

# The Origin and Perpetuity of the Baptists

*The Baptist Examiner*

## *The Origin Of The Church*

### CHAPTER 1

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The church had a beginning. When it began is a matter of much dispute. This is chiefly because of false concepts as to what the church is. When you have a false concept of what the church is you will most likely have a false concept as to when the church had its beginning. When you understand what the church is (on assembly) you will have very little difficulty in spotting its beginning. It is true that the Bible nowhere says, "The church started on this spot on this day." But when we know what the church is, we are able to closely examine the Scriptural record and see when that church began.

Let us approach this matter from the negative side; let us first notice when, the church did not begin.

#### FALSE THEORIES AS TO THE CHURCH'S ORIGIN

##### 1. *The church did not begin with the first man ever saved.*

The Bible nowhere teaches such and nowhere hints it. The only reason this theory is taught is because of the universal, invisible church theorists who contend that all the saved of all time compose the church.

2. *The church did not begin with Abraham.* Pedobaptists like to think that it did, for they think they here have some ground upon which to base infant "baptism." That idea has repeatedly been exploded by the truth. Pedobaptists point to Acts 7:38 and say that Israel is called "the church." Yes, but the word there is "ekklesia" (assembly) and this word itself does not denote the *kind* of assembly. If this word alone will make Israel and the church of Christ one and the same, then the "ekklesia" of Acts 19 is one and the same with Israel and Christ's church. So what do you then have? Israel, Christ's church, and the heathen of Ephesus—all the same "church!"

No, the word "ekklesia" itself does not signify the kind of assembly.

Furthermore, if the church began with Abraham, why did the Jews of New Testament times have to become members of the church referred to in the New Testament? Were not they already in the church? Why must they be baptized, then? They were not members of the New Testament church until they were baptized; if they were already in the church, why be baptized to become members of the New Testament church?

Pedobaptists also argue that the covenant of grace was made with Abraham and thus this marked the beginning of the church. Not so, for the covenant of grace is eternal and since the very first man God's grace has saved sinners. The covenant of grace was not *made* with Abraham, but confirmed to him. The covenant of circumcision was made with him, yes, but the two covenants are not the same. Furthermore, grace and the church are not the same, So the argument fails completely.

**3. *The church did not begin with John the Baptist.*** John came as the forerunner of Christ "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). He made them ready by calling them to repentance and baptizing those who gave evidence of having repented. He never did organize an "ekklesia." Many of his converts were among those who did form the first "ekklesia," but John did not start it.

There is one thing which did begin with John, however. That is baptism. God commissioned this man to preach and to baptize those who heeded his message. John baptized those who composed the first church and John baptized the Founder and Head of the church, Jesus Christ. Baptism is thus of divine origin and is not "minor," "human," or "non-essential." No one could tell John that it doesn't matter how one is baptized. None could tell him that it doesn't matter who does the baptizing. He knew because he had gotten his orders from God.

No, John didn't start a church, but he did have something to do with "preparing" those folk whom Christ called out for His "ekklesia." John stands to Christ as David stands to Solomon: as Solomon built the temple with the material furnished by David, so Christ called His church and formed it of the people "made ready" by John the Baptist.

**4. *The church did not begin on Pentecost.*** This is the theory of Scofield, the Campbellites, Holy Rollers and many Protestants. Something unusual happened, very, very unusual, on Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, yes. But the book of Acts does not tell us that the church originated on that day.

To say that the church originated on Pentecost ruins the typology of the church as being God's temple filled with His glory. Notice: when the Tabernacle was completed, the glory of God filled it (Exodus 40:34). When the Temple was completed, the glory of God filled it (1 Kings 8:10, 11). When Christ left this earth He left behind Him an "ekklesia" that had been following Him for over three years. He had taught it, set Apostles in it, given it the Lord's supper, met with it after His resurrection, commissioned it, and commanded it to wait in Jerusalem for an enduement of power. On Pentecost the church was immersed in the Holy Spirit. The glory of God filled His new "tabernacle," His "temple," the "house of God"—the *church*. It wasn't built on Pentecost, it was filled with divine glory on Pentecost.

How do we know there was an "ekklesia" before Pentecost?

*Because* the word "ekklesia" means a called out assembly and Christ had that long before Pentecost.

*Because* before Pentecost the disciples were *assembled in* the upper room praying and conducting a business meeting (Acts 1:12-26), electing an apostle. They were 120 in number (v. 15), and who will deny that they were an "ekklesia" (assembly) of baptized, professing Christians? Who can show one thing that reveals that they were not a Christian "ekklesia" (assembly)?

*Because* Christ "set" the apostles in the "ekklesia" and that was done before Pentecost (Mark 3:13-19; 1 Cor. 12:32).

*Because* Jesus told them how to exclude members from the "ekklesia" (Matthew 18:15-17), and that was before Pentecost. Scofield, in order to get around this passage, says that this is instruction for the "future" church. *Mason* answers: *"But it still remains unreasonable to believe that Jesus referred to something that the disciples did not understand, or that He indicated a rule of discipline relating, to a church that did not exist"* (The Church That Jesus Built, page 18).

*Because* the "ekklesia" had both ordinances given to it before Pentecost.

*Because* the only singing Christ ever did was before Pentecost (Mark 14:26) and Hebrews 2:12 says that it was in the "ekklesia." Hence there was a church before Pentecost.

*Because* the commission was given before Pentecost and if there were no church then, then the church does not have the commission of Matthew 28:19,20.

*Because* those saved on the day of Pentecost were "added to" the "ekklesia" (Acts 2:41, 47). You couldn't add the 3,000 souls to nothing, so there must have been an "ekklesia" already in existence.

*Because* Judas was an apostle in the "ekklesia" and he died before Pentecost. Hence there was a church before Pentecost.

## **WHEN, THEN, DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?**

"Ekklesia" means assembly, a called out assembly, an assembly called out for a specific purpose.

What is Christ's "ekklesia"? It is an assembly called out for a specific purpose, namely, to fulfill His will, to keep and teach His ordinances and commandments.

When did Jesus begin His "ekklesia"? When did He begin to call it out and assemble it? The answer: *when He called out the very first persons who because the first members of the "ekklesia."* When was that? We read of it in John 1:35-51.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, what seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where

dweldest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They come and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John, speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him. We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Here was the beginning of Christ's calling out His assembly. Those called out had been baptized by John the Baptist one were thus "prepared" for composing the Lord's "ekklesia."

The church did not begin on the occasion mentioned in Mark 3:13-19; that was an ordination service. This was when the twelve disciples were "set" in the church as *apostles*.

Neither does Matthew 16:18 indicate the time of the church's beginning. The Greek word for "build" means "build up" and does not refer to the initial beginning of the church.

Before Mark 3 and Matthew 16 Christ had an *assembly* of baptized disciples. He was their Head and they were following Him and serving Him. What else is necessary before a group is an "ekklesia"? It is true that He was not through with the church in teaching it and commissioning it; but He had an "ekklesia," and had had one from the day. He called those first disciples and they began to follow Him. John had "prepared" them, the Master assembled them as His "ekklesia." God wanted it that way, John wanted it that way, Christ wanted it that way, the

disciples wanted it that way, and that is the way it *was*. *God said, "Hear ye Him;" John said, "Behold the Lamb of God;" Christ said, "Follow me;" the disciples "followed Him"* That is how and when the assembly of Jesus Christ had its beginning.

It is clear, very clear.

Yet some tell us that the Bible doesn't indicate when the church began. The trouble with their thinking is their false concept as to what the church is. Let them get straight on what a church is and the whole thing opens up as when light dispels darkness. Let them once see the truth that the church is an assembly and it is easy to see when Christ began assembling His assembly.

Was it a Baptist Church? If you mean in name—that it wore the title "Baptist"—no; but if you mean in doctrine and practice, yes. If you mean that sound churches today known as Baptists are its descendants and its present-day expression, yes.

If you were to set that first century (A.D.) church over here into the twentieth century, that church would be recognized by everyone as a Baptist Church. The Campbellites and Pedobaptists would say it is an unscriptural Baptist church. Why? Because it had baptism from John the Baptist and according to them that wasn't "Christian" baptism. They would deny that it is a church because it was not organized on Pentecost. Yes, set those early disciples and their Head over into the twentieth century and the only people who would even RECOGNIZE them as a church would be Baptists because most everyone else says that the church began on Pentecost. The only churches that would receive their baptism would be Baptist Churches because they are the only ones who accept John's baptism as being "Christian."

So we say, Yes, it was definitely a Baptist church. What else could it have been?

We like the name, "Baptist," but we do not base this conviction upon it. Rather, we base our conviction on three things: (1) the church's doctrine, (2) the promise of God to perpetuate His church, and (3) the testimony of history. On these three things we base our conviction that the church Christ built was a Baptist Church. In the next chapter we shall discuss these things, showing that Christ promised perpetuity to His church and that history testifies to this perpetuity.

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### ***The Perpetuity Of The Church***

#### **CHAPTER 2**

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*Webster's Dictionary* defines the word "perpetuity" to mean "perpetual existence." When we speak of the perpetuity of Christ's church we mean it has had perpetual existence since the day the Lord Jesus first began assembling it. The first members of the first "ekklesia" of Christ are dead; the bodies of the members of the church at Antioch have been in the grave for almost two thousand years; the folk who composed the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, and other cities and areas mentioned in the Bible are not with us today; but the church of Jesus Christ is with us today and has been on this earth since Christ inaugurated it. Adam and Eve were members of the first family, but they are dead: nevertheless, the family has existed throughout the ages of the human race. So with the church: it has existed in every century, every year, every month, every day since it had its beginning.

The words "succession," "continuity," and "perpetuity" are words often used in reference to this subject. *J. B. Moody* says, "Not one of these words expresses the whole idea, but each one is nearly right, and sufficient for honest inquiry" ("My Church," page 132). Brother Moody is right; those who do not want to make an "honest inquiry" would pervert the meaning Baptists attach to such terms and make a straw-man regardless of any kind of lengthy explanation we might give; so we forbear any explanation of the terms other than what has been briefly stated as to "perpetuity."

