

### **III. BABY BELIEF FROM NICEA TO THE REFORMATION**

In this chapter, we shall endeavour to trace the gradual demise of the Ante-Nicene Church's presumption of baby belief before baptism in covenant children. We shall trace it from the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea onward. A description will be given of this deterioration, right down to the time of the Lutheran and Zwinglian Protestant Re-Formation of the Christian Church -- just prior to the time of John Calvin himself.

#### **146. Faith and baptism in the canons of the Council of Nicea**

Already the *Council of Nicea* correctly complained<sup>1</sup> (in 325 A.D.) that "many things have been done contrary to the ecclesiastical canon.... Men just converted from heathenism to the faith, and who had been instructed but a little while, are straightway being brought to the spiritual laver -- and as soon as they have been baptized, are advanced to the episcopate. ... For the time to come, no such thing shall be done.... To the catechumen himself, there is need of time -- and of a longer trial after baptism."

Nicea also discouraged the ordination of ministerial candidates without prior examination.<sup>2</sup> On this, the later commentator Balsamon observed: "Some say that as baptism makes the baptized person a new man, so ordination takes away the sins committed before ordination. This opinion does not seem to agree with the canons."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, in the *Arabic Canons* attributed to the Council of Nicea, there was mention "of sponsors in baptism." This preceded the soon-following canon anent "giving names of Christians in baptism -- and of heretics who retain the faith in the Trinity and the perfect form of baptism."<sup>4</sup>

#### **147. The baptism of infants in the Donatist Controversy**

It is true that the Donatists rejected the validity of baptisms performed in the Catholic Church, and rebaptized all donatized converts therefrom (and also from all other groups of Christians). But it is not true -- as sometimes alleged by Antipaedobaptists -- that the Donatists rejected infant baptism. Nor did they question the presence of faith in infants before administering baptism to them.

Around 367, the Catholic Bishop Optatus of Milevus wrote an important book *Against Parmenian the Donatist*. That book also incorporated an appendix compiled a little earlier (between A.D. 330 and 347). As Dr. Wall explains of Optatus:<sup>5</sup> "This Bishop living in Africa had occasion to write several books against the schism of the Donatists. Some part of the controversy between them and the Catholics was about baptism -- but not about infant baptism....

"This appears plainly, by what this author says in way of persuading them to break off their schism: "The ecclesiastical management is one and the same with us and you. Though men's minds are at variance, the sacraments are at none [so that Paedobaptism and the prebaptismal faith

of covenant children was not a matter of variance between Catholics and Donatists]. And we may say -- we believe alike; and are sealed with one and the same seal (not otherwise baptized than you); nor otherwise ordained than you are'....

"The apostle says, 'As many of you as have been baptized in the Name of Christ, have put on Christ' [Galatians 3:27]. Oh what a garment is this that is always one, and never renewed; that decently fits all ages and all shapes! It is neither too big for infants; nor too little for men; and, without any alteration, fits women."

Significantly, the Donatists too agreed -- in their controversy against the Church Universal. Wrote Cresconius the Donatist against the Catholics: "There is, between us and you, one religion -- the same sacraments. Nothing in the Christian ceremonies different. It is a schism that is between us -- not a heresy."

All this foreshadows the later *African Code* against Donatism (and also against Pelagianism). There, it was held that "when those baptized in infancy by Donatists are converted -- this [prior baptism by Donatists] shall be no impediment to them." Indeed, "let there be no rebaptisms!"<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, added the *African Code*, "whosoever denies that infants newly from their mother's wombs should be baptized -- or says that baptism is for remission of sins but that they derive from Adam no original sin which needs to be removed by...regeneration" *etc.* -- "let him be *anathema*!" Indeed, "whoso affirms that those newly born and baptized contract nothing from Adam's transgression..., is to be execrated. For through one [*viz.* Adam] -- both death and sin invaded the whole world."<sup>7</sup>

#### **148. The covenant child Basil the Great was sanctified prenatally**

Basil the Great, A.D. 329-79, was truly a child of the covenant. Therefore, fifty years after his birth, in the words of his famous contemporary Gregory of Nazianze during the latter's *Oration at Basil's Funeral* -- Basil had, prenatally, been 'formed day by day' half a century earlier. Compare Psalm 139:16 (Septuagint): 'Your eyes saw my unshapeness[es]; they had all been written in Your book; they shall keep on being formed, day by day.'

