

Editor's note: From the Introduction to this essay we understand that Pastor Rone prepared this work to be presented at one of two summer gatherings at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, which took place in 1953 and 1954. A group of Baptist historians and theologians met to discuss the doctrine of the church. Rone's explanation for his work is given: ". . . permit me to express my heart-felt thanks to Dr. Duke K. McCall, President of this institution, which is my Alma Mater, and to the special Faculty Committee appointed by him, for the distinct and undeserved honor conferred upon me in being asked to take part in this important study on "The Doctrine Of The Church."

A book was published in 1958 as a "Symposium of Baptist Thought" entitled *What is the Church?*, edited by Duke K. McCall. Wendell Rone's paper was not published in the book. It is presented here as it was scanned from a manuscript copy. -- [Jim Duvall](#)
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THE PROBLEM OF BAPTIST SUCCESSION

By [Wendell H. Rone, Sr.](#)



WENDELL H. RONE. SR.

AN OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

I. A DEFINITION OF TERMS.

- A. Baptist.
- B. Succession, Continuity, Perpetuity.
- C. Apostolic Succession.
- D. Baptist Succession.

II. A MAJOR QUESTION AMONG BAPTISTS.

- A. Baptists Are Not Agreed Among Themselves Concerning Their Origin And Continuity.
- B. The Various Schools Of Thought Among Baptists Concerning Baptist Succession, Continuity, Or Perpetuity.

The Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity View.

The Spiritual Kinship View.

The English Separatist View.

- C. Problems Which Complicate The Problem.

How Many And What Baptist Principles Must A People Possess In Order To Entitle Them To Be Called Baptists?

How Far May A Church Depart From The New Testament Pattern Before It Ceases To Be A New Testament

Church?

Conflicting Views Among Baptists Over The Nature And Authority Of The Church.

Conflicting Views Among Baptists Over The Nature And Distinction Of The Church And The Kingdom Of God.

A Scarcity Of Documentary Evidence And Conflicts Over The Nature And Source Of That Which Is Available.

III. A COMPARATIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY OF THE VARIOUS VIEWS ON BAPTIST SUCCESSION, CONTINUITY, OR PERPETUITY.

- A. Elements Of Strength And Weakness In Each View:

The Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity View.

The Spiritual Kinship View.

The English Separatist View.

- B. A Brief Pro And Con Study Of The Sects, Parties, And Movements Up To The Seventeenth Century Who Held Principles In Common With Modern Baptists.

The Montanists
 The Novatians
 The Donatists
 The Paulicians
 The Albigenses
 The Petrobrussians, Henricians
 The Waldensians
 The Anabaptists

C. A Conclusion Which May Not Conclude The Matter.

[p. 2]

THE PROBLEM OF BAPTIST SUCCESSION

INTRODUCTION

May I ask your kind and patient indulgence at the beginning of this phase of our study to permit me to express my heart-felt thanks to Dr. Duke K. McCall, President of this institution, which is my *Alma Mater*, and to the special Faculty Committee appointed by him, for the distinct and undeserved honor conferred upon me in being asked to take part in this important study on "The Doctrine Of The Church." An overwhelming sense of my own inability to authoritatively and properly present my subject grips me, as I am not prepared academically, in talent, or in special competence for such a task. Likewise, the fact that I am found in the company of men whose talents and past accomplishments fit them more thoroughly to do the task which has been assigned to me, causes me to acknowledge in all candor that I am not sufficient for these things. Furthermore, the limitations of materials to be found in my own personal library, as well as the libraries in my immediate vicinity, have served to increase the difficulties of my endeavor. Nevertheless, I ask your sympathetic consideration in the presentation of this paper and trust that some little contribution may be made to our study from which all of us shall derive much profit. The results of the study thus far have already shown and guaranteed to all of us an increase of wisdom, knowledge, and appreciation for those things of a biblical and a^ahistorical nature which have, under God, made us the individuals and the people that we are. I am certain that it has been the purpose of this composite study to glorify our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Since such an objective has characterized the study for and preparation of this paper, we confidently proceed noticing,

[p. 3]

I. A DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the sake of information and clarification, we feel that a definition of some terms which shall appear in this article is necessary. They are:

A. BAPTIST.

BAPTIST 1. "A member of a Christian Denomination which maintains that Baptism (usually implying immersion) should follow only upon a personal profession of Christian faith. 2. One who baptizes."¹ "A Denomination of Christians who maintain that Baptism is to be administered by Immersion, and not by Sprinkling."² "The Baptist movement in history has always been back to the New Testament. This people has always refused to follow others away from the teaching and practice of that book. In the New Testament are plainly stated certain great principles which lie as foundation stones in the base of the Church of Christ. These principles are: the regeneration of the believer by the Holy Spirit and the word of God, the baptism of the believer in water, the equality of believers in the Church, the separation of Church and State, and in the Church the sole authority of the Bible."³

B. SUCCESSION, CONTINUITY, PERPETUITY.

SUCCESSION "1. The coming of one after another in order, sequence, or the course of events; sequence. 2. A number of persons or things following in order or sequence."⁴

CONTINUITY "1. State or quality of being continuous. 2. A continuous or connected whole."⁵

PERPETUITY "1. Endless or indefinitely long duration or existence. 2. Something that is perpetual."⁶

¹ *The American College Dictionary*, Harper and Brothers, New York. 1948 (Text Edition), p. 97.

² Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, John I. Kay & Co, Pittsburgh, 1831, p. 35

³ W. W. Everts, In Introduction to W.A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, Baptist Gleaner Edition, Fulton, Ky., 1894, p. 7.

⁴ *The American College Dictionary*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1948, p. 1208, (Text Edition).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 903.

[p. 4]

C. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION "A term made use of by the Romanists (Roman Catholics)) and others, in reference to those bishops who are supposed to have derived their authority from the apostles, and so communicated that authority to others in a line, or succession."⁷ It is the doctrine that there exists a direct ministerial and church succession from Christ's Apostles, and that it is maintained through the transmission of ordination of the clergy by bishops who have received authority in a direct line from the Apostles.

D. BAPTIST SUCCESSION.

BAPTIST SUCCESSION is a term in use among Baptists which has come to refer to a belief, or theory, or conviction held by many Baptists that "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."⁸ The belief affirms, furthermore, that the first New Testament Churches organized by our Lord and His Apostles were in doctrine and in practice essentially the same as the Baptist Churches of today, and *vice versa*. The claim is likewise made that there is sufficient historical proof to demonstrate that the Baptist Churches of today have direct historical connection with the Churches of apostolic times, and that the Baptists are the historical descendents of these same New Testament Churches.

Dr. S. H. Ford, the renowned editor of *Ford's Christian Repository*, published during the last half of the nineteenth century, said:

"Succession among Baptists is not a linked chain of Churches or ministers, uninterrupted and traceable at this distant day The true and defensible doctrine is, that baptized believers have existed in every age since John baptized in Jordan, and have met as a baptized congregation in covenant and fellowship where an opportunity afforded."⁹

⁷ Charles Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

⁸ W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁹ Quoted in W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[p. 5]

It is assumed, in view of the foregoing, that the subject of Baptist Succession is

II. A MAJOR QUESTION AMONG BAPTISTS

Even a hasty perusal of writers on Baptist history, both early and late, will readily convince the reader that

A. BAPTISTS ARE NOT AGREED AMONG THEMSELVES CONCERNING THEIR ORIGIN AND CONTINUITY.

This is quite evident when one notices that Dr. John T. Christian unhesitatingly 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."¹⁰

To which Dr. A. C. Underwood replies:

"No modern reader of some of the earlier histories of the Baptists can fail to be surprised at the extraordinary way in which their descent from the New Testament is traced through such groups as the Montanists, the Novatianists, the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Lollards and others, all of whom are claimed as Baptists. The instincts of the writers who made these excursions into genealogy were sounder than their scholarship. We cannot now agree that all the groups they so industriously enumerated were Baptists, but they did belong to the same type of Christianity, and of that type Baptists have been the spearhead."¹¹

The view, found in Dr. Robert G. Torbet's *History of The Baptists* that

"The history of English Baptists begins in Holland with a religious refugee, John Smyth, who has been claimed by some as the 'founder of the modern Baptist Churches,' because he adopted believer's baptism and formulated to a marked degree Baptist principles in his historic confession."¹²

has been assailed at length by Dr. John T. Christian in a chapter entitled "The Episode of John Smyth."¹³ Rousing denials are also found in D. B. Ray's *Baptist Succession*¹⁴ and Dr. W. A. Jarrell's *Baptist Church Perpetuity*.¹⁵ On the other hand Dr. A. C. Underwood¹⁶ and Dr. H. C. Vedder¹⁷ unite their testimony

¹⁰ *History of The Baptists*, Vol. I, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, 1922, pp. 5-6.

¹¹ *A History of the English Baptists*, Kingsgate Press, London, 1947, p. 15.

¹² Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, The Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1950, p. 62.

¹³ Christian, *op. cit.*, Volume I, pp. 222-248.

¹⁴ D. B. Ray *Baptist Succession*, First printed in 1870.

¹⁵ Jarrell, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *A History of the English Baptists*, The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1947.

¹⁷ Vedder, *Short History of the baptists*, ABPS, Philadelphia, 1907.

[p. 6]

in support of the view presented by Dr. Torbet. Further study of these authors and many others brings out more clearly the fact that Baptists are not one at all with regard to their origin and continuity. This leads to a study of

B. THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AMONG BAPTISTS CONCERNING BAPTIST SUCCESSION, CONTINUITY, OR PERPETUITY.

At least three distinct theories or views have prevailed among Baptist historians and writers concerning the origin and continuity of the people called Baptists. Some variations have also appeared within the framework of these views. They are:

1. THE SUCCESSION-CONTINUITY-PERPETUITY VIEW.

This view is perhaps the oldest and most generally accepted among Baptists, especially those of the South, and its reign was almost unchallenged until about 1870. It is the view that Baptist Churches are of divine origin; that they originated in the first Christian century with the ministry of John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ; and 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.