## **CHRIST PROMISED CHURCH PERPETUITY**

It is rarely denied that Christ promised His church perpetuity; very few men attempt to disprove the clear teaching of the Word of God on this point. But those who do not truly believe in perpetuity pervert the truth on the matter by saying it was to a universal, invisible church that Christ promised perpetuity and not to the church "visible" (to use their phraseology). It is quite clear, however, that there is no such invisible church mentioned in the Bible and this alone is enough to crush this idea of perpetuity. But we dare say that the primary reason for rejecting the truth of church perpetuity lies in unbelief. Men can read the promise of Christ, but because they can't put their finger on the "visible" church in every day and age since the New Testament record was closed, they do not believe the Master's plain promise!

Notice what the Master said: "Upon this rock I will build my church; *and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*"

This verse (Matthew 16:18) is plainly a promise of perpetuity. The "gates of hell"—whatever that means and includes, whether Satan and his forces, or death, or all combined—shall not prevail against the church built by Jesus Christ, but that church shall prevail always. If it has not *prevailed*, then our Master's promise is proved to be empty. If at any time the church of Jesus Christ has been overcome by "the gates of hell," then we can forget about trusting the Person who made the promise that the opposite would be true. But we cannot for a moment entertain this thought.

Never has there been a time when Ephesians 3:21 was not fulfilled:

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ, Jesus *throughout all ages*, world without end. Amen."

The Corinthian church was told that the Lord's Supper would be observed "*till he came*" (1 Corinthians 11:26) . That indicates the perpetuity of the church.

So the promise is there. We should believe it, not try to get around it because of our inability to see the perpetuity. Take God at His word and believe.

## **THE PROMISE HAS BEEN FULFILLED**

Through fire, blood, and *persecution unto* death, the church has lived. Millions upon millions of its loyal members have given up their lives in martyrdom, yet the church has gone on. Heathen and Religionist alike have tried to extinguish the fire of the church by the fires around the stake, but to no avail. When the flames were the hottest for Christ's church, its members were the most tenacious in their stand for the faith. Eyes were burned out, tongues were pulled out from the roots, ears were filled with hot lead, bodies were mangled and mutilated and thrown to the wild beasts—but the church of Jesus Christ came on victoriously over "the gates of hell."

We know the promise has been fulfilled because no promise of the Master has ever or will ever fail. Every saint of God ought to FIRST believe on the basis that GOD SAID IT. Oh, how many must see before they believe! When God says a thing, we ought to immediately believe it is so, regardless of our inability to see. But after we have once accepted the plain statement of God, it is not difficult for us to SEE the promise literally fulfilled.

Let us look at it this way: A man stands on one side of a river with a cable in his hand. He says, "I am going to cross this river and stretch this cable under the water. The cable is attached to a pole on the bank and the man goes down into his boat and pulls the long cable into the water. Eventually he reaches the other side and there attaches the other end of the cable to another pole.

Now a young lad comes up and sees the cable extending from the pole into the water. He looks across the river and there is the other end of the cable. He cannot see the greater portion of the cable because it is submerged in the river, but he knows that the cable he sees on one side is the same cable he sees on the other.

When we see the church that Jesus built go into what is called the "Dark Ages;" and when we stand on this side of the Dark Ages and see a church come forth that is the same in all its characteristics as the Master's church, what are we to conclude? On the basis of the Master's promise and the doctrinal identification of the two churches, we can say that this present-day church coming out of the Dark Ages is one and the same as the church of New Testament times. We don't have to be able to see the perpetuity in order for it to actually be there. On the basis of God's promise we know it is there, and on the basis of the doctrinal oneness of the two churches, we know they are one and the same.

Who was it that suffered death at the hands of the Roman emperors, if not the church's members? Who was it that was persecuted by apostate Romanism, if not the church? When Romanism covered the European nations as thick darkness, who was it that yet held up the light of the Gospel of Christ, if not Christ's church? Who was it that left their marks on the caves and underground hiding places of these nations? Whose blood was it that bathed the soil of the earth

during the Dark Ages? When the Protestant Reformation arose within the Romish stronghold, who was it that was persecuted by both Romanists and Protestants? Who stood true to the Bible on baptism when Romanism and Protestantism were propagating sprinkling and pouring with a zeal that brought wrath down upon immersionists?

We find our answer in the church that Jesus built.

People talk of Romanism as being the "Mother church;" people talk of Protestant groups as being "branches of the church;" Rome is a mother, yes—the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (Rev. 17:5) . Protestants are the rebellious daughters of Rome, and the many Protestant "branches" are truly branches of Rome. But the church of Jesus Christ has no part nor lot with Rome and Protestantism. God says to all His people in either and both of these movements, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God's church was here before the old whore of Rome; it was here a good 1500 years before Luther and Calvin. What truth Luther and Calvin taught had been taught all through the ages before; what heresy they taught will eventually lead their movements back to "Mother" Rome from whence they came.

## **THE PROMISE FULFILLED IN BAPTIST CHURCHES**

We want to make one thing clear with regard to the name "Baptist." We make no claim whatsoever to perpetuity on the basis of the title "Baptist." We are convinced that Christ built a Baptist Church, but the name "Baptist," as the name "Christian," was not given to the church by Christ or any writer of the New Testament. We accept the name Baptist as the early saints eventually accepted the name Christian. There is nothing about the name Baptist for which to be ashamed. It is drenched with blood—the blood shed because of faithfulness to God's Word. Its history carries us back to those called "Ana-baptists" (or re-baptizers). Real Baptists have a precious heritage in their name. We love the name and what it signifies. But we build no doctrine or conviction upon it and if the time ever comes that Baptists must bear some other reproachful title by which they are identified by their enemies, then Baptists will no doubt accept it and unashamedly stand for the faith.

With this matter as to the name Baptist clarified, we wish to now demonstrate that Christ built only a Baptist church. Our method will be one of simplicity, one that any child can understand. The testing of the various denominations in the light of history will lead us to the inevitable conclusion that the churches known today as Baptist are the only ones that could possibly claim to be or actually be descendants of the church that Jesus built.

## **HISTORICAL ELIMINATION**

All of the recent Protestant organizations and other sects and schisms are clearly eliminated from any claim as being the church Christ built, for history marks their beginning far this side of the time of Christ.

*Lutherans*. of course, were the followers of the great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther. In the early sixteenth century, Luther began his efforts toward cleaning up the Roman Church, which

he considered to be the church of the Lord. Particularly between 1520 and 1530, Lutheranism developed so as to eventually become a separate movement from Romanism.

*Presbyterians* are so-called because of their form of government and owe their origin and practices to John Calvin. Calvin, like Luther, was a Romanist, and he, too, tried to clean up the Roman Church. His movement, as a separate movement from Romanism, is usually dated at 1536, the year when Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* appeared.

*The Episcopal Church* had its beginning in 1534 when Henry the Eighth broke with Rome. The reason back of Henry's action was his desire to be divorced from his wife in order to marry another person. Rome refused his request for divorce, so Henry broke with the Pope and became the head of the Church of England, known as the Episcopal Church because of its form of government.

*The Congregational Church* had its beginning with a man named Robert Brown. It was in 1580 that this Episcopalian schoolteacher led in the organization of this church. However, historians tell us that Brown later went back to the Church of England—but his movement is still with us today.

*Methodism* also sprang off from the Church of England. As a result of the work of John Wesley, his brother Charles, and associates, the movement branded as "Methodism" by Church of England leaders who opposed it, eventually became a separate denomination in 1739. Wesley did not intend this to be done, but it was only inevitable after all that took place during his ministry.

*Campbellism* manifested today in groups known as Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, and The Christian Church, owes its origin to a zealous and very intelligent man named Alexander Campbell. 'Campbell was a brilliant man, but knew nothing about salvation; he taught that sins are literally washed away in baptism. The actual date when this movement began is disputed. But the Campbellites themselves usually assign 1827 as the year.

*Holy Rollerism*, is the offspring of Methodism and there are so many different sects and schisms among them that we forbear listing them. It has been since 1900 that Holy Rollerism has developed so rapidly and widely. All Holy Roller groups—Pentecostal, Nazarene, Assemblies of God, Holiness, Four Square, etc. —are basically Wesleyan in theology, emphasizing in particular the Wesleyan heresy of sinless perfection.

As for the groups usually called "sects," *Seventh-Day Adventists* were put on foot by William Miller and developed under Ellen G. White, dating back to the 1840's. *Mormonism* began with Joseph Smith and was organized in 1830. Mary Baker Eddy concocted *Christian Science* and the organization of the first society was in Boston, in 1879. C. T. Russell instigated the *Jehovah Witness* movement in the 1870's.

Since all of these groups mentioned had their beginning at a later date than the first century A. D., they certainly cannot qualify as being the church built by the Saviour. They are therefore

eliminated. It does not matter what they believe; if they had a beginning this side of Christ, they are not the church Christ built.

We have not as yet mentioned Roman *Catholicism*. The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the church built by Christ. But history reveals that Romanism gradually developed from apostate groups who were not sound in the faith. Over a period of years, certain groups fell for the notion of the primacy of the bishop of Rome until the papacy was the result. Constantine played an important role in Romanism's rise and by the sixth century, the papal seat was well established. Thus, Romanism could not be the church built by Christ.

## WHAT ABOUT BAPTISTS

We have shown that Protestants and others mentioned (some not mentioned) cannot qualify historically as Christ's church. Can Baptists qualify? We believe they can.

There is one church (and I here use the term "church" in the generic sense) which cannot be traced back to any man this side of Jesus Christ. That is the Baptist Church. The author has tried to study Baptist history from both friend and foe and he has found that the opinions of non-Baptist historians as to the history and origin of Baptists to be as follows:

- (1) Unprejudiced historians who care only for what is, or at least appears to them to be historical truth, trace Baptists through the Anabaptists, Waldenses, and other nick-named groups—which held to the same general principles as Baptists—all the way back to the apostolic age.
- (2) Other historians whose integrity seems to have been of the highest type are uncertain about Baptists and do not know when Baptists had their beginning. With *J. L. Mosheim*, the great Lutheran historian born in the late sixteenth century, they agree that the history of Baptists is involved in "much obscurity," or is perhaps "hidden in the depths of antiquity, and is of consequence difficult to be ascertained." (*History of the Anabaptists*, pages 490, 491).
- (3) Enemies of Baptists, anxious to bring Baptists down on the same level with other groups put on foot by men, have tried their uttermost to attribute the origin of Baptists to some person. The author has in his library anti-Baptist literature which names several different persons, each supposedly being the founder of Baptists. The enemies are thus divided amongst themselves, and have failed to satisfy anyone who is really searching for the truth.

