

THE ORIGIN
OF THE BAPTISTS

BY

S. H. FORD

Copyright (Public Domain)

www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html

(Reformed on the Web)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Where did the Baptists come from?

Chap. I — Century Eighteen: Baptists in Virginia

Chap. II — Century Seventeen: Baptists in England

Chap. III — Century Sixteen: The Reformation

Chap. IV — Century Fifteen: Wales, Bohemia, Germany

Chap. V — Century Fourteen: Wickliffe and the Lollards

Chap. VI — Century Thirteen: Pete de Brue

Chap. VII — Century Twelve: Henry of Lausanne, Peter de Bruis
(Bruys), Arnold of Brescia

Chap. VIII — Century Ten: Baptists in Italy - Paulicians

Chap. IX — Century Eight: Retrospect

Chap. X — Century Seven: Montenses

Chap. XI — Century Six: Donatists

Chap. XII — Century Five: Numidians

Chap. XIII — Century Three: Novations

Chap. XIV — Century Two: Tertullianists

Chap. XV — Century One: The Primitive Churches

INTRODUCTION

*"...the church of the living God,
the pillar and ground of the truth." (1Ti 3:15)*

The following will prove a very acceptable historical contribution to the masses of the people. It will be to history a sort of elementary work, yet replete with historic facts, and the biographies of the leading witnesses of Jesus in the darkest ages of the world.

In this little work, the general reader will find, traced by a graphic pen, the bold outline of the history of the people now called Baptists. Like an experienced woodsman, the author has blazed the rough and bloody track of our people back into the wilderness, even into the "*remotest depth of antiquity*," but in these dark depths he loses not, like Mosheim, their "*trail*," but pursues it until it leads out into the unclouded light of the first century, where he finds the footsteps of the apostles and the Son of God himself, mingling with those of the first Christians, leading still back toward the banks of the Jordan, upon which the colors of the new kingdom were first unfurled, and a people to receive the coming Son were first prepared by his herald, John.

Some may object to the mode selected by the author in pursuing his inquiry, and, because it is novel, regard it as unnatural and unphilosophical.

Such an objection is not well founded. The author designed this for the outline of an original investigation of his subject, and he has therefore selected the more real and genuine method of procedure.

Says Rawlinson:

"In every historical inquiry it is possible to pursue our researches in two ways; we may either trace the stream of time upward and pursue history to its earliest source, or we may reverse the process, and, beginning at the fountain-head, follow down the course of events in chronological order to our own day. The former is the more philosophical, because the more real and genuine method of procedure; it is the course which, in the original investigation of the subject, must, in point of fact, have been pursued; the present is our standing point, and we necessarily view the past from it, and only know so much of the past as we connect more or less distinctly with

it." (Bampton Course, 1859, Lecture ii, p. 49.)

This work is timely, and we think will be gladly received by the masses, since it furnishes them, in a condensed form, with authentic historical facts, with which to meet the questions and charges every day cast into their faces by the descendants of those who murdered our ancestors: "*Where did the Baptists come from?*" "*Baptists originated with Roger Williams, and their baptisms with his informal baptism.*" "*Baptists at best are but the descendants of the fanatical Anabaptists of Munster, and have no history before their day,*" and other like charges. Multitudes of our people have never been furnished with the facts of history with which to disprove these charges. They have ever opened at the third of Matthew, and triumphantly pointed to a body of Baptists in Judea, gathered by "*John the Baptist,*" and to the Church on the Mount of Olives, to which Christ gave the commission to the Church at Jerusalem, and to all the Churches planted by the apostles, all manifestly Baptist Churches; but the thick darkness of eighteen centuries, to the multitude, rolls between the apostolic period and the present. It should be a matter of devout thanksgiving to Almighty God, and be hailed as the harbinger star of near millennial day, that every year is pouring increasing light into that darkness, discovering to the inquiring gaze of the world who have been the true followers of Christ, and who "*the witnesses of Jesus,*" contending earnestly for and maintaining with martyr courage the faith once delivered to the saints, and the ordinances as they were at first committed to the Church. The light that is pouring upon the obscurity that has so long rested upon the wanderings of the Bride of Christ, in the wilderness into which she has been driven by her bloody persecutors, may be the earnest of the fulfillment of the prophet's vision when he saw a woman, the symbol of the Church, coming up out of the wilderness, leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible, to her enemies, as an army with banners.

O, that the Lord would fulfill that vision in our day! We wait, we long for it as one who watcheth for the morning. Then shall be sung, in full vision, the song an oppressed and suffering Church has long sung in faith only:

*Triumphant Zion, lift thy head
From dust and darkness and the dead!
Though jumbled long, awake at length,
And gird thee with thy Savior's strength.*

*Put all thy beauteous garments on,
And let thy excellence be known:
Deck'd in the robes of righteousness,
The world thy glories shall confess.*

*No more shall daring foes invade,
And fill thy hallow'd walls with dread;
No more shall hell's insulting host
Their victory and thy sorrow boast.*

*God from on high has heard thy prayer,
His hand thy ruin shall repair,
Nor will thy watchful Savior cease
To guard thee in eternal peace.*

-----Southern Psalmist.

Nashville 1860 J.R.G.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BAPTISTS

WHERE DID THE BAPTISTS COME FROM?

Milestones by the Track of Time

This is an age of inquiry and tireless research. To the questionings of an imperative curiosity the very rocks have rendered an account of themselves, and the leaves that fell before the flood, have been made to tell their story. Not a time-worn mark, or hieroglyphic, but has been cleared from the dust of centuries and deciphered. Not a crumbling monument, or a buried city, or perished people of the dead, past, but has been reproduced on the canvas of living history. Naught escapes the sleepless eye, the persevering industry of modern research.

Now, there is a class of people in our midst, numbered by hundreds of thousands—found, indeed, wherever soul-freedom is, and the gospel is, a people marked and peculiar, whose principles and influences have told, and must still tell on the character and destiny of society. This people are called BAPTISTS.

Their distinguishing peculiarities are, an uncompromising avowal and advocacy of soul-liberty, enlightened, and guided, and governed only by the Eternal King. That earthly priests, and kings, and governments, ranged hierarchies and mitered fathers, are but as those "*that peep and that mutter.*" "*To the law and to the testimony,*" is their watchword; "*if any man speak not according to these things, it is because there is no light in him,*"—that no mortal has the right to decide the church relations of any human being. In a word, that Christianity demands voluntary obedience; and to forestall, control, or fetter this, is antichristian. This is the prominent peculiarity of the people of whom we speak. And the profession of this voluntary surrender to the Lord of life is avowed by a burial by baptism into his sacred name.

Now, this people, so well known and so rapidly increasing among us, as a distinct class, originated somewhere. Some spot witnessed their beginning; some period in the march of time noted the birthday of these Baptists. Can the place of their nativity be found? Can the record of their origin be traced? Is the energy of human research, with all its triumphs, to pause breathless here, and acknowledge itself baffled and defeated? NO, no! The question can and must be answered, or history is a dead, a dumb thing. Let its voice but be

heard as it tones distinctly through the mists of ages, and it will be forever decided—WHERE DID THE BAPTISTS COME FROM?

But in vain shall we seek among the authoritative records of the past, for one kind word concerning them. Crushed beneath a powerful and persecuting hierarchy; few, feeble, and what the world calls unlearned, yet lifting up their voice in defiant tones above the storms of execration and violence; protesting, in the name of truth and freedom, against the universal domination of the State Church, and a proud, tyrannical clergy; sounding out through the grates of filthy prisons the joyous notes of redeeming mercy, and melting the hearts of those that mockery attracted to the spot; scattered defenceless, without State patronage, or the prestige of noble names, or great leaders; with no earthly head, or strong central government to give direction to their aims; with the Word of God their only guide; yet rising in the strength of God above the crested waves, battling with the storm, steadily, steadfastly, onward, upward, until now, in the words of the eloquent Chalmers:

"Let it never be forgotten of the Baptists, that they form the denomination of Fuller, and Cary, and Ryland, and Hall, and Foster; that they originated one of all missionary enterprises; that they have enriched the Christian literature of our country with an authorship of the most exalted piety, as well as of the first talent, and the first eloquence; that they have waged a noble war with the hydra of Antinomianism; that, perhaps, there is not a more intellectual community of ministers, or who have to their number put forth a greater amount of mental power and mental activity in the defense and illustration of our common faith; and what is still better than all the triumphs of genius and 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 all the walks of private society, and thus both to uphold and extend the living Christianity of our nation." (Dr. Chalmers's Lectures on Romans.)

Such are the people whose origin we would trace, and whose origin surely can be found.

CHAPTER I — Century Eighteen

Baptists in Virginia

In 1775, the Baptists first appeared in this mighty West. It was at a period the most momentous in the world's history. The storms of Revolution were sweeping over the colonies, spreading calamity and gloom. Nowhere did the contest rage more fearfully than in Virginia, and nowhere did the opposing parties put forth mightier efforts. It was the battle of truth, of principle, of national life, fought not for America alone, but for the world. The dark hour was succeeded by the sunrise of freedom.

In the midst of this conflict, and ere the storm had subsided, the West rose into being, like the fabled spirit of beauty, from the waves of the agitated sea. The principles which triumphed in the revolution were the elements of her existence, and the men who had suffered most from oppression, and had lifted up their voices for freedom from the jails of Virginia, were the first settlers in the valley of the Mississippi.

Lewis Craig had been followed by his sympathizing church to the gates of Fredericksburg jail. He was followed by that same church through the Cumberland gap, to plant that gospel barrier amid the tangled wilderness of the "*dark and woody ground*." The principles which actuated him and them, and which have ever characterized the Baptists, had been working silently, but effectually, for a century previous in Virginia.

Of the names of those prosecuted for those principles little need be said. Let one scene suffice. It was the trial of Lewis and Joseph Craig and Aaron Bledsoe. They had been indicted for preaching the gospel of the Son of God in the colony of Virginia. The clerk was reading the indictment in a slow and formal manner; when he pronounced the crime with emphasis—"*For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God in the colony of Virginia*," a plainly-dressed man who had just rode up to the court-house entered, and took his seat within the bar. He was known to the court and lawyers, but a stranger to the mass of spectators, who had gathered on the occasion. This was PATRICK HENRY, who, on hearing of this prosecution, had rode some fifty or sixty miles from his residence in Hanover county, to volunteer his services in their defense. He listened to the further reading of the indictment with marked attention, the first sentence of which that had caught his ear was, "*For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God*." When it was finished, and the

prosecuting attorney had submitted a few remarks, Henry arose, reached out his hand and received the paper, and addressed the Court:

"May it please your worships: I think I heard read by the prosecutor as I entered this house the paper I now hold in my hand. If I have rightly understood, the king's attorney of this colony has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning, and punishing by imprisonment, three inoffensive persons before the bar of this Court, for a crime of great magnitude—as disturbers of the peace. May it please the Court, what did I hear read? Did I hear it distinctly, or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression as if a crime, that these men, whom your worships are about to try for a misdemeanor, are charged with—what?"—and continuing in a low, solemn, heavy tone, "For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God!"

Pausing, amid the most profound silence and breathless astonishment, he slowly waved the paper three times around his head, when, lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, with peculiar and impressive energy he exclaimed, "GREAT GOD!" The exclamation, the action, the burst of feeling from the audience, were all overpowering. Mr. Henry resumed:

"May it please your worships: There are periods in the history of man, when corruption and depravity have so long debased the human character, that man sinks under the weight of the oppressor's hand, and becomes his servile, his abject slave; he licks the hand that smites him; he bows in passive obedience to the mandates of the despot, and in this state of servility he receives his fetters of perpetual bondage. But, may it please your worships, such a day has passed away! From that period, when our fathers left the land of their nativity for settlement in these American wilds, for LIBERTY, for civil and religious liberty, for liberty of conscience, to worship their Creator according to their conceptions of Heaven's revealed will; from the moment they placed foot on the American continent, and in the deeply imbedded forests sought an asylum from persecution and tyranny, from that moment despotism was crushed; her fetters of darkness were broken, and Heaven decreed that man should be free—free to worship God according to the Bible. Were it not for this, in vain have been the efforts and sacrifices of the

colonists; in vain were all their sufferings and bloodshed to subjugate this new world, if we, their offspring, must still be oppressed and persecuted. But, may it please your worships, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, 'For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God.' Great God! For preaching the Gospel of the Savior to Adam's fallen race." And in tones of thunder, he exclaimed: "WHAT LAW HAVE THEY VIOLATED?"

while the third time, in a slow, dignified manner, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and waved the indictment around his head.

The Court and audience were now wrought up to the most intense pitch of excitement. The face of the prosecuting attorney was pallid and ghastly, and he appeared unconscious that his whole frame was agitated with alarm; while the judge, in a tremulous voice, put an end to the scene, now becoming excessively painful, by the authoritative declaration, "*Sheriff, discharge those men.*"

They battled on for truth and soul freedom; and their fortitude, their courage, and final triumph have been recorded by their foes. They were republicans from principle. Says the Episcopalian, Hawkes: (Hawkes's Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p.121.)

"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; but 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 the grated windows. "Persecution had taught the Baptists not to love the establishment, and they now saw before them a reasonable prospect of overturning it altogether. In their Association, they had calmly discussed the matter and resolved on their course; in this course they were constant to the end; and the war 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

ardor of patriotism, which accorded with their interests, they addressed the Convention, and informed that body that their 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, and the ministers of all denominations, in accordance with the address, placed on equal footing. This, it is believed, was the first step toward religious liberty in Virginia."

A century anterior to this, a statute was enacted in the colonial Legislature of Virginia, which runs thus:

"*Whereas*, Sundry and divers persons, out of adverseness to the establishment orthodox religion, or out of new-fangled conceits of their own heretical inventions, refuse to have their children baptized. Be it enacted, that whosoever shall thus refuse when he might carry his child to a lawful minister within the country, shall be fined two hundred pounds of tobacco, half to the informer, and half to the parish." (Herring's Statutes).

The persons against whom the legislative thunder was hurled in the name of God and King Charles II., were Baptists. Here, then, in the interior of Virginia, at the time when Rhode Island was organizing, and with no intercourse with that distant little colony, we find Christian immersionists, Baptists. Where did they come from?

One year previous, in the colony of Massachusetts, a "poor man by the name of Painter," as we are informed by Mr. Hubbard, "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, both from the church and the court. He told them that infant baptism was an antichristian ordinance, for which "*he was tied up and whipped.*"

Gov. Winthrop tells us that Painter was whipped "for reproaching the Lord's ordinance."(Backus, vol. i, p. 147).

The persecutions at this time were so numerous in this pious Pedobaptist colony, that a letter was addressed to the "Governor, Assistants, and People of Massachusetts, exhorting them to lenient measures toward the Dissenting

brethren." About this time, we are told by Gov. Winthrop, that "the Anabaptists increased and spread in Massachusetts; and this *fearful* increase which could not be checked by argument or insult, led to the following act for their suppression:"

"*Forasmuch* as experience hath plentifully and often proved that the Anabaptists have been the infectors of persons in the 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 therewith; and whereas, divers of this kind have, *since our coming* into New England, appeared among ourselves, and if they should be connived at by us are likely to be increased among us, 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 purposely depart from the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance—every such person or persons shall be subject to banishment."
(Winthrop, p. 211).

Of the malice of these "*tender mercies*" of Pedobaptist orthodox churches, a passing glance is sufficient. The connection of infant baptism and oppression is so intimate, that in no spot on earth has the former prevailed that the latter has not followed. But pursuing our inquiry; the statute shows one fact: that from the first settlement, (or, as the act reads,) "*since our coming into New England have appeared among ourselves divers Anabaptists.*" Five years anterior to the enactment of the above law, in 1638, Hanserd Knollys, a name enshrined in the temple of soul-liberty, gathered together a Baptist church; and John Smith, John Spur and four others, were arrested in 1639 for attempting to organize a church at Weymouth, fourteen miles south of Boston. Before Roger Williams was baptized, or his Church organized, there were Baptist Churches and Baptist ministers throughout New England. The principles of this down-trodden people Roger Williams adopted, and in advocating them, defending them, and suffering for them, he has stamped immortal honour on his name. The glory of that name we would not, even could we, tarnish. Not a green leaf would we pluck from the imperishable laurels that wreath his brow. Every lover of freedom, every one imbued with the spirit of Jesus Christ, as he follows the turbid stream of history and

searches for that vital principle which first enlarged the soul of humanity on this continent, will have his footsteps arrested, and will pause with delight as he watches the developments of principle on the colony of Massachusetts.

In February, 1631, an humble pilgrim, noble in his appearance, yet retiring in his manners, a little more than thirty years of age, a fugitive from English persecution, Roger Williams, like a "light on eternity's ocean," rose amid the darkness of spiritual depotism, then brooding over Europe and the world. "It became his glory," says Bancroft, "to found a State on the principle of full liberty of conscience, and to stamp himself upon its rising institutions in characters so deep that the impress has remained to the present day, and can never be erased." There he stood, like freedom itself, towering above the storms of persecution and suffering, triumphant, sublime.

But historic facts prove beyond doubt that Roger Williams was not the founder of the Providence Church, and further, that the church he established, and which crumbled to pieces four months after it was gathered, was not the first church in America. It is recorded in the minutes of the Philadelphia Association, *when the first Church in Newport was one hundred years old in 1738, Mr. John Callender, their minister, delivered and published a sermon on the occasion.*

Williams, indeed, touched the Baptist standard, but ere he raised it, his hand trembled, and it fell. It was seized by a steadier hand; at Newport it was raised, and far and near they came to it; it was carried into the heart of Massachusetts, and a work was commenced which till the last setting of the sun, shall never cease; and this, before we have any evidence that a church in Providence had begun to be.

Among the evils that have resulted from the wrong date of the Providence Church, has been the prominence given to Roger Williams. It is greatly to be regretted, that it ever entered into the mind of any one to make him, in America, the founder of our denomination. In no sense was he so. Well would it be for Baptists, and for Williams himself, could his short and fitful attempt to become a Baptist be obliterated from the minds of men. A man only four months a Baptist, and then renouncing his baptism forever, to be lauded and magnified as the founder of the Baptist denomination in the New World! As a leader in civil and religious liberty, I do him homage; as a Baptist, I owe him nothing.