The method followed generally by the Baptist writers and historians, who have presented this view and have sought to establish it, is to prove from the teachings of the New Testament the fact that Jesus established His Church. The next step is to show that He promised continuity and perpetuity to His Church. The Old and New Testament Scriptures are appealed to in a rather profuse manner to show that a continuity and perpetuity was promised concerning the Kingdom of Christ, and to the Church, its particular agency of perpetuation. Such passages as Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20; Luke 1:33; Revelation 11:15; I Corinthians 11:26; Daniel 2:44, and many others which speak of the continuity and final triumph of the cause of Jesus Christ, are used.¹⁸

¹⁸ John T. Christian. *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 20-21; D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-38; Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*, 7th Edition, No Date and Publisher, pp. 21-63; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-31.

[p. 7]

It is felt that such promises and purposes demand the perpetuity and continuity of the Church.¹⁹ Likewise, any view which suggests that the "True Church" apostatized during the times of defection and defalcation of the "Dark Ages" is readily repudiated and rejected.²⁰ In consequence, so-called reformatory efforts are scored as having fallen far short of a return to the pristine faith of the New Testament.²¹ After establishing the identifying marks of New Testament Churches, the evidence is presented to show that the Baptist Churches of the present era are remarkably alike the Churches of the New Testament. It is then that the effort is confidently launched to prove from the findings of ecclesiastical historians, Catholic, Protestant, and Baptist, from friend and foe, that there have been evangelical sects, known by various names and dwelling in various nations, in the centuries since apostolic times, who have held to a few or many Baptist principles and practices and defended them against the most cruel onslaughts of their enemies, both Gaek and Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants during the early days of the Reformation.²² Some authors begin with the present era and trace the "Trail of Blood"²³ back to the age of the Apostles. Others begin and trace it to

the modern Baptist movement from the apostolic age, while some adopt both methods, but the aim and end in view is the same.²⁴

Having established the thesis of continuity, the writers of Baptist history who hold to this view proceed in presenting a history of the modern Baptist movement. Among the writers, both early and late, who have held to the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view have been: William Kiffin (1645)²⁵; Daniel King (1650)²⁶; Henry D'Anvers (1674)²⁷; Thomas Grantham (1678)²⁸

¹⁹ *Ibid.* ²⁰ W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-37

²¹ P. E. Burroughs, *The Baptist People*, Sunday School Board, S.B.C., Nashville, 1934, p. 36.

²² John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-221; W. A. Jarrell. *op. cit.*, pp. 69-346.

²³ J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, a pamphlet, 1931, 56 pages.

²⁴ See references for **fn 18**.

²⁵ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255; ²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 255-256.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 257. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[p. 8]

Joseph Hooke (1701)²⁹; and Samuel Stennett (1775)³⁰. All of these writers stress their belief in the continuity of Baptists and their principles by linking them with the principles and practices of the New Testament through the evangelical groups of the intervening centuries. However, it was left for Thomas Crosby, an English author, to give the English Baptists their first thorough history,³¹ following the concepts of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view. Other historians and writers since that time who have adopted this view have been: G.H. Orchard, an English Baptist minister, (1855)³²; Joseph Ivimey (1830)³³; B. Evans (1862-1864)³⁴; J. Davis (1835)³⁵; J. M. Cramp (1868)³⁶; J. H. Shackelford (1884)³⁷; D. B. Ray (1870, 1912)³⁸; Edward T. Hiscox (1894)³⁹; W. A. Jarrell (1894)⁴⁰; Cushing B. Hassell (1886)⁴¹; William Cathcart (1881)⁴²; S. H. Ford, (1891)⁴³; J. B. Moody (1908)⁴⁴; Roy Mason (1923)⁴⁵; John T. Christian (1899, 1922)⁴⁶; J. M. Carroll (1931)⁴⁷; W. R. Rothwell (1891)⁴⁸; J. W. Porter (1914)⁴⁹; W. P. Harvey (1892)⁵⁰; P. E. Burroughs (1934)⁵¹; W. M. Nevins (1938)⁵²; and probably many other writers whose works we are unaware of. This extensive list has been given, not for effect, but to show that the view has been widely held throughout the history of the modern Baptist movement.

²⁹ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-259.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³¹ Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists From The Reformation To The Beginning Of The Reign of King George I*, London, 1738-1740, 4 Volumes. See I, lvii-lxi and II 2.

³² G. H. Orchard, *A Concise History of Foreign Baptists*, Nashville, 1855.

³³ Joseph Ivimey, *A History Of The English Baptists*, 4 Volumes, London, 1811-1830. English Baptist History to 1820.

³⁴ B. Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, 2 Volumes, London, J. Heaton and Sons, 1862-1864.

³⁵ J. Davis, *History of The Welsh Baptists*, Pittsburgh, D. M. Hogan, 1835.

³⁶ J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1868.

³⁷ J. H. Shackelford, *A Compendium of Baptist History*.

³⁸ D. B. Ray, *Baptist Succession*, The Kings Press, Rosemead, Cal., 1949. First printed in 1870. Twenty-six editions to 1912. Revised, 1912. Printed by W. R. Newberry, Jr., from Author's 1912 Edition.

³⁹ Edward T. Hiscox, *The New Directory For Baptist Churches*, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1894, pp. 492-521.

⁴⁰ W. A. Jarrell, *Church Perpetuity*, Baptist Gleaner Edition, Fulton, Ky, 1894.

⁴¹ Cushing B. Hassell, *Church History*, Gilbert Beebe's Sons, Middletown, N.Y., 1886. A Primitive Baptist Author and Work.

⁴² William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Louis H. Evarts, Philadelphia, 1881, 2 Volumes.

⁴³ S. H. Ford, *Brief Baptist History*, Christian Repository Press, St. Louis, Third Edition, 1891.

⁴⁴ J. B. Moody, *My Church*, Baptist Book Concern. Louisville, 1908, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁵ Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*, First Edition, 1923, No Publisher Given.

- ⁴⁶ John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, Baptist Book Concern, Louisville, 1899; *A History of The Baptists*, Volume I, Sunday School Board, S.B.C., Nashville, 1922.
- ⁴⁷ J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, Ashland Avenue Baptist Press, Lexington, Ky., 1931. Several Printings.
- ⁴⁸ W. R. Rothwell, *The New Testament Church Order, Denominational Self-Examination*, R. H. Woodward and Company, Baltimore, 1891, pp. 139-189; 273-285.
- ⁴⁹ J. W. Porter, *The World's Debt To Baptists*, Baptist Book Concern, Louisville, 1914, Chapter VII, "Baptist Perpetuity," pp. 140-199.
- ⁵⁰ W. P. Harvey, *Baptists In History*, A Pamphlet, Baptist Book Concern, Louisville, 1892. 40 pages. A sermon preached at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., on July 3, 1892.
- ⁵¹ P. E. Burroughs, *The Baptist People*, Sunday School Board, S.B.C., Nashville, 1934.
- ⁵² W. M. Nevins, *Alien Baptism and The Baptists*, Western Recorder Press, Louisville, 1938.

[p. 9]

2. THE SPIRITUAL KINSHIP VIEW.

Some Baptist historians and writers have shown hesitancy in claiming a historical succession, continuity, or perpetuity of Baptist Churches, principles, and practices through the centuries since New Testament times. They have felt that the historical evidence is too meager to warrant such a conclusion, and that it is extremely difficult at times to trace and establish a connection between such groups as the Novations, Donatists, Paulicians, Henricians, Petrobrussians, Waldenses, and the Swiss, German, and Dutch Anabaptists, most of whom are antipedobaptists (opposers of infant baptism) and anabaptists (re-baptizers or those who refuse to acknowledge the validity of infant baptism or baptisms of groups not their own). This school of Baptist historians and writers, recognizing the above difficulty, find their chief satisfaction in saying that Baptists are glad to claim a *spiritual kinship* with the groups enumerated because they maintained a succession or continuity of regenerated baptized believers which can be traced back to New Testament times. Such groups are recognized as being of the same type as Baptists and may be considered as pre-Reformation forerunners of the Baptists.⁵³

"The best service that can be rendered to the Baptists is, to trace the noiseless energy and native immortality of the doctrines which they hold, after all their conflicts, to the glory of Christ, for it is exactly here that we see their excellency as a people. If it can be shown that their Churches are the most like the apostolic that now exist, and that the elements which make them so have passed successfully through the long struggle, succession from the times of their blessed Lord gives them the noblest history that any people can crave. To procure a servile imitation of merely primitive things has never been the mission of Baptists. Their work has been to promote the living reproduction of New Testament Christians, and so to make the Christlike old, the ever delightfully new."⁵⁴

It can truthfully be said that historians of ability among Baptists have held to this position, although their number is not as large as the aforementioned group. They generally follow a similar pattern in writing their histories as these holding to the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view.⁵⁵

⁵³ Thomas Armitage, *History Of The Baptists*, Bryant, Taylor and Co., New York, 1887, p. 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁵ See the histories of Cook, Benedict, Armitage, etc.

[p. 10]

The history and principles of the Christians and Churches of New Testament times are established. Baptists are shown to be a copy of the Apostolic Churches. Then the history of the sects through the centuries who have held to one or many Baptist principles is given, with a greater kinship being shown between Baptists and the biblical Anabaptists and Waldenses than any other groups.