Personally, the author believes that the history of the church from the time of the apostles is so foggy that it has not and never will be written. We have some great histories that have been composed by very studious and earnest men, but these are nothing but muddy water, if not mud, compared with what we believe to be the church's true history. Modern historians, actually know very little about the ages gone by. There are so few records of the history prior to the printing press that our knowledge is greatly limited.

Not only is our historical knowledge limited for lack of records, but also by lack of knowledge on the part of the authors of records which we have. Imagine how limited a writer of the Dark Ages must have been! He had no means of communication such as we have today and very little

contact with other nations, not to mention what was actually taking place in those nations. Whatever a person of that age would write would be reliable only as it concerned local affairs.

Another thing to consider is that writers have not always recorded information about every religious movement. The history of the church is greatly clouded because of this in particular. We have an illustration of this very thing in even the twentieth century. Broadman Press (Southern Baptist Convention) recently published a large two volume encyclopedia. In this encyclopedia there is information of some sort on practically all present-day Baptists. But there is no information whatsoever on Baptist Churches such as the one to which the author belongs, except references to particular doctrines which we hold in common with some other groups named. The church to which the author belongs is located in Ashland, Kentucky, and within the radius of fifty miles of Ashland, there are at last fifteen independent Baptist churches of like faith and order. Furthermore, through our weekly paper, *The Baptist Examiner*, we have contact with a great number of other churches of like faith and order. The new encyclopedia of the Southern Baptist Convention publishing house will no doubt come to be regarded as a historical document in years to come of the Lord tarries His coming). When the historians of the future look into this document for records as to the Baptists of this day, they will find no record of churches of the kind just mentioned. Yet this encyclopedia should be the one most likely to give such information because the faith and order of Convention churches is in precept essentially the same as that of these independent churches.

When a twentieth century publication completely overlooks churches and gives no information about them, then it is certainly not difficult for us to understand how historians and writers of the past ages could have very easily or deliberately done the same. And this is not even taking into consideration the bigotry and hatred for Baptists that has characterized non-Baptist writers.

Yes, Baptist history is cloudy so far as the written record is concerned, but were God to uncover the clouds of the past ages we have not the slightest doubt that we would see a glorious path that leads through some nineteen hundred years of God-honoring witnessing for Christ and truth.

Proving that Baptists are linked with the Anabaptists, Waldenses, Donatists, Novatians, etc., is not too important. Of course, it is important that Baptists be linked with the church which has descended from Christ, but whether all (or any of) these groups named were the expressions of Christ's church in their day and age, we do not definitely know. No doubt some of the churches in these groups were not sound in the faith, just as many churches among Baptists today are not sound. But there is great possibility and strong indication from what history is recorded of them, that these Anabaptists and Waldenses and other groups held to the same truths for which the churches of the New Testament stood. That in some of these groups there were things which are not in harmony with what we believe to be New Testament teaching is not denied. But let us remember that what is recorded in history as being the position of a certain group does not mean that the entire group or even the majority of the group held to such. Furthermore, let it be remembered that right along side these groups who had some error mixed with truth we do not know that there weren't other churches that were entirely free from the error and held solely to the truth Today a person could go into a church called Baptist and hear many things which sound Baptists do not believe. If that person were to judge all Baptists by this one church he would have a wrong impression. Now *this is exactly what happened in many instances in ages past, no*

*doubt.* When someone points to some inconsistency on the part of a certain group, we say, "Prove that all the churches held to that. Prove that there were not other churches standing against this error."

Also, it should be remembered that most history has been written by the enemies of Baptists. Baptists, as a result of persecution, were unable to do much by way of writing. They were too busy seeking a place to worship without persecution to give time to write; and furthermore, they were poor people and unable to buy equipment to print or pay for the printing. One more fortunate Baptist brother wrote a little tract in which he said: "We that have most truth are persecuted, and therefore most poor; whereby we are unable to write and print, or we would, against the adversaries of truth. It is hard for us 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?" (*The Origin of Baptists* by S. F. Ford, page 20) .

We should expect, then, that Baptists of the past would be greatly slandered and misrepresented, even as they now are in this day when we have again and again made our views clear. Papists and Pedobaptists have never been satisfied with Baptists and their doctrines and never will be. They shall try to annihilate them one way or another as long as Baptists stand for the truth.

## WHAT HISTORIANS SAY ABOUT BAPTISTS

With these things taken into consideration, we now wish to call attention to some of the things that historians have stated with regard to the history of Baptists. These quotations reveal that if any one can lay claim to being the church that has descended from Jesus Christ, it must be the Baptists.

*J. Newton Brown*, editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* and a scholar of renown, maintained that "the ancient Waldenses, Cathari, Peterines and Donatists were our historical ancestors, and that a succession of whom continued up to the Reformation." (Quoted by Graves in *Old Landmarkism*, page 127) .

*David Benedict*, though often misinterpreted by many enemies of Baptist perpetuity, says: "The more I study the subject, the stronger are my convictions that, *if all the facts in the case could be disclosed*, a very good succession could be made out" (*History of Baptists*, page 51) .

*Mosheim* says of the Anabaptists:

"The true origin of that sect which acquired the name 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 (Simon Menno) to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is, consequently, extremely difficult to be ascertained." (Maclaine's 1811 edition of Mosheim's work, Vol. IV, pages 427, 428).

In a work entitled *The History of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands*, two Pedobaptist historians, J. J. *Dermount*, chaplain to the king of Holland, and *Professor A. Ypeig*, professor of theology in the University of Groningen, wrote:

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

"We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long in history received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their denomination is the most ancient." (Vol. 1, page 148).

The men who wrote this statement, remember, were not Baptists, but Pedobaptist scholars of the Dutch Reformed Church.

*Theodore Beza*, the friend, pupil, co-pastor, and successor of Calvin, is quoted by Jones in his *History of the Christian Church* as saying:

"As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian church, since they are those that have been upheld, as is abundantly manifested, by the wonderful providence of God; so that neither those endless storms and tempests, by which the whole Christian world has been shaken for so many succeeding ages, and the western parts, of length so miserably oppressed by the bishops of Rome, falsely so called, nor those horrible persecutions, which have been expressly raised against them, were ever able so far to prevail as to make them bend or yield a voluntary subjection to the Roman tyranny and idolatry." (Page 353) .

Cardinal Hosius, president of the Council of Trent (A. D. 1550).

"If the truth of religion were to be judged of by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of Anabaptists, since there have been none, for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished, or

that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to, the most cruel sorts of punishment, than these people." (*Letters, Apud Opera*, pages 112, 113).

Notice this quotation does not date the origin of Anabaptists 1200 years prior to the time Hosius lived, but is in reference to the persecution suffered by them. The use of the name "Anabaptist" did begin during these early years but that was only because the churches would not receive alien immersion or anything else as baptism. They were thus called "Anabaptists" rebaptizers). The churches repudiated this name since they did not consider their practice as being a re-baptism but the first Scriptural baptism that those baptized had actually received.

Again Hosius says:

"The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect. Of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been, although some of them lately, as they testify in their apology, declare that they will no longer re-baptize, as was their former custom; nevertheless, it is certain that many of them retain their custom, and have united with the Anabaptists." (*Works of the Heresaeics of Our Time*, Book 1, page 431).

*Philippus van Limborch*, the historian of the Inquisition, says:

"To speak my mind freely, if their opinions and customs were to be examined without prejudice, it would appear that among all of the modern sects of Christians, they (Anabaptists) had the greatest resemblance to that of the Mennonites or Dutch Baptists." (*History of the Inquisition*, 1, page 51).

Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer.

"The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for one thousand and three hundred years has caused great disturbance in the church, and has acquired such a strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appeared futile for a time." (From the introduction to Orchard's Concise History of Baptists).

*John T. Christian* quotes this statement with regard to the Waldenses made by an Austrain inquisitor in the Diocese of Passau about 1260:

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

are known to be too easily lead away." (Gretscher, *Contra Waldenses*, IV. As given in *A History of Baptists* by Christian, page 72).

In his debate with the Roman Bishop J. B. Purcell, Alexander Campbell also quotes the foregoing statement (page 174). Toplady likewise refers to it (*Works*, page 90).

*Augustus Toplady*, perhaps no scholar in ecclesiastical history, but one who certainly was an outstanding student of it, says:

"According to Pilichdorffius, the Waldenses themselves carried up the date of their commencement as a body, as high as three hundred years after Constantine, i.e. to about the year 637. For my own part, I believe their antiquity to have been higher still. I agree with some of our oldest and best Protestant divines, in considering the Albigenses, or Waldenses (for they were, in fact, one and the same), to have been a branch of that visible Church, against which the gates of hell could never totally prevail; and that the uninterrupted succession of Apostolical doctrine continued with them, from the primitive times, quite down to the Reformation: soon after which period they seem to have been melted into the inner mass of Protestants." (*Works*, page 89).

Concerning the last remark, let it be understood that Toplady, being a Protestant, no doubt includes Baptists in his reference, although Baptists are not Protestants. As *Sir Isaac Newton* has said, "Baptists are the only Christians who have not symbolized with Rome." (See *Memoirs of Whiston*, page 201).

*John Wesley*, in his *Explanation Notes upon the New Testament*, comments on Revelation 13:7 as follows:

"‘And it was given, him’—That is God permitted him, ‘To make war with his saints’—With the Waldenses and Albigenses. It is a vulgar mistake, that the Waldenses were so called from Peter Waldo of Lyons. They were much more ancient than he; and their true name was Vallenses or Vaudois, from their inhabiting the valleys of Lucerne and Agrogne . . . Against these many of the Popes made open war. Till now the blood of Christians had been shed only by the heathen or Arians, from this time by scarce any but the Papacy."