There is another name, long, too long concealed, by Williams being placed before him, who will in after times be regarded with unmingled affection and respect, as the true founder of the Baptist cause in this country. That orb of purest luster will yet shine forth, and Baptists, whether they regarded his spotless character, his talents, his learning, the services he rendered, the urbanity and the modesty that distinguished him, will mention John Clarke as the real founder of our denomination in America. And when Baptist history is better understood than it is at present, every one, pointing to that venerable church which, on one of earth's loveliest spots he established, will say, "*This is the mother of us all!*"

But in Virginia were Baptists ere Rhode Island had its charter. In Massachusetts were Baptist congregations before Williams was baptized. In the language of the legislative act already cited, "since our coming to New England," *before Roger Williams saw it*, "divers of this kind", Baptists, pleading for soul-liberty and Christian immersion, trod these shores of the New World, stained or hallowed by their blood. "SOME OF THE FIRST PLANTERS IN NEW ENGLAND WERE BAPTISTS." This is the language of Dr. Mather, their bitter foe, who lived in that persecuting age; and his language, corroborated as it is by colonial laws and documents still extant, is conclusive.

Here, then, closes our first milestone up the blood-stained path which Baptists have been forced to travel. Here we look on the bleak, wild forests of New England and Virginia, as this mighty nation was lifting its mountain summits into the morning mists of historic light. And here, before Williams lived, or Clarke or Holmes suffered and bled, we have found these Baptists.

We subjoin the epitaph of this noble man of God, whose memory should be held in vivid and grateful recollection by every lover of truth and freedom.

To the Memory of

DOCTOR JOHN CLARKE,

One of the original purchasers and proprietors of this island, and one of the founders of the First Baptist Church in Newport, its first pastor and munificent benefactor: He was a native of Bedfordshire, England, and a practitioner of physic in London. He, with his associates, came to this island from Mass., in March, 1638, O.S., and on the 24th of the same month obtained a deed thereof from the

Indians. He shortly after gathered the Church aforesaid, and became its pastor. In 1651, he, with Roger Williams, was sent to England, by the people of Rhode Island Colony, to negotiate the business of the Colony with the British ministry: Mr. Clarke was instrumental in obtaining the Charter of 1663 from Charles II., which secured to the people of the State free and full enjoyment of judgment and conscience in matters of religion. He remained in England to watch over the interests of the Colony until 1664, and then returned to Newport and resumed the pastoral care of his Church. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Williams, two fathers of the Colony, strenuously and fearlessly maintained that none but Jesus Christ had authority over the affairs of conscience. He died April 20, 1676, in the 66th year of his age, and is here interred.

To our inquiry—Where did they come from?

CHAPTER II — Century Seventeen

Baptists in England Cromwell and the Stuarts

"We are cheered by the rays from former generations, and live in the sunny reflection of all their light."

Monuments rise all along the stream of time, whose summits, like the fabled statue, kindled beneath the light, give out cheering music, and over the deep sorrows of humanity throw a halo of hope and joy. We can thus look up the dark current in its ever onward, desolating sweep, bearing on its flood the wreck of nations and systems; can behold the rocky towers where our fathers have stood, and the deep indented footprints crimsoned with their blood; and can hear above the deep silence the sublime echo of their voices. We are their children. They link us to the past. Their histories, like the tombstones of our parents, speak lovingly to us from their graves.

Such a monument, a link in our common brotherhood, was Hanserd Knollys, a Baptist preacher, who was imprisoned in New England by virtue of a warrant from the Court of Commission, a Protestant inquisition, which followed him with its persecutions till the day of his death. Around him were numerous Baptists. Such men as Clarke and Holmes battled and suffered by his side. They had fled in search of freedom to this New World, but their tracks were followed, and their first church-meeting, near Boston, broken up, and they were hauled to prison by the agents of the law. Eighteen years after the landing of the Mayflower, when every man in the colony was English born, and before Roger Williams was baptized, a Church of Baptists was formed in America. *Where did they come from?*

Let us trace the connecting link across the Atlantic, from New England to Old England. Hanserd Knollys was born in Lincoln, England, 1598. He graduated with honour at Cambridge University. Having joined the Baptists, he became the object of Episcopal hate. He passed over to New England, where persecutions still followed him. When the news reached him of the revolution which brought Charles I. to the block, in 1648, he returned to England. Says Crosby:

"A few years after his return from America, we find Mr. Knollys discharging his public ministry to a congregation of his own gathering, in Great St. Helen's, London, where the people flocked in

crowds to hear him, and he had generally a thousand auditors. This roused the jealousy of the Presbyterians, and the landlord was prevailed on to refuse them the use of the place any longer.

"The life of this good man was one continued scene of vexation and trouble. Soon after the Restoration, in 1660, Mr. Knollys, with many other innocent persons, was dragged from his own dwelling-house, and committed to Newgate, where he was kept in close custody for eighteen weeks, until delivered by an Act of grace upon the king's coronation. At that time, four hundred persons were confined in the same prison for refusing to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. A royal proclamation, occasioned by the rebellion of a person of the name of Venner, was issued at this time, prohibiting Anabaptists and other sectaries from worshipping God in public, except at their parish church. This cruel edict was the signal for persecution, and the forerunner of those sanguinary laws which disgraced the reigns of the Stuarts; and to these things we must attribute the frequent removals of Mr. Knollys, mentioned in a former part of this memoir. During his absence in Holland and Germany, his property was confiscated to the Crown; and, when the law did not favour the monarch's pretensions, a party of soldiers were dispatched to take forcible possession of Mr. Knollys's premises, which had cost him upward of £700."

The old man died in poverty at the age of ninety-three after spending at different times nine years of imprisonment, besides fines and banishments. In a brief review of his life, as immortality was about to break in upon him, he wrote:

"I confess that many of the Lord's ministers have excelled me, with whom he has not taken so much pains as he hath with me. I am an unprofitable servant; but, 'by the grace of God, I am what I am.'"

The brief visit of Hanserd Knollys to America, and his return to England, together with sacrifices and suffering—amid which he stood like a tower, unawed and unbowed beneath the thunder-storm, give to his character peculiar interest. But, beyond this, the age in which he lived will ever be memorable to Baptists. It was the age of Tombs, of Collier, of Kiffin, and of Bunyan, a day of trial and triumph. Let us listen to the historian, Macaulay,

speaking of these men:

"Bunyan had been bred a tinker, and had served as a private soldier in the parliamentary army. Early in his life he had been fearfully tortured by remorse for his youthful sins, the worst of which seem, however, to have been such as the world thinks venial. From the depths of despair, the penitent passed to a state of serene felicity. An irresistible impulse now urged him to impart to others the blessings of which he was himself possessed. He joined the Baptists, and became a preacher and writer. His education had been that of mechanic. He knew no language but the English, as it was spoken by the common people. Yet his rude oratory roused and melted hearers, who listened without interest to the laboured discourses of great logicians and Hebraists. His works were widely circulated among the humbler classes. One of them, the Pilgrim's Progress, in his own lifetime, was translated into several languages.

"It may be doubted whether any English Dissenter had suffered more severely under the penal laws than John Bunyan. Of the twenty-seven years which had 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 understanding and his 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." (The Continuation of Bunyan's Life, appended to his "Grace Abounding.")

"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 juncture, have rendered more valuable services 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 desolate, 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 grandson had forfeited." (Macaulay's History, vol. 2 p. 175).

Of Thomas Collier, a passing word is all that can be given. He preached at Guernsey, where he had many converts; but his cruel persecutors would not allow him to enjoy peace. They banished him and many of his followers from the place, and cast him into prison at Portsmouth; but how long he remained in confinement we are not informed. On account of his incessant labours and extensive usefulness, he is represented by his adversaries as having done much hurt in Lymington, Hampton, Waltham, and all along the west country. "This Collier," says Edwards, one of his Pedobaptist contemporaries, "is a great sectary in the west of England, a mechanical fellow, and a great emissary, and a dipper, who goes about Surrey, Hampshire, and those countries, preaching and dipping." (Sketches of Early Baptists). But time would fail to speak of Bamfield, of Denne, and of Tombs, the antagonist of

Baxter, of Jessey, also, and of Goswold, whose congregation in London, even at that day, was three thousand, and whose pulpit powers no man in England surpassed.

This was in 1660. There were then, even in the midst of all this persecution, two hundred and seventeen (217) Baptist churches in England; and a fearless avowal of their convictions, long afterward known as the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, was published and circulated, among whose signers were Kiffin, and Tombs, and Knollys.

It was a dark, and yet a glorious day, for the Baptist denomination; for the blackest clouds send forth the brightest lightnings. Charles I. was dethroned in 1648, and royalty, nobility, episcopacy, and the whole tribe of dead formalities were swept like rotting leaves from the realm. But the Stuarts had returned, and with sin a treason in their train, marched with garments rolled in blood and crime over the rights of a prostrate people. Episcopacy, ever the deadly foe of Christianity and soul-freedom, was again enthroned and clad in scarlet. It plied at once its engines of oppression and cruelty. But there were those whom the power of the Bishops could neither bend nor crush. Above their thunder rose, with fearless front, the forms of Bunyan, of Kiffin, of thousands more, whose names are found only in heaven's martyr-roll; Baptists, whose fidelity to their principles was, like those principles themselves—DEATHLESS.

From 1649 to 1659 was a kind of twilight hour of hope; and most valiantly did the Baptists press upon the attention of the world their principles of soul-freedom. These principles, previously sheltered in obscurity, became the property of the people. The parliamentary army, whose splendid victories won freedom for England, and struck terror to the tyrants of Europe, was composed, to a great extent, of Baptists. An army, not of hireling fighters, but of true men, battling for freedom. Says Carlyle:

"In dark, inextricable difficulties, Cromwell's officers used to assemble and pray alternatively for hours, for days, till some definite resolution arose among them. Consider that—in tears, in fervent prayers, and cries to the great God to have pity on them, to make His light shine before them. A little band of Christian brothers, who had drawn the sword against a black, devouring world, they cried to God in their straits, in their extreme need, not to forsake the cause that

was His. The light that now rose upon them, how could a human soul by any means get better light? To them it was as the shining of heaven's own splendour into the vast howling darkness."

Never before had the world seen such an army, whose "*officers preached,*" and whose privates were constantly "*busy in searching the Scriptures.*"

Major General Harrison, one of the most distinguished leaders, was a Baptist. To the cause of freedom his life had been given; and his death on the scaffold, on the return of Charles II., was that of a pious Christian hero. Ludlow, Tilburn, and Overton, the friend of Milton, and Col. Mason, the governor of the Isle of Jersey, were Baptists. And such was their increase and influence, that Baxter, the Presbyterian, complained that many of the soldiers became Baptists as a means of promotion. He laments, that "those who at first were but a few in the city and army, had, within three years, grown into a multitude." To them he traces the invasion of Scotland, the downfall of monarchy, and the establishment of a Republic. (Baxter's Works, xx. p. 255). In Cromwell's own family their influence was felt; and the genius of Milton shunned not to avow these sentiments. No wonder that Bunyan, who once served in the army against the king; not wonder that Baptists, generally, were the victims of hate and cruelty, from kings, bishops, and presbyters. They were, as their antagonist, Hawks, has said, "Republicans from principle." In the destruction of the throne of Charles, they were the principal actors. During that brief hour of freedom, they multiplied by thousands. But we must pass a little farther up the stream. To our inquiry—*Where did the Baptist come from?*

The confession or declaration of principles, to which reference has been made, was published during the reign of Charles I., in 1643. Thirty-two years previous, when the burning rage of Episcopal persecution was at its height, a similar avowal of their faith, a bold confession of their immortal principles, was published to the world. (Rippon's Register, No. 8). A reference to these *Confessions of Faith* often curls the lip of ignorance into a heartless sneer. But let the eye glance a moment on the situation of those who signed a sent forth these confessions; let their sorrows, their foes, the dangers menacing them, be seen,—and the man who does not honour the real heroism displayed in the fearless, outspoken avowal of their principles, is one destitute of the noble instincts of humanity.

A sublime scene was that, when, in the old hall in Philadelphia, with the roar of the British lion in their ears, feeble, and unorganized, and an ignominious death the certain consequence of defeat, man after man moved calmly forward and placed his name to that immortal document, the Declaration of Independence. Is there any comparison? Let us see.

THE BAPTISTS OF ENGLAND WERE POOR

Into their situation we can have an insight by an extract from a tract, put forth by one of them in 1613. A tract which, if we will reflect a moment, we will acknowledge to be a deep tone of sorrow, wrung from crushed, yet trusting, fearless hearts. The extract is from a little work published by Leonard Busher, citizen of London, entitled "*A Plea for Liberty of Conscience, presented to King James.*" Busher, toward the close of his treatise, says:

"Another reason why so many good people are now deceived, is, because we that have most truth are persecuted, and therefore most poor; whereby we are unable to write and print, as we would, against the adversaries of truth. It is hard to get our daily bread with our weak bodies and feeble hands. How, then, should we have means to defray other charges, and to write and print? I have, through the help of God, out of his Word, made a scourge of small cords, whereby antichrist and his ministers might be driven out of the temple of God. Also a declaration of certain false translations in the New Testament. But I want wherewith to print and publish them. Therefore must they rest till the Lord seeth good to supply it."

Ah, poor Busher! And yet dare he and the Baptist of his day, three years after King James' version was sent forth, attempt to show up the *false* translations of our present version. Then, alas, they were too poor to print the corrections which truth required. But they did not and do not despair.

When Busher thus lifted his voice, the ashes of Edward Wightman were still being borne about by the winds; for, he was burned at the stake at Litchfield for being Baptist just three years before. He was charged with affirming "*that the baptizing of infants is an abominable custom; that the Lord's Supper and baptism are not to be celebrated as they now are in the Church of England; and that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the Church of England, but only in part.*" For these, Episcopacy doomed him to death. It was the year 1612, April 11, that Wightman was sent to the stake; one year

after James' version was given to the world. And that almost canonized head of the Episcopal church thus, in the name of Christ, authorized poor Wightman's death.

"Whereas, the reverend father in Christ, Richard by Divine providence, of Coventry and Litchfield, bishop, hath signified unto us, that he, judicially proceeding, according to the exigence of the ecclesiastical canons, and of the laws and customs of this our kingdom of England, against one Edward Wightman, of the parish of Burton-upon-Trent, in the diocese of Coventry and Litchfield, and upon the wicked heresies of Ebion, Cerinthus, Valentinian, Arius, Macedonius, Simon Magus, Manus, Manichees, Photinus, and of the ANABAPTISTS.

"We command thee, that thou cause the said Edward Wightman, being in thy custody, to be committed to the fire in some public and open place, below the city aforesaid, for the cause aforesaid, before the people; and the same Edward Wightman, in the same fire, cause really to be burned, in the detestation of the said crime; and for manifest example of other Christians, that they may not fall into the same crime. And this no ways omit, under the peril that shall follow thereon. ("Witnesses, etc., James, Rex.")

And the Episcopal historian, Dr. Fuller, a contemporary with these events, says: "God may seem well pleased with these seasonable severities."

It was in the midst of such circumstances as these: poor, calumniated, fined, banished, burned at the stake, that Baptists had the courage to make public confession of the truths they held, and for which they were ready to die. Fearlessly, without equivocation or compromise in the face of danger and death, they penned, they signed, they published, and circulated what they professed and confessed. Let heartless, faithless scoffers scoff at it and such as them. Their privilege to scoff was won by the blood of these men.

But we must take a few more hurried steps along the upward pathway. "In 1589, Dr. Some, an Episcopal writer of that day, "*there were several Anabaptist conventicles in London and other places.*" This was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as the fires of Smithfield, which lit up the bloody reign of her sister Mary were dying out; and yet their slumbering flames were fed with the bodies of inoffensive Baptists, whose dooms were sealed by "the

most Protestant virgin Queen."

A congregation of Baptists was discovered on Easter day without Aldergate, London, in 1570, seven and twenty of whom were taken and imprisoned, where they wasted and died in filthy dungeons. And during the same year John Wielmaker and Henry Torwoort were burned at Smithfield. (Hume, Crosby, Cobbett).

Passing by the years of Mary's reign, which were marked by the indiscriminate murders of Protestants, we may pause over the illustrious years of the young and pious Edward VI., in which the foundation of Episcopacy was laid; when king-craft and priest-craft united to force upon Protestants a creed and a ritual still venerated and followed in America by the offshoots of that Antichristian hierarchy, Protestant Episcopacy and Methodist Episcopacy.

Cranmer, the father of English Episcopacy, ruled young Edward and England.

"There were, at this time," says Fox, in his Book of Martyrs, "numerous Anabaptists in England, who, with other errors, objected to infant baptism and to the manner of it, by sprinkling, instead of dipping. Among them was one George Van Parre. He had led a very exemplary life, and suffered with great composure of mind."

He was burned to death. A Protestant inquisition was established in 1549, with Cranmer at its head, and hundreds of Baptists were the victims of its cruelty. Among these, an illustrious and heroic example will ever awaken the sympathies of mankind.

Joan Boucher, of Kent, was a female of illustrious character and family distinction. Her education was far beyond that of the most eminent of her country-women of her age. The commission was granted to the bishops to search out and apprehend the heretical Baptists. Joan was selected as an illustrious victim. She was tried before these Protestant bishops and condemned. The venerable archbishop who framed many of the prayers still read in the Episcopal and Methodist Churches brought the warrant to the youthful Edward to sign. He doubted, even declined. The bishop plied him with arguments and arts. The king still thought it was an instance of the same spirit of cruelty for which the Reformers condemned the Papists. But Papist and Protestant Episcopacies, through their ramifications, are one in origin, form, and tyranny. Edward was silenced, not convinced. With tears in his

eyes, he signed the death warrant.

A year, within three days, transpired between her condemnation and death. Every effort was made to pervert her from the truth. At length, on the 2nd of May, 1550, she was bound to a stake in Smithfield, and died in fearless triumph. Her persecutors tried to sully her memory by attributing opinions to her which she never held. She was a Baptist; a member of the Baptist Church then existing at Canterbury, and which exists to this hour. Her memory is deathless, and the crime of her murder stains with blackness, and stamps FALSEHOOD on the front of Episcopacy.

We here approach those stirring times when society burst forth into new life; when the magic charm which wrapped Europe in the sleep of ages was broken, and the light of truth dawned like a new morning of creation on the world. Amid the struggle and the conflict of heart and mind, of truth with fiction, of the oppressed with tyrants, Baptists were everywhere mingling in the battle, foremost, fearless, numerous, in England, Spain, Germany, France, lifting up their voices, yielding up their lives; pleading for soul-freedom, and embalming it with their blood. The Reformation, a memorable milestone in the path of time, records ten thousand Baptist martyrdoms.

Did they originate in the great Protestant Reformation?

