul liberty, the inalienable rights of man, enlargement, benevolent operations educational advantages, and world wide missionary endeavor, — all had been made possible by the struggles of the past. George Washington had been consulted by the Baptists to assist in securing freedom of conscience, and he replied:

I have often expressed my sentiments, that every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience. While I recognize with satisfaction, that the religious society of which you are members have been, throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe, faithful supporters of a free, yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them, that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity (Sparks, Writings of George Washington, XII. 155. Boston, 1855).

### **BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE**

David Benedict, The History of the Baptist Denomination in America;  
Henry C. Vedder, The Baptists;  
A. H. Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States.