In that funeral oration, Gregory had just finished speaking about Basil's martyred progenitors -- and of his immediate parents. The latter were his godly father (Rev. Basil Sr.) and his gracious mother Emmelia. Gregory next went on to say of Basil the Great himself:<sup>8</sup> "Then, in the beginning of his age [namely *prōta tēs hēlikias*], he was by his excellent father...'swaddled' (*sparganoutai*) and 'formed' (*diaplattetai*) -- with that best and most pure formation (*katharōtatēn*) which the godly David [in Psalm 139:16 Septuagint] speaks of as proceeding 'day by day' *etc.*"

Gregory continued: "There have been many men of olden days, illustrious for piety.... Enos first ventured to call upon the Lord [Genesis 4:26]. Basil both called upon Him himself -- and, what is far more excellent -- preached Him to others. Enoch was 'translated' [Genesis 5:21].... Basil's whole life was a 'translation'.... Abraham was a great man; a patriarch; the offerer of the

new sacrifice [Genesis 22:1f].... Basil's offering was no slight one, when he offered himself to God.... Isaac was promised even before his birth [Genesis 18:10]. Basil promised himself....

"Among those that call upon His Name, there is Samuel -- who was given to God before his birth; and sanctified immediately after his birth; and the anointer with his horn of kings and priests [First Samuel 1:20 & 16:13]. But was not Basil as an infant [or rather 'fetus'] consecrated to God from the **womb** (*ek brephous Theō, kathierōmenos apo mētras*), and offered with a coat at the altar (*bē mati*)?" Compare First Samuel 2:19 with Galatians 3:27. "And was he not a seer of heavenly things; and anointed by the Lord; and the anointer of those who are being perfected by the Spirit (*teleioudenōn ek Pneumatos*)?"

Gregory concluded: "I now turn to the New Testament.... Who was the forerunner of Jesus? John -- the voice of the Word, the lamp of the Light before Whom he even leaped in the womb [Luke 2:41].... Is it not indeed manifest that Basil was a copy of John.... When, after he had finished his course and kept the faith [from the womb to the tomb!], he longed to depart.... The time for his crown was approaching.... This is my offering to you, Basil!"

#### **149. Dr. Wall on Basil's prenatal and postnatal formation before his baptism**

Dr. Wall's remarks about the above, are extremely important. Says he:<sup>9</sup> "This 'formation' [or *katharōtatēn* of the prenatal Basil] appears to have been given in infancy -- both by the words *ta prōta tēn hēlikias* ('in the beginning of his age') and also by the emphasis of the word *sparganoutai* which signifies the binding or first fashioning of the body of an infant in swaddling clothes.... The foregoing paragraph must have referred to his [Basil's] infancy....

"He [Gregory] is comparing Basil to each of the patriarchs and holy men of the Old Testament -- Abraham, Moses, &c.... Among the rest, he compares him to Samuel.... Samuel among them that call upon His Name, was both given [or promised] before he was born -- and presently, after his birth, was consecrated.... Was not this man [Basil] consecrated to God in his infancy, from the womb, and carried to the steps [*bēma* alias 'font'] in a coat? Did he not become...an anointer of such as were [being] initiated by the Spirit?

"The word '*bēma*' properly signifies steps. It is ordinarily taken for a pulpit, to which one goes up by steps.... It may signify a font or baptistry.... But the 'coat' in which he [Gregory] says Basil was offered to God....cannot well be supposed to have been anything but...baptism [*cf.* Galatians 3:27]. And this, he says, was in his infancy.

"The instance of Samuel dedicated in infancy, is one which this father [Gregory] does, at other places, make use of for a comparison or example of a Christian's child baptized in infancy.... Where speaking to some tender mothers that were afraid...of putting their infants into...baptism, he [Gregory in his *Oration* 40:17] says: 'You are afraid, as a faint-hearted mother.... But Hannah, before Samuel was born, devoted him to God; and, when he was born, presently consecrated him and brought him up in a priestly coat.' The very things that he says here of St. Basil's parents!"

## **150. The fourth-century Church's transition toward baptismal regenerationism**

Asterius 'the Sophist' (who died about A.D. 340) held<sup>10</sup> -- on the strength of *Sheminith* (the Hebrew superscription to the sixth psalm) that the eighth day after birth was the best time for baptism -- "as a sign of the seal of the faith of Abraham [Genesis 17:12].... Also circumcision was given to the descending generations -- so that even the Christians afterwards may learn to seal their infants."