CHAPTER III — Century Sixteen

The Reformation

A pure Christianity is the glorious embodiment of soul freedom

Adapted to the spiritual wants and immoral aspirations of the individual man; meeting him in his darkness with the clearness of its discoveries; meeting him in weakness with its transforming power; meeting him in wretchedness with consolation and refuge; coming in direct contact with the heart, and flashing in upon it a full sense of its sinfulness and responsibility, and breathing into the deep recesses of his being the breath of life and hope, it raises him to communion with the Eternal, as responsible and as free to worship God, so far as human agencies or interferences are concerned, as though no other being but himself dwelt upon the earth. Christianity, uncorrupted, presses upon man his personal, his individual relations to eternity, telling him to "*work out his own salvation,*" and thus makes it a matter entirely between himself and his God.

Hence its announcement was not to kings or magistrates; to a convocation of rules or a hierarchy of priests. It chose no organized power as its oracle. It sanctioned no assumptions of human authority in spiritual concerns. Replete with blessings boundless and eternal, with all that could elevate and adorn a fallen humanity; shedding the light of truth on man's ruin and redemption; unfolding the future and perfection of his being, and flinging an everbrightening radiance over the grandeur of his destiny, Christianity was and is her *own* revealer; her *own* oracle; attending herself the heaven-lit fires that burn upon her altar.

Passing by, without a word or a look of recognition, the exalted ranks of principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, she unvailed her beauty and whispered her message of mercy to the obscure, the despised, the pious poor. She visited the haunts of the people, and not the conclaves of priests or the palaces of kings. From the hill-tops, by the shepherds, her songs were first heard. Amid poverty in the manger she took up her abode. She uttered her voice in the streets, and in the fields, in the fisherman's hut on the sea-shore, and in the chief places of concourse in the city. Leveling or ignoring all artificial distinctions, Christianity places each man on an equal platform before his Maker, *equally* dependent, *equally* responsible, and therefore *equally* free. This is the great conservative principle of human society, the

freedom of the soul, a principle whose elements Christianity concentrates and proclaims.

Where, then, shall we expect to behold Christianity, robed in her pure forms, lifting her laureled brow and gathering up her trophies?

*"Go walk where she hath been, and see
The shining footprints of her deity,
And feel those godlike breathing in the air
Which mutely tell HER SPIRIT hath been there."*

Truth flourishes where freedom is. On a fair field, single-handed against the serried hosts of error, her victory is sure.

Well, where did the truth flourish most? Let a foe to Baptists answer:

"In the times of general liberty this opinion (of Baptists) grew mightily." (Wall, ii, p. 317.)

Yes, in the times of general liberty it grew mightily; and even beneath the withering blast and fiery thunderbolts of despotism, though often riven, it could never be uprooted.

Such a time of general liberty was that glorious epoch known as the Protestant Reformation. Night had long wrapped in darkness and tyranny a sleeping world. Suddenly, as at the trump of God, men everywhere awoke and struggled to roll off the weight that was crushing them. Simultaneously in Germany, France, Switzerland, England, Spain, throughout Europe, mighty men rose up pleading for truth and freedom. But the history of the Reformation is known. Its results are all around us. Protestant Episcopacy, and that branch of it called Methodism, Presbyterianism through all its subdivisions, and Lutheranism, all Reformed or Protestant Churches, are the results of that mighty awakening and revolution. The Church of Rome they reformed. In it these Reformers were baptized, and its materials were used in the new formation.

And truly great men were these Reformers, these founders of the present Protestant Churches. From the monk of Wittenberg, from the valleys of the Alps, from the plains of France, the notes of soul-freedom rung forth. These notes were heard amid the mountain glens, in the forest depths, by thousands sheltered in remote obscurity, who came forth at the cheering call and owned themselves—BAPTISTS. Is this so? Let their opponents decide. Mosheim

says this:

"The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites, from that famous man to whom they owe much of their present felicity, is hidden in the depths of antiquity, and is of consequence difficult to be ascertained. This uncertainty will not appear surprising when it is considered that this sect started up suddenly in several countries at the same point of time, under leaders of different talents and different intentions, and at the very period when the first contests of the Reformers with the Roman pontiffs drew the attention of the world, and employed all the pens of the learned in such a manner as to render all other objects and incidents almost matters of indifference."

(The Anabaptists) "not only considered themselves descendants of the Waldenses, who were so grievously oppressed and persecuted by the despotic heads of the Romish Church, but pretend, moreover, to be the purest offspring of the respectable sufferers, being equally opposed to all principles of rebellion on the one hand, and all suggestions of fanaticism on the other."

"It may be observed," continues Mosheim, "that they are not entirely in an error when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and other ancient sects, who are usually considered as witnesses of the truth in times of general darkness and superstition. *Before the rise of Luther and Calvin*, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Monrovia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the doctrine, etc., which is the true source of all the peculiarities that are to be found in the religious doctrine and discipline of the Anabaptists." (Mosheim's History of the Anabaptists, p. 490-1).

These words of the learned Pedobaptist historian we have given in full, for all ought to know them.

The Baptists "started up suddenly in several countries at the same point of time, at the very period the Reformers drew attention of the world." They

came not from these Reformers, for they started up at the same point of time, and according to Mosheim, "they were not satisfied with the reformation proposed by Luther. They looked upon it as much beneath the sublimity of their views, and, consequently, undertook a more perfect reformation; or, to express more properly their visionary enterprise, *they proposed to found a true church, entirely spiritual, and truly divine.*" (Mosheim's History of the Anabaptists, p. 492).

They did not commence with Menno Simon, for when first he attended the Anabaptist assemblies, says Mosheim, he was a Popish priest; "and not till 1536 did he throw off the mask and publicly embrace their communion." They came not from Rome. They had not received baptism from her priests, and attempted no reformation of her dead, corrupting form. *Where did these Baptists come from?* The unchallenged words of Mosheim, already quoted, answer the question, "concealed in almost all the countries of Europe before the rise of Luther and Calvin." Let us illustrate his statement by a rapid glance at the places of their concealment.

ENGLAND

In the year 1539, the thirteenth of the reign of Henry VIII, the following enactment was promulgated:

"That those who are in any error, as Sacramentarians, Anabaptists, or any others that sell books having such opinions in them, once known, both the books and such persons shall be detected and disclosed immediately to the king's majesty, or one of his privy council, to the intent to have it punished without favor, even with the extremity of the law." (Fox's Martyrs, vol., ii, p. 440).

This was soon after the bands which attached Henry to Rome were severed. It was the first dawn of the Protestant Reformation in England. Henry had divorced Catharine, and married Anne Boleyn. The effects of his quarrel with Rome emboldened the Baptists to leave their hiding-places, "and," says, Fox, speaking of the influence of Anne Boleyn over Henry,

"we read of no persecution nor any abjuration to have been in the Church of England, save only that the Registers of London make mention of certain Anabaptists, of whom ten were put to death in sundry places of the realm, A.D. 1535; other ten repented and were saved." (Martyrology, p. 956, Ed. 2).

Here, then, were Baptists coming out from their concealment at the very first dim dawn of the Reformation, when Henry first broke with the Pope, because he would not grant him a divorce from Queen Catharine. The following year a convocation sat, and, after some matters relating to the king's divorce had been debated, the lower house presented to the upper house a list of religious heresies which prevailed in the realm, specifying those of the Anabaptists. Among its items are:

"1. Infants must needs be christened, because they are born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted, and which only can be done in the sacrament of baptism.

"2. That children or men once baptized, can or ought never to be baptized again.

"3. That they ought to repute and take all the Anabaptists, and every man's opinion agreeing with said Anabaptists, for detestable heresies and utterly to be condemned." (Dr. Wall, vol. ii, p. 309).

The truth, like an over-burning altar fire, thus lived unquenchable in concealment, "or," as says the persecuting Dr. Featly, who wrote against the Anabaptists in 1645, "if it broke out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, it was soon put out. But of late this sect has rebaptized hundreds of men and women together, in the twilight, in rivulets and some arms of the river Thames." (Ibid, Infant Bap., vol. ii, p. 316).

"They were found," says Bishop Burnett, "in almost every town and village in England." "They were emboldened," says Durham, as quoted by Dr. Wall, "and their great increase is accounted for by the partial toleration in religion."

The fact stated by Mosheim is thus verified: Baptists lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe before the rise of Luther and Calvin. They lay concealed in thousands in England, and came forth at the first note of partial freedom.

Where, then, did the Baptists come from?

CHAPTER IV — Century Fifteen

Wales, Bohemia, Germany

WALES

The vale of Carleon is situated between England and the mountainous parts of Wales, just at the foot of the mountains. It was for centuries the Piedmont of the Welsh. The Welsh Alps, Mount Merthyn and Tydfyl, the recesses and caverns, were the hiding-places of Christ's lambs. In this vale, as in other portions of Wales, the ordinances of Christ had been administered since the time of the Apostles. So soon as the Reformation occurred in England, and spread into Wales, communication was at once opened between the obscure followers of Christ in the mountain fortresses, and the awakened clergy of the establishment. Of the latter, three distinguished men adopted the sentiments held by those Welsh heretics, who claimed descent from the Apostles. Their names were Perry, Wroth and Ebury. These henceforth were called the Baptist Reformers, because they were of the Reformation, and had joined with the Baptists. We will now let the History of the Welsh Baptists present the facts in the case:

"It is no wonder that Perry, Wroth, and Ebury, commonly called the first Baptist Reformers in Wales, should have so many followers at once, when we consider that the field of their labors was the vale of Carleon and its vicinity. As they were learned men belonging to that religion established by law, and particularly as they left that establishment and joined the poor Baptists, their names are handed down to posterity, not only by their friends, but also by their foes, because more notice was taken of them than of those scattered Baptists on the mountains of the principality (Wales). If this denomination had existed in the country since the year 63, and so severely persecuted, it must be, by this time, an old *thing*. But the men who left the Popish establishment were the chief objects of their rage, particularly as they headed the sect everywhere spoken against, and recognized Baptist Churches. The vale Olchon, also, is situated between mountains almost inaccessible. How many hundred years it had been inhabited by Baptists before William Ebury, it is impossible to tell. It is a fact that can not be controverted, that there

were Baptists here at the commencement of the Reformation; and no man upon earth can tell when the church was formed, and who began to baptize in this little Piedmont. Whence came these Baptists? It is universally thought to be the oldest church, but how old none can tell. We know that, at the separation, they had a minister named HOWELL VAUGHAN, quite a different sort of Baptist from Ebury, Wroth, Vavasor, Powell, and others, who had come out from the Established Church. And this is not to be wondered at; for they had dissented from the Church of England, and had, probably, brought some of her corruptions with them. But the mountain Baptists were not (Protestants or) dissenters from the establishment. We know the Reformers were for mixed communion, but the Olcan received no such practice." (Thomas's History Welsh Baptists. Also Hist. W. B., by J. Dais, p. 17).

These are most conclusive evidences that William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into the English language, and the four books of Moses into the Welsh language, in 1536, was a Welsh Baptist of that plain, strict, apostolic order. He lived most of his time in Gloucester, England; but Llewellyn Tyndale and Hezekiah Tyndale were members of the Baptist Church in Abergavenny, South Wales. (Dais's History Welsh Baptists, p.21). The text of Mosheim is thus fully illustrated by facts. Baptists lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe before the rise of Calvin and Luther.

BOHEMIA

A deep forest, extending three hundred miles in length, and two hundred in breadth, was, in the days of Roman triumph, settled by a tribe of Celts called Boii, who fled to its shelter to avoid the Roman yoke. Hence the word "Bohemia," under which are now included the countries of Silesia and Moravia. A short time before the birth of Christ, Caesar described this Hercynian Forest thus:

"It is nine day's journey over. It begins on the confines of the Helvetii, Nemetes, and Rauraci, (that is, Switzerland, Basil, and Spires,) and extends along the Danube to the borders of the Daci and Anartes, (that is, Transylvania,) there turning from the river to the left, it runs through an infinite number of countries. No one could ever yet come to the end of it or know its utmost extent, though

some have gone sixty days' journey into it."

This was the Hercynian Forest, of which the Black Forest was then a part. Amid its depths, Paul tells us he preached the gospel of Christ, and its tribes were visited by Titus. (Rom. 15:19, 28; 2 Tim. 4:16). In this wilderness, before the rise of Luther, Mosheim tells us, were Baptists. Thousands of them claim to have been sheltered there in the wilderness from the wrath of the dragon. Is it true? In 1519, six years before Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms, a letter was addressed to Erasmus from Bohemia, thus describing this people:

"These men have no other opinion of the Pope, cardinals, bishops, and other clergy than of manifest Antichrists. They call the Pope sometimes the beast, and sometimes the whore, mentioned in the Revelation. Their own bishops and priests, they themselves do choose for themselves, ignorant and unlearned laymen, that have wife and children. They mutually salute one another by the name of brother and sister. They own no other authority than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. They slight all the doctors, both ancient and modern, and give no regard to their doctrine. Their priests, when they celebrate the offices of mass, (or communion,) do it without any priestly garments; nor do they use any prayer, or collects on this occasion, but only the Lord's Prayer, by which they consecrate bread that has been leavened. They believe, or own little or nothing of the sacraments of the church. Such as come over to their sect, must every one be *baptized anew in mere water*. They make no blessing of salt, nor of water; nor make any use of consecrated oil. They believe nothing of divinity in the sacrament of the eucharist; only that the consecrated bread and wine do, by some occult signs, represent the death of Christ; and, accordingly, that all that do knee down to it, or worship, are guilty of idolatry; that that sacrament was instituted by Christ to no other purpose but to renew the memory of his passion, and not to be carried about or held up by the priests to be gazed on. For Christ himself, who is to be adored and worshipped with the honor of Latreia, sits at the right of God, as the Christian Church confesses in the Creed. Prayers to saints, and for the dead, they count a vain and ridiculous thing; as likewise auricular confession and penance enjoined by the priest for sins.

Eves and fast-days are, they say, a mockery and disguise of hypocrites."

Every word in this description points out Baptists. Two of these brethren waited on Erasmus at Antwerp, to congratulate him on his bold statements of truth. He declined their congratulations, and reproached them as Anabaptists. (*Adversarii nobis hunc titulumie., Anabaptistarum, Apud Lydium. Robinson's Researches, p. 506*). Luther and the German Reformers, whom they joyfully welcomed into the light, turned from them with antipathy and cheerlessly they returned to their concealment in the depths of their native forests to tell their brethren "They are adverse to us because of our name - i.e. Anabaptists." (Erasmus's Answer is in *Camerarus de Eccl. Fratrum, p. 125*). They acknowledged the charge; they owned themselves Baptists. But their concealment, their principles, and their numbers were known. Entreaty, sophistry, and threats were used in vain to influence, pervert, or intimidate them. They appealed to God's word, and were unwavering.

Their destruction was planned and brutally executed. An edict for their banishment was obtained from the Emperor, and Protestants and Catholics rejoiced in its enforcement. About forty thousand Baptists were proscribed. His majesty, in the edict, expresses his astonishment at the number of Anabaptists, and his horror at their principal error, which was, that they would submit to no human authority on matters of religion. The edict was published just three weeks before the harvest and vintage came on, that these poor people might not be able to carry away the produce of their toil. Their lands were to be forfeited to the emperor, and they banished to beggary. And three weeks after the proclamation of the edict, death would be inflicted on any of them found in the borders of the country. (*Carafa, p. 133, quoted by Robinson in Researches*).

And thus is the scene described:

"It was autumn, the prospect and the pride of husbandmen. Heaven had smiled on their honest labors. Their fields stood thick with corn; and the sun and the dew were improving every moment to give them their last polish. The yellow ears waved an homage to their owners; and the wind, whistling through the stems and the russet herbage, softly said, *Put in the sickle, the harvest is come*. Their luxuriant vine leaves, too, hung aloft by the tendrils, mantling over the

clustering grapes, like watchful parents over their tender offspring; but all were fenced by an imperial edict, and it was instant death to approach. Without leaving one murmur upon record, in solemn, silent submission to the power that governs the universe and causes *all things to work together for good* to his creatures, they packed up and departed. In several hundred carriages they conveyed their sick, the innocent infants sucking at the breasts of their mothers who had newly lain-in, and their decrepit parents, whose work was done, and who silvery locks told every beholder that they wanted only the favor of a grave. At the borders they filed off, some to Hungary, others to Transylvania, some to Wallachia, others to Poland and Sach-hel-greater, far greater for their virtue, than Ferdinand for all his titles and for all his glory."

Ah, me! what a sad pilgrimage was that! Sad! No; it was sublime. And when the triumphal march of bannered legions, flushed with victory and crowned with glory, shall have been forgotten, the memory of these men, their pilgrimage, their tears, their sublime, trusting silence will be held in everlasting remembrance. Bohemian Baptists, forty thousand of them, who sent messengers to cheer the German Reformers at the first dawn of the Reformation; who lay concealed in the dark forests of Dalmatia, "before the rise of Calvin and Luther." *Where did they come from?*

GERMANY

Luther, in his strugglings into light, had boldly written at the commencement of his career as a Reformer, these words:

"The term '*baptism*' is Greek, and may be rendered '*dipping*,' as when we dip anything all over, so that it is covered all over; and although the custom is now abolished among many, (for they do not dip children, but only pour on a little water,) yet they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately taken out; the etymology of the word seems to require this. The Germans call baptism *tauff* from *tieff*, depth, signifying that to baptize is to plunge into the depth. And, indeed, if we consider the design of baptism, we shall see that this is requisite." (Luther, De Pedobaptism, p. 71).

He had also said:

"If you receive the sacraments without faith, you bring yourselves

into great difficulty, for we oppose against your practice the saying of Christ, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" (Luther's Works, tome vii).

What wonder that from their concealment came forth the banished, enfeebled, downtrodden Baptists, to hail him as a brother. And so they did. "The drooping spirits of these people," says Mosheim, "who had been dispersed through many countries, and persecuted everywhere, were revived when they were informed of Luther's course. Then they spoke with openness and freedom." But some years afterward he became their foe, and notwithstanding what he had said about dipping, persecuted them as redippers or Anabaptists. Among these German Baptists was one MUNZER, on whose noble efforts to break the fetters of political slavery so much insult and falsehood have been heaped. But Munzer was a Popish priest. He followed Luther in his reforming projects. "Thomas Munzer," says D'Aubigne, "was not without talent. Certain mystical writings, which he had read in his youth, had given a false direction to his thoughts. He made his first appearance at Zwickau; quitted Wittenberg on Luther's return thither; and, not willing to hold a secondary place in general esteem, became pastor of the small town of Alstadt." (D'Aubigne, vol. iii p. 148). He was then a reforming parish priest, and not till years after was he known or named as an Anabaptist. So that before Munzer left Rome and joined the political party engaged in the Munster Rebellion, Luther and Erasmus, as well as the Pope, had denounced and persecuted the thousands of Baptists scattered through Europe. But of Poland we might speak; of Switzerland also, and the persecution there, of almost every country in Europe.