Among the Baptist historians who have held to the Spiritual Kinship view of the relation of Baptists to Anabaptist sects have been such men as: David Benedict (1848)⁵⁶; Richard B. Cook (1884)⁵⁷; Thomas Armitage (1887)⁵⁸; and Albert Henry Newman (1897)⁵⁹. Dr. Torbet states that Dr. Walter Rauschenbusch, because of his interest in democracy and liberal social views, also held to this view, as he saw the socially radical concepts of the Anabaptists were akin to the views of Baptists.⁶⁰

3. THE ENGLISH SEPARATIST VIEW.

This is the view which affirms that Baptists are an outgrowth of the immensely unstable times of the early

seventeenth century and resulted from a cleavage of certain English Separatists who held to a congregational form of Church Government and who came, after much struggle, to the conclusion that the baptism of believers alone met the requirements of the Scriptures. An increasing number of Baptist historians and Baptist theological professors in the field of Church History have come to an acceptance of this view in several forms within the past seventy-five years. One form of the theory is that Baptists began in the year 1641, when immersion was re-established in England by a few English Separatists who came out of the Jacob Church at

⁵⁶ David Benedict, *A General History Of The Baptist Denomination*, Lewis Colby and Company, 1848.

⁵⁷ Richard B. Cook, *The Story of the Baptists*, W. M. Wharton, Baltimore, 1884.

⁵⁸ Thomas Armitage, *History of the Baaptists*, (See Footnote 53).

⁵⁹ A. H. Newman, *History of Antipedobaptism*, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 1897.

⁶⁰ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 60. See also for various theories held by Baptist historians, pp. 59-62.

[p. 11]

Southwark, London, after becoming convinced that the biblical mode of Baptism was by immersion alone. Dr. William H. Whitsitt set forth this view as early as 1880⁶¹ and published a book to that effect in 1896,⁶² which precipitated one of the most vehement controversies Baptists have ever been engaged. Dr. Augustus H. Strong, the renowned theologian, accepted the Whitsitt position in 1904,⁶³ and affirmed that Baptists began when the Particular Baptists of London and the General Baptists (a little later) began to practice immersion as the biblical mode of Baptism in the early 1640's.

Dr. John H. Shakespeare, noted English Baptist, set forth this theory in a slightly different form at the close of the last century. In it he affirmed that the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists represent an unbroken Baptist witness, thus eliminating the General or Arminian Baptist group. His view was that the Particular Baptists are the real beginning of the modern Baptist Denomination.⁶⁴ Dr. Henry C. Vedder, the long-time and able Church Historian of Crozer Theological Seminary, came to the conclusion that

"After 1610 we have an unbroken succession of Baptist Churches, established by indubitable documentary evidence . . . From about the year 1641, at the latest, Baptist doctrine and practice have been the same in all essential features that they are today."⁶⁵

Since this is the view held by Dr. Robert G. Torbet, the efficient author of the latest published *History Of The Baptists*, the following conclusion is drawn:

"Such a conclusion is apparently the most plauilble one for several reasons:

(1) It does not violate principles of historical accuracy, as do the views which assume a definite continuity between earlier sects and modern Baptists.

⁶¹ See issues of New York <>Independent in 1880, 1881, and 1882.

⁶² William H. Whitsltt, *A Question in Baptist History*.

⁶³ A. H. Strong, *Miscellanies*, Vol. I, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 1912.

⁶⁴ John H. Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, Kingsgate Press, London, 1906.

⁶⁵ Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History Of The Baptists*, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 190.

[p. 12]

(2) Baptists have not shared with Anabaptists the latter's aversion to oath-taking and holding public office. Neither have they adopted the Anabaptists' doctrine of pacifism, or their theological views concerning the incarnation, soul sleeping, and the necessity of observing an apostolic succession in the administration of baptism."⁶⁶

Although the above historians recognize that Baptist principles and practices are rooted in the framework of New Testament Christianity, and that some sects through the centuries have held to one or more of these principles, practically all the holders of this view unite in saying that "no historical continuity between the two groups can be proved,"⁶⁷ *i. e.* that not all Anabaptists can be claimed as spiritual forbears of Baptists, because their teachings varied greatly with Baptists in some instances. Dr. Torbet states further that:

"In fact, such a relationship can be traced only to those Anabaptists who taught believer's baptism, regenerate church membership, and the supremacy of the Scriptures. The admirable tradition of civil and

religious liberty for which so many of them gave their lives has been kept alive by the people we know as Baptists."⁶⁸

What has been said above concerning the lack of historical continuity between the Baptists and Anabaptists proper is also stated by the proponents of this view with reference to other early and medieval sects.

A closer and more accurate scrutiny of the three main views mentioned in the foregoing pages will probably disclose that there are many places where all of these historians agree with reference to the beliefs and practices of several sects who antedated and anticipated the modern Baptist movement; but a wide divergence of opinion is manifested immediately when the evidence is interpreted and applied to the study of Baptist History, thus creating the problem we are discussing. We are led, therefore, to what your writer believes to be

⁶⁶ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[p. 13]

C. PROBLEMS WHICH COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM.

Since it has been determined that there are conflicting views among Baptist Historians and writers over the subject of the origin and continuity of the people called Baptists, it will certainly not be amiss to look into some of the problems which have arisen to complicate the larger problem of Baptist Succession, Continuity, or Perpetuity. Lack of space forbids a lengthy discussion of these matters. Yet, they must not be overlooked, if an understanding of the conflicting views is to be forthcoming. One of the first problems to complicate the larger problem is

1. How Many and What Baptist Principles Must A People Possess In Order To Entitle Them To Be Called Baptists?

That this problem clamors for an answer is evident when we notice that the Baptist Historians and writers who follow the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view invariably establish the basic New Testament principles and show that Baptists hold to those principles. Their study then proceeds to look for these identifying marks in the various sects from the New Testament to the modern Baptist era. If these sects are seen to possess what many Baptist writers believe to be the irreducible minimum of such principles, Scriptural Salvation and Scriptural Baptism, they are enlisted under the Baptist banner, although they may have possessed and practiced principles at variance with modern Baptists.⁶⁹ Such a variance in many practices is evident among Baptists today. On the other hand, since Baptists have possessed a full complement of several principles since the early part of the seventeenth century, those writers who hold to the Spiritual Kinship and the English Separatist theories, while allowing fully for those principles held by the sects in question and which give them a Baptist hue, nevertheless, decline to consider them as fully of the Baptist faith.⁷⁰ One is led to doubt that this problem will ever be solved.

⁶⁹ D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-411; Roy Mason, *op. cit.*, 118-125; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-48; J. T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-6.

⁷⁰ H. C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-10; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-12; A. C. Underwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-27; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*

[p. 14]

2. How Far May A Church Depart From The New Testament Pattern Before It Ceases To Be A New Testament Church?

This question is akin to the foregoing one and has received similar treatment by Baptist writers as the former. That the New Testament Churches possessed irregularities of various kinds is readily admitted by all students of the New Testament Scriptures. The Churches of Corinth and Thessalonica in particular were plagued with moral declension and doctrinal vagaries, and the Apostle's letters were written to correct many of these errors. The Seven Churches of the Revelation were far from perfect, yet the fact that they were Churches is not denied.

"That a Church also may make grave departures in doctrine and practice from the apostolic standard without ceasing to be a Church of Christ, must be admitted."⁷¹

Since the line of demarcation between existence and non-existence as a New Testament Church is drawn at one place by some Baptist authors and at another place by others, it is almost a foregone conclusion that this problem will have to be settled first if common agreement is ever reached. For this reason some Baptist writers accept the sects of

ancient times as Baptists on the basis of their possession of the two essentials of a New Testament Church, the way of Salvation and the way of Baptism in keeping with the Scriptures, while others look for more characteristics and refuse to accept such sects as Baptist when they find deviations and a lack of such characteristics.

3. Conflicting Views Among Baptists Over The Nature And Authority Of The Church.

Baptist unity is broken over the question of the nature and the authority of the New Testament Church. What kind of Church was it that Jesus founded? Was it an autonomous, "local," independent body? Was it a universal, visible, gigantic hierarchical organization? Was it identical with and coterminous with the Kingdom of God? Was it a world-wide organism

⁷¹ A. H. Newman, *History Of Anti-pedobaptism*, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 1897, p. 28.

[p. 15]

with many "branches" of varying hue? Was it a universal, invisible, spiritual body composed of all of the redeemed? Was it "the Church" composed of "the Churches?" Is the authority of the Church under Christ of a corporate nature or individual? These and many other questions must be answered by all writers on the doctrines and practices of Baptists, and since varying and conflicting views concerning the nature and the authority of the Church are held, Baptist Historians have come to the parting of the ways on Baptist Succession, Continuity, or Perpetuity. Advocates of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view are almost one in rejecting the universal, visible theory and the universal, invisible, spiritual theory of the nature of the Church, and hold rigidly to the "local," visible, particular, organismal, and organizational view of the Church, since they hold to the view that such was the type of Church built by Jesus. Such Churches have been perpetuated through the centuries. On the other hand, those who hold to the Spiritual Kinship theory and the English Separatist theory are practically unanimous in holding to the universal, invisible, spiritual concept of the nature of the Church, and for practical purposes they allow for the local, visible, particular application. In consequence, their contention is that the perpetuation of the spirit, the doctrine, and the life of the apostolic New Testament Churches is of far greater importance than the tracing of a succession or continuity of organized life through the centuries. This does not mean that Successionists omit the spiritual content of New Testament faith in the Churches, as they contend for the perpetuity of doctrine and life as well as corporate existence. As long as such conflicting views exist over the nature and authority of the Church there will be conflicting views over the question of succession, perpetuity, and continuity. The question of the authority possessed by the Church has been a cause of many rifts in Baptist fellowship leading to differences of opinion concerning the administrator in Baptism, "Open" and "Close" Communion, Alien Immersion, Ordination, Creeds or Declarations of Faith, the power of Associations and Conventions, and even the question of Baptist Succession.