*Robert Barclay*, a Quaker, states:

"We shall afterwards show the rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the time of the apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine Truth, and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Catholic Church." (*The Inner Life of the Societies of the Commonwealth*, pages 11, 12).

*Augustus Neander*, a famous name in ecclesiastical history, says

"But it is not without some foundation of truth that the Waldenses of this period asserted the high antiquity of their sect, and maintained that from the time of the secularization of the church—that is, as they believed, from the time of Constantine's gift to the Roman bishop Sylvester—such an opposition finally broke forth in them, had been existing all along." (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. V11, page 352).

*Jonathan Edwards*, the famous president of Princeton University, in *History of Redemption*, says of the Waldenses:

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

*Alexander Campbell*, founder of the movement which has split into groups called Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, and The Christian Church, bears witness to the perpetuity of Baptists. In an appendix to the published debate with Walker, Campbell says

"While the Protestant church must date its origin from the nineteenth of April 1529—that memorable day on which fourteen cities of Germany protested against a decree of the Diet of Spires, which met in the March preceding; while the Presbyterian Church must date its origin from the autumn of 1537, the year in which John Calvin published his Confession of Faith, had a Public Debate with Peter Caroli, and constituted a church in Geneva: whilst the Scotch Presbyterians must date their origin from the arrival of John Knox in Scotland from Geneva, who arriving there Anno Domini 1558, and becoming a champion in the cause of Presbyterianism, was denominated the 'Scotch Apostle John Knox'; while the English Presbyterians must date their origin from November 20, 1572, 'when a small Presbyterian Church was erected at Wandsworth, a village near London': whilst the Seceders must date their origin from August, 1733, when Messrs. E. Erskine, W. Wilson, A. Moncrief, and J. Fisher, were deposed and excluded from the communion of the Presbyterian church, and become the founders of a new sect: while the Unionists or Scotch Burghers; must date their origin from the year 1747: the Methodists from John Wesley, 1729: the Quakers from George Fox, 1655: —I say, while all these sects are of recent origin, not one of them yet 300 years old—not one of them able to furnish a Model of their peculiarities, or antiquity, greater than I have mentioned, the Baptists can trace their origin to apostolic times, and produce unequivocal testimonies of their existence in every century down to the present time; and the MODEL of their peculiarities the Scriptures themselves afford, as far as the name BAPTIST is concerned." (Pages 261, 262).

In his debate with Maccalla, Campbell stated that "*Clouds of witnesses attest the fact that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism, have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced.*" (Reproduced edition of 1948, page 339)

Debating with Rice, Campbell stated:

"In reference to the subject of succession as respects the question before us, let me be permitted to say, that since the days of the bishop Sylvester till now, there have been immersed multitudes of persons not members of the church of Rome. They have been called by many names, such as Danites, Paulicians, Henricians, Novatians, Petrobusians, Waldenses, Albigenes, etc., a mighty host of men, never under the direct influence of popery, who, in all ages bore their firm and unwavering testimony against all its assumptions and pollutions." (Page 587)

In his book *on Christian Baptism*, page 409, he says:

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

*The Edinburgh Cyclopaedia* (Presbyterian)

"It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described under the appellation of Anabaptists. Indeed, this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time." (*The New Testament Church* by Martin, page 22).

*Crossing the Centuries*, edited by William C. King, having as associate counselors, editors, collaborators and contributors such as Cardinal Gibbons (Roman Catholic), Bishop John H. Vincent (Methodist), President Theodore Roosevelt, President Woodrow Wilson, W. H. P. Founce (President of Brown University), Albert Bushnell Hart, head of the History Department of Harvard University, George B. Adams of Yale, and many more such famous men, says:

"Of the Baptists it may be said that they are not reformers. These people, comprising bodies of Christian believers known under various names in different countries, are entirely distinct and independent of the Roman and Greek churches, and have an unbroken continuity of existence from apostolic days down through the centuries. Throughout this long period, they were bitterly persecuted for heresy, driven from country to country, disfranchised, deprived of their property, imprisoned, —tortured and slain by the thousands; yet they swerved not from

their New Testament faith; doctrine and adherence." (Quoted in The New Testament Church by Martin, page 26).

In view of what we have said and quoted thus far, we say with J. R. Graves, "One thing is certain, if churches, now known as Baptists, holding *essentially* the same doctrines, administering the same ordinances for the same purpose, and to the same subjects, are not the true church of Christ; then Christ has never had a church on this earth." (*Great Carrollton Debate*, page 841).

## The Origin and Perpetuity of the Baptists

*The Baptist Examiner*

### ***The Testimony Of Representative Baptists As To Baptist History***

## **CHAPTER 3**

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Of course, we could quote at great length from many Baptists, under this chapter's heading. But we confine ourselves to the following:

*Charles H Spurgeon*, a name that needs no introduction, stated:

We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect, yet there has never existed a Government holding Baptist principles which persecuted others; nor, I believe, any body of Baptists ever held it to be right to put the consciences of others under the control of man. We have ever been ready to suffer, as our martyrologies will prove, but we are not ready to accept any help from the State, to prostitute the purity of the Bride of Christ to any alliance with Government, and we will never make the Church, although the Queen, the despot over the consciences of men. (From The New Park Street Pulpit, Volume VII, page 225).

Spurgeon again:

History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called Anabaptists were brought up for condemnation. From the days of Henry II to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism. Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scriptures, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sabbath to Sabbath. As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder—what a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought! Our history forbids discouragement. (From *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1881, Volume 2, page 249).

*John T. Christian*, author of probably the greatest work on Baptist history ever written says: "I have no question in my own mind that there has been a historical succession of Baptists from the days of Christ to the present time" (*A History of the Baptists*, Volume 1, pages 5, 6).

Again: "The author believes that in every age since Jesus and the apostles, there have been companies of believers, churches, who have substantially held to the principles of the New Testament as now proclaimed by the Baptists" (*Ibid.*, page 21).

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

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

liberty for all, and have held that the gospel of the Son of God makes every man a free man in Christ Jesus." (Ibid., pages 22, 23).

J. R. Graves, an outstanding proponent of Baptist truth, wrote: "Baptists claim that they are successors to the 'Witnesses of Jesus,' who preserved the faith *once* delivered to the saints, and kept the ordinances as they were originally committed to the primitive churches. They claim to be the lineal descendants of the martyrs who, for so many ages, sealed their testimony with their blood. They claim that they can trace the history of communities, essentially like themselves, back through the 'wilderness,' into which they were driven by the dragon, and the beast that succeeded to him, and the image of the beast, by a trail of *blood*, lighted up by a thousand stake-fires, until that blood mingles with the blood of the apostles, and the Son of God, and John the Baptist. They believe that they never did, ecclesiastically, symbolize with the Papacy, but ever repudiated it as Antichrist, and withdrew from it, and refused to recognize its baptisms or ordinances, or its priests as the ministers of Christ. These are bold claims, we admit; yet if we can sustain them successfully against those of any other communion, it is not only our right, but our imperative duty to do so." (Trilemma, pages 119, 120).

*D. B. Ray*, in his Baptist Succession, says: "No point in history has yet been found, this side of the days of Jesus Christ on earth, where the Baptist denomination had its origin. Notwithstanding all the efforts of bitter foes, no break has yet been discovered in the chain of Baptist succession. There has been no point of time since the apostolic age, when it can be said, in truth, there were no witnesses for Christ on earth holding the faith and practice of Baptists. Every other professed Christian denomination, either admits a human origin in modern times, or claim its succession through the Romish apostasy. But as the Romish succession is the succession of Antichrist, therefore those churches whose history is identified with the Church of Rome, can lay no claim whatever to the true succession. The Baptists are the only people on earth who claim a succession from the apostolic age, independent of the Church of Rome; and as Jesus Christ has a church against which the gates of hell have never prevailed, which has existed independent of the Romish hierarchy, therefore the Baptists are really the only claimants to this succession. All others, by their own acknowledgments have no just claims to be the church established by Jesus Christ Himself, which has been perpetuated to the present time. We take it for granted, that every denomination is competent to give the leading facts of its own history. Even the most depraved denominations except the Catholics have sufficient candor and honesty to give a correct account of their own origin. The Romish Church herself, confesses that many of her rites and ceremonies have been introduced since the apostolic age. She acknowledges that she has changed the ordinances of Jesus Christ on the supposed authority of the keys. Even Rome herself with her present rites and ceremonies does not claim an apostolic origin. The Lutheran Church claims its origin from Martin Luther, about the year 1525. It has no succession beyond the sixteenth century, unless it was the Romish succession through Rome herself, yet she is compelled to look to King Henry VIII, about the year 1530, for her origin separate from the Romish, jurisdiction. The Presbyterian Church boldly claims the 'godly-learned' man, John Calvin, as its founder. Its succession extends no further back in history than the year 1541. The various branches of Presbyterianism are of still more recent date. The Methodist Church glories in John Wesley as her founder and head. She can not go beyond the year 1729, for the term of that system of ecclesiasticism known as Methodism. And it was not until the year 1784 that Methodism was rent off from the Episcopal Church. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church claims its origin from

the fourth day of February, 1810. It has Messrs. Ewing, King, and McAdow as its founders. The Campbellite society, which makes higher pretensions than all the modern sects combined, boast of Alexander Campbell, of Bethany. Virginia, as the head of their religious movement. They claim the year 1827 as the date of their origin as an organized ecclesiastical body. After all their claims to be the Christian Church, and their noise about Pentecost, they are forced to admit the humiliating fact, that as an organization, they are not yet one hundred and fifty years old; and that they fall short of the day of Pentecost nearly 1800 years.

"But the Baptists boldly claim Jesus Christ as their Founder and Head, and a continued succession through succeeding ages from the apostles to the present time. And if the Baptists do not give a correct statement of their own origin, they are the only denomination outside of the Church of Rome too dishonest to give the truth of their own history. But if Baptists are too dishonest to tell the truth as to their origin, then other denominations ought not to desire religious correspondence with them; but if their claims are true, then they are the only people who possess the true church succession" (Pages 406, 407).