Is the statement of the Pedobaptist historian sustained? Let it be repeated: "*Before the rise of Luther and Calvin there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe many persons who adhered tenaciously to the doctrines of the Anabaptists.*" Thousands upon thousands in the mountain fastnesses, amid the sheltered valleys of the Alps, in the deep forests of Illyricum, and the obscure glens of England, were Baptists. The torch of truth, which lit their places of concealment, revealing the blackness of the deep rayless night which surrounded them, flashed unnoticed into the cell of the hermit and the monk, and, under God's guiding eye, directed priests and scholars to his holy word. That torch, which these Baptists had borne steadily aloft and handed down along their blood-tracked path, at length lit up the world in the blaze of

splendor which burst forth at the Reformation! that became an epoch, a milestone, in the march of Christ's witnesses. Beyond it, before it, we have found these witnesses, these Baptists. The inquiry again recurs, WHERE DO THESE BAPTISTS COME FROM?

CHAPTER V — Century Fourteen

Wickliffe and the Lollards

A bright star rose on the darkness of the fourteenth century, and threw its light over Britain and the continent of Europe.

It was the darkest hour of that long night of Papal oppression. Over that darkness and dead silence, from the Avon to the Tiber, a sound went forth from Lutterworth; a light from the center of Britain. A memorable spot is that little village Richard III buckled on his armor for the battle of Bosworth field. Near it Wolsey fell, and with him the power of Popery in England. There, too, stands the memorable little ground of Naseby, where Cromwell and liberty triumphed over the defeated despot Charles.

Lutterworth! Associations cluster round it more potent in their influence than the clash of armies or the fall of kings. The lone voice that went forth from it. the light that gleamed from it in the fourteenth century are heard and felt still, must echo and beam through all time, and all eternity. It was the voice and light of truth, truth which once generated is immortal. Chains can not bind it; time can not weaken it. Eternal is its nature; eternity is its guardian. (Bancroft) John De Wickliffe, rector of Lutterworth, was the chosen instrument to announce that truth, and bear aloft that flame-torch through the world's valley of the shadow of death.

On the banks of the Tee, in Yorkshire, John Wickliffe was born, in 1324. With Bradwordine, and Occam, and Dunn, and Scotus, the luminaries of the age, He passed his early manhood in Oxford University. He entered the clerical order, and beheld before him the highest honors in the "*Church*." But, like Luther God's Word had found entrance into his soul, and. in obedience to its teaching he tore away from his heart the webs and wrappages of error which incased and deadened it. On, step by step, he struggled into light, until on the Bible and the Bible alone, he took his lime and defiant position. Among the principles he advocated were, that the church consisted only of believers, the saved; that baptism was a "*sign of grace received before*," and consequently should be administered to those only who professed to have received "*grace*."

"It was in 1371" says Walsingham, "that Dunn and Wickliffe read the accursed opinions of the Berengerians, one of which undoubtedly was the denial of infant baptism." (Neal's History of the Puritans). Thomas Walden, who was familiar with his writings, called him "one of the seven heads that

rose out of the pit, for he denied the baptism of infants, that *Heresie* of the Lollards of which he was so great a leader." And further, Wickliffe, in the eleventh chapter of his Trialogues, as quoted by Danvers, states that "believers are the only subjects of baptisms."

In his adherence to the Bible as his only rule of faith and practice; in his denial of grace or pardon communicated in baptism; in his rejection of infant and avowal of *Christian* baptism; and in his clear definition of a church as an assembly of baptized believers, WICKLIFFE WAS A BAPTIST. Among Baptist heroes and martyrs must his name be enrolled. As one of them was reviled while living, and, forty years after his peaceful death, his ashes were violated by the foes of truth.

But Wickliffe did not stand alone. Thousands were around him, and followed him. Branded, burned, and driven from the haunts of men, these Wickliffites, these Baptists, were found scattered throughout England. "They were as numerous," says Sir William Newbury, in his History of England, "as the sands of the sea."

Here, then, we have found these people in the midst of the fourteenth century. *Where did these Baptists come from?* Did they originate with Wickliffe? Did the "morning star" of the Reformation usher in the advent of the Baptists, whose existence previously was not? Let us see. Milner, in his History of Christianity, says:

"The term 'Lollard' was affixed to those who professed a greater degree of attention to acts of piety and devotion than the rest of mankind. Of these, Walter Reynard, a Dutchman, was apprehended and burned at Cologne. This is he whom I have already called Reynard Lollard, in the account of the Waldenses, and from whom the Wickliffites are supposed to have acquired the name of Lollards."

That these Lollards were Baptists is evident. The denial of infant baptism we have already seen was the "*great heresie of the Lollards.*" In the Dutch Martyrology is an account of one L. Clifford, who was arraigned as a Lollard, and confessed and recanted, acknowledging that they renounced infant baptism. And Fox, in his Martyrology, has extracted from the register of the Bishop of Hereford, on of the charges of which the Lollards were found guilty, "that faith ought to precede baptism."

Of these Lollard Baptists was William Sawtre, the first name in that illustrious roll of martyrs who died for soul-freedom in Britain; and soon after, at the hour of midnight, one hundred of those down-trodden Christians assembled to worship god among the bushes of St. Giles, near London, hoping, at that hour and unfrequented place, to be free from detection and molestation, were tracked and murdered by the king and a troop of his courtiers.

Among the Lollards was one illustrious man of title, wealth, and courage. It was Sir John Oldcastle, Earl of Cobham. He was apprehended and brought to trial before the Bishops. He met them and their charge with fearless intrepidity. Nobly he avowed and advocated the doctrines which have distinguished Baptists in every age. Honor and preferment were before him if he would but recant; disgrace, ignominy, and death the reward of his steadfastness. He chose to be numbered with the scorned, down-trodden, *vulgar* Baptist; And confront shame and suffering, rather than abandon or betray the immortal principles that inspired them.

Faith, inwrought, heartfelt faith, shining, without a shadow into the depths of a man's being, revealing the eternal verity of the thing believed, faith resting on a rock which the rush of a wrecked universe can not move, this is the soul of true heroism. There never was a hero without it. Dragged, amid insults, to Tyburn to be hung up by the waist and burned to death, his possessions confiscated, his family impoverished, his name cast out as evil, Sir John Oldcastle never wavered. this was the victory whereby he overcame the world, even his faith. In death he warned the people to follow nothing but the scriptures; prayed for his enemies, and exclaimed, "I die in triumph!"

And so he received the crown which celestial conquerors wear. Pity or regret found no place in the hearts of his sanctimonious murderers. "He was an Anabaptist." said Parsons the English Churchman, "and deserved to die as a traitor." (Dr. Thomas Fuller, Church History, vol. ii, p. 448).

"Not satisfied with his death," [says Fox,] "the clergy induced the Parliament to make fresh statutes against the Lollards. It was enacted, among other things, that whosoever read the Scriptures in English, should forfeit lands, chattels, goods, and life, and be condemned as heretics, should be hanged for treason against the king, and then burned for heresy against god." (Fox, Acts and

Monuments).

"No sooner was this act passed than a violent persecution was raised against the Lollards." (Ib., Book of Martyrs, p. 224).

In an old history of the Welsh Baptists are recorded the labors and sufferings of an intelligent, active Baptist layman, who, from Wales, passed into England in company with a preacher. His name was Walter Brute.

"While the Lord was employing the immortal Wickliffe to prepare his way in England, he remembered Wales in his tender mercy, and visited her with the dayspring on high. The pioneer in the cause of the Reformation in Wales was Walter Brute, who was a native of the principality, and who had been at Oxford, where he became acquainted with Wickliffe, with whom he formed an intimacy, and fully entered into his views respecting the reformation of the church. It is an old adage, that like begets like, which was verified in the case Brute. Having reflected on the pitiable condition of his countrymen, who were bewildered in the haze of ignorance, his heart was moved with compassion. He left the university, endowed with the principles, fortified with the intrepidity, and fired with the zeal of his colleague; and fully determined to resist the delusions and abominations of the secular church, even unto blood, he entered his native land, where he soon distinguished himself." Fox says, that Walter Brute was "eminent in learning, gifts, knowledge, zeal, and grace."

"He fearlessly sounded the trump of God throughout the land, until, in a few years, the huge temple of Antichrist began to crumble, and its gilded worshipers to tremble for their safety, As his weapons were those of truth and righteousness, and his cause the cause of God, his victory was certain, and he soon became instrumental in rescuing the prey from the mighty, and in delivering many lawful captives. His disinterestedness becoming generally known, and his labors of love appreciated, he found a number of steady friends among high and low. It may be supposed, that in traversing the country to preach the truth, and to seek the lost sheep of the house of Adam, that the established churches were closed against him; for we learn that he was preaching from house to house, and in the chief

places of concourse and elsewhere, and conducting the worship of God with the greatest simplicity. He maintained that baptism was not necessary to salvation; and that it was to be administered to adults subsequently to conversion. And he frequently took occasion to protest against the doctrines and discipline of the Established Church. His zeal for the truth and his exposures of the Papacy, soon elicited the hostility of the clergy, and fixed upon him all the envy of the sons of the Church, in the prosecution of the heresiarch, Walter Brute, whose words the land was not able to bear. The insolence, oppression, and exsquires of the clergy had become quite intolerable to the lords and squires, whose hereditary high-mindedness would not suffer the sons of Levi to surpass them in authority or splendor. Many of the great congratulated Brute in putting a check to the clergy from no other principles than those of personal interest and envy; and gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to chastise their powerful rivals. Besides, the Reformation had so extensively prevailed among all ranks, that some of the great and nobles were pious reformers, and others were impelled to yield to the force of public opinion.

Arrested and brought before the Bishop of Herefordshire, he confounded his adversaries by his fearlessness and acquaintance with the Scriptures. In the account of his trial, recorded by fox, is his written answer to the Bishop:

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Walter Brute, sinner, Layman, husbandman, and Christian, having my offspring of Britons, have been accused to the Bishhop of Herefordshire that I did err in matters of Christian faith, by whom I am required that I should give a written answer.

"If any man of any state or sect whatever, will show me that I err in my writings or sayings, by the authority of the sacred Scriptures, or a probable reason grounded thereon, I will gladly receive his information. But as for the bare words of any teacher, (Christ only excepted,) I will not simply believe, unless he shall be able to establish them by the truth of experience, and the example of God's Word."

Such was the fearless denial of Episcopal and church teachings which

Baptists dared to utter centuries before Luther was born, and which is their leading characteristic still. Walter Brute was condemned as an Anabaptist.

But from the ten thousand sufferers of the poor Lollards we must pass. there still stands at this hour the gloomy monument of their miseries on the banks of the Thames, the Lollards Tower at Lambert Palace, London. Fitted up as the palace of their torture by the Bishop of Canterbury, in 1414, it stands there a witness to the triumph of truth. It speaks with an awful, yet prophetic eloquence, of the future of the Baptists.

But still the question occurs, these Baptists, Lollards, Wickliffites, Whence came they? Was Wickliffe, then, their father and founder?

It must be remembered that Wickliffe was denominated by his persecutors, "The leader of the Lollards." It is evident that thousands of these Lollards hailed him as a great light, whom God had raised up and sent forth amid the darkness. that he adopted their principles, and became one of them, there is little doubt. but why were they called Lollards? Now Mosheim, with whom there is a general agreement among historians, states that

"Walter, a Dutchman of remarkable eloquence, and famous for his writings, who came from Mentz to Cologne, was burned there in 1322." (History, p. 356)

Fuller and Perrin state that he came to England in the reign of Edward III. "from the Waldenses, among whom he was a great barb or pastor." That this man's name was Walter Reynard is most evident, and, "Lollard," a term of reproach, was given to him and his brethren because they were accustomed to sing psalms and hymns. Abelly says the word is derived from *loben*, "to praise," and *herr*, "Lord." But, however this may be, the fact is unchallenged, that Walter the Lollard, a shining light in the midnight of Papal darkness, after passing from country to country, lifting his eloquent voice and scattering over the wintry seed-fields the germs of truth, passed trough England to build up the scattered flock of Christ there, and then breathed out his great soul amid the fires of martyrdom, before John Wickliffe was born.

That this Walter Lollard was a Baptist is unquestionable. He came from the Waldensian Baptists to England, and found Baptists there, who were welcomed this eloquent teacher among them, may be traced to a still higher date. At the time when the Norman nobles of William the Conqueror were crushing out the spirit, the language, and nationality of Englishmen; when a

foreign priesthood and a foreign tongue were forced by cruel edicts upon the prostrate Saxons, there were those who still dared to avow their deathless attachment to the simple truths and ordinances of primitive Christianity. During the reigns of William and his son Rufus, they were subjected to insults and persecutions, and were denounced by the imported Popish Bishop, Lanfrank, of Canterbury. (Fuller, Ecclesiastical History, vol. I). Gascony and Guienne, the domains of the Duke of Normandy, were, at the conquest, attached to England. The intercourse between the latter and the Pyrenean mountains, became general and intimate. "In Gascony the heretics, says the old monkish historian, Sir William Newbury, *were as numerous as the sands of the sea.*" A company of these Baptists were found in England in the tenth century, and is thus described by Henry in his history of Great Britain, which in substance, corresponds with Napier, Collier, and Lyttleton:

"A company of about thirty men and women attracted the attention of the government by the singularity of their religious practices and opinions. They were apprehended and brought before the Council of the Clergy at Oxford. Being interrogated about their religion, their teacher, named Gerard, a man of learning, announced in their name, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the apostles. Upon a more particular inquiry, it was found that they denied several of the received doctrines of the church, and, refusing to abandon their damnable heresies. they were condemned as incorrigible heretics, and delivered to the secular arm to be punished. The king, (Henry II,) at the instigation of the clergy, commanded them to be branded with red-hot iron on their foreheads, whipped through the streets of Oxford, and having their clothes cut short at their girdles, to be turned into the open fields, all persons being forbidden to afford them shelter or relief under the severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed with the utmost rigor, and it being the depth of winter, all these unhappy persons were pressed with cold and hunger."

A further account of these people and their treacherous treatment, is found in the Dutch Martyrology, or "*Martyr's Mirror*," (This rare book is in the Jesuit's College of St. Louis) which places the date in 1161, and gives abundant evidence that they were Baptists. Their leader was branded on the forehead and chin, and, as they were driven, bleeding and naked, out into the wintry

fields to die, he raised his voice in triumph, singing,

*"Blessed are ye when ye are hated,
Beaten, despised." etc.*

But they did not all perish. There were among the crushed Saxons a hatred to their foreign oppressors, dings, and priests, and a common sympathy for those who suffered from Norman cruelty. The seed was scattered, and a half century afterward, Walter Lollard preached among these same Baptist, Waldenses of England.

The Lollards, The Wickliffites, the suffering, struggling pioneers of the Reformation, we have found them away up amid the darkness of the middle ages, found them weak, yet fearless; few, yet mighty; poor, yet powerful, sublime in their sufferings, and triumphant in their prostration. Baptists they were, whether represented by Wickliffe. or Lollard, or Gerard. Neither the power of man, nor the gates of hell could prevail against them.

But from the Lollards, and from England with it blessed and elevated by the truths they cherished, let us pass still upward, marking this or them as a milestone in the path of time.

'In the year 1391, the king, wishing to show favor to the Church, issued a letter to the nobility of the Principality, in which he imperiously enjoined them to assist Dr. John Trevnant, Bishop of Hereford, in apprehending and punishing Walter Brute and his adherents."*Evans Martyn's Letter.*

CHAPTER VI — Century Thirteen

Pete de Brue

"History is composed of innumerable biographies." At least it should be. We love to tread the path beaten out by human footsteps, and lit up by imperishable deeds. Men and their acts are the waymarks which make the road familiar; the travelers and their footprints give all its interest to the moss-grown pathway.

From the Baptists of England, who were scourged and driven forth into the wintry fields to die, we ascend a step higher. Let us travel back the path they came. We shall let Dr. Wall, in his very opposition to Baptists, tell:

"William of Newburg, who lived then in England, describes some of these men by the name of Publicani, and by their being Gascoigners; and says, about thirty of them came out of Germany into England, under Henry II, about 1170, and being examined of their faith, they denied and detested holy baptism, the eucharist, and marriage. Foxe, out of *Historia Gisburnensis*, mentions the same men; and that the chief of them were Gerhardus and Dulcinus Navarensis. He gives no account of any opinion they had against baptism. But Holinshead says, they derogated from the sacraments such grace as the church, by her authority, had then ascribed to them." (Wall, his *Infant Baptism*, vol. ii, p. 264. As quotations from a multitude of authors confuse, I shall confine myself principally to Wall, Oxford edition, 1835, or new American edition, 1860.)

Gascony was in the south of France, not far from the Pyrenees, those mountain walls which divide France from Spain. Here the same historian, Newburg, says: "These heretics were as numerous as the sands of the sea." They were called sometimes Albigenses, and sometimes Waldenses; this later word meaning simply, *dwellers in valleys*. Of these French Baptists, who passed from Gascony to England, Wall says:

"But the more exact accounts, and particularly Mr. Limborch's history of the inquisition, do distinguish the Waldenses from the Albigenses, both as to their tenets and their places of abode. And it is, I think, only among the latter that any Antipedobaptists were found. As FRANCE WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY in Christendom where dipping of children was left off, so there FIRST

ANTIPEDOBAPTISM BEGAN." (Wall, his *Infant Baptism*, vol. ii, p. 239).

Or more truly, according to this admission of a champion of infant baptism in France, whose emperor gave power to the beast, the superstition of infant sprinkling was first introduced, and "dipping left off." and, consequently, there the followers of Christ first displayed their uncompromising opposition to the corrupting rites. Yes, where sprinkling was first introduced, Antipedobaptists are first found. When was that? Not in apostolic days. Wall admits it was in beautiful, degraded France. When was it? Date it when you may, and then, and there, you must date the determined opposition to it in the land that gave it birth. These Albigeses, then so numerous in Gascony, were Baptists. But Wall shall speak again:

"First, one Evervinus, of the diocese of Cologne, a little before the year 1140, writes to St. Bernard a letter, (which is lately brought to light by F. Mabillon, *Analect*, tom. iii,) giving him an account of two sorts of heretics lately discovered in that country. One sort were, by his description, perfect Manichees. Of the other sort he says:

"they condemn the sacraments, except baptism only; and this only in those who are come to age, who, they say, are baptized by Christ himself, whoever be the minister of the sacraments. They don't believe infant baptism. alleging that place of the Gospel: He that believeth and is baptized, etc. All marriage they call fornication, except that which is between two virgins,' etc.