[p. 16]

4. Conflicting Views Among Baptists Over The Nature Of And Distinction Between The Church And The Kingdom Of God.

This problem is similar in nature to the preceding one. Many of the authors who hold to the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view also hold that the Kingdom of God is the organized government over which Jesus Christ presides as Law-Giver and Ruler, and whose laws are administered through the Churches as His executives. Thus the Kingdom and Church are correlative, but not necessarily coterminous. The view that the organic or visible Kingdom of Christ includes the sum total of the local, scriptural Churches is also held by a few advocates of the above theory. The concept that visible and organized Churches are the outward embodiment of the Kingdom of God among men, and the means whereby that Kingdom is to be extended, is adhered to by at least one supporter of the Spiritual Kinship theory,⁷² and by one proponent of the English Separatist view.⁷³ Drs. Torbet and Underwood do not speak out on the subject as far as we have been able to determine by casual search.

5. A Scarcity Of Documentary Evidence And Conflicts Over The Nature And Source Of That Which Is Available.

It has never been an easy matter for a Baptist historian to attempt the production of a history of his people. As one of them has said:

"Baptist historians have always written against great odds. Commonly those who rejected our principles in past ages were filled with bitterness, and destroyed the best sources of exact data in the shape of treatise, narrative, and record. The hated party was weak, and the dominant sought its destruction. Often these helpless victims of tyranny were obliged to destroy their own documents, lest discovery should overwhelm them in calamity....Then, as the Baptists had no national government, they could not preserve their records as did others....The hand which carried the sword to smite this people, carried also the torch to burn up their books, and their authors were reduced to ashes by the flames of their own literature. The material for

building up their chronicles is both crude and scanty."⁷⁴

⁷² Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

⁷³ W. O. Carver, Article on Baptist Churches in *The Nature Of The Church*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952, Edited by R. Newton Flew, p. 289.

⁷⁴ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[p. 17]

Therefore, until more documentary evidence of an authentic nature becomes available, it will continue to be difficult to write a complete history of the Baptists. This is an acknowledged weakness of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity View, especially as it relates to information concerning the sects who resembled the Baptists; and all Baptist historians have probably bewailed the lack of sources of a prime nature concerning the confused, troublesome, and hectic times of the early seventeenth century in England. Likewise, as long as Baptists are forced to secure much information concerning themselves from enemy sources, or from friendly non-Baptist sources, it will continue to be difficult to get a true picture.

Furthermore, the proponents of the views of Baptist origin and continuity which have been given are far from being one in their interpretation, judgment, and use of the materials which are available. In consequence, what one Baptist Historian accepts as authentic and reliable is discarded or ignored by another, and the secondary sources of one are considered to be non-consequential and unreliable by another. Exhaustive treatises have been written in opposition to and in favor of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view, while the same has been done with reference to the place John Smyth plays in the origin of English Baptists. Heated controversy resulted from the promulgation of the view that immersion was restored by English Baptists in 1641, and the Gould "Kiffin Manuscript" was declared by one writer to be worthless as documentary evidence of early English Baptist history. No small stir has been created over the problem of whether the Anabaptists of the Continent had historical connection with English Baptists, whether Roger Williams was immersed or sprinkled when he was baptized, and whether the mode of baptism among the Swiss, Dutch, and German Anabaptists was by immersion or pouring or both. Authors are pitted against authors, documents against documents, and arguments against arguments to prove or disprove many positions assumed by Baptist historians. In some instances, what is considered to be reliable and irrefutable proof by one writer is glibly ignored by another.

[p. 18]

It would not be too far from the truth to state that some writers have allowed the tint of their theory to color to some extent their interpretation and use of evidence, as it has never been an easy matter to be entirely objective and scientific. One thing must be said, however, in regard to most Baptist historians

"Their work shows an instinctive love eCrtheutfeuth for the truth's sake, worthy of such veterans* Their spirituality is elevated, their piety without guile, their devotion to the Gospel ardent, and their historical acuaen quite equal to that of other Church historians. In the main, their leading facts and findings have not been proved untrustworthy, and no one has attempted to show that their general conclusions were untenable."⁷⁵

III. A COMPARATIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY OF THE VARIOUS VIEWS ON BAPTIST SUCCESSION, CONTINUITY, AND PERPETUITY.

In a succinct manner we now desire to notice some of the elements of strength and weakness in the views of Baptist historians and writers concerning the origin and continuity of the people called Baptists.

A. ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN EACH VIEW.

1. The Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity View.

a. Elements of Strength.

(1). It has been constantly and continually held by many historians, leaders, and people during the history of the Baptist movement, and was held among those sects who are claimed as progenitors of modern Baptists.

(2). In the estimation of its proponents, the efforts put forth to sustain it have been credible and rewarding, while the efforts to overthrow it have not met with success.

(3). Baptist authors of differing views, as well as non-Baptist authors, have acknowledged that Baptist characteristics are evident among the sects usually brought forth to substantiate the view.

⁷⁵ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[p. 19]

(4) Opposers of the view have sometime been very careful to not assert that it cannot be proved.⁷⁶

(5) It has strong support from those Scripture passages which affirm and promise the preservation and perpetuity of the Church and Kingdom Of God.

(6). It is a reasonable theory and gives proper recognition and honor to those who practiced and adhered to Baptist and New Testament principles through the centuries in spite of overwhelming opposition.

(7). It gives greater tangibility and embodiment to the existence of those who held to Baptist principles and advocated them through the centuries.

B. Elements of Weakness.

(1). A lack of documentary evidence.

(2). A tremendous burden is placed upon the one who espouses it to produce as best he can the evidence favoring it.

(3). Those who espouse it are placed in the position of being criticized in the same manner and for the same reasons as those who hold to Roman Catholic and Anglican views of Apostolic Succession and the Historic Episcopate.

(4). The evident irregularities among those sects who possessed Baptist characteristics cannot be easily defended or explained.

(5). There is ever-present the danger of an unscholarly perversion of facts in espousing the view.

(6). In the present state of knowledge no such continuity can be shown by evidence that will bear the usual historic tests.⁷⁷

2. The Spiritual Kinship View.

a. Elements of Strength.

(1). This view shows that the unity of Christianity is enwrapped in all who have followed purely apostolic principles rather than in a succession⁷⁶ H. C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

[p. 20]

of Churches.

(2). It allows acknowledgement for the presence of some or many Baptist principles being among the sects of medieval times, but does not necessarily say that they were Baptists.

(3). It allows for a more scientific and objective presentation of Baptist History.

(4). It does not lay its proponents open to the charge of seeking to maintain a theory similar to Roman Catholic and Anglican Apostolic Succession and the Historic Episcopate.

(5). It relieves its proponents of having to try and prove what may be practically impossible to prove.

(6). Its advocates feel that it fits better those Scriptures which promise continuity and preservation of the spiritual content of the Christian faith rather than a continuity and preservation of the organizational life of Christianity.

(7). This view enables Baptist Historians to separate their history from questionable materials and present only those facts that conform to the Gospel.

b. Elements Of Weakness.

(1). Opponents of this view are unable to see how that Baptist principles and practices could be preserved and propagated without it being known as Baptists. It takes Baptists to propagate Baptist principles and practices.

(2). Proponents of this view seem to exaggerate the faults of the sects by taking the biased testimony presented by their enemies rather than the statements of the extant writings of these Christians themselves.⁷⁸

(3). This view reverses the emphasis of the New Testament and places it on an invisible and spiritual Church rather than on the spirit and life of a visible and particular Church.

⁷⁸ Roy Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

[p. 21]

(4). Opponents of this view, at least some of them, feel that this is an effort on the part of those who advocate it to avoid the stigma an exclusivism which inevitably stems from holding to the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view.

(5). The novelty of the theory among Baptists arouses suspicion against it.

(6). It seems to be an effort at holding to the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view and not holding to it at the same time.

3. The English Separatist View.

a. Elements of Strength.

- (1). It is responsible only for developing the history of the modern Baptist movement, hence it is free from the necessity of maintaining and proving what many Baptist Historians believe to be a practical impossible.
- (2). It does not violate principles of historical accuracy.⁷⁹
- (3). This view fits best the extant and commonly accepted facts of the beginnings of Baptists as is believed and propagated by the leading Baptist Historians and professors of Church History at the present time.
- (4). Allowing full credit for all that they did to preserve evangelical life in periods of apostasy and decline, the modern Baptist Historian is left entirely free to disassociate the sects of history from his presentation of the Baptist movement. He can practically ignore them if he wishes.
- (5). It entirely avoids the pitfalls of any view which savors of Apostolic Succession and the Historic Episcopate.
- (6). It enables its proponents to avoid any charges of exclusivism or biased sectarianism.
- (7). Documentary evidence is at hand to substantiate fully this view.

⁷⁹ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[p. 22]

b. Elements of Weakness.

- (1). It may be accused of treating the importance of the life and influence of the sects too lightly.
- (2). Its proponents fail to answer all too often the contrary claims of its opponents on such questions as the 1641 theory of the restoration of Immersion among English Baptists; the reliability of the Gould "Kiffin Manuscript," evidences of Immersion being practiced by Anabaptists, the Church of England, and others; the novelty of sprinkling in England after 1600; the lack of evidence in favor of the descent of ALL Baptists from Helwy's Congregation and Salisbury's Church; and the mode of Roger William's Baptism.
- (3). It places too much emphasis on the theory of an invisible, spiritual Church, which is often detrimental to the importance of the particular congregation.
- (4). This view tends, likewise, to exaggerate the faults of the various sects by taking the testimony of their bitter opponents without making too much allowance for it.
- (5). The novelty of this theory among Baptists; has also aroused suspicion with regard to it.
- (6). Some opponents of this view feel that it takes particular and local occurrences and makes a general application of them, thus leaving the impression that ALL Baptists and ALL persons in a particular sect followed the same course.

In enumerating the above elements of strength and weakness of the views presented concerning the origin and continuity of Baptists your writer has gathered together the most prevalent arguments which have been advanced by both the proponents and the opponents of each view. Such arguments may have merit and they may not. Nevertheless, they provide food for thought, and cannot, under the circumstances, be ignored. No question is ever settled until it is settled in the right manner, and no question is ever settled in

[p. 23]

the right manner until all sides of it are known, wisely and fairly interpreted, and conclusions in keeping with the evident facts are drawn up. It seems that Baptist Historians and writers will have to follow such a course if they ever settle the problem of Baptist Succession, Continuity, or Perpetuity.