*George W. McDaniel:* "To be born well is to enter life with advantages. Baptists are justly proud of their parentage—the New Testament. They have an ancient Scriptural origin. Certain characters in history are named as founders of various denominations—the Disciples of Christ began with Alexander Campbell, the Methodists with John Wesley, though Wesley never left the 'Church of England,' the Presbyterians with John Calvin and John Knox, the Lutherans with Martin Luther, and the Church of England with Henry VIII and Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer in the reign of Edward VI. Not so with the Baptists. There is no personality this side of Jesus Christ who is a satisfactory explanation of their origin. The New Testament churches were independent, self-governing, democratic bodies like the Baptist churches of today. We originated, not at the Reformation, nor in the Dark Ages, not in any century after the Apostles but our Marching Orders are the Commission, and the first Baptist Church was the Church at Jerusalem. Our principles are as old as Christianity, and we acknowledge no founder but Christ" (*The People Called Baptists*; pages 7, 8).

*S. H. Ford:* "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 he 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. Here, then, is our ancestry—of whom we are proud—the origin of our denomination—for which we are grateful." (*The Origin of the Baptists*, pages 103, 104).

*H. B. Taylor, Sr.*: "The church which the Lord Jesus built was not only a Baptist church, but He promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. *He kept that promise.*"

"The only church on this earth that was founded *at the right time*—during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ: *at the right place*—*Palestine: by the right person*—the Lord Jesus: *of the right material*—*the* born again, which brought forth good fruit before their baptism, and to which the Lord Jesus promised unending perpetuity, was the first Baptist Church, which Jesus built out of the material made ready by John the Baptist. Baptist Churches are the only churches on this earth, whose baptisms like a gold dollar are worth one hundred cents to the dollar the world around. The only church on this earth that Jesus could join if He were here, on His baptism, is a Baptist Church, for all others say John's baptism is invalid. Baptists say the only baptism that is valid is John's baptism: for it is the only one that came from Heaven. Baptist Churches are the only churches on this earth, that will not be plucked up by the roots, when Jesus comes, for He said: '*Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up*'" (Matthew 15:13). (*Why Be a Baptist?*, page 41).

*W. A. Jarrell*: "All that Baptists mean by church 'Succession,' or Church Perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth." (*Baptist Church Perpetuity*, page 3).

*J. W. Porter*: "But we do believe that Baptist Churches were instituted by Jesus Christ, and that they have had a continuous existence ever since and will continue to exist as long as time shall last. We do emphatically affirm the succession of Baptists, in spite of imprisonment, blood and fire, as witnesses for the truth, and that He who hath preserved them, will continue to be with them till the end of the age." (*The Baptist Debt to the World*, page 84).

Again, "With the exception of the Baptist Churches, it is a comparatively easy task to ascertain the year in history, when each of the various denominations had its origin. It may be announced as the incontrovertible verdict of history that each of them had its origin several centuries this side of the Apostolic period. In fact, nearly all of the denominations frankly admit their human origin. In truth, the only denomination, apart from the Baptists, that has even the semblance of claim to any early origin is the Roman Catholic, and this church, by the common consent of Protestant Christendom, has neither the birth-marks, nor ear-marks of a Scriptural church. Their present faith and policy, when tried by New Testament faith, conclusively show the lack of Scriptural origin or teaching. Nor do they need, in accordance with their faith, any Scriptural origin, for; with an infallible pope and council they have the right to change, subtract, or supplement any portion of Scripture, or any doctrine of the church. If, then, it be true that Christ did start a church, and the church He started has had a continuous existence; if it be further true that the human origin of all other denominations can be proven and the origin of Baptist Churches cannot be proven, then it must follow that the Baptist Churches were instituted by

Christ, and have enjoyed the unbroken existence promised them by the Head of the churches." (Ibid., page 88) .

*E. T. Hiscox*: "Baptists have a history of which they need not be ashamed—a history of noble names and noble deeds, extending back through many ages, in which the present generation well may glory. From the days of John the Baptist until now, a great army of these witnesses for the truth, and martyrs for its sake, has illumined and honored the march of Christian history. The ages since Christ have known no purer, nobler lives, no braver, more faithful witnesses for the Gospel, of Christ, no more glorious martyrs for its sake, than many of those who honor us by being called 'our fathers in the faith.' They were true to conscience and to principle, and loyal to Christ, at a cost to which we are strangers. They went gladly to prison and to death in defense of the Gospel which they loved. Social ostracism, bonds and imprisonment, confiscations, and fines, whippings, drownings, and burnings at the stake, not only in solitary cases, but by hundreds and thousands, are certified to, even by their enemies. Christian martyrology has no bloodier and no brighter page than that which tells, however imperfectly, of the persecutions and sufferings for conscience's sake of Baptist confessors, received during the past ages, not from pagan barbarians so much as from professed fellow-Christians. It is an equal honor to their record that, while they endured persecution for the truth's sake, *then never persecuted others for conscience sake—never!* How could they, when one of their cardinal principles was, and is, entire freedom of conscience and liberty of faith and worship, without interference by any? And the one priceless heritage they have given to the world, with which the world's religious life of today—and its secular life as well—has become imbued; is that of entire religious liberty of faith, speech and worship, and entire separation of Church and State." (*The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, page 492).

*G. H. Orchard*: "I have demonstrated, so far as human testimony is allowed to prove any fact, that the Baptist church, as the church of Christ, has existed from the day of Pentecost to this privileged period." (*A Concise History of Baptists*, Vol. 2, page 11).

*George C. Lorimer*: "There are reasons for believing that the Baptists are the oldest body of Christians who dissent from the assumption of the Romish church. Historically they are not Protestants, for while they sympathize with the protest offered by the reformers at the Diet of Spires, 1529, in which this now famous name originated, their existence antedates it by many centuries." (Quoted in *Baptist Church Perpetuity* by Jarrell, page 40) .

*J. B. Moody*: "Baptist principles were committed to Baptist *men*, to be kept by them. The commission converts them to principles. Make disciples (or men), baptize THEM, teach THEM to keep safely all things whatsoever I have commanded YOU, and lo! I am with YOU alway, even to the end of the world. This is all we claim, but this much we demand. Here is perpetuity of principles, held by MEN in organic capacity, for in no other sense had he, or could he have been with THEM to the end of the world. Evil powers prevailed against individual saints, but the gates of Hades have not against His church. Christ came not only to teach principles, but he also built a church. You may boast of blood-bought principles, of blood-bought men, but the Word of God tells also of the blood-bought church." ("My Church," pages 186, 187).

*J. M. Carroll*: "Into the 'dark ages' went a group of many churches which were never in any way identified with the Catholics. Out of the 'dark ages' came a group of many churches, which had never been in any way identified with the Catholics." (*The Trail of Blood*, pages 54, 55).

*R. J. W. Buckland*: "From the time when Christ walked the earth down to the present there has not been a period in which they (Baptists) have not suffered persecution. From the age of John the Baptist to the massacre in Jamaica, bigoted religionists have not ceased first to slaughter and then to slander them." (*Madison Avenue Lectures*, page 312).

*J. Wheaton Smith*: "Why, sir, if between us and the apostolic age there yawned a fathomless abyss, into whose silent darkness intervening history had fallen, with a Baptist Church on this side; and a New Testament on the other, we should boldly bridge the gulf and look for the record of our birth among the hills of Galilee." (Letters to Albert Barnes).

*William Williams*: "I now hasten to reply that it is not the teaching of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary through its Professor of History, that the origin of Baptists is to be traced to the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century . . . The Baptist Churches, in my opinion, are of divine origin, and originated in the first century under the preaching and founding of the Apostles of the Lord." (Quoted by Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, page 40).

*S. E. Tull*: "Now; we come to the Baptist denomination. Who organized the first Baptist Church? What was the date of its establishment? Who formulated its articles of faith? In answer to these questions. I assert that the first Baptist Church was organized by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during His personal ministry on the earth." (*Denominationalism Put to the Test*, page 16).

*J. H. Grime*: "All true Baptist Churches are legitimate successors of the first church constituted by Christ Himself; just as every man now living is the legitimate successor of Adam, the first man." (*Catechism of Ecclesiastical History*, page 9).

*J. L. Smith*: "We have submitted the testimony of more than forty of the world's best historians—not one of them a Baptist—who expressly and clearly point out the movement of these Baptist people through the long centuries back to the apostolic days." (Quoted by Mason in *The Church That Jesus Built*, page 105).

*R. B. Cook*: "Baptists are able to trace their distinctive principles to the apostolic age . . . When from the union of the church and state Christianity become generally corrupt, there still remained, in obscure places, churches and sects which maintained the pure doctrines and ordinances of Christ, and hence it is certain that these churches and sects held substantially the same principles which are now held as the distinctive views of the Baptists." (*Ibid.*, page 105).

# The Origin and Perpetuity of the Baptists

*The Baptist Examiner*

## ***Anti-Baptist Writers Confused And Divided As To Baptist History***

### **CHAPTER 4**

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Wide confusion exists among those who seek to mark the beginning of Baptists this side of Christ. This confusion may not necessarily prove anything in favor of Baptists, but it certainly reveals that their claims to perpetuity all the way back to Christ have not been disproved to any general satisfaction.

*W. A. Jarrel*, author of *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, wrote to Roman Catholic bishops, priests, and Protestant scholars, asking "*when, where, and by whom the first Baptist church originated.*" Here are some of the answers that Jarrel received:

J. Gentile (Roman Catholic), a priest of Shreveport, Louisiana: "You have in Dallas, two or three priests with valuable libraries. Interview them."

G. H. Elder (Roman Catholic), a bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio: "I cannot get time to answer all my letters. These questions cannot be answered without explanation, which I have not time to make. And there is no reason why you came to me for them. You have men near you—priests and others—who can do it better than I."

A Roman bishop of New Orleans, said: "In Germany, called Anabaptists, by Nich. Stork, 1522."

John S. Murphy, a priest of St. Patrick's church, Houston, Texas: "Stork, a short time after Luther proclaimed his heresies."