"Then at the year 1146, Peter, abbot of Clugny, writing against one Peter Bruis, and one Henry, his disciple, and their associates. charges them with six errors, the first of which was their denial of infant baptism. The other five were:

"2. That churches ought not be built; and if built, ought to be pulled down.'

"If we were to credit all the reports that come now from France, the Cevennois would seem to of this opinion, by their destroying so many churches; but I hope that those reports are not true. (These are Wall's own words).

"He also says, that they were reported to renounce all the Old

Testament, and all the New, except the four Gospels, but this he was not sure of; and would not impute it to them, for fear he might slander them. So it appears that he did not certainly know what they held. Yet, to make his proofs unquestionable, he first proved the truth of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, by their agreement with the Gospels; and then the Old Testament by the New. And then out of the whole proceeds to refute their tenets, bestowing a chapter on each. The first of them was, as I said against infant baptism, and is thus expressed:

"The first proposition of the new heretics. They say:

" 'Christ sending his disciples to preach, says in the Gospel: *Go ye out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* From these words of our Savior, it is plain that none can be saved unless he believe and be baptized; that is, have both Christian faith and baptism.

"It is therefore an idle and vain thing for you to wash persons with water, at such a time when you may indeed cleanse their kin from dirt in a human manner, but not purge their souls from sins. But we do stay till the proper time of faith; and when a person is capable to know his God, and believe in Him; then we do (not as you charge us, rebaptize him, but) baptize him.'

"This is, as to the practice, perfectly agreeable with the modern Antipedobaptists; but, as Cassander observes, it is upon quite contrary grounds. For the Antipedobaptists now do generally hold, that all that die infants, baptized or not, of Christian or of heathen parents, are saved; and so it is needless to baptize them; whereas, these held that, baptized or not, they could not be saved; and so it was to no purpose to baptize them. And this writer does accordingly spend most of the chapter, which is in answer to this tenet of theirs, proving that infants, as well as grown men, are capable of the kingdom.

"'Abate,' says he, 'of that overmuch severity which you have taken upon you, and do not exclude infants from the kingdom of heaven, of whom Christ says, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven.*'

"It is to be noted," continues Wall, "that this author speaks of this opinion as then lately set on foot; and says, it might have seemed to need or deserve confutation, 'were it not that it had now continued twenty years. that the first seeds of it wee sown by Peter de Bruis,' (who was living when the book was written, but put to death before it was published, of which mention is made in the preface). It was first vented in the mountainous country of Dauphine, and had there some followers; from whence, being in good measure expelled, it had got footing in Gascony, and the parts about Toulouse, being propagated by Henry, who was a Disciple and successor of the said Peter.

"This writer aggravates this charge of novelty by urging that if baptism, given in infancy, be null and void, as they pretend, 'Then all the world has been blind hitherto, and by baptizing infants for above a thousand years, has given but a mock baptism, and made but fantastical Christians, etc. and, whereas, all France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and all Europe, has had never a person now for three hundred or almost five hundred years baptized otherwise than in infancy, it has had never a Christian in it.'"

It must be remembered that the foregoing citations were made by Wall writing against the Baptists, and are quoted from Papist persecutors, who wrote for the purpose of arousing the vengeance of the church against these water heretics. No wonder that the rejection of infant baptism was slanderously construed into a denial of infant salvation, when the Papist joined the two together as inseparable. but that these heretics believed in a converted church membership, in believers' baptism only, and in local church independency, is most evident from the character of the reproaches and calumnies of their foes, which is and must be recognized by all who regard his word. It has been the *question* of the ages; it is preeminently the question of this age.

If any proof were needed, it is abundant. These men were Baptists. The Jesuit Gretzer after describing this ancient sect, says: "This is a picture of the heretics of our own day, especially the Anabaptist." "to say honestly what I think," writes the celebrated Limborch, of all the modern sects, the Dutch Baptists most resembles the Albigenses and Waldenses." "The Baptists are

not entirely in error." says Mosheim, "when they boast their descent from the Waldenses, petrobrussians, and other Ancient sects, who are usually considered witnesses for truth in the time of general darkness and superstition."

No, we are not entirely in error, even according to our ancient and present foes. "Witnesses for the truth in the times of general darkness," our elder brethren have ever been. Noble brotherhood! Poor, simple down-trodden were ye; but boldly, amid gloom and blood, ye stood forth, witnesses for the truth. Baptists they have an ancestry around whom associations cluster, eclipsing the triumphs of all earth's chivalry. Baptists, O! that the earnest, death-defying devotion of their forefathers still were theirs.

The Baptists who came from the regions of the Pyrenees to England, were called Wickliffites and Lollards. We have traced them to Gascony, where they were called by the names already given from Wall, Henricians, Petrobrussians, and Arnoldists. Of these men we shall now speak.

WHAT IS BAPTISM? Has this word no meaning to it? Why, then, is not that meaning discovered and its requirement followed? What a blessing to the world were this question settled, and put forever at rest.

CHAPTER VII — Century Twelve

Henry of Lausanne, Peter de Bruis (Bruys) Arnold of Brescia

HENRY OF LAUSANNE

In the beautiful city of Lausanne, surrounded by the towering Alps, the sheltering homes of God's hidden ones, an Italian hermit learned the simple truths of the gospel. The idleness of the hermit was at once exchanged for the armor and the toil of an ambassador of Christ. To the dwellers in those valleys he broke the bread of life; and over those mountain peaks he passed, bringing glad tidings to beautiful, yet darkened France. From Mans, from Poitiers, from Bordeaux, he was successively banished, after what victories or defeats we know not. Of martial valor, of deeds of chivalry performed on those same spots, we have many a glowing record. What would we not give to know the words and acts of this simple gospel preacher, as he passed through those proud old cities, with their grim castles and splendid cathedrals, and glorious recollections of heraldry and conquest looming up in the Gothic twilight of that age. But like the apostolic record, which notes the entrance of Paul into Philippi, where the beauties of Grecian art, column, and statue, and temple, robed in the autumnal charms of a vicious loveliness, surrounded him on every side, one fact only has importance sufficient for enduring record: "There they preached the Gospel." So of Henry. More than this we know not.

"He passed through these cities, exercising his ministerial function with the utmost applause of the people, and disclaiming with vehemence and fervor against the superstitions they had introduced into the Christian Church." (Mosheim, p. 289).

"We have no satisfactory account," adds Mosheim, "of the doctrines of this man; we merely know that he censured the baptism of infants, and the corrupt manners of the clergy."

But we have a satisfactory account of his doctrines, given even by Mosheim himself, and more especially by Wall. Henry was a Baptist, believing in the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, the supreme authority of Christ as king, and the immersion of true believers.

In the old and melancholy city of Toulouse, where four thousand heretics were burned during a century, the hero hermit, Henry, lifted his voice, "cried aloud, and spared not." Toulouse, from whose cathedral summits are seen the mingling streams of the Cervennes and the Tarn, sweeping on through the beautiful vale of the Garonne; and in the obscure distance of the Pyrenees, rearing their silvered heads to heaven, as though inviting to their mountain fastnesses the shorn lambs of Christ's fold; Toulouse, in the darkness and stillness of its death-sleep, was suddenly convulsed by the embodied power and wisdom of God, the gospel.

The clergy woke to the danger of their craft. His opposition to their human dogmas, their splendid buildings, their vestments, instrumental music, the whole train of priestly wrappings, brought down their vengeance on the daring innovator. The great *Saint Bernard*, we have seen, thundered out his maledictions, and poor Henry, driven from Toulouse, fled to the mountains, was pursued, and brought before a council at Rheims. This was in 1158.... He held that the church was a spiritual body composed of regenerated persons. He also held that no person should be baptized until he knew he was saved. He rejected infant baptism. He denied that children, before they reach the years of understanding, can be saved by receiving baptism. So great was this man's influence that whole congregations left the Romish churches and joined with him.

Because of his plain and powerful preaching he was compelled to flee for his life, but was finally arrested and committed to prison at Rheims where he finished his life.

PETER DE BRUIS (BRUYS)

"Peter de Bruis made the most laudable attempts to reform the abuses and to remove the superstitions that disfigured the beautiful simplicity of the gospel; but, after having engaged in his cause a great number of followers, during a laborious ministry of twenty years, he was burned at St. Giles's, in the year 1130, by an enraged populace, instigated by the clergy, whose traffic was in danger from the enterprising spirit of this reformer. The whole system of doctrine, which this unhappy martyr, whose zeal was not without a considerable mixture of fanaticism, taught to the Petrobrussians (a name by which his followers were called) is not known." ... He held to the same principles as Baptists of today. He rejected infant baptism, and baptismal

regeneration. He condemned the doctrines of the popes, that the real body and blood of Christ were exhibited in the Eucharist, but taught that they were merely represented or symbolized by the emblems used. He taught that the oblations, prayers, and good works of the living, could be in no respect advantageous to the dead. After a laborious ministry of twenty years, he was burned in 1130, by an enraged populace set on by the clergy, whose traffic was in danger from the enterprising spirit of this great and powerful preacher.

ARNOLD OF BRESCIA

Arnold, early in life, traveled from his native Italy into France, (Chapter v. p. 289) and became a pupil of the celebrated Abelard. In France he imbibed the spirit of soul-freedom, and received into his heart the light of the gospel. He returned to his native city in the habit of a monk; and began to preach that gospel in the streets of Brescia. The people were melted and roused beneath his fiery appeals. The clergy were alarmed, and in the Council of Lateran condemned him to perpetual silence. This was in 1139. Arnold fled to the wilderness, and in the valley of the Alps found shelter among kindred spirits. He was soon found proclaiming the truth in the Canton of Zurich, where Zwingle afterward appeared. Conspiracies were formed against him. The whole power of Rome was directed to his overthrow and ruin.

We can not contemplate the lion courage of Luther at Worms without emotions of enthusiastic admiration. The admiration is just. And yet the intrepidity of Arnold, fully equal to it, if not superior, is seldom mentioned. A lone man, in a still darker age, unsupported by the presence and sympathy of princes, as Luther was, he breasted and defied the whole thunderstorm of Rome. Driven from his shelter, he passed the Alps, and planted himself in the midst of his foes, entered Rome itself, and with the sublime example of his master before him, as

*"A gate of steel
Fronting the sun receives and renders back
His figure and his heat"*

He flashed the light of truth in burning eloquence over the seven hills. (Gibbon, vol. iii, p. 366) Freedom triumphed for the hour. Rome woke from the slumber and slavery of ages. "But the fervor of the people is less permanent than the resentment of the priest." The powers of the clergy were again concentrated and directed against the preacher. The heresy of Arnold

was considered two-fold. "He dared," says Gibbon, "to quote the language of Christ, 'My kingdom is not of this world', that the church was a distinct and spiritual assembly of baptized believers; and, as a consequence, the heinous crime was laid to his charge of *rejecting infant baptism*." (*Præter hæc de sacramento ulterius et Baptismo parvulorum*). He was a Baptist. For holding just what Baptists now hold, and for no other charge, "he was arrested, condemned, crucified, and then burned, and his ashes thrown into the Tiber."

Well has Dr. Brewster said, It is impossible not to admire the genius and persevering intrepidity of Arnold. To distinguish truth from error in an age of darkness, and to detect the causes of spiritual corruption in the thickest atmosphere of ignorance and superstition, evinced a mind of more than ordinary strength. To struggle against superstition entrenched in power, to plant the standard of revolution on the very heart of her empire, and keep possession of her capital a number of years, could scarcely be expected from an individual who had no power but that of his eloquence, and no assistance but that which he derived from the justice of his cause. Yet such were the individual exertions of Arnold, which posterity will appreciate as one of the noblest legacies which former ages have bequeathed. Religious freedom: it was not announced first by Roger William, nor Milton, nor the Baptist in Germany. "*The trumpet of liberty*," says Gibbon, "*was first sounded by Arnold of Brescia*." That trumpet has been sounded by every true Baptist in every age. In its defense have they ever suffered; yet in its defense they have ever rallied. In its defense, the bleeding body of Arnold was immolated on a burning pile.

But his memory lives, and even in Rome will his name yet become a watchword of victory. The time will yet be, when over the spot where the flame consumed him, will some monument record his greatness and his virtue, when the power which has trampled on human rights, and has rioted in human blood, with all its corrupting inventions, shall have sunk, like the apocalyptic millstone, in the deep, and no traces remain of the ruin it has wrought.

We pass from these heroes of "the faith once delivered to the saints." The Arnoldists, the Henricians, and Petrobrussians we have found, and, by their enemies, showed them to be Baptists. Did the Baptists originate with these men whose names were transfixed to them? We shall pause in our journey,

for we have found they were Baptists; and their presence marks *another milestone in the path of time.*

CHAPTER VIII — Century Ten

Baptists in Italy Paulicians

Waymarks in the wilderness, flame-pillars in the night-desert, were these three heroes of truth, Henry, Peter de Bruis, and Arnold of Brescia. "Nor are the Baptists," says Mosheim, "entirely in error when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and other ancient sects."

These "ancient sects," it has been seen, received from their foes appellations derived from champions who were renowned, or who perished in the propagation of their cause. Truth is aggressive *ever*. Christianity aims at the entire subversion and ruin of everything opposed to it in spirit or practice. Such was the mission of the apostles. Feeble and few as they were, they undertook the invasion of the mighty territories of evil. They admitted of no compromise; they asked and gave no quarter. They sought no relaxation, knew no pause, and were deaf to the word "retreat;" but ever in the field, they "fought manfully the battles of the Lord."

The same indomitable energy and fearless courage characterized the Baptist standard-bearers of the dark ages, and those who gathered around them were called by their names. Thus the "*heretics*" along the valleys of Piedmont and the Alps, were called "Arnoldists." That Arnold was a Baptist, as well as Peter de Bruis, has been shown by the statements of Pedobaptists. Those, therefore, known as their followers, and who were numbered by thousands, were, also, most unquestionably, Baptists. *Where did they come from?*

We have now to peer through the darkest gloom that ever settled on the world's history. Through that mystic obscurity images appear, arrayed in the wrappings of ecclesiastic pomp; and romantic personages, that seem like the creations of fancy. Can we, amid that mist and darkness, find the footsteps of God's hidden ones? We are on the track, and shall faithfully follow it.

We have already seen, that in the south of France were thousands of Baptists in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

"It was in the country of the Albegeois," [says the classic Gibbon,] "in the southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were most deeply implanted. In the practice, or at least in the theory, of the sacraments, the Paulicians were inclined to abolish all visible

objects of worship; and the words of the gospel were, in their judgment, the baptism and communion of the faithful," (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. v, p. 388). [believers].

Now let us learn from Mosheim the belief of those Paulicians:

"They maintained, in general, according to their own confession, that the whole of religion consisted in the study of practical piety, and in a course of action conformable to the Divine laws; and they treated all external modes of worship with the utmost contempt. Their particular tenets may be reduced to the following heads:

1. They rejected baptism, and, in a more especial manner, the baptism of infants, as a ceremony that was, in no respect, essential to salvation.
2. They rejected, for the same reason, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
3. They denied that the churches were endowed with a greater degree of sanctity than private houses, or that they were more adapted to the worship of God than any other place.
4. They affirmed that the altars were to be considered in no other light than as heaps of stones, and were, therefore, unworthy of any marks of veneration or regard.
5. They disapproved the use of incense and consecrated oil in services of a religious nature.
6. They looked upon the use of bells in the churches as an intolerable superstition.
7. They denied that the establishment of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and other ecclesiastical dignities, was of Divine institution, and went so far as to maintain that the appointment of stated ministers in the church was entirely unnecessary.
8. They affirmed that the institution of funeral rites was an effect of sacerdotal avarice, and that it was a matter of indifference whether the dead were buried in the churches or in the fields.
9. They looked upon the voluntary punishment called penance, so generally practiced in this century, as unprofitable and absurd.

10. They denied that the sins of departed spirits could be, in any measure, atoned for by the celebration of masses, the distribution of alms to the poor, or a vicarious penance; and they, consequently, treated the doctrine of purgatory as a ridiculous fable.

11. They considered [Catholic ceremonial] marriage as a pernicious institution, and absurdly condemned, without distinction, all connubial bonds.

12. They looked upon a certain sort of veneration and worship as due to the apostles and martyrs, from which, however, they excluded such as were only confessors, in which class they comprehended the saints, who had not suffered death for the cause of Christ, and whose bodies, in their esteem, had nothing more sacred than any other human carcass.

13. They declared the use of instrumental music in the churches, and other religious assemblies, superstitious and unlawful.

14. They denied that the cross on which Christ suffered was, in any respect, more sacred than any other kind of wood, and, in consequence, refused to pay to it the smallest degree of religious worship.

15. They not only refused all acts of adoration to the images of Christ, and of the saints, but were also for having them removed out of the churches.

16. They were shocked at the subordination and distinctions that were established among the clergy, and at the different degrees of authority conferred upon the different members of that sacred body. When we consider the corrupt state of religion in this country, and particularly the superstitious notions that were generally adopted in relation to outward ceremonies, the efficacy of penance, and the sanctity of churches, relics, and images, it will not appear surprising that many persons of good sense and solid piety, running from one extreme to another, fell into the opinions of these mystics, in which among several absurdities, there were many things plausible and specious, and some highly rational." (Mosheim, pp. 258, 259).

Let it be remembered that this is the statement of their bitter enemy, and even

he modified it by this explanation:

"The eleventh article is scarcely credible, at least as it is here expressed. It is more reasonable that these mystics did not absolutely condemn marriage." (Mosheim, pp. 258, 259).

Doubtless the truth is, they denied, as all Protestants do, that marriage was a sacrament, and stripping it of all the ghostly ceremonies of Popery, esteemed it, as we do, a civil contract between the parties, in the fear of God, and according to His Word. Their denial of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper can be accounted for in the same way. They refused to worship the host, or admit that the words pronounced by the priest change the bread into the soul, body, and divinity of Christ. This, to the clergy of Rome, was, of course, a blasphemous denial of the sacrament. They were Baptists. They were the predecessors of the Petrobrussians and Arnoldists. They were numbered by scores of thousands. Gibbon says:

"They conversed freely with strangers and natives, and their opinions were silently propagated in Rome and the kingdoms beyond the Alps. It was soon discovered that many thousand Catholics, of every rank and either sex, had embraced the Manichean heresy."