B. A BRIEF PRO AND CON STUDY OF THE SECTS, PARTIES, AND MOVEMENTS UP TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WHO HELD PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN COMMON WITH MQBERN BAPTISTS.

From a study of the Various Baptist Historians and writers on the beliefs and principles of Baptists we are able to glean that they are a people who have held to the following principles during their existence, at least from the seventeenth century:

1. The supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, with particular emphasis on the New Testament as the charter of the Christian Faith and Church.⁸⁰
2. The recognition of Jesus Christ as the Founder and Head of the Church and Lord of the individual Christian.⁸¹
- The regeneration of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the Gospel.⁸²
- U-. The New Testament Church composed only of baptized believers.⁸³
- The priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of the local congregation.⁸⁴
- Immersion in water in the name of the Trinity the only valid mode or manner of Baptism.⁸⁵
- Absolute Religious Liberty and the Separation of Church and State.⁸⁶
- Individual responsibility to God and the competency of the soul before God in the performance of all religious duty.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-20; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.* xi; George W. MacDaniel, *The People Called Baptists*, Sunday School Board, Nashville, S.B.C., 1925, 32-34; Henry Cook, *What Baptists Stand For*, Kingsgate Press, London, 1947, pp. 13-24; *New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, Article I; *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, Article I.

⁸¹ Philip L. Jones, *A Restatement of Baptist Principles*, Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia, pp. 31-40; D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 202-208

⁸² W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, vii; Philip L. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-30.

⁸³ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-24; D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-231.

⁸⁴ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-28; D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-249; Philip L. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-48; J. B. Moody, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁸⁵ D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-231; Henry Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-128.

⁸⁶ Philip L. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-78; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-34; Henry Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-172; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, x.

⁸⁷ George W. MacDaniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37; E. Y. Mullins, *Axioms of Religion*, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 1908, pp. 155-167.

[p. 24]

9. The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Church Ordinances and are symbols of the Gospel of Christ His death, burial, and resurrection.⁸⁸

10. Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons are the Church's officers.⁸⁹

11. The Church's mission to preach the whole Gospel to the whole world.⁹⁰

Since the above characteristics are common to Baptists of practically all nations, we are now ready to make a brief study of the sects, parties, and movements during the Christian era in order to determine to what extent they held principles in common with the Apostolic Churches and modern Baptist Churches. We shall also note those beliefs and practices which mark them at variance with Baptists and the Apostolic Churches.

1. THE MONTANISTS.

The Montanists were probably the first extensive movement in protest against the growing corruptions and serious departures from the simplicity of the pristine Christian faith. They were called Montanists from their leader, Montanus, or Cataphrygians or Phrygians, from the country in Asia Minor in which they first appeared.

Montanus was from Ardaban, in Phrygia, and began to declare, about 156 A. D., that he was the passive instrument of the Holy Spirit in the arrival of the Spirit's dispensation, and that Spirit-filled believers receive revelations which are supplementary to the Holy Scriptures.⁹¹ He soon found many adherents, among whom were the prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla, as well as Quintilla, Alcibiades, Theodotus, and Proclus. The North African presbyter, Tertullian, became the greatest exponent of the movement after about 200 A.D. Perpetua and Felicitas were martyrs to the movement

⁸⁸ George W. MacDaniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-81; Henry Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-74; Philip L. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-58; D. B. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-273.

⁸⁹ George W. MacDaniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-49; Edwin C. Dargan, *Ecclesiology*, Charles T. Dearing, Louisville, 1897, pp. 48-63.

⁹⁰ Philip L. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-119; W.O. Carver, *Missions In The Plan Of The Ages*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1951.

⁹¹ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

[p. 25]

under Septimius Severus, 193-211 A.D. The sect became numerous, spreading from its native home to Rome and North Africa, and continued for centuries, finally becoming known under other names.⁹² The movement came into contact with the Paulicians, and probably into actual communion with them in Phrygia.⁹³

Montanism attempted no innovations in doctrine of any moment; nor were its moral precepts new and unheard of, or of such a nature to appear intolerable in the eyes of Christians. It was a reactionary and reformatory movement within or alongside of the "Old Catholic" movement,⁹⁴ and was called forth by the problem of the lowered spiritual standards and the mixture of regenerate and unregenerate persons within the pale of the "Old Catholic" Churches.

"Montanism was simply a reaction of the old, the primitive Church, against the obvious tendency of the Church of the day to strike a bargain with the world, and arrange herself comfortably in it."⁹⁵

The Montanists were akin to Baptists in that they believed in a regenerated Church membership,⁹⁶ baptism of believers, by immersion,⁹⁷ the priesthood of believers,⁹⁸ the separation of Church and State,⁹⁹ the authority of the Scriptures,¹⁰⁰ although their acceptance of the "new revelations" from ecstatic prophets tended to obscure the clarity of this important principle, and was perhaps the weakest point and most extreme position assumed by them.¹⁰¹ Tertullian, however, informs us that these ecstatic revelations related only to points of discipline, and neither affected the doctrines of Christianity nor superseded the authority of the Scriptures. Moller says, of Tertullian:

⁹² Eusebius, *The Church History*, p. 229. Note 1 by Dr. A. C. McGiffert.

⁹³ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁹⁴ J. L. Neve, *A History Of Christian Thought*, Vol. I, The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1945, p. 59.

⁹⁵ E. W. Moller, "Montanism," *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia Of Religious Knowledge*, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1882, Vol. II. p. 1561.

⁹⁶ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁹⁷ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 62; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁹⁸ Thomas Armltage, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁹⁹ A strong inference deduced from their emphasis on a regenerated and spiritual Church membership.

¹⁰⁰ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁰¹ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

[p. 26]

"To him the very substance of the Church was the Holy Spirit and by no means the Episcopacy whose right to wield the the power of the keys he rejected."¹⁰²

The Montanists were distinguished for their austerity of manners and strictness of discipline. They condemned second marriages and practiced many fasts. They maintained that all flight from persecution was unlawful, and that the Church had no power to forgive great sins after baptism. They held to a strong premillennialism concerning the return of Christ. None of their opponents accused them of serious departures from the Christian faith, and they were treated as schismatics and not heretics.¹⁰³ They insisted that those who denied the faith during times of persecution should be rebaptized, as they had "lapsed" from the faith of Christ. They were called "Anabaptists" on this account, and some of their principles re-appeared in Anabaptism.¹⁰⁴ Some have felt that they leaned toward the position of the "Old Catholics" with reference to the Monarchical Bishop as an officer in rank above the Presbyter,¹⁰⁵ but their emphasis on the priesthood of believers would seem to deny this view.¹⁰⁶ If one accepts the view that the presence of Scriptural Salvation and Scriptural Baptism are enough to give being to a New Testament Church, then the Montanists were essentially Baptist. On the other hand, if one's view calls for the evident presence of more principles, then they fail in some points in qualifying as Baptists. This accounts for their acceptance by some Baptist authors into the Baptist family and their rejection by others. There was probably more to the movement than met the "orthodox eye" of the day.

¹⁰² E. W. Moller, *op. cit.*, p. 1562.

¹⁰³ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Schaff, *History Of The Christian Church*, Eerdman Edition, 1950, Vol. II., p. 426.

¹⁰⁵ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

[p. 27]

2. THE NOVATIANS.

The Novatianist movement is another outcropping of the seemingly incessant struggle among the early Churches over the question of laxity and strictness in Church discipline.¹⁰⁷ A century later than Montanus, about 250 A. D., there was converted, on what seemed to be his deathbed, and amid very severe conflicts, a Pagan philosopher named Novatian. That his conversion was real is attested by his learned treatises and by his life of stern self-denial and his death by martyrdom. He was destined to renew the moral protest of Montanus.

The occasion of the schism was the election of Cornelius as Bishop of the Church in Rome. Novatian was elected by a minority who objected to the lax discipline favored by Cornelius, which permitted the return of the lapsed to the Church after the Decian persecution. Many Churches followed the example of the minority in Rome and the puritist movement, known also as Catharism or the Cathari, extended throughout the Roman Empire, from Armenia to Numidia, in Spain. They were especially strong in Phrygia, where the Montanists fused with them, and in the great cities of Constantinople, Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome.¹⁰⁸ The charge that the division was caused by Novatian's ambition and jealousy has been refuted strenuously by several historians.¹⁰⁹ Churches after this order flourished for several centuries throughout Christendom, and "distinguished by a variety of names, . . . a succession of them continued until the Reformation."¹¹⁰

Their kinship to modern Baptists may be ascertained from the following statements:

¹⁰⁷ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 850.

¹⁰⁸ J. H. Kurtz, *Church History*, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1888, Vol. I, p. 234.

¹⁰⁹ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 851, Note 2.

¹¹⁰ Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, Cambridge, 1792, p. 126.

[p. 28]

"The Novatians were the earliest Anabaptists; refusing to recognize as valid the ministry and sacraments of their opponents and claiming to be the true Church, they were logically compelled to rebaptize all who came to them The party gained great strength in ASIA Minor, where many Montanists joined them."¹¹¹

"They held to the independence of the Churches; and recognized the equality of all pastors in respect to dignity and authority."¹¹²

Novatian's clinic (couch) baptism, while on his supposed death bed, has proved to be a stumbling block to some in accepting him as Baptist in principle and practice, but such does not stand in the way of others.¹¹³ Their great stress upon the moral integrity of the administrator in making a baptism valid has been questioned by some, who have felt that this was an extreme position for the Novatians to take.¹¹⁴ Novatian's position in regard to the efficacy of the "sacraments" of Baptism and the Lord's Supper together with the office of Prelatical Bishop has been debated pro and con.¹¹⁵ They did not practice infant baptism as it had not found its way to Rome by that time.¹¹⁶ Newman's opinion that the Novatians believed in baptismal regeneration,¹¹⁷ a view supported by Mosheim,¹¹⁸ seems to be contradicted by the emphasis of those people upon believer's baptism.¹¹⁹ Novatian is to be distinguished from Novatus, the North African presbyter, who also joined the movement.¹²⁰ The effort of the Novatians to maintain the traditions of a purer Christianity is commendable.