A spokesman for Cardinal Gibbons (Roman Catholic) of Baltimore, Maryland: "Your questions are not possibly capable of exact and very positive answers. The Baptist church of the present times seems to be the lineal descendant of the old Anabaptists of Reformation times. They have their most probable origin in the Mennonites or Dutch Baptists. These arose, as you know, after Martin Luther. The forefathers emigrated into England in the time of Henry the VIII, and of Queen Elizabeth. However, the first church known as the Baptist Church seems to have been built in London in 1606. The year 1547 is about the earliest date set by reliable historians for the existence of a Baptist denomination. As a sect they can not go back to a more remote date than that. It is not sound history or good reasoning to try to connect them with an earlier sect or heresy; though you may find some similarity between their teachings and the teachings of the ancient Waldenses, or sects and controversies even earlier."

The professor of church history in the Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary wrote: "Baptists were originated by 'some Swiss, about 1523.'"

H. M. Scott, professor of church history in the Congregational Theological Seminary, in Chicago, wrote: "It arose in Zwickan, Saxony, A. D. 1520; under the Zwickan prophets, Starch and others."

A. C. Lewis, professor of church history in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Chicago, wrote: "I regret not being able to give you the categorical answers you seem to anticipate . . . The questions as put, do not admit of short and categorical answers . . . The first Baptist Church was not formed or organized, but evolved out of Anabaptist antecedents."

Professor L. L. Paine, of the Congregational Theological Seminary, of Bangor, Maine, wrote: "When Luther began his reformation there were so-called Anabaptists. But the Baptist denomination is later. The origin of the English Baptists is very obscure. They appear in the reign of Elizabeth, persecuted."

Professor John Clarke Ridpath, Methodist, of Du Paw University, evasively answered: "The answers of your questions turns upon the definition of the word Baptist . . . There is, therefore, a sense in which we should say that there was a Baptist Church in the age of Luther. There is another sense in which we should have to deny the proposition . . . I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as A. D. 100, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists."

The president of the Campbellite College, at Bethany, Va., wrote: "The Baptists appeared first in Switzerland." Who founded the first Baptist church that ever existed "cannot be determined. There were no Baptist Churches before the beginning of the sixteenth century though immersion was practiced from the beginning."

A. P. Cobb, pastor of the First Campbellite Church, in Springfield, Ill., wrote, "Was there a Baptist Church when Luther began his Reformation? Yes. In Switzerland, 1523. Large churches fully organized in 1525-30 in South Germany. Who originated the first Baptist Church? I cannot tell."

The pastor of the First Campbellite Church, Ann Arbor, Mich., wrote: "Was there a Baptist Church when Luther began his Reformation? The Baptists had large churches fully organized between 1520-30 in Switzerland. They were persecuted by both Zwingli and, the Romanists. Who originated the first Baptist Church that ever existed? I do not know."

The professor of church history in the Campbellite College, at Irvington, Ind., endorsed the following quotation—which he enclosed with his letter—from the *Journal and Messenger*, of Cincinnati: "Baptists believe that the churches founded by the Apostles were essentially Baptist. That they believed and practiced what Baptist Churches believe and practice today. They also believe that persons holding these essential doctrines were found all along down through the centuries, from the days of the apostles until now. But they do not fix upon any particular time when the first Baptist Church of modern times came into existence. They find that such churches

existed in Switzerland in the early part of the sixteenth century—the days of Zwingli and Luther. They find that about the same time such churches were to be found in Holland and the Low Countries; and that soon after they were to be found in England. They find that as early as 1640-44 they were existing in various parts of our own country, and that their founders for the most part came from England or Wales. Not to speak of Roger Williams, it is found that Hanserd Knollys founded a little Baptist Church in New Hampshire; that a similar church was founded in New Jersey, another in Pennsylvania and others in the Southern States, in the seventeenth century. No one church in this country can be called the mother church of Baptists."

His words are: "As it did not seem possible to answer in the brief space of your card, the reply has been delayed. In the meanwhile the enclosed extract from the *Journal and Messenger* . . . set forth all the facts in the case, as given in church history."

B. D. Dean, Professor of Church History in Hiram College, wrote: "Was there a Baptist Church when Luther began his Reformation? No, not under that name. Baptist churches sprang up simultaneously in different countries as the result of the Reformation. I know of no Baptist Churches calling themselves Baptist Churches prior to 1600."

Professor Dean, in his letter, endorses the following statement: "In Switzerland, in Germany, in Holland, it has been found impossible to decide when Baptists first appeared, or which were the first churches of Baptists in those lands . . . and it is quite as difficult to decide the question about 'Baptists in England.'"

Jarrel's remarks on these replies to his questions:

"Had I asked any of the foregoing scholars: Who was the first President of the United States? When and by whom was the Methodist Church originated? The Presbyterian? The Lutheran? The Campbellite? The Episcopal? In a half dozen words they could have answered. Yet, in answer to when and by whom Baptist churches originated, we see they spend more time refusing to attempt an answer, than would be necessary to tell the name and the date of the origin of Baptist Churches if they were of modern and of human origin; or, they evade the question; or, they annihilate each other's answers by their contradictions of each other; or, they admit the impossibility of answering my questions, or, they indirectly, without intending it, concede Baptist Churches are neither of human nor of modern origin.

"Closing these answers is the following, which I received when I received the others just quoted, from Prof. Walker, professor of church history in Harvard University: 'As you are probably aware, your questions relate to one of the most disputed points in church history. Whether the Baptist movement can be traced back to the Lutheran Reformation or not, is a question which has been much debated of late . . . Some men of weight in church history, and notably the German scholar, Ludwig Keller, of Munster, would find a continuous, relation between the Anabaptists of the Reformation period and individual sects like the Waldenses, and through them a line of free and possibly evangelical churches, back to the early days of the church.'"

"In view of these statements of representative scholars—to which an almost unlimited number can be added—that history does not assign to Baptist Churches a human founder and a post-apostolic date of origin is settled beyond doubt."

## The Origin and Perpetuity of the Baptists

*The Baptist Examiner*

***Baptists Did Not Begin With John Smyth,  
The Münsterites, or Roger Williams***

### CHAPTER 5

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The author has before him two pieces of Roman Catholic literature, both of which try to establish the notion that Jesus built the Roman Catholic Church. One of the pieces ("Just One Minute Please") has a chart which marks the beginning of Baptists in the seventeenth century, John Smyth as founder.

The other piece of literature ("The Truth About Catholics") has a chart which shows Baptists beginning with Roger Williams in 1639.

A Campbellite piece of literature states that Baptists began at Münster with the "fanatical Anabaptists."

Because the three above mentioned teachings are the most popular among anti-Baptists as to Baptist history, we shall devote this chapter to showing the error of them.

#### JOHN SMYTH

Opponents of the Baptists claim to perpetuity from Christ often assert that Baptists originated with *John Smyth* in the early seventeenth century. It is erroneously said that Smyth baptized himself (and some wrongly say he sprinkled or poured for baptism) and that Baptists derived their baptism from this source.

"This perversion of the facts of history was first started by Thos. Wall for the selfsame purpose that prompts my opponent to repeat it, to injure Baptists," stated *J. R. Graves* in his debate with Elder Ditzler of the Methodist society (page 893). "It is wholly false," Graves declared. "The Baptists of England, when it was first made, pronounced it false—and proved it to be false—(see) Crosby, Ivemy, Evans, Kiffin."

Graves proceeds to present the following facts with regard to John Smyth and his company:

*"First.* John Smyth was a minister of the established Church of England."

*"Second.* About the year 1606, Mr. Smyth led a company of exiles-Separatists or Brownists—from England to Amsterdam, in Holland."

*"Third.* He here united with the English church of Brownists, under the pastorship of Mr. Ainsworth."

*"Fourth.* A difficulty occurred in Mr. Ainsworth's church, on account of John Smyth's opposition to infant baptism, which resulted in the exclusion of Smyth and his party from said church."

*"Fifth.* John Smyth and his party proceeded to administer baptism, and to the formation of a church. There is no evidence that Smyth baptized himself, but it is probable that one of his company baptized him."

*"Sixth.* John Smyth and a part of his company soon became dissatisfied with their rash proceedings, upon which a difficulty arose between them and the majority of the church, on account of which Smyth and his party were excluded. Thus, it appears that John Smyth was excluded from this 'Baptist church' of which he was the founder. Of this, Mr. Evans, the historian, says: 'It is admitted, on all hands, that, from some cause or other; the church over which Smyth and Helwys presided was divided, but the cause of division is not so manifest. Smyth, with some twenty-four persons, was excluded from the church, and these sought communion with one of the Mennonite churches in the city."

*"Seventh.* Mr. Smyth repudiated his own baptism and church organization as invalid, and, with his party, sought admission into one of the Mennonite churches in Amsterdam, and, was received after making the following confession: 'The names of the English who confess this their error, and repent of it, viz.: that they undertook to baptize themselves, contrary to the order appointed by Christ, and who now desire, on this account, to be brought back to the true Church of Christ as quickly as may be suffered.'"

"We unanimously desire that this, our wish, should be signified to the church."

*"Names of Men.* —'Hugh Bromhead, Jarvase Neville, John Smyth, Thomas Canadyne, Edward Hankin, John Hardy, Thomas Pygott, Francis Pygott, Robert Stanley, Alexander Fleming, Alexander Hodgkins, John Grindall, Solomon Thompson, Samuel Holton, Thomas Dolphin."

*"Names of Women.* —'Ann Bromhead, Jane Southworth, Mary Smyth, Joan Halton, Alis Amfield, Isobel Thomson, Margaret Stanley, Mary Grindall, Mother Pygott, Alis Pygott, Margaret Pygott, Betteris Dickinson, Mary Dickinson, Ellyn Paynter, Alis Parsons, Joane Briggs, Jane Argon."

"The above confession may also be found in Latin, on page 244 of Evans' Early Eng. Bap. His., Vol. 1."

*"Eighth.* After Mr. Smyth and his party were 'cast out' from his own church, and confessed their error in setting up for themselves, on their humble petition, they were received into a Mennonite church, whose 'mode of baptism was by sprinkling or affusion.'"