We will pass the Alps, and follow up the track those Baptists traveled. In the classic land of Italy, beneath the dread shadow of the Vatican, have lived, in every age, men, upon whose foreheads was never stamped the symbol of the beast, and on whose spirits beamed the light of truth, brighter and purer than their own lovely skies. The historian Gibbon says:

"In the busy age of the crusades, some sparks of curiosity and reason were kindled in the Western world. The heresy of Bulgaria, the Paulician sect, was successively transplanted into the soul of Italy and France. The Gnostic visions were united with the simplicity of the gospel, and the enemies of the clergy reconciled their passions with their conscience, the desire of freedom with the profession of piety."

These were the same people whose belief has been given from Mosheim, the people to whom Arnold of Brescia belonged, and who were called Manicheans, Paulicians, Catheri, Paterines, and Anabaptists. In Italy they were known as Paterines. They said that a Christian Church ought to consist

of persons who had professed faith, and that it had no power to frame general canons or creeds. And Gregory, writing against them, says:

"The baptism which the Catholics approve, the Paterines condemn, the baptism of children, which is condemned by the Paterines."

They were Baptists. They had fifteen associations in Italy. And in vindication of their principles, their virtues, and their antiquity, let Gibbon now speak:

"The Paulicians sincerely condemned the memory and opinions of the Manichean sect, and complained of the injustice which impressed that invidious name on the simple followers of Paul and Christ. The objects which had been transformed by the magic of superstition, appeared to the eyes of the Paulicians in the genuine and naked colors. Of the ecclesiastical chain, many links were broken by these reformers; and against the gradual innovations of discipline and doctrine they were strongly guarded by habit and aversion, as by the silence of Paul and the Evangelists. They attached themselves, with peculiar devotion, to the writings and character of Paul, in whom they gloried. In the Gospels and Epistles of Paul, Constantine investigated the creed of the primitive Christians; and whatever might be the success, a Protestant reader will applaud the spirit of the inquiry. In practice, or, at least, in the theory, of the sacraments, the Paulicians were inclined to abolish all visible objects of worship; and the words of the gospel were, in their judgments, *the baptism and communion of the faithful*. A creed thus simple and spiritual, was not adapted to the genius of the times; and the rational Christian was offended at the violation offered to his religion by the Paulicians." (Gibbon's Ro. Hist., ch. 54).

Mosheim says:

"It is evident they rejected the baptism of infants. They were not charged with any error concerning baptism."

Dr. Allix says:

"They, with the Manicheans, were Anabaptists, or rejectors of infant baptism, and were, consequently, often reproached with that term."

Milner says:

"They were simply Scriptural in the use of the sacraments; they

were orthodox in the doctrine of the Trinity; they knew of no other Mediator than the Lord Jesus Christ."

That these Paulicians or Paterines were Baptists, is by the united testimony of profane and ecclesiastical history, placed beyond a doubt. Well, *where did they come from?* Gibbon continues:

"About the middle of the eighth century, Constantine, surnamed Copronymus by the worshipers of images, had made an expedition into Armenia, and found, in the cities of Melitene and Theodosiopolis, a great number of Paulicians of his kindred heretics. As a favor of punishment, he transplanted them from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople and Thrace; and, by this emigration, their doctrine was introduced and diffused in Europe. If the sectarians of the metropolis were soon mingled with the promiscuous mass, those of the country struck a deep root in a foreign soil. The Paulicians of Thrace resisted the storms of persecution, maintained a secret correspondence with their Armenian brethren, and gave aid and comfort to their preachers, who solicited, not without success, the infant faith of the Bulgarians."

They were transplanted from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople. Under the Byzantine standard they were transported to "Rome, Milan, and the kingdoms beyond the Alps." Amid the provinces of southern France they were found in the twelfth century, under the leadership of Henry and Peter de Bruis. From the south of France they passed to England and other parts of Europe, "where they lingered," says Gibbon, "till the Reformation." And thus is the text of Mosheim illustrated:

"Before the rise of Luther and Calvin there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe men who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Baptists."

And thus through the gloom of the dark ages have we tracked the path along which passed the witnesses of Christ, and have found those who, with abiding attachments, adhered to our principles, and were members of our churches as far back as the eighth century, and in the lands of apostolic labor and suffering. The Paulicians, calumniated, banished as criminals, stand forth a prominent milestone in the march of time, and that blood-stained trace we shall still follow in our further inquiry: *Where did the Baptists come from?*

CHAPTER IX — Century Eight

Retrospect

Let us number up the way-marks we have passed. From the persecutions in Virginia just preceding the Revolution, we ascended the stream of colonial history, and found Baptists in the Old Dominion at the time that Holmes, and Clark, and Knollys, were planting the standard of truth and freedom in the wilds of New England. From Virginia and Rhode Island we entered the jail of Bunyan, and beheld Keach on the pillory. With the rise of Luther, and Calvin, and Cranmer, we found Baptists starting forth from their concealment, pouring down like torrents from the mountain fastnesses in every part of Europe. Long before Luther lived, or the Reformation was born, we found them in the vales of the Alps, in the mountains of Wales, and in the forests of England. Henry, Peter de Bruis, and Arnold of Brescia, were among the torch-bearers in the darkness of the middle ages.

In the lovely land of Italy, under the very shadow of the Vatican, the Paterine Baptists were condemned by the persecuting Pope, and described by the classic historian.

From Italy to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Armenia and Syria, we have traced the Paulician Baptists. From these we again take our line of departure in our search for the head-spring. But ere we proceed, let us ascend some historic height and glance over the surrounding prospect. We are up among the Paulicians in the mountains of Armenia, in the middle of the seventh century. Amid those sublime heights where the family of Noah looked down on a world covered with the slowly receding waters of the deluge, let us take a passing survey of a world now mantled in spiritual night. What a sad, yet not hopeless sight, the world in the seventh century presented. In the distant West, where the tall Alps rise above the glassing lake; where the children of freedom find safety within those mountain walls, the green foliage of the "*tree of life*" is blooming, the flowers in "*the garden of the Lord*" send forth their sweet perfume, and the dew of blessing descends on the few and banished children of Christ who are dwelling there together in unity. Still farther west, and among the Pyrenees, the descendants of the banished Novatians, branded as Anabaptists, live in quiet peace, devoted to their sovereign Lord. And yonder, in those western isles, where white cliffs gleam in the setting sunlight, a scene of striking interest may be witnessed.

Let us look at it.

From Asia Minor, through Paul, or some of his co-laborers, the gospel was carried to Britain. When civil dissension had weakened the power of Rome, and the wild Picts and Scots were continually making inroads upon the helpless inhabitants, when Rome could not defend them, the protection of the hardy Anglo-Saxons was sought; they drove back the Scottish invaders, but became in their turn the owners and rulers of the island. A Saxon kingdom of Pagans was established, and the old British Christians were driven toward Wales. Pope Gregory sent a monk named Austin to convert these Saxon Pagans, who came with his tribe of muttering and persecuting monks to carry out the commands of his ghostly lord. He won over the Saxons. He made disciples of them by wholesale baptisms. His next step was to attempt the conversion of those apostolic churches over to Christendom, that is, *Popery and infant baptism*. The old British Churches differed in regard to baptism, as well as in many other things, with those Romanist missionaries. An old British, or rather Welsh pastor, named Deynock, whose opinion in ecclesiastical affairs had the most weight with his countrymen, when urged by Austin to submit in all things to the ordinances of the Roman Church, returned the following remarkable answer:

"We are all ready to listen to the church of God, to the Pope of Rome, and every pious Christian; that so we may show to each, according to his station, proper love, and uphold him by word and deed. We know not that any other obedience can be required of us toward him whom you call the Pope, or the father of fathers. But this obedience we are ready to render to him and to every Christian."
(Neander, vol. iii, p. 17).

A council or convention was afterward held between Austin and the Welsh preachers, at which the latter declared that they could do nothing without a full representation from their churches. Finally the Britons refused to enter into any terms of agreement with Austin. "Well, then," said the haughty priest, "as you will not have us as friends, you shall as foes, and experience the vengeance of the Saxons." (Neander's *Eccl. Hist. Ang.* Fuller's *History English Churches*, vol. i).

His threat was carried out. The college at Bangor was destroyed; the preachers were massacred, and over two thousand of these primitive

Christians in Hereford were sacrificed to the demon of apostasy. (Dupin, Eccl. His., vol., p. 90. Fox's Martyrs, vol. i, p. 135).

The question arises, were these ancient British Christians Baptists? That they did not originate from Rome is most evident; that they never had adopted her profane rites, her wholesale baptisms, her councils and decretals, is unquestionable. Were they Baptists? They had not Episcopal head or archbishop among them who could speak and act authoritatively from the rest, as is most evident from the fact that Deynock, the old Pastor who had so much influence among them, could not represent and act for the churches. That they were not Episcopalians is evident to any one who will read the account of the convention under the oak; in which, though a large number of their principal men were assembled to meet and confer with Austin, they would not and could not speak for their churches; they possessing no such authority. They evidently belonged to independent churches, which regarded the humblest Christian as being quite as good authority as the Pope or his church council. Such is the plain language of Deynock, as given above. So far they were Baptists.

Further, we are told by Neander, (and with him agree all the more ancient church histories,) that they differed with Austin in regard to the *mode* of baptism; for it appears that while he immersed as a usual thing, he sprinkled, according to Roman indulgence, the infant and the dying. The primitive British Churches, therefore, must have been *rigid immersionists*; else how could they have differed with Austin about the mode? But, in addition to this, the old English Chronicle says:

*"and thus hed wuneden here
an hundred and five yere
that neure com here cristendom
i cud i thissen londe
no belle i-rungen
no masse isunge
no chirche ther nes i-haleyed
no child ther nes ifuleyed."*

The modern English of which is:

*"And thus they dwelt here
An hundred and five years
So that never christening*

*Came here to be known in the land,
Nor bell rung, nor church hallowed,
Nor child was there baptized."*

Such is the historic chronicle of England, the only form in which the history of that dark period has come down to us. And the evidence is conclusive that there was no infant baptism in England till it was brought there from Rome by Austin and his monks. Here there were independent churches against whose theology no complaint could be brought which rejected the authority and formalities of Rome; *believed in a spiritual birth; rigidly enforced immersion, and knew nothing about infant baptism.* They were Baptists in church government, in theology, in practice; uncompromising Baptists, who were ready to perish rather than yield a principle. Where did they come from? Not from Popery; not from the Gnostics, or Oriental sects; nor from the apostate Greek hierarchy. It is acknowledged that the BANGOR CHRISTIANS WERE PLANTED BY THE APOSTOLIC EVANGELISTS, whose principles and practices they maintained, and it has been demonstrated that these primitive Bangor disciples were Baptists. Driven back by Austin and the Saxons, they continued under the protection of Heaven and the Welsh mountains, preaching Christ and administering his ordinances, down through all the changes, and darkness, and persecution of the middle ages, until, like the descendants of the Paulicians, charging the moral atmosphere with those elements which burst forth in the sixteenth century in the great Reformation.

But from the point we have reached in the regions of Armenia in the seventh century, we must inquire for the origin of those Paulicians. After Neander had dwelt with painful minuteness on the corruptions of the old Greek Church, he says:

"We have yet to speak of the reaction of the Christian consciousness within the church against this ecclesiastical system, which had been forming by the combing Christian with foreign elements; a reaction on the part of rising and spreading sects that stood forth in opposition to the dominant church, presenting a series of remarkable phenomena of the religious spirit, extending through the medieval centuries, and accompanying the progressive development of the church theoretical system.

"In spite of fire and sword, the remains of those sects which arose in the early period of the Christian Church, had been still pressed in

those districts. These sects having from the first stood out against the union of Christianity with Judaism, now entered into the contest against those doctrines and institutions in particular which had grown out of the mixture of Jewish with Christian elements." (Neander, vol. iii, p. 214).

These Paulicians were then, according to Neander, and every other impartial historian, one of those sects which arose in the early period of the Christian Church; one of those sects which broke off from the majority on the first introduction of Jewish ceremonies, circumcision, or its substitute, infant baptism, episcopacy, priesthood, instrumental music, imitations of the Pagan temples, and, finally, baptismal regeneration, *image worship*, APOSTASY.

Manichaeus was a slanderous name, indicating that they mixed with their Christianity some notions of the Persian Pagans. It was a baseless calumny. "We find nothing at all, however," says Neander, "in the doctrines of the Paulicians, which would lead us to presume that they were an offshoot from Manichaeism." The ancient origin and the Baptist principles of these Paulicians are thus demonstrated. Covering the hills and vales of Armenia, receiving fresh accessions from the persecutions of the Greek Church, and exerting an influence which reacted on Europe and the world; connected by the bonds of harmonious brotherhood with the banished Donatists, the spiritual Novatians, and the Cathari, or Paterine Baptists of Europe, these Paulicians, on the lofty table-lands and mountain slopes of Armenia, rose like a monument above the waste of all that was spiritual and all that was true, A MILESTONE IN THE MARCH OF TIME.

Whence comes these people called Baptists?

CHAPTER X — Century Seven

Montenses

We have seen that the Paulicians were Baptists; that they arose in an early period of the Christian Church; and that their opposition to the dominant party, whose aim was to blend Jewish elements and rites with the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel; and we find that Sylvanius learned the truth which he afterward propagated with such earnestness and success, from a Syrian who was returning from captivity among the Saracens. This was in the year six hundred and fifty-seven.

We have, therefore, clearly traced these Baptists to Syria and Armenia. We have paused on those heights and looked out on the sleeping earth, with here and there a company of pilgrims anxiously inquiring, *What of the night?* We have seen Baptists at every step of our journey. and now we ask, Where did these Baptists of Syria and Armenia come from?

Now, it is a fact, that about the very time that Sylvanius received the copy of the Scriptures from the returning Syrian, Pope Gregory the First issued Papal mandates condemning and urging the persecution of certain heretics, whom he called "*Montenses and other Anabaptists.*" He describes them as the advocates of a spiritual church, composed of regenerated persons only, and as rebaptizers of those whom they received from others societies. (Gregorii, I Papea, Lib, iii: "De herese Donatistarum pullutanta. Multos insuper quibus regenerationis qua prabuerat rebaptizante."). They are spoken of as a multitude, and as the descendants of the Donatists.

At the same period another class of dissenters were found in Armenia, and also in Phrygia, who, like those called Donatists, were denounced as heretics and Anabaptists, because they contended for a pure church. *They were known as Novatians.* Not that either of these classes of Dissenters, among whom there was a complete agreement, were the followers of the men whose names had been given to them as a term of reproach, not even that they held the same principles or adopted the practices advocated by Novatian or Donatus; but the sweeping censures and anathemas of the Greek and Roman Catholics confounded all Dissenters under one head, designating them by whatever epithet was the most odious at the time. The Montenses, or Mountaineers, were made up of those two classes of Dissenters, Novatians and Donatists. Among them also mingled what were called by the Greeks Melchedecians.

"They had neither beginning nor end," said a Greek father; "neither head nor tail." (Epiphanius Heris, 70. Neque principium, neque finis; neque caput, neque radix).

The Eucharites (prayers) and Messalians, names given to the very same people by different writers, were found in the mountains of Armenia during the seventh century, whither they had sought refuge from their merciless persecutors.

Socrates Scholasticus, in his church history, written in the early part of this century, says:

"The Phrygians are a nation far more temperate and modest than others; for at this day they use no running a tilt; no such warlike exercises; neither do they use to pastime themselves with spectacles and stage-plays. Wherefore these kind of men, in mine own opinion, draw nearest to the drift and disposition of Novatian's letters. It is well known that the Phrygian way of life is more modest, more chaste and contented, than any other heretical sect whatever. I conjecture that they aimed at the same modest (humble) way of life which inhabited the West parts, (Europe,) and leaned toward Novatians's opinion, who varied from the Church of Rome by reason of a severe way of living." (Socrates Scholasticus, Eccl. His., lib, iv, chap. 23. I quote from an old translation in my possession, printed in London, 1584).

Here, then, is a key to the character of the Asiatic Montenses, furnished by a contemporary historian. It shows that *these were not exactly Novatians, but resembled them*; and that, in piety and discipline, they carried out the principal advocated in the Novatian's letters. What were those principles? We answer, such as now characterize the Baptist Churches. Of this we shall have occasion to speak again. But let it be noted here, as an incontrovertible historic fact, that in regard to the doctrines of grace, of Christ's deity, vicarious atonement, and intercession; of spiritual regeneration, and the resurrection of the body, and eternal rewards and punishments, the orthodoxy of the Novatians was never questioned. The independency and purity of the churches, and the rebaptism of all who came from the other organizations, was their "heresy." And it was from a people resembling them, and carrying out their principles and practices, scattered through Syria, Phrygia, and

Armenia, that the Paulicians descended. According to the Catholic historian, they were chaste, modest, with a severe or rigorous discipline, suffering the loss of all things for the truths they cherished. *They were Baptists*. The Minutemen, made up of Novatians and Donatists, and called Eucharites, Messalians, Melchedecians, Anabaptists, were the true churches of Jesus Christ, which have witnessed in every age against corruption, innovation, Jewish rites, and clerical rule.

We will ascend a step farther in the world's history, we will turn over another page in the records of the struggles of Christ's soldiery, and, marking the mountains of Phrygia and Armenia as points in our path where we have found Baptists, we will investigate where these scattered Montenses came from.

CHAPTER XI — Century Six

Donatists

It is difficult to ascertain the true sentiments and character of a people whose writings were destroyed by those who feared them, and whose words can only be caught as they are echoed, with bitterness and misrepresentation, by their implacable foes.

It is, therefore, no wonder if the motives, the faith, and the practices of the Donatists have been misstated and caricatured by nearly all who have written their history.

We have already seen that the Baptists of every age and clime have received names borrowed from men who, holding high positions in the dominant church, suddenly lifted their voices against its corruptions, and were, consequently, driven from its communion. It was so with Claude of Lorraine, Arnold of Brescia, and Wickliffe of England. It is easy to understand how those spiritual churches, which had never symbolized with the great apostasy; how those "hidden ones." who, in obscurity, battled and suffered for the truth, would hail, with enthusiastic gratitude, the appearance of a prominent and bold reformer who, in the midst of a corrupt church, would come forth, as a messenger from God, to plead for the truth. At once those scattered and obscure disciples of Christ would rally around the newly-arisen standard, on which were emblazoned those principles which they cherished with deathless love. They would soon, in the public mind and on the page of partisan or superficial history, be identified and lost in the new movement, and would receive the name which had been given to the new party. It was thus in the case of the Donatists, as we shall fully see.