¹¹¹ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 64

¹¹² John T. Christian, *op. cit.*

¹¹³ W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-82.

¹¹⁴ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 177, says: "They re-immersed all who came to them from the Catholics. For this reason alone they were called 'Anabaptists,' although they denied this was re-baptism, holding the first immersion null and void as it had been received from corrupt Churches."

¹¹⁵ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 27; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, 127.

¹¹⁷ A.H. Newman, *Manual of Church History*, A.B.P.S., Philadelphia, 1899, Vol. I, p. 207.

¹¹⁸ J. L. Mosheim, *Church History*, Applegate & Co., Cincinnati, 1857, P. 74.

¹¹⁹ Robert Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 127; J. M. Cramp, *op. cit.*, p. 58; W. A. Jarrell *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 179.

¹²⁰ J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-234.

[p. 29]

3. THE DONATISTS.

The Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists had very much in common and flourished in practically the same areas.

The Donatist agitation began in Carthage, in North Africa, over the question of the treatment of those who had surrendered the sacred books to be burned during the Diocletian persecution (303-311 A. D.).¹²¹ Those who did so were called *traditores*. In the election of a Bishop of Carthage in 311 A. D. the party which favored liberal treatment of these *traditores* elected Caecilian and he was irregularly installed into office, by Felix of Aptunga. The stricter party refused to recognize Caecilian because of his supposed weakness relative to the *traditores* and the fact that Felix was actually one. The whole issue was over the character of the Churches of North Africa, and was an agitation of the pious part of the Churches against the impious; the necessary result of loyalty to the doctrine of a regenerate Church membership. The election of Caecilian served to bring the matter to the forefront.¹²²

"The Donatist controversy was a conflict between separatism and catholicism; between ecclesiastical purism and ecclesiastical eclecticism; between the idea of the Church as an exclusive community of regenerate saints and the idea of the Church as the general Christendom of State and people. It revolved around the doctrine of the essence of the Christian Church, and in particular, the predicate of holiness . . . The Donatists . . . laid chief stress on the predicate of the subjective holiness or personal worthiness of the several members, and made the catholicity of the Church and the efficacy of the sacraments to depend upon that. The true Church, therefore, is not so much a school of holiness, as a society of those who are already holy: or at least of those who appear so; for that there are hypocrites, not even the Donatists could deny, and as little could they in earnest claim infallibility in their own discernment of men. By the toleration of those who are openly sinful, the Church loses her holiness, and ceases to be a Church."¹²³

The stricter party elected Marjorinus as Bishop, but as he soon died, Donatus the Great, of Carthage, was elected. This party greatly increased and was

¹²¹ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

¹²² H.C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹²³ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 365.

[p. 30]

separated from the "Old Catholic" movement. They made the mistake of appealing to the Emperor Constantine for redress, which they later repented of. After an unfavorable report had been returned against the Donatists by the Council of Aries in 314 A. D., the Emperor ruled against them at Milan in 316 A. D. Penal laws were issued against them and persecution followed. Leniency from the Emperor followed in 321 A. D. Constans, the successor of Constantine, resorted to violent measures against them, provoked some of them to insurrection, and put down the revolt by military measures. Executions, banishments, and the loss of property followed. Donatus the Great died in exile, and was succeeded by Parmenianus.¹²⁴ Respite under Julian the Apostate, was followed by persecutions under other emperors, and dissensions within. The opposition of Augustine and Optatus became prominent at the beginning of the fifth century and the party finally declined, to be revived for some time during the tenure of the Vandals after 427 A. D., only to suffer after their fall in 534 A. D. Little is heard of them after that time.¹²⁵

Baptist historians are not agreed at all concerning the Baptist characteristics of the Donatists. Benedict classes them as Baptists in affirming that they rejected infant baptism, held to believer's baptism, a congregational form of Church government, baptism by immersion, and were classed as anabaptists.¹²⁶ Christian shows that they contended for a regenerate Church membership, pure Church discipline, Church independence, and baptized all who came to them from the "Old Catholic" Churches as they counted such baptisms null and void. He further shows that they, after severe trials, stood for liberty of conscience, the separation of Church and State, purity of life, and apostolic simplicity. The claims of Vedder that the Novatians and Donatists believed¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

¹²⁵ J. W. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, pp. 394-396.

¹²⁶ David Benedict, *A History of the Donatists*, Pawtucket, 1875, pp.

¹²⁷ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-447.

[p. 31]

in baptismal regeneration, and practiced anabaptism because of the issue of the qualifications of the baptizer alone, are seriously questioned and opposed by other Baptist historians.¹²⁸ The claim of Vedder that the Donatists practiced infant baptism is opposed by others,¹²⁹ although it is admitted that some of the Donatists may have done so,¹³⁰ as there were about four divisions among them.¹³¹ Differences of opinion are evident on the question of hierarchical episcopacy among the Donatists.¹³² It looks as if the degree that the Donatists may be considered as Baptists will

depend upon the interpretation placed by the observer upon the evidence from documentary sources and the various Church historians. Such a course will lead either to a full acceptance of these people as Baptists, a partial acceptance, or a downright repudiation.

4. THE PAULICIANS.

Since most of the information concerning the Paulicians has come from their bitter enemies,¹³³ until at least the close of the last century, it is difficult to get a true picture of them. The discovery of the "*Key of Truth*," an old book of theirs, by Dr. Fred C. Conybeare in 1893, with its publication and translation in 1898, has led to a complete re-writing of Paulician history.¹³⁴

The name "Paulicians" was given by their opponents to that people which seem to have been revived about 660 A. D. by one, Constantine, from Samosata, who, inspired by the Epistles of Paul, took the name of Sylvanus, and called the communities who followed his leadership after such congregations as Corinth, Phillipi, Achaia, and others. They preferred the name "Christians."¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 66; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 100; David Benedict, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹²⁹ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 201; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-97.

¹³⁰ J.M. Cramp. *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

¹³¹ David Benedict, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹³² Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹³³ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 574-576.

[p. 32]

Constantine was stoned to death in 684 A. D. by command of Symeon, on orders from the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, and his congregation scattered. Symeon was struck and converted by his courage, revived the congregation, and served it as Titus. Repeated later persecutions and inner dissensions followed the spread of this people throughout Asia Minor. Another leader, Sergius, called Tychicus, (801-835 A. D.) caused a great revival of the sect. The fate of the Paulicians varied with the policy of the Greek Emperors toward them. Theodora had over one hundred thousand put to death under her short reign (844 A. D.).¹³⁶ They overthrew their enemies by 867 A.D. only to be reconquered a few years later. They maintained the free State of Teprice in Armenia for about one hundred and fifty years before it was overcome by the Saracens.¹³⁷

It is evident that they were later found in Thrace (Greece), Bulgaria, Southern France (Languedoc), Northern Italy, and along the Rhine.¹³⁸ In Italy they were called Cathari and Paterines, in France the Albigenses, and in Germany the Gazari.¹³⁹ They were also known in France as Bulgarians, from the land of their origin, and by the name *Boni Homines*.¹⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the rise of the Waldenses, Arnoldists, Petrobrussians, and the Anabaptists took place in these same areas in later centuries.

Furthermore, we note wide divergence of opinion among Baptist historians and others concerning the character of the Paulicians. Vedder¹⁴¹ unhesitatingly states that they were Manichaean in doctrine, as does Schaff;¹⁴² but this is hotly contested by Christian, Armitage, and Jarrell,¹⁴³ as well as by Mosheim, Kurtz, and Neander.¹⁴⁴ Adeney calls them "Ancient oriental Baptists"

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

¹³⁷ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁴² Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. ITi, pp. 573-578.

¹⁴³ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-237; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-111.

¹⁴⁴ J. L. Mosheim, *op. cit.*, p. 203; J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 423; Augustus Neander, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 244.

[p. 33]

these people were in many respects Protestants before Protestantism.¹⁴⁵ The usual six charges brought against them by Photius and Peter Siculus, and other Greek writers, are answered with many quotations from many authorities by Jarrell and Christian.¹⁴⁶ They seem to have practiced immersion,¹⁴⁷ opposed infant baptism,¹⁴⁸ practiced religious liberty,¹⁴⁹ believed in a regenerated Church membership,¹⁵⁰ practiced anabaptism,¹⁵¹ a very simple form of Church government,¹⁵² and were probably Adoptionist in their Christology.¹⁵³ They were especially averse to the accumulation of ceremonies and the veneration of images, relics, and saints in the Catholic communion.¹⁵⁴ Once again we note the attitude of Baptist historians toward them Christian and Jarrell embrace them as Baptists, Vedder recoils from their supposed Manicheanism, and Torbet ignores them entirely.¹⁵⁵

5. THE ALBIGENSES.

The Albigenses flourished in Southern France and Northern Italy in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Their descent has been traced from the Paulicians who came from Thrace and settled in the above areas,¹⁵⁶ while others claim they had been in the valleys of France from the earliest ages of Christianity.¹⁵⁷ Their spread was rapid and the city of Albi, in the district of Albigeois, became the center of the sect. They received their name from this area. Inquisitorial examinations by their enemies, the Roman Catholics, give us the following information concerning them:

¹⁴⁵ W.F. Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1906, p. 219.

¹⁴⁶ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 776-578; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-122.

¹⁴⁷ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁴⁸ A. H. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

¹⁴⁹ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 51-52.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; A.H. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

¹⁵¹ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁵² J. L. Mosheim, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

¹⁵³ F.C. Conybeare, *The Key Of Truth*, cl , cli. .