*"Ninth.* Not long after this, 1610, John Smyth died in Holland. He never returned to England. He never belonged to any English Baptism church; neither did he ever belong to a legitimate Baptist Church at all."

*"Tenth.* The remnant of the John Smyth church left in Amsterdam, united with the Mennonite Church in 1615, and thus became extinct." (Ibid. pages 894-895) .

"John Smyth never was connected with any Baptist Church in his life, and no Baptist Church with him." (Ibid., page 845) .

So the idea that Baptists descended from Smyth is not to be accepted. Baptists had been in existence in many countries—including England (see Jarrell, chapter 23) —long years before the birth of the man.

The historian Crosby says *of* Smyth: "If he were guilty of what they charge him with (as to baptism), it is no blemish on the English Baptists, who neither approved *of* any such method, nor did they receive their baptism from him." (*History of English Baptists*, pages 445, 446) .

## THE ANABAPTISTS OF MÜNSTER

Some enemies of Baptist perpetuity say that Baptists originated with the "madmen of Münster," a name used of the sixteenth century Anabaptists who supposedly caused great disturbances in that city, according to some Protestant historians.

Graves, in his debate with Ditzler, clearly answers this historical error (see Pages 890-893) .

It is a well established and notorious fact of history that the "Münsterites" were sprinklers, and not Baptists, they were Protestants. They had followed Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli out of Rome, and broke away from their influence and ran into fanaticism and excesses of all sorts. Was this the origin of the Baptists—were these my ancestors, or those of my opponents? Mosheim the Lutheran, whose history is published by the M. E. church, says:

*"The true origin of that sect which acquired the name 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 the greatest part of their present felicity, IS HID IN THE REMOTE DEPTHS OF ANTIQUITY, and is consequently, extremely difficult to be ascertained." — Vol. iv. p. 427.*

Have the Baptists of America and England any connection with the sprinkling Anabaptists of Germany? Merle D'Aubigne, the distinguished author of the History of the Reformation, says:

*"On one point it; seems necessary to guard against misapprehension. Some persons imagine that the Anabaptists of the times of the reformation and the Baptists of our day are the same. But they are as different as possible."*

To this testimony we add that of Fessenden. In his Encyclopedia quoted with approbation by D'Aubigne, he says:

*"ANABAPTISTS. —The English and Dutch Baptists do not consider the word as at all applicable to their sect. It is but justice to observe that the Baptists of Holland, England and the United States are to be held essentially distinct from those seditious and fanatical individuals above mentioned, as they profess an equal aversion to all principles of rebellion of the one, and enthusiasm of the other."* —Pref. to Ref. p. 10.

Dr. Barnas Sears, late President of Brown University, has recently contributed an article upon the History of the German Anabaptists of the sixteenth century and has proved to the world that the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century were the veritable followers of the Zwickau prophets, and originated in the year 1522, were Protestants and sprinklers and not Baptists. He says:

*"It should be remembered that THIS sect appeared at first not under the name of Anabaptists, but of the Zwickau Prophets, and that for several years those in Germany with whom Luther and Melanchthon were concerned, cared little about baptism in any way, and did not practice differently from the church. Of Munzer, the leader of the Anabaptists, Scidemann his latest and most critical biographer says: Oecolampadius says that Munzer visited him in Basle, near the beginning of 1521, which was about three years after the Zwickau party was formed. Oecolampadius asked him how he administered baptism, to which he replied, 'I baptize publicly, once in two or three months, all the children of the parish that are born during this interval.' Both Fussli and Schreiber says that Munzer never rebaptized any person. The first instance of rebaptism, say they, occurred near Zurich in 1524.*

*"In 1521 and 1522, Stork, Munzer and others broached the Anabaptist doctrines in Wittenberg, Zwickau, and other places in Saxony. But, as I have said, none of them at that time went farther than to discuss the theory of infant baptism, and that was quite incidental as relating to a mere subordinate question. They did not rebaptize adults. The first rebaptism by the Anabaptists of this period did not take place in Germany, but in Switzerland; and was not performed by the disciples of Luther, but by those of Zwingli; and not in the year 1521, but in 1524.*

*"Conrad Grebel, in a secret assembly in Zurich, baptized Gorge Blaurock in the spring of 1524. The original account runs substantially thus; 'Blaurock arose in the assembly and in an ecstatic state threw himself prostrate upon the floor. When he came out of that state, he said it was the will of God (as revealed to him) that they should, without delay, be rebaptized by Grebel. Then he in turn baptized the rest.' This is the first definite account we have of rebaptism by this sect."* See "The Baptist," v. 9, p. 123.

#### MÜNZER HIMSELF THE HEAD AND LEADER OF THE MÜNSTER "ANABAPTISTS" WAS A PEDOBAPTIST.

Let this fact be remembered and used in repelling the charge of Elder Ditzler.

I conclude with an article from the New American Cyclopedie "Art. Anabaptists":

"There was another class of Anabaptists, widely different from those who have been described (the Münster men). In some instances, undoubtedly, when the former class fell back upon their purely spiritual views, the two parties coalesced. Brandt refers to on instance in which the moderate were brought into difficulty by being found in such association with the fanatical. *The distinction*, however, is real, and may be traced. It is a mistake to suppose that the rejection of infant baptism during the reformation, was found among the unlearned only. Melanchthon, Zwingli and Oecolampadius were all troubled by the questions which arose respecting the adjustment of this rite to the personal faith required by Protestantism.

"Some of those who became leaders of the Anabaptists were the associates and equals of these reformers. Mantz, Grebel and Hubmeyer were men of learning, the lost of great genius and eloquence. Mantz had been the friend and fellow-student of Zwingli, and was an early martyr in the cause of the Anabaptists, Zwingli himself pronouncing the sentence in the words '*Qui iteram mergit mergatur.*' The persecution of such men and their followers in Switzerland, shocked the moderate of all parties. In expressing his views of this persecution, Erasmus pays a tribute to the character of the sufferers in these words: 'A people against whom there is very little to be said, and concerning whom we are assured there are many who have been reformed from the worst to the best lives; and though, perhaps, they may foolishly err in certain opinions, yet have they never stormed towns nor churches, nor entered into any combinations against the authority of the magistrate, nor driven anybody from his government or estate.'

"These people, so persecuted, *demanded* a church composed of spiritual persons, introduced into it by a voluntary baptism. They *demanded likewise* the separation of the church from the state, and the non-interference of the magistrate in matters of religion.

"Anabaptists of the same class were found in the Netherlands in large numbers. The records of their sufferings, their martyrs multiplied by thousands, furnishes a melancholy and affecting chapter in human history. William of Orange, founder of the Dutch republic, was *sustained* in the gloomiest hours of his struggles by their sympathy and aid, and has left his testimony to their loyalty, industry and virtue. That great Prince, however importuned, steadfastly refused to persecute them.

"The same class were found in England during the reign of Edward VI; and Burnet declares that not books, but flames, were used in reply to their arguments. Simon Menno, born at the close of the fifteenth, or, as some say, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, educated for the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, and converted in the prime of manhood to the faith of the Anabaptists, became their chief leader, and the instrument of their organization into a recognized body of Protestant Christians. *Menno disavowed for himself and his brethren any connection whatever with the fanatics of Münster*, though it is not impossible that some of the more rational of the furious party were won by him to great sobriety of views, and to peaceful lives. Mennonites and Anabaptists have from his time been interchangeable terms, and the communities so called have descended to the present time. Even while he lived, however; they became separated into two great divisions the 'Fire' and the 'Gross,' *the former* claiming a more strict adherence to the austerity of the older Anabaptists, and the latter relaxing into closer resemblance to Protestants generally."

*John T. Christian says of the matter:*

"It may be concluded that Münzer was a follower and friend of Luther; he practiced infant baptism to the close of his life; he was never in the practice of Anabaptism; he was opposed by the Baptist leaders; held doctrinal views radically different from the Baptists on the use of the sword; and he was never intimately associated with the Baptists.

"All parties seem anxious to rid themselves of the responsibility of the Münster affair. The Roman Catholics charge the Lutherans with the disturbances, and the Lutherans in return lay all the blame on the Anabaptists. It suited the purposes of each party to make the account of the disturbances as horrible as possible. This is only one more instance of how the dominant class of every age writes history in its own interest, and how it has hitherto succeeded not only in imposing its views on the average intelligence of its own time, but in passing it down to the second-hand historians of subsequent ages (Bax *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*, 173). The accounts given by the enemies of a party, are to be received with caution. This is doubly true in this instance, since the Lutherans were trying to shield themselves from the Roman Catholics, and were endeavoring to lay the blame on the Anabaptists. The Lutherans became the historians, and they wrote what they

pleased, and there was no one to correct them." (*A History of The Baptists*, pages 157-158).

## ROGER WILLIAMS

In the book, *The First Baptist Church in America Not Founded by Roger Williams*, by Graves and Adlam, it is revealed that the popular idea that Roger Williams founded the first Baptist Church on this continent rests solely upon an unreliable historical compilation made by John Stanford, nearly one hundred and fifty years after the Williams church was supposedly organized. The sources of Stanford's compilation are shown to be not at all reliable.

On page 31 of this book, *Mr. Caldwell*, pastor of the Providence church for many years, is quoted as saying: "*No records before the coming of Manning, in fact, prior to 1775, have been preserved. They may have departed with Winsor and his church, and disappeared, we know not where. One hundred and fifty years of the story now told has had to be taken wherever it could be found, tend not from any records preserved and authenticated by the church itself.*"

*David Benedict*, the Baptist historian who stated that he "did not go beyond the church records" with regard to the history of the Providence church said, before he died, "*The more I study on this subject, the more I am unsettled and confused.*" (*History of Baptists*, page 443).

Caldwell, on April 28 of 1889, stated: "*We celebrate, after all, an Unknown Day. There is no Record of the Exact Date of our Beginnings.*" (Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Address).