In the early part of the fifth century there appeared all over that part of Africa lying along the shores of the Mediterranean, a class of determined men, who "maintained that the church should cast out from its body those who were known, by open and manifest sins, to be called unworthy members." The corruption's of the so-called church were detailed by an eye-witness (Salvian, who belonged to the church party) in colors the most odious. Iniquity and vice reveled unblushingly under the protection of church sanctity. Forms, borrowed from Judaism and Paganism, were substituted for the spiritual power and voluntary obedience of the gospel. All were received as members who could repeat the Creed and the form of renunciation; and infant baptism

already found advocates. Against all this, these Numidians, afterward called Donatists, entered their solemn and powerful protest. Neander says:

"They adduced the fifth chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians to prove that none but those who gave evidence of conversion should be received into or retained in the church. When the church did not act in accordance with these rules, 'they affirmed' but tolerated such unworthy members in her communion. She lost the predicates of purity and holiness, which are the predicates of a true church." (Neander, vol. ii, p. 206).

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, taking the position of the Catholic Church, replied:

"That the good and faithful Christians, certain of their won salvation, may persevere to dwell in unity with the corrupt when it is beyond their power to punish."

The Catholics appealed to those passages and parables which speak of the *separation* of the good and bad being reserved to the last day. The Donatists replied:

"that these passages relate either to the mixing of the good and bad in this world, or the the hypocrites who crept in unawares; that Christ himself taught that the field is the world."

Their antagonists answered, that "by the world Christ meant the church."

The one plead for a line of demarcation between the church and the world; and that giving baptism to any woe gave no evidence of a spiritual change, obliterated all such distinctions. The Catholics, on the other side, advocated hereditary church membership without moral or spiritual qualifications, and for a complete blending of the church and the world. The Catholic party triumphed by imperial interference and merciless persecution. It resulted in national church establishments, into which all are received to membership infancy, and from which none are excluded except for heresy.

The other principle, that none but the converted should be received or retained into the churches of Christ, was derided, trampled in the dust, branded as infamous, and its advocates treated as fanatics, apostates, rebels. But it was sheltered amid the mountains of Armenia. It descended through the night of centuries. It gleamed along the path of human progression and

civilization. It lit the torch of the Reformers, and blazed upon downtrodden Europe. It finally burst forth in splendor in these glorious States of ours, where thirty millions of freemen enjoy its blessings.

But there was another great principle which distinguished the Donatists. Men who plead for a spiritual church, must necessarily oppose coercion toward the passive or the unwilling, the young or the old, all human dictation and constraint in matters of conscience. Petilian, one of the Donatist leaders, says:

Did the apostles ever persecute any one? or did Christ ever deliver any one over to the secular power? Christ commands us to flee persecutors, (Matt. 10:23). thou who callest thyself a disciple of Christ oughtest not to imitate the deeds of the heathen. Think you thus to serve God by destroying us with your hands? Ye err, ye err, poor mortals, if ye believe this; for God has not executioners for his priests. Christ persecutes no one, for he was for inviting not forcing men to the faith. Our Lord Christ says: 'NO MAN CAN COME UNTO ME UNLESS THE FATHER WHO SENT ME DRAW HIM.' But why do you not permit every man to follow his own free-will, since God the Lord himself has bestowed this free-will upon man? He has simply the way of righteousness, that none might be lost through ignorance. Christ, in dying for men, has given Christians the example to die, but not to kill. Christ teaches us to suffer wrong, not to requite it. The apostle tells us of what he had endured, not of what he had done to others. But what have you to do with the princes of this world, in whom the Christian cause has only found enemies?" (Augustin Contra Petilianam, in Lardner's Gospel Testimony, also Neander).

Are not these the principles for which Baptists have pleased and suffered in every age of the gospel era? Are they not the principles for which true Baptists (and they only) contend still?

"God made man FREE, after His own image. How am I to be deprived of that, by human lordship, which God has bestowed on me? What sacrilege, that human arrogance should take away what God has bestowed, and idly boast of doing this in God's behalf! It is a great offense against God when He is defended by men. What must he think of God who would defend him with outward force. Is

it that God is unable to punish offenses against himself? Hear what the Lord says: 'My peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you.' The peace of Christ *invites the willing* with wholesome mildness. IT NEVER FORCES MEN AGAINST THEIR WILLS."

Here were the glorious principles inscribed on the broad banners of those called Donatists. A church made up of the willing, active, converted believers, professing, obeying, and associating themselves together in church compact of their own free-will; neither passively while infants, nor by constraint when adults. Is it any wonder that those who had withdrawn from the majorities and formed independent churches, long before the Donatists arose, hailed these defenders of the faith as true yoke-fellows, and that they, consequently, received their name? Where would the advocates of such principles be classed now? By what name would they be called? Among whom would they find co-workers and sympathizers? In the rejection of the baptisms of all other parties, says Hooker, the great defender of Episcopacy:

"Good men were followed by the Donatists as they are now followed by the Anabaptists, who rebaptized in infancy." (Lardner's Eccl. Polity; also Fuller's Eccl. Hist., vol. ii, book v).

"The Anabaptists of our day," says the English Church historian, "are the Donatists new dipped."

The fact is thus historically demonstrated, that those branded as heretics and Anabaptists, scattered through Asia Minor, Armenia, Phrygia, and portions of Italy and Gaul, after the subversion of Alexandria and Carthage, and the whole of Numidia, by the Arabs, banished, reproached, anathematized, pursued by clerical vengeance, and condemned as criminals by Greek and Roman, the Donatists were watched by the Shepherd of Israel, preserved by an unseen but almighty hand; and continued, like the bush amid the fires of persecution, unconsumed, undismayed, the true, independent, spiritual churches of Jesus Christ, composed of baptized believers. They were Baptists. With a firmness and fortitude which no disasters could shake and no sufferings appall, they won their title to that celestial nobility, that linked brotherhood, which, wit God's help, has kept the altar-fires burning through the centuries of blood and gloom, through every trial and through every storm.

"The Donatists," says Mosheim, "enjoyed the sweets of freedom and tranquillity, as long as the Vandals reigned in Africa; but the scene was greatly changed with respect to them, when the empire of these barbarians was overturned in 534. They, however, still remained in a separate body, and were bold enough to attempt the multiplication of their sect. Gregory the Roman pontiff opposed these efforts with great spirit and assiduity; and, as appears from his epistles, tried various methods of depressing this faction." (Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., cen. vi, ch.5).

Again have we found Baptists in Asia, and Africa and Europe, far up the stream of time, amid the darkness of the sixth century; and again we will inquire where these Donatist Baptists came from?

CHAPTER XII — Century Five

Numidians

Men are known by the cause they espouse, and principles they avow, rather than the party with which they are classed, or appellations they receive.

That Lafayette was a Republican might in coming years be disputed, or denied, on the grounds that he was a titled noble, chose to live under a monarchical form of government, and never expatriated himself from one, so as to become a citizen of the Republic which claims him as an advocate of its principles, a defender of its rights, and an associate of its founders.

By such special pleading, though with far less truth and consistency, has it been disputed and denied that the Numidians were Baptists. But let facts speak their testimony is decisive.

A minority of the church at Carthage, on the shores of the Mediterranean, called a council to investigate the validity of the election and ordination of its newly-made pastor or bishop. He had by management secured the majority vote, and hurried on his ordination by the hands of a self-excluded pastor of a neighboring church, who was not recognized by the surrounding churches or their pastors. (I have condensed these facts, which will be found with a unanimity of detail in Hawei's Mosheim and Neander). These associate pastors (of Numisia) were not invited, nor their counsel or approbation sought. The council decided that the minority was the true church. It then proceeded to ordain Majorius, elected by it as pastor or bishop. The neighboring Churches of Africa, in sustaining this church and its pastor against the dominant party and its bishop Celilianus, gave voice to a great principle, which involved the Christian world in discussion and interminable contest. The principle was this:

"That every church which tolerated unworthy members in its bosom was itself polluted by the communion with them. It thus ceased to deserve the predicated of purity and holiness, and consequently ceased to be a true Christian Church, since a church could not subsist without these predicates." (Neander, p. 203).

This principle was a protest against hereditary church membership. It proclaimed that none but those who were born from above, had any right to the ordinances or admission into the church. Neander, an apologist for *infant*

baptism, says:

"It was still very far from being the case, especially in the Greek Church, that infant baptism was generally introduced into practice. Among the Christians of the East, infant baptism, though in theory acknowledged to be necessary, yet entered so rarely and with so much difficulty into the existence of the church during the first half of this period." (History, vol. ii, p. 319). [That is, the first half of the fifth century.]

It is thus most evident from the investigations of the great pedobaptist historian, whose researches took a wider and more thorough range than those of any other man, living or dead, that infant baptism was not as yet introduced when the division took place in the churches in Carthage and Numidia, and when the *majorities* expressed and battled for theories which were in direct antagonism even to their *own practice*. Even Augustine, who rose to eminence during the conflicts in Africa, though a child of pious parents, was not baptized in infancy. The question of infant baptism soon necessarily rose into prominence. The principles of the Numidian pastors and churches, *that none but regenerate believers could be received into a true Christian Church*, and that those who received any others were not true churches, utterly condemned the theory of infant membership, and condemned the practice which the majority soon after introduced.

MAJORIUS, the first pastor of the Carthage Church, died soon after his ordination, and Donatus was elected to fill his place. Schisms occurred in almost every church in Africa, and extended into Asia and Europe.

Henceforth, those who declared for the Numidian pastors, and endorsed the principles they expressed, were denominated Donatists. Their ground was that Cecilianus had acted the traitor during the persecution of Diocletian, as had many members of the Carthage Church: that these traitors were nevertheless sustained by, and continued in the church, and had by management elected Cecilianus pastor: that Felix, a notorious traitor, was selected to ordain the new pastor, against the protest of the minority and without the council of neighboring pastors: that the majority, in thus countenancing unworthy and unregenerate members, and declaring that spirituality was not essential to church-membership: in fact lost the predicates of a true church. They had remained in the dominant church until they had

seen in it the signs of apostasy. Braving and enduring confiscation, imprisonment, banishment, and death; refusing position, power, the smiles of great Constantine, and the terrors of imperial indignation, they stood steadfast to those principles which were cherished by thousands who had long before broken all connection and communion with dominant party.

A council of foreign interested bishops was appointed by Constantine, the emperor, to settle the dispute; but compromise was a word unknown to these Donatists. A spiritual church was with them everything, nothing else was a church. But these principles would have unchurched those very bishops who were appointed to adjudicate. Of course the decision was against the Donatists. Accordingly they were denounced as heretics, and persecuted by the Emperor, now at the head of the so-called Catholic Church. As a consequence, all who held these principles, now so manfully sustained by the Donatist, united with them, and were known by their name; and thus were found in various countries separate and independent churches, which baptized into their communion none but those who gave evidence of a change of heart and life, refused all union and communion with the religious organizations around them, and rebaptized all who had been immersed in any other society.

Such were their principles, that Osiander, a historian of great note, and an apologist for infant baptism and a worldly church, said: "*Our modern Anabaptists were the same as the Donatist of old.*" And according to Long, an Episcopalian, who wrote a history of the Donatists, "*they did not only rebaptize children, contrary to the Catholic Church.*" (History of the Donatists, Orchard, p. 60).

Then, the Donatists of Africa were Baptists. *Did the denomination originate with them?*

CHAPTER XIII — Century Three

Novations

Donatus was elected pastor of the Church at Carthage in the year 306. It was at that great crisis in the conflict between Christianity and Paganism, when the prestige and power of Constantine decided the religion of the Roman empire, and crushed out all independence and spirituality from those societies which were absorbed in the universal, or Catholic Church. But years before the rise of the Donatists, a class of men existed who had separated themselves from the worldly churches around them, and had long stood on the same ground now occupied by the Donatists. Similar in their principles, they were soon merged in them, and received their name; but before that movement they were known by other names, borrowed from the localities where they withdrew from the dominant parties, or, from some distinguished pastor among them.

We have found them before spread over Italy, Greece, and Asia. Among other epithets they were called Novatians. Some of these people were in Carthage up to the year 254, one Florentius Papianus, who having maintained a good confession under the pains of torture, stood in high authority as a martyr, asserted that "he was at a loss to say what he would not part with, sooner than enter into terms of fellowship with Cyprian, then bishop of the Church at Carthage."

Neander continues:

"Conventicles of this party, where the holy supper was distributed, still remained open, as Cyprian himself gives us to understand. Commodian, who wrote his Christian admonitions at a somewhat later period, considered it needful to combat this separatist tendency." (Neander, vol. I, p. 237).

So that there were those in Africa long before the Donatists, who held the same principles, separated from the majority, and contended for independent and spiritual churches. But these were linked in the more general separation, and were consequently lost in the great movement which occurred in Italy in the early part of the third century.

NOVATION was a presbyter at Rome. Of his learning and piety there was no question. It has been said that he made a party to gratify his ambition, and

because he could not brook a rival. The facts are these: He protested against the lax discipline of the church in the city of Rome. He objected to Cornelius, its pastor; and, with a minority of that church, withdrew, and formed a new church, of which he was elected bishop. Neander says:

"According to the accusations of passionate opponents, we must, indeed, suppose that, in the outset, he was striving from motives of ambition after the Episcopal dignity, and was thence induced to excite these troubles, and throw himself at the head of a party. The accusations of his opponents should not be suffered to embarrass us, for it is the usual custom with the logical polemics to trace schisms to some outward unhallowed motive.

"The contest at Rome, however, had for its main-spring another individual altogether, one Novatus, who belonged, originally, to the Separatists of Africa."

Neander continues:

"He was the man whenever he might be at Carthage or at Rome to become the moving spring of agitation, although he placed some one else at the head, and caused everything to move under the name of the latter." (Neander, p. 248).

"The controversy with the Novatian party turned on two general points; one relating to the principle of repentance; the other what constitutes the idea of a true church. On the first point Novatian, doubtless, went to extremes. But Novatus never advocated the absolute rejection of every one that violated his baptismal vows.

"With regard to the second main point of controversy, the idea of the church, Novatian maintained that one of the essential marks of a true church being purity and holiness, every church which neglected the right exercise of church discipline, tolerated in its bosom, or readmitted to its communion those guilty of gross sins, ceased, by that very act, to be a true Christian Church. Novatian laid at the basis of his theory the visible church as a pure and holy one." (Neander, p. 248).

Such were the principles of the Separatists of Carthage and Rome in the first great schism, church independence and a spiritual church- membership.

At once the scattered minorities, which had separated from the corrupt majorities, extended fellowship to the independent Church of Novatian and Novatus. They were expelled by the majority parties; but in almost every town and city they flourished in independence, baptizing none but those who gave evidence of renewed hearts, and rebaptizing all who came among them from other organizations.

That all should be called Novatians is easily accounted for. That they should be slandered and vilified by the corruptors of Christianity, might have been expected. But they spread through Europe, through Africa, and Asia. In the mountains of Armenia they still lingered, till the name Donatists was lost in Montenses and Paulicians. In the recesses of the Alps the Novatians (called from the first Puritans) were persecuted as Paterines and Waldenses. Up through the darkness we have traced their crimsoned footprints. We have found them here, in the third century, contending for a pure and independent church, baptized on a profession of faith, and persecuted as Anabaptists. The people called Novatians were Baptists. They may justly be termed another milestone in our upward march. It will again be our inquiry: Where did the Baptists come from?

CHAPTER XIV — Century Two

Tertullianists

Tertullianus was born in Carthage, in the latter part of the second century. His writings and his memory were fresh; and the churches which believed and practiced as he did were numerous at the time of the rise of Novatian and Novatus. They were scattered throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Of the learning, the ability, and the piety of Tertullian, even the old Catholic historians speak in the highest praise. his letters to the Emperor of Rome, and his defenses of Christianity, are monuments of his learning and genius.

Like the Novatians and Donatists, Tertullian beheld the innovations and corruptions which were fast changing the spiritual character of the churches into semi-Jewish organizations. He pleaded and protested against the growing tendency, and, at length, with a minority, withdrew from the Church at Carthage. This minority church continued there, as similar churches did in other places, till the rise of Novatus, and, finally, of the Donatists. They were frequently called Tertullianists, but more generally Montanists.

To learn their principles we must go to the writings of this extraordinary man. Neander says:

"In the last years of the second century Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism, a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolic institution, for, otherwise, he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. We perceive, from his arguments against infant baptism, that he introduces Matt. 19:14. Tertullian advises that, in consideration of the great importance of the transaction, and of the preparation necessary to be made for it by the recipients, baptism should rather be delayed than prematurely applied. 'Let them come,' says Tertullian, 'while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught that to which they are coming; let them become Christians while they are susceptible.'" (Neander, vol. i, p. 312).

The great Neander, commenting on these words, remarks:

"Tertullian evidently means that children should be led to Christ by instructing them in Christianity, but that they should not receive

baptism until, after being sufficiently instructed, they are led by personal conviction, and by their own free choice, to seek for it with sincerity of heart." (Ut supra).

With such principles, *where would Tertullian be classed now?* As the corruptions which were steadily undermining the standing of the churches increased, Tertullian denied to them the claim of being true Christian Churches. He plead for an equality among presbyters or elders against the growing arrogance of the metropolitan pastors. He plead for the purity of the church, and the rejection of all unregenerate persons. He joined the now numerous sect of the Montanists, and finally proclaimed with them that the one immersion "*can relate only to us who know and call on the true God and Christ. The heretics have not this God and Christ. These words, therefore, can not be applied to them, and as they do not rightly administer the ordinance, their baptism is the same as none.*"

Such were the principles of the Tertullianists in the second century. Were they not Baptists?

Tertullian is called a Montanist. Now these Montanists were principally found in Phrygia. Of these people we give the bitter statements of an enemy who lent all his talent and power to corrupt and carnalize Christianity. Eusebius says:

"There is a certain village in Mysia, (a region of Phrygia,) called Ardaban, where first of all one Montanus, a late convert in the time of Gratus, proconsul of Asia, inflated with an immoderate desire of chieftainship, primacy, and being deranged and bereft of his wits, became furious, and published strange doctrines, and contrary to the customs of ancient tradition. There were few of the Phrygians seduced, notwithstanding that bold and blind spirit instructed them to revile every church under heaven. The faithful in Asia excommunicated, rejected, and banished this heretical opinion out of their churches." (Eusebius, 1. s., chap. xiv).