¹⁵⁴ J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

¹⁵⁵ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-57; H.C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 75; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-122.

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[p. 34]

"It is remarkable that the inquisitorial examinations of the Albigenses did not tax them with immoralities, but they were condemned for speculations, or rather for virtuous rules of action, which the Roman Catholics accounted heresy. They said a Christian Church should consist of good people; a Church had no power to frame any constitutions; it was not right to take oaths; it was not lawful to kill mankind; a man ought not to be delivered up to the officers of justice to be converted; the benefits of society belong alike to all members of it; faith without works could not save a man; the Church ought not to persecute any, even the wicked; the law of Moses was no rule for Christians; there was no need of priests, especially the wicked ones; the sacraments, and orders, and ceremonies of the Church of Rome were futile, expensive, oppressive, and wicked. They baptized by immersion and rejected infant baptism (William Jones, *The History of the Christian Church*, I. 287). They were decidedly anti-clerical."¹⁵⁸

Their growth was so rapid that the Popes were greatly alarmed and aggravated. The Lateran Council condemned them in 1139, as did the Council of Tours in 1163. Missionaries (Roman Catholic) were sent among them to get them to return to the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Innocent III finally published a Crusade against them about the year 1209 A. D. The war went on in a Second Crusade for twenty years and resulted in utter devastation and ruin for these hapless people. The Inquisition finished the deadly work.

Owing to the above persecutions the Albigenses scarcely left a trace of their writings, doctrinal, apologetic, or polemical; thus the representations of their enemies, the Roman Catholic writers, concerning them may be greatly exaggerated.¹⁵⁹ Baptist historians especially caution us to read their works with care.¹⁶⁰

The supposed Manichaeian tendencies ascribed to the Albigenses, who were called Cathari in Italy, and sometimes

Waldenses, though they seem to be separate and distinct from that people, are denied by many Baptist historians and others.¹⁶¹ The charge of their enemies that they rejected marriage, baptism, and the Lord's supper may mean nothing more than that they rejected the Roman Catholic views concerning these matters.¹⁶² Again, one sees that

¹⁵⁸ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹⁶¹ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 62; W.A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 119, 125-126.

¹⁶² W.A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, p. 126; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

[p. 35]

the question of the Albigenses being progenitors of the Baptists depends upon the sources used, the pre -exceptions of the author, and his interpretation of the evidence.

6. THE PETROBRUSSIANS, HENRICIANS, AND ARNOLDISTS.

The Petrobrussians, Henricians, and Arnoldists are grouped together because of the striking similarity of their views and the fact that all flourished in the twelfth century. The Petrobrussians received their name from their enemies, because of their foremost leader, Peter of Bruis, who was a converted Roman Catholic priest, and supposedly a pupil of the great Abelard. Being brought to Christ by reading the Bible, he began immediately to attempt the restoration of apostolic Christianity as early as 1104 A. D., in Languedoc and Provence, in France. Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Clugny, and Abelard wrote against him. From them mainly we learn that the Petrobrussians, as they were called by Peter the Venerable, held to the following principles:

- a. They held that the Church was a spiritual body composed of regenerated persons.¹⁶³
- b. That no persons whatever were to be baptized before they were come to the fullness of their reason.¹⁶⁴
- c. In consequence, they were anti-pedobaptsts , or rejected infant baptism.¹⁶⁵
- d. They practiced the re-baptism by immersion of those who had been immersed as babes and had been regenerated in later years.¹⁶⁶
- e. Consecrated Church edifices and altars are useless.¹⁶⁷
- f. The mass is nothing tn the world.¹⁶⁸
- g. Prayers, alms, and other good works are unavailing for the dead.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. V., p. 484; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65; Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-115; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 285.,br> ¹⁶⁷ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, X, p. 484.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

[p. 36]

- h. That priests should marry, transubstantiation was not so, and the Lord's Supper was a symbol and not a sacrament.¹⁷⁰
- i. The rejection of tradition and acceptance of the authority of Scripture only.¹⁷¹
- j. They also held to the priesthood of believers, religious liberty, and the separation of Church and State.¹⁷²

Peter of Bruis spent a laborious ministry of about twenty years and was burned at the stake in 1126 by a mob enraged against him at the instigation of fanatical clergy, whose traffic was in danger from the enterprising spirit of this new reformer. Most Baptist historians and writers are quite enthusiastic about the numerous Baptist characteristics to be found among the Petrobrussians.

The death of Peter of Bruis did not mean the end of the cause he espoused. Henry of Lausanne, who had formerly been a monk at Clugny (1116 A. D) and who was probably born near the close of the eleventh century, had joined

himself to Peter of Bruis, and had thus caught his spirit and had been imbued with his principles. He created quite a commotion in 1116 A. D. in the diocese of Mans, by preaching against clerical corruptions and advocating Scriptural truths, which resulted in his being driven away and into union with Peter of Bruis.¹⁷³ Coming out of Switzerland into France great multitudes followed him. For almost thirty-two years he spent his time in various places, until his removal to Toulouse, about 1148 A. D., where he was brought before the Council of Rheims, committed to prison, and spent his last days there. Pope Eugene III sent Bernard of Clairvaux to Toulouse in 1148 A.D. to preach against him, but it was almost unavailing.

"He is described as 'a man of great dignity of person, a fiery eye, a thundering voice, impetuous speech, mighty in the Scriptures.' 'Never was there a man known of such strictness of life, so great humanity and bravery,' and that 'by his speech he could easily provoke even a heart of stone to compunction.'"¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-287.

¹⁷¹ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁷² Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 29.

¹⁷³ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

¹⁷⁴ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[p. 37]

The followers of Henry were called "Henricians," which was just another title for the Petrobrussians, as their views were practically the same.¹⁷⁵

Arnold, of Brescia, was born in that northern Italian city, about the year 1105, and was an educated monk and a disciple of Abelard, in Paris. On his return to Lombardy, he began to attack the worldliness of the Church and the Roman Catholic papacy with great moral and religious earnestness.

"He possessed great fervor, purity, and serenity, with a remarkable flow of eloquence; these he united to most graceful and attractive manners and charming conversational powers. As a preacher, he filled Lombardy with resistance to the pride and pretensions of the priesthood . . . As the apostle of religious liberty, he contended for the dissolution between Church and State, and fired the cities to seek perfect freedom from both Pope and Empire by establishing a Republic."¹⁷⁶

Having been accused by his Bishop as a heretic before the Council of Lateran in 1139 A. D., he was forced to flee. He returned to France, where he defended Abelard against Bernard and others, only to have that "heresy-hunter" to turn on him unrelentingly. He went to Switzerland and labored at Constance for some time, until the zeal of Bernard caused his expulsion from there. He found refuge in Rome from 1145 A. D. to 1155 A. D., and during that time led the people in an attempt to restore the republic, with the senate as its head, confine the Pope to spiritual matters, and put the ecclesiastics under civil power. The Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, finally overthrew the effort about 1155 A. D., Arnold was hanged, his dead body was burned, and the ashes were cast into the Tiber, lest his remains be gathered as relics.

The Arnoldists, for it seems he was the founder of such a sect, occupied themselves with the carrying out of his politico-ecclesiastical ideals after his death. Besides their emphasis upon the separation of Church and State,¹⁷⁷ the Arnoldists also opposed infant baptism,¹⁷⁸ practiced

¹⁷⁵ A. H. Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 560-562.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 293; Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. V., p. 99.

¹⁷⁸ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[p. 38]

the baptism of believers,¹⁷⁹ denied the efficacy of water baptism to secure the remission of sins,¹⁸⁰ probably denied the Catholic theory of the mass,¹⁸¹ and joined with others in an uncompromising hostility to the Roman Catholic Church, especially against the secularization and corrupt living of the 182 clergy, whose ministrations of the sacraments they considered null and void.¹⁸² In this last emphasis they may have been somewhat Donatistic. The view that there was some connection between the Arnoldists and the Waldenses has been debated pro and con by several historians, with Schaff denying it and Newman affirming it,¹⁸³ as well as Armitage and Christian.¹⁸⁴ That

they had some Baptist characteristics is evident.

7. THE WALDENSES.

One of the major problems in studying the ancient and medieval sects of Christian history has been that of distinguishing various groups within the sects, as their opponents at times grouped radically divergent parties under one head, often condemning evangelically sound peoples by accusing them of the practices of heretical groups. The Waldenses have suffered under this type of treatment in the past; but students of their history are now reaching conclusions that there were several groups gathered under the general heading and name, thus accounting for a variety of beliefs.¹⁸⁵

There are two prevalent accounts among historians concerning the origin of the Waldenses. One account says that they began with Peter Waldus or Valdez, a rich merchant of Lyons in Southern France, who died about 1218 A. D. From him they received their name.¹⁸⁶ Another account says that the name is derived from the Italian "Valdese," or "Waldesi," signifying a

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

¹⁸⁰ A.H. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 564.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 565.

¹⁸³ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 98, Note 1; A. H. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 566.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 301; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁸⁵ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 501; A. H. Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 571-574; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-302.

¹⁸⁶ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 493-494.

[p. 39]

valley, and, therefore, the name signifies that they lived in valleys and were a people of the valleys. Thus Peter was called Waldus or Valdez because he was a valley man, and only a noted leader of a people who had long existed.¹⁸⁷ A very remote origin had been claimed for them, which has been sustained by the admissions of their enemies and confirmed by historians.¹⁸⁸ That they antedated Peter Waldus and were known under other names is difficult to deny.¹⁸⁹ The Waldenses themselves held the opinion that they were of ancient origin and truly Apostolic. Kurtz is doubtful of this claim and presents evidence to disprove it.¹⁹⁰

Peter Waldus, referred to above, a wealthy citizen of Lyons, France, was converted about 1166 A. D., following a sudden death which occurred at a public meeting which he attended. Renouncing his property, providing for his family, and giving the rest to the poor, he went forth to serve the Lord. Having had the Bible translated into the vernacular, as well as choice sayings from the Fathers, he distributed the same and preached. Drawing his rule of life from the Bible, he led his followers into crusading activity among the cities and villages. Southern France was their first home, but opposition to Waldus and his followers was aroused by the Archbishop of Lyons, and they moved into Dauphine, and later into Picardy, where hosts were converted to the Gospel. From France they pressed into the Piedmont of northern Italy and gained followers. Waldus and his people thus became identified with the Humiliati or Poor Men of Lombardy. They, themselves, had received the name of Poor Men of Lyons. They also spread into Austria and Germany, especially Bohemia, where a probable union with Wyckliffite views helped form the background of the Hussite movement.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; Augustus Neander, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 352.