They do this, "through baptism by 'the circumcision of Christ.' Concerning this, Paul says: 'In Whom you were also circumcised by a circumcision not made by hand, having been buried with Him through baptism by the circumcision of Christ' [Colossians 2:11].... The circumcision of the Jews was given to an infant early.... How much more should the 'circumcision of Christ' -- through baptism -- be given even more speedily to the infant..., so that if the infant dies he may not depart unsealed" from this life.

In A.D. 329, because of the ever-rising heresy of baptismal regenerationism, we have the first known case in the Church Universal of the baptism of an infant of two Christian parents being postponed to adulthood. In this way, all of the sins ever committed during one's life, were deemed to have been washed away by baptism at the end of one's old age.

Such was done in the case of the infant Gregory of Nazianzen. Similarly, also Emperor Constantine -- the son of one believing parent -- was baptized only on his deathbed in 337. However, as we shall soon see -- when Gregory himself grew up -- he discouraged these 'delayed baptisms' and warmly encouraged the revival and utilization of the apostolic and early-patristic infant baptisms of covenant children.

Meantime, as the modern Greek Orthodox scholar Bajis remarks:<sup>11</sup> "Some may ask why Sts. John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus...and Jerome were all baptized as adults -- even though they had at least one Christian parent. The earliest evidence that Christian parents refrained from having their child baptized immediately [or at the very most within a couple of years] after birth -- is in the middle of the fourth century. Gregory was the first example of this.

"None of these men postponed their baptism because of faith, however. Surely Gregory and John Chrysostom at thirty [and] Jerome at twenty...(at which ages they were baptized) -- had reached the 'age of reason' and individual faith long before then! They [and especially their parents] postponed their baptisms on the false premise that they could better assure themselves a place in heaven -- if they minimized the times they sinned after baptism."

The postponement of the baptisms of covenant children from infancy till later life should not be taken to imply that such infants were devoid of faith when still unbaptized babies. To the contrary, as we have just seen above -- in the words of Bajis: "John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus...and Jerome" -- and, he could well have added, even Augustine of Hippo-Regius -- "were all baptized as adults." Nevertheless, "none of these men postponed their baptism because of faith" (or their lack of it) when still infants. For quite apart from all being covenant children, it is further to be presumed that all of them also had at least the seed of faith -- while they were yet babies.

### **151. The faiths of the infants of Gregory Nazianzen's mother the godly Nonna**

We have already seen that, in his *Oration at Basil's Funeral*, Gregory of Nazianze certainly presupposed the covenanter Basil's prenatal sanctification -- being the child of godly parents. Gregory also seems to have suggested that Basil was baptized in infancy -- even though Gregory himself was not.

The reason why the infant Gregory had been kept unbaptized, may well be because his father (Gregory Sr.) had been an advocate of Hyspistarianism -- an idolatrous unitarian syncretism of Judaism and Christianity and Paganism. However, Gregory Jr.'s mother Nonna was a lifelong godly covenanter. She herself had been conceived and born of Christian parents. So later, she likewise consecrated her own three children to the Lord -- long before they were born.

It seems Gregory Jr. himself could never remember not believing that Christ was his Lord and personal Saviour. Certainly this was indeed the case in respect of his brother Caesarius and his sister Gorgonia.

Just hear part of Gregory Nazianzen's sermon at the funeral of his own younger brother! Said Gregory Jr. of Caesarius:<sup>12</sup> "His father [Gregory Sr.] was well-grafted -- out of the wild olive tree [of Hyspistarianism] into the good one [of his wife's 'catholic' Christianity]....

"His mother [Nonna] was consecrated to God by virtue of her descent from a saintly family. She was possessed of piety as a necessary inheritance not only for herself but also for her children -- being indeed a holy lump from a holy firstfruits [Romans 11:16 *cf.* First Corinthians 7:14]. And this she so far increased and amplified -- that some...have both believed and said that even her husband's perfection has been the work of none other than herself....

"Lovers of their children and of Christ as they both were..., they were far greater lovers of Christ than of their children.... I have entered into these details not from a desire to eulogize them..., but to set forth the excellence inherited from his parents [Gregory Sr. and Nonna] by Caesarius....

"His earthly life was such as becomes [or behooves] those really well-born.... Bred and reared under such influences, we [children] were fully trained in the education afforded here [in Nazianze].... Our mother