The truth of the matter is given by J. R. Graves on pages 120-124 of his little work, *Trilemma; or, Death by Three Horns*:

The facts are, that Roger Williams never was a member, much less a minister, of any Baptist Church in England or America. He was converted to, and advocated, their views of baptism and civil and religious liberty. It is true that he immersed Ezekiel Holliman, who, in turn, baptized him; and he again, ten or eleven others; and so formed a society: but he continued with it only four months, when he repudiated what he had done, and his society soon, came to nothing. Cotton Mather, the contemporary of Williams, a distinguished Pedobaptist Puritan minister, (see Mather's History,) said it soon came to nothing.

It can not be shown that any Baptist Church sprang from Williams' affair.

Nor can it be proved that the baptism of any Baptist minister came from Williams' hands.

The oldest Baptist Church in America is the one now existing, with her original articles of faith, in Newport, R.I., and she was planted by Dr. John Clark before Williams was baptized. He received his baptism in Elder Stillwell's Church in London, and that Church received hers from the Dutch Baptists of Holland, sending over a minister to be baptized by them. These Baptists descended from

the Waldenses, whose historical line reaches far back and connects with the Donatists, and theirs to the Apostolical Churches.

A writer in the Christian Review condenses the facts of history into the following eleven statements, which can be confidently relied upon:

"1. Roger Williams was baptized by Ezekiel Holliman, March, 1639, and immediately after, he baptized Mr. Holliman and ten others.

"2. These formed a Church, or Society, of which Roger Williams was the pastor.

"3. Four months after his baptism, that is, in July following, Williams left the Church, and never afterward returned to it. As his doubts respecting baptism and the perpetuity of the Church, which led to this step, must have commenced soon after his baptism, it is not likely that he baptized any others.

"4. The Church which Williams formed, 'Came to nothing,' or was dissolved soon after he left it.

"5. It was reorganized, or another was formed a few days afterward, under Mr. Thomas Olney as its pastor, who was one of the eleven baptized by Roger Williams. Olney continued to be the pastor of this Church until his death, in 1682, somewhat over 30 years.

"6. In 1653 or '54, which was a few years after the formation of Olney's Church, there was a division in that Church on the question of 'laying on of hands' in the reception of members, and a separate Church was formed for the maintenance of this ceremony, under the pastorship of Chad Browne, Wickenden, and Dexter. This Church was perpetuated, having, in 1808, given up its original faith as to the laying on of hands, and is now the First Baptist Church in Providence.

"7. The parent Church, under Olney, gradually dwindled away, and became extinct about the year 1718, some seventy years from its origin.

"8. No Church was formed from Olney's after the division already mentioned, and no ministers are known to have gone out from it. Olney's baptism, whether valid or invalid, was not propagated.

"9. Nearly a century passed before the Church formed from Olney's began to colonize, in, 1730.

"10. None of its ministers, or the ministers of the Churches formed from it, received their baptism from Williams, or from any one whose baptism descended from his.

"11. The Baptist Churches of America, then, could not have descended from Roger Williams, or from the temporary society which he formed. Their true descent is from the Baptist Churches of Wales and Piedmont, extending back to the apostles' times."

The first Baptist Church in America was the one pastored by *John Clarke* and was organized in Newport, R. I., in 1638.

*S. H. Ford*, in vindication of this great man, John Clarke, and the Newport Church, wrote:

But historic facts proven 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 unmixed 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.

*J. M. Carroll* states: "In the year 1651 (?) Roger Williams and John Clarke were sent by the colony to England to secure, if possible, legal permission to establish their colony. When they reached England, Oliver Cromwell was in charge of the government, but for some reason he failed to grant their request. Roger Williams returned home to America. John Clarke remained in England to continue to press his plea. Year after year went by, Clarke continued to remain. Finally Cromwell lost his position and Charles II sat upon the throne of England. While Charles is regarded in history as one of the bitterest of persecutors of Christians, he finally, in 1663, granted that charter. So Clarke, after 12 long years of waiting returned home with that charter. So in 1663, the Rhode Island colony became a real legal institution, and the Baptists could write their own constitution." —*The Trail of Blood*, page 42.

## The Origin and Perpetuity of the Baptists

*The Baptist Examiner*

### ***Distinction Between The Ancient And Modern Mennonites***

## **APPENDIX**

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(In preceding chapters reference has been made to the Mennonites as ancestors of Baptists. *The ancient Mennonites*—so called after the name of their outstanding leader, Simon Menno—are not to be confused with the modern Mennonites. The following article, taken from D. B. Ray's *Baptist Succession*, will show the true historical and doctrinal distinction.)

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Menno Simon, a native of Frieseland, a Romish priest, renounced the Catholic Church and joined the Baptists in 1536. His wonderful success as a Baptist minister brought down the hatred and persecutions of all Pedobaptists upon him. And from him the opponents of the Baptists began to call them Mennonites. Mosheim, the historian, in his account of the Baptists, heads the chapter, "The History of the Anabaptists or Mennonites." The question has lately been raised as

to the Baptist character of the Mennonites. The confusion on this point has arisen from a failure to discriminate between the original strict Mennonites, and the modern Mennonites. Menno himself was a strict Baptist. It is known that all Mennonites profess to practice believer's baptism, but the recent Mennonites are known to practice pouring for baptism.

*J. N. Brown*, the author of the Religious Encyclopedia, states; upon; the authority of Mr. Ward, that, "The modern Mennonites plead the authority of Menno for the use of pouring and sprinkling as baptism. But in reality, it is a wide departure from the views of Menno, who says, 'After we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism but dipping in water, which is acceptable to God and approved in his Word'" (Rel. Encyc., p. 797).

And Mr. *Benedict* remarks that: "Menno was, indeed, a distinguished teacher among the Anabaptists during the whole of his ministry, but Mosheim's account of his gathering up the fragments of the society after their dispersion, and reorganizing them upon new and better principles, is not at all sustained by anything that appears in their own relations. They were the same people in policy and practice before Menno came among them, as afterward." (Benedict's His. Bapt. p. 124).

These quotations go to prove, that Menno held the Baptist doctrine of immersion and that he joined the Baptists, who were denominationally the same people before and after his reception among them.

*Mosheim*, the historian, settles the fact, that the original Mennonites were thorough immersionists. Speaking of the particular Baptists of England, he says: "The Baptists of the latter sect settled chiefly in London, and in the adjacent towns and villages; and they have departed so far from the tenets of their ancestors, that, at this day, they retain no more of the peculiar doctrines and institutions of the Mennonites, than the administration of Baptism, by immersion, and the refusal of that sacrament to infants, and those of tender years; and consequently they have none of those scruples relating to oaths, wars, and the functions of magistracy, which still remain among even the most rational part of the Mennonites." (Mosheim's Church His., p. 500).

Here we have the testimony that the "Administration of baptism by immersion, and the refusal of that sacrament to infants," are "peculiar doctrines" of the Mennonites. And though this historian would make the impression that the English Baptists differed from the Mennnites, yet that difference had no reference to church organization or ordinance, but only related to their views concerning oaths, bearing arms, etc.

Mosheim further states the doctrine of the Mennonites, as follows: "The opinions entertained by the Mennonites in general, seemed to be derived from this leading and fundamental principle, that 'the kingdom of Christ established upon earth, is a visible church or community, to which the holy and the just are alone to be admitted, and which is consequently exempt from all those institutions and rules of discipline that have been invented by human wisdom for the correction and reformation of the wicked.' This fanatical principle was frankly avowed by the ancient Mennonites: their more immediate descendants, however, began to be less ingenious; and, in their public confessions of faith, they either disguised it under ambiguous phrases, or expressed themselves as if they meant to renounce it. To renounce it entirely was, indeed, impossible,

without falling into the greatest inconsistency, and undermining the very foundation of those doctrines which distinguished them from all other Christian societies. And yet it is certain that the present Mennonites, as they have, in many other respects, departed from the principles and maxims of their ancestors, have also given a striking instance of defection in the case now before us, and have almost wholly relinquished this fundamental doctrine of their sect, relating to the nature of the Christian church." (Mosheim's Church His., p. 497).

In this extract we have exhibited the purity of the ancient Mennonite doctrine concerning the church, and also the fact that the modern Mennonites have departed from these original principles.

A controversy originated among the Mennonites concerning church discipline. This began about the middle of the sixteenth century. One party favored the rigid execution of church discipline, while the other was more moderate. Speaking of these parties, Mosheim remarks: "These two sects are, to this very day, distinguished by the denomination of *fine* and *gross*, or to express the distinctions in more intelligible terms, into *rigid* and *moderate* Anabaptists. The former observe, with the most religious accuracy, veneration, and precision, the ancient doctrine, discipline, and precepts, of the purer sort of Anabaptists; the latter depart much more from the primitive sentiments, manners, and institutions of their sect, and more nearly approach those of the Protestant churches. The gross or modern Anabaptists consisted, at first, of the inhabitants of a district in North Holland, called Water Land; and hence their whole sect received the denomination of Water Landrians." (Mosheim's Church His., p. 496).

This needs no comment. It was the *gross* Mennonites—for the historian uses the words Anabaptists and Mennonites interchangeably—that departed from their original principles of purity in doctrine and practice. The present Mennonites who pour for baptism, are the descendants of the Water Landrians, and not of the original Mennonites. And when it is now stated that the Mennonites practice pouring for baptism, or that they are not Baptists, we must understand the allusion to be made to the descendants of the gross Mennonites.

The departure of modern Mennonites from the principles held by their ancestors, is confirmed by other historians. Isaac Backus, speaking of this country, remarks that: "The Mennonites also came from Germany; and are of like behavior, but they are not truly Baptists now. Their fathers were so in Luther's day, until confinement in prison brought them to pour water on the heads of the subjects, instead of immersion; and what was then done out of necessity is now done of choice, as other corruptions are." (Backus' Church His., p. 227).

Mr. Benedict acknowledges that part of the Mennonites have departed from their original custom of immersion. It is evident that some of our writers have conceded too much when they intimate that the original Mennonites were not immersionists. The original Mennonites, who were called Anabaptists, passed in shoals into England, where they are known under the name of Baptists. And those who now retain the name Mennonites, have entirely departed from the original doctrine of Menno and the "Anabaptists,"

—The foregoing appendix is taken from D. B. Ray's  
*Baptist Succession*, pages 397-400.