¹⁸⁹ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁹⁰ J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 134-135.

¹⁹¹ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

[p. 40]

Having been denied the privilege of preaching, they appealed to the third Lateran Council in 1179 A. D. under Pope Alexander II, as they were still within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church at the time. They were treated with contempt, forbidden to continue as lay preachers, but such moves failed to stop them. They were put under the ban in 1184 A. D., but Innocent III reversed such a decision in 1209 A. D. and permitted their organization, in part at least, to be considered as an order of lay monks, who should preach, expound Scripture, and give practical instruction

under ecclesiastical supervision. But this move came too late as the Waldenses were fast on the road to evangelical freedom and separateness. Innocent III renewed the ban against them at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 A.D. After this they take on a decided New Testament and apostolic hue.

Persecutions of the worst sort became their lot for many years, as inquisitorial savagery sent thousands of them to the stake. The remnants of the German and Austrian Waldenses finally merged into the movement of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren; those of France and Italy retired into the remote valleys of the western and eastern spurs of the Cottian Alps, into Dauphine, Provence, and Piedmont, where they dwelt for some time without molestation. The French Waldenses in Provence and Dauphine succumbed to persecution and destruction in 1545 A. D. The Piedmontese of Italy suffered after 1487 A. D. until into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After about 1532 A. D. the Italian Waldenses have been definitely Pedito-baptists, as they merged with the Calvinistic Reformers. They are Italy's oldest Protestants.

As there were different periods of Waldensian history, as well as various groups among them, it is difficult to get a true picture of their beliefs and practices. Thus it is a problem to harmonize different documents, showing some Waldenses to have remained in the Church of Rome; some separated from it; and some were never in it. Some may have practiced infant baptism, held to the seven sacraments, practiced a modified episcopacy, and held to other mild Catholic views. On the other hand, there is evidence of a denial

[p. 41]

by some of the need and efficacy of infant baptism,¹⁹² the belief in a regenerated Church membership,¹⁹³ the priesthood of believers,¹⁹⁴ the practice of immersion,¹⁹⁵ the authority of the Holy Scriptures,¹⁹⁶ the symbolism of the Lord's Supper,¹⁹⁷ believer's baptism,¹⁹⁸ and held to a Scriptural form of Church government,¹⁹⁹ and were firm believers in religious liberty.²⁰⁰ They repudiated at various times the Roman Catholic system. Thus, in view of the foregoing statements, many Baptist historians and writers have brought forth the Biblical and evangelical Waldenses and placed them in the lineage of Baptist progenitors, with some going so far as to call them Baptists.

8. THE ANABAPTISTS.

The Anabaptist movement on the Continent of Europe originated with no particular man and in any one place. It seems to have been a movement which sprang up and flourished from about 1520 A. D. to 1570 A. D. in many places and under many leaders. The name ANABAPTISTS or Re baptizers (*Wiedertauffer*), originated with their enemies, the Pedobaptists (those who practice infant baptism), but was rejected by them, because they knew and practiced no other baptism but that of believers. Hence, they said that infant baptism was no baptism at all.

Swiss Anabaptism sprang up in those hectic times of the early Zwinglian Reformation around Zurich about 1523 A. D. The leaders were Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and Ludwig Hatzer. For a time they were a part of Zwingli's movement, but differences of opinion relative to infant baptism and the relation of the Church and the State led to a rupture

¹⁹² John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-81; Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 504; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-173.

¹⁹³ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

¹⁹⁴ J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 136; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

¹⁹⁵ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

¹⁹⁶ J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 136; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁷ Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

¹⁹⁸ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24; Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 127; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 305; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-181.

²⁰⁰ Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 309-317; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[p. 42]

and an independent course for the Anabaptists. They soon came to be considered by both Reformers and Roman Catholics as the radicals of the Reformation.

"The Reformers aimed to reform the old Church by the Bible; the Radicals attempted to build a new Church from the Bible. The former maintained the historic continuity; the latter went directly to the apostolic age, and ignored the intervening centuries as apostasy. The Reformers founded a popular State-Church, including all citizens with their families; the Anabaptists organized on the voluntary principle select congregations of baptized believers, separated from the world and from the State... The Radicals made use of the right of protest against the Reformation, which the Reformers so effectually exercised

against popery. They raised a protest against Protestantism. They charged the Reformers with inconsistency and semi-popery; yea, with the worst kind of popery. They denounced the State-Church as worldly and corrupt, and its ministers as mercenaries. They were charged in turn with pharasaical pride, with revolutionary and socialistic tendencies. They were cruelly persecuted by imprisonment, exile, torture, fire and sword, and almost totally suppressed in Protestant as well as in Roman Catholic Countries. The age was not ripe for unlimited religious liberty and congregational self-government. The Anabaptists* perished bravely as martyrs of conscience."²⁰¹

Anabaptist opinions spread rapidly, or rose simultaneously, at Berne, Basle, St. Gall, Appenzell, all along the Upper Rhine, in South Germany, and Austria. Other leaders in the movement were Hubmaier, Denck, Hans Hut, and Reublin. The Anabaptists were driven from place to place, and were forced to travel as fugitive evangelists. Nevertheless, they preached repentance and faith, baptized converts, organized congregations, exercised a rigid discipline, and were earnest and zealous, self-denying and heroic, but restless and impatient.²⁰² The Reformers testify, as well as their Catholic enemies, to their uprightness of character.²⁰³ A great variety and confusion of opinion prevailed among many groups who have been styled as Anabaptists, such as the the Munster (1534) insurrectionists, while some held to soul-sleep between death and the resurrection, a rabid millennialism, final restorationism, communistic and socialistic views, with wild

²⁰¹ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 71-72.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-104.

[p. 43]

excesses of immorality occurring here and there.²⁰⁴ But the great body of Swiss and Moravian Anabaptists were free of these excesses and distinguished for their simple faith and strict morality.²⁰⁵

Two main ideas seemed to be pvident in early Anabaptism that of a pure Church of believers only and the baptism of such believers only. This naturally led to the repudiation of infant baptism. While baptism was done in some instances by sprinkling and pouring,²⁰⁶ it is equally evident that a total immersion was taught and practiced.²⁰⁷ They are also credited with the following characteristics:

- a. An unswerving devotion to religious liberty.
- b. The separation of Church and State.
- c. The immediate and direct accountability to God of every soul.
- d. The right of the individual to intrepret the Scriptures.
- e. The supremacy of the Scriptures as a rule of faith.
- f. The re-baptism of all who came for membership and had been baptized in infancy. They considered the first baptism the same as no baptism at all.
- g. They utterly rejected Baptismal Regeneration.
- h. Simple congregational Church government.
- i. A rejection of all priestly and hierarchical notions of the ministry.
- j. Pacifism, non-interference in government, and pietism.²⁰⁸

Space forbids a detailed study of the German and Dutch Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and others, in Germany, the Netherlands, England, and elsewhere. The books referred to in footnote 208 will alllow the reader a great variety in reading more about these interesting people.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁰⁷ Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 578; John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-152.

²⁰⁸ John T. Christian, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-170; A. H. Newman, *op. cit.*, Vol. II pp. 148-200; Henry C. Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-198; A.C. Underwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-27; Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 606-611; Vol. VIII, pp. 70-85; Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-55; Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View Of The Church*. American Society of Church History, 1952; W. A. Jarrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-233; Thomas Armitage, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-424; J. H. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 390-405.

These works give in greater detail material concerning one or more of the above characteristics of Anabaptists.

[p. 44]

That there were many characteristics among the Biblical Anabaptists which parallel beliefs and practices among modern Baptists is undeniable. On the other hand, they held to some things that have been either discarded or were never held at all by Baptists. Their kinship with medieval parties of an evangelical nature is a view which refuses to be cast aside.

C. A CONCLUSION WHICH MAY NOT CONCLUDE THE MATTER.

Having looked at the distinctive views of Baptist Historians and writers concerning the problem of Baptist Succession, Continuity, or Perpetuity, and having seen the elements of strength and weakness in all of these views, as well as a brief outline of the major ancient and medieval sects who are usually brought forward to support the Succession, Continuity, Perpetuity view in particular, we are now ready to draw some conclusions, wise or otherwise, relative to this study.

1. Adherents of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view are not convinced that the proponents of the Spiritual Kinship and the English Separatist views have succeeded in over-throwing their view and proving it wrong.
2. In all fairness, modern Baptist Historians should re-study this whole question in the light of the latest discoveries of evidence concerning the Anabaptist movement. Proponents of the Succession-Continuity-Perpetuity view do not believe that the final word has been spoken and written on the matter.
3. All future works on Baptist History should attempt to present in an unbiased manner the best evidence and conclusions available to substantiate all views, thus leaving it to the reader and student to draw his/her own conclusions. The presentation of only one side of the question is both unhistoric and unbaptistic.
4. Diligent effort should be made to create a history consciousness among Baptists and cheaper editions of histories which present the views studied in this paper should be made available for them.
5. Regardless of the view one holds concerning the origin and continuity of Baptists, they are here in the world and should and must continue to seek to "practice New Testament Christianity, defend Religious Liberty, and foster the Democratic way of life."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Robert G. Torbet, *op. cit.*, on front of book jacket.

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[The document was provided by Pastor Ben Stratton.]

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