The first thing that strikes the reader of this paragraph is that the churches, even in the times of Eusebius, were separate and independent, that they all immersed is unquestioned. The introduction of Jewish and Pagan ceremonies, at the time of the rise of Montanus, is recorded by every historian; and Neander, with almost every other reliable antiquarian, acknowledges that a

half century after this period, "infant baptism was not introduced as an apostolic practice." The conclusion which forces itself on the impartial mind is, that all the churches, at the time to which Eusebius referred in the foregoing extract, were nominally made up of baptized believers, which we now call Baptist Churches. But they were gradually losing their spiritual elements and gospel principles, and departing from the faith once delivered to the saints. The abuse afterward heaped on Montanus and Tertullian by this court bishop Eusebius, who was affected with Arianism, reveals the spirit which actuated the Judaizing party. Neander says:

"Montanus belonged to the class of men in whom the first glow of conversion begat and unconquerable opposition to the world. We should remember that he lived in a country where the expectation that the church should finally enjoy on the theater of its sufferings, the earth itself, previous to the end of all things, a millennium of victorious dominion." (Neander, vol. i, p. 518).

That there may have been some extravagances in regard to spiritual operations and influences, maintained by the Tertullianists, is altogether possible. That Montanus and his associates have been shamefully misrepresented is certain.

"While it was the custom to derive the power conceded to the bishops from the power to bind and loose, conferred on PETER, the Montanist Tertullian, on the other hand, maintained that these words referred only to Peter personally, and to those who, like Peter, were filled with the Holy Ghost indirectly. Montanism set up a church of the Spirit, consisting of the *spiritual homines*, (spiritual men,) in opposition to the prevailing outward view of that institution."

Tertullian says:

"The church, in the proper and preeminent sense, is the Holy Spirit in which the three are one, and next the whole community of those who are agreed in this faith.' The Catholic point of view expresses itself in this, viz.: that the idea of the church is put first, and by this very position of it is made outward. Next the agency of the Holy Spirit first, and considers the church as that which is only derived." (Neander, vol. i, p. 518).

There was the ground on which took place the first grand separation from a

carnalized community. As the fading light left the once irradiated churches wrapped in the twilight, which soon afterward settled into deep night, the Montanists parted from them, and proclaimed the true gospel principles, conversion, faith, spirituality *first, baptism and church-membership* NEXT. The dissenting minorities were excluded and traduced. But, unflinching and uncompromising, they would not acknowledge those societies to be churches, and therefore re-immersed all who came from them.

These men were Baptists, if immersing none but professedly converted men, and organizing independent churches on the principles of the gospel, constitute men Baptists. We found them in Phrygia and Armenia, in Italy and Africa, increasing steadily till crushed out by imperial cruelty. We traced their footsteps among the Pyrenees and Alps, where they lay concealed, and suddenly started into life at the Reformation of Luther.

Thus through the darkness have we tracked them up to the dissent of the Montanists in Asia, in the year 190, which was within a century of the apostles. Here, in the rural districts of Asia, which had witnessed the toil and sufferings of the apostles, and where their teachings were remembered by the living, who had actually listened to their preaching, and where their writings were recorded as the inspired voice of Go, here we find Baptists protesting against the very first departures from the simplicity and spirituality of apostolic churches. **HERE WE FIND WHERE THE BAPTISTS CAME FROM.**

CHAPTER XV — Century One

The Primitive Churches

We now make the bold, yet almost universally admitted assertion, that the primitive churches were in every distinguishing characteristic Baptist churches. We affirm that at the time of the departure of the great Tertullian, their Baptist features were as yet uneffaced; and that, though lost in the development of the Man of Sin, they have preserved those lineaments intact in the churches to this day. Where shall we seek the proof of this? Whom shall we introduce as witnesses? Shall we let Baptists speak? Will their testimony be received? No; with all their research, and learning, and candor, we shall dismiss them as witnesses in the case. Let Pedobaptists speak; let Presbyterians and Episcopalians testify; and if a jury of rational men can be found, who, guided by their report, can give a verdict against our affirmation, we shall acknowledge that there is no confidence to be placed in testimony.

DID THEY BAPTIZE INFANTS?

M. De la Roque:

"The primitive churches did not baptize infants, and the learned Grotius proves it, in his annotations on the gospel." (In Stennett's answer to Russen, p. 188).

Salmasius and Suicerus:

"In the two first centuries no one was baptized, except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrines of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of these words; 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.'" (Epist. ad Tustum Pacium. Thesaur. Eccles. sub voce Evrazis, tom. ii, p. 1136).

Curcelleus:

"The baptism of infants, in the two first centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown, but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages it was generally received. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born in the former ages no trace of it appears, and it was introduced without the command of Christ." (Epistle to the Churches of Galatia, chap. iii, verse 27 (2.) Annotat. ad Rom., v. 14).

Venema:

"Tertullian has nowhere mentioned Pedobaptism among the traditions of the church, nor even among the customs of the church that were publicly received, and usually observed; nay, he plainly intimates that, in his time, it was yet a doubtful affair. Nothing can be affirmed with certainty concerning the custom of the church before Tertullian, seeing there is not anywhere, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism. Justin Martyr, in his second apology, when describing baptism, mentions only that of adults. I conclude, therefore, that Pedobaptism can not be certainly proved to have been practiced before the times of Tertullian; and that there were persons in his age who desired their infants might be baptized, especially when they were afraid of their dying without baptism. Tertullian opposed, and by so doing he intimates that Pedobaptism began to prevail. These are the things that may be affirmed with apparent certainty concerning the antiquity of infant baptism, after the times of the apostles; for more are maintained without solid foundation." (Hist. Eccles., tom. iii, Secul. II, 108, 109).

Episcopus:

"Pedobaptism was not accounted a necessary rite till it was determined so to be in the Milevitan Council, held in the year 418." (Institut. Theology, l. iv, c. xiv).

Bishop Taylor:

"There is no pretense of tradition, that the church in all ages did baptize all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not always do it than that they did it in the first ages. St. Ambrose, St. Hierome, and St. Austin, were born of Christian parents, and yet not baptized until the full age of man or more." (Liberty of Prophesying, v, p. 84).

We might multiply evidence, every word of which is from those who, nevertheless, practiced infant baptism. But we close with the testimony of the greatest ecclesiastical historian that ever lived, *i.e.*, Neander:

"Baptism was administered at first only to adults, as men were

accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolic institution, and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later, as an apostolical tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis. Irenaeus is the first church teacher in whom we find any allusion to infant baptism, and in his mode of expressing himself on the subject, he leads us at the same time to recognize its connection with the essence of the Christian consciousness; he testifies of the profound Christian idea, out of which infant baptism arose, and which procured for it at length universal recognition." (Neander's History, vol. I, p. 311).

Is there any possibility of denying this testimony? Is it not convincing, overwhelming, that the churches, previous to Tertullian, practiced but one baptism, and that it was adult baptism? So far, then, they were Baptists.

IMMERSION

We pause not now to argue the question of immersion. We simply wish to ascertain a fact. We ask historian, what did the churches of the first and second centuries do when they performed that ordinance called baptism? Again we call on the most renowned, the most distinguished Pedobaptists, to answer, men who practiced and apologized for sprinkling, yet dared not, as scholars, garble or misrepresent the truth of history.

Neander's History of the Christian Religion:

"Baptism was originally administered by immersion; and many of the companions of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration. The immersion is a symbol of death, of being buried with Christ; the coming forth from the water is a symbol of a resurrection with Christ; and both, taken together, represent the second birth, the death of the old man, and a resurrection to a new life. An exception was made only in the case of sick persons, which was necessary, and they received baptism by sprinkling."

Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, first century:

"The sacrament of baptism was administered in this century without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for the purpose, and was performed by immersion of the whole body in the

baptismal font.

"The sacrament of *baptism* was administered publicly twice every year, at the festivals of Easter and Pentecost or Whitsuntide, either by the bishop or the presbyters, in consequence of his authorization and appointment. The persons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the creed, confessed and renounced their sins, and particularly the devil and his pompous allurements, were immersed under water, and received into Christ's kingdom by a solemn invocation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the express command of our blessed Lord. After baptism, they received the sign of the cross, were anointed, and, by prayers and imposition of hands, were solemnly commended to the mercy of God, and dedicated to his service; in consequence of which, they received the milk and honey, which concluded the ceremony. The reasons of this particular ritual coincide with what we have said in general concerning the origin and causes of the multiplied ceremonies that crept, from time to time, into the church."

History of the Church, by George Waddington, M. A.:

"The ceremony of immersion (the oldest form of baptism) was performed in the name of the three persons of the Trinity; it was believed to be attended by the remission of original sin, and the entire regeneration of the infant or convert, by the passage from the land of bondage into the kingdom of salvation."

Cave's Primitive Christianity:

"The action having proceeded thus far, the party to be baptized was wholly immersed, or put under water, which was the almost constant and universal custom of those times, whereby they did more notably and significantly express the three great ends and effects of baptism. For, as in immersion there are, in a manner, three several acts, the putting the person into water, his abiding there for a little time, and his rising up again, so by these were represented Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; and, in conformity thereunto, our dying unto sin, the destruction of its power, and our resurrection to a new course of life. By the person's being put into water was lively represented the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,

and being washed from the filth and pollution of them; by his abode under it, which was a kind of burial unto water, his entering into a state of death or mortification, like as Christ remained for some time under the state or power of death. Therefore, as many as are baptized into Christ, are said to be 'baptized into his death, and to be buried with him by baptism into death, that, the old man being crucified with him, the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he might not serve sin, for that he that is dead is freed from sin,' as the apostle clearly explains the meaning of this rite. Then, by his immersion, or rising up out of the water, was signified is entering upon a new course of life, differing from that which he lived before, that, 'like as Christ was raised up from the dead to the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'"

Bishop Taylor (Episcopalian):

"The custom of the ancient churches was not *sprinkling*, but immersion; in pursuance of the *sense* of the word (baptize) in the commandment and example of our blessed Savior. Now this was of so sacred account in their esteem that they did not think it lawful to receive him into the clergy who had been only sprinkled in his baptism, as we learn from the Epistle of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch."

Richard Baxter (Presbyterian):

"It is *commonly confessed* by us to the Anabaptists, as our commentators declare, that in the apostles' time, the baptized were *dipped over head* in the water, and that this signified their profession, both of believing the burial and resurrection of Christ; and of their own *present* renouncing the world and flesh, or dying to sin and living to Christ, or rising again to newness of life, or being buried and risen again with Christ, as the apostle expoundeth, (Col. 3, and Rom. 6;) and though we have *thought* it lawful to *disuse* the manner of dipping, and to use less water, yet we presume not to change the use and signification of it."

Bossuet (Catholic Bishop):

"The baptism of John the Baptist, which served for a preparative to that of Jesus Christ, was performed by plunging. When Jesus Christ

came to John, to raise baptism to a more marvelous efficacy in receiving it, the Scripture says, *that he went up out of the water of Jordan*, (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10). In fine, we read not in the Scripture that baptism was otherwise administered; and we are able to make it appear, by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for *thirteen hundred years*, baptism was thus administered *throughout the whole church*, as far as was *possible*." (In Mr. Stennett against Russen, p. 145-76).

Dr. Whitby (Episcopalian):

"It being so expressly declared here, (Rom. 6:4, and Colos. 2:12,) that we are *buried with Christ in baptism* by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and this immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for *thirteen centuries*, and approved by our church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the Author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity." (Note on Rom. 6:4).

Dr. Wall (Episcopal):

"Their (the primitive Christians) general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant, or grown man or woman, into the water. This is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that as one cannot but pity the weak endeavors of such Pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it, so also we ought to disown and show a dislike of the *profane scoffs* which some people give to the English Antipedobaptists, merely for their use of dipping. It was, in all probability, the way by which our blessed Savior, and for certain was the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians did receive their baptism. 'Tis a great want of prudence, as well as of honesty, to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says. As for sprinkling, I say, as Mr. Blake, *at its first coming up in England*, 'Let them defend it who use it.' They (who are inclined to Presbyte-

rianism) are hardly prevailed on to leave off that scandalous custom of having their children, though never so well, baptized out of a basin, or porringer, in a bed-chamber, hardly persuaded to bring them to church, much further from having them dipped, though never so able to bear it." (History of Infant Baptism, Part II, chap. ii, p. 462).

"In the case of sickness, weakness, haste, want of quantity of water, or such like extraordinary occasions, baptism by affusion of water on the face, was by the ancients, counted sufficient baptism. France seems to have been the first country in the world where baptism, by affusion, was used ordinarily to persons in health, and in the public way of administering it. There has been some synods, in some dioceses of France, that had spoken of affusion, without mentioning immersion at all, that being the common practice; but for an office or liturgy of any church, this is, (Referring to Calvin's "Form of administering the Sacraments) I believe, *the first in the world* that prescribes affusion absolutely; and for sprinkling, properly called, it seems it was, at 1645, just then beginning, and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times after 1641." "But then came *The Directory*, which says: 'Baptism is to be administered, not in private places, or privately, but in the place of public worship, and in the face of the congregation,' and so on. 'And not in the places where fonts, in the time of Popery, were unfitly and superstitiously placed.' So they *reformed* the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in had been always 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 the other Popish countries) in times of Popery; and that accordingly, all those countries in which the usurped power of the Pope is, or has formerly been, owned, have *left off* dipping of children in the font; but that all other countries in the world, which had never regarded his authority, do still use it; and that basins, except in case of necessity, were never used by Papists, or any other Christians whatsoever, *till by themselves*." "What has been said of this custom of pouring or sprinkling water in the ordinary use of baptism, is to be

understood only in reference to these western parts of Europe, for it is used ordinarily nowhere else." (History of Infant Baptism, Part II, chap. ix).

Mr. John Wesley:

"Mary Welsh, aged eleven days, was baptized according to the custom of the first church, and the rule of the Church of England, by immersion. The child was ill then, but recovered from that hour. (Extract of Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from his embarking for Georgia, page 10). '*Buried with him*,' alluded to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." (Wesley's Notes on Rom. 6:4).

NEED WE ADD MORE? Is any other endeavor necessary to substantiate beyond a question that the churches of the first and second centuries were Baptist Churches, so far as baptism is concerned in subject and action? The testimony that might be produced would fill a volume; but the foregoing is sufficient for the candid. Certain it is as that the heavens are above us, that the primitive churches immersed all who joined them, and that none were received but professing believers. One other feature of Baptist Churches must be noticed.

THEIR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Were they Episcopal, Presbyterian, or monarchical? Again let history speak. Mosheim says:

"The churches in those early times were entirely independent on of another: none of them being subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each governed by its own rules and its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles had this particular difference shown them, that they were consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had *no judicial* authority, no sort of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality of these primitive churches. Having witnessed, in the second century, that the custom of holding councils commenced in Greece, whence it soon spread through the other provinces." (Mosheim, first century, chap. 10, sec. xiv).

This evidence is conclusive that neither Episcopacy nor Presbyterianism was

known in the first churches; their government was that now existing among Baptists. but further, Gibbon, the classic historian of Rome, says:

"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 those little states maintained a mutual, as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly. Toward the end of the second century the churches of Greece and Asia adopted the useful institutions of provincial Synods, and they are justly supposed to have borrowed the model of a representative council from the celebrated examples of their own country, the Amphictyons, the Achean league, and the assemblies of the Ionian cities."

We here pause again and review our course. We found, in the early part of the third century, ere one hundred years had transpired from the death of the apostles, Tertullian and the Montanists breaking away from the dominant parties in the churches, on the ground of the innovations, the formalities, and the corruptions, which had almost quenched their life and light. We found that these Tertullianists were Baptists, and that from the churches planted by them descended those persecuted and slandered in every age as Anabaptists. We have now found, by the light of impartial history, recorded by Pedobaptist scholars, that previous to Tertullian and the Montanist schism, that is, previous to the third century, *none but adults were baptized*. The action of baptism was immersion, universally; and each church was an independent little republic.

We have now found, by the glimmering and oftshaded lamp of history, relumed by Pedobaptist scholars, that, previous to Tertullian and the Montenses schism:

- I. *None but believers were baptized.*
- II. *Baptism was immersion.*
- III. *Each Church was an independent little republic, knowing nothing of ecclesiastical conferences, synods, general assemblies, or authoritative councils.*

IV. *Consequently they were all Baptist Churches then.*

For, if the baptism of none but professedly converted believers, and that by immersion, with independent and democratic church government, constitute Baptist churches, then *the primitive churches were Baptist Churches.*

Where, then, did the Baptists come from?

When the learned Mosheim, after tracing the origin of every sect, came to the Anabaptists, or Mennonites, that laborious investigator paused and said:

"The true origin of this sect is hidden in the depths of antiquity; and it is of consequence extremely difficult to be ascertained."

Never was truer statement penned. All up the stream of ecclesiastical history had tracked them, up to its main spring he had gone, and found them there. Amid the scenes of apostolic labor, in the purest ages of the church, he traced their *existence, but not their origin.* Further up into the light of inspired history he would not pass. Their origin was hidden in those remote depths of antiquity. It could be found in the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, and in the testimony of Jesus. But here he would not seek for their origin, and so he proclaimed that it was lost. it is not hid in those remote depths. It stands forth in unadorned simplicity on the shores of the Jordan, amid the scenes of the Pentecost, and the cities of Greece, while the New Testament flings a flood of historic light over the whole subject. ere, then, is our ancestry, of whom we are proud, the origin of our denomination, for which we are grateful.

On the shores of the Jordan, thronged with the wondering citizens of Jerusalem, and the gathering multitudes of Judea, the harbinger of the Messiah announced the setting up of the kingdom of Jesus, the institution of the church of Christ. The last of the prophets, and the first of the heralds of the gospel, like the star of morning, shining clear and radiant from the bright sky, and then fading away in the cloudless splendor of the orb of day, in the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ came John, baptizing in the wilderness. That was the *beginning.*

Amid the multitudes stood Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God! exclaimed the enraptured herald of the kingdom. And then in those waters, consecrated by a thousand sacred associations, Jesus was baptized, while from the parting heavens came the approving voice of the Father, and the anointing symbol of the Holy Ghost. thus it was, and there it was, that our denomination had its

origin. Nor can learning nor ingenuity fix another spot, nor another period.

Baptists! the flag that floats over you is that of Jesus *only*; the principles that govern you have the authority of Jesus *only*; the ordinances which distinguish you have the example of Jesus *only*; and the founder of your churches is Jesus *only*. Let deep devotion be yours. Let earnest zeal be yours. Let the spirit that animated to deeds of valor and endurance our noble and martyred ancestors be yours. Let us move in harmony, and fight on manfully and wear the armor constantly, and soon the songs of the angels will announce the advent of the era when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

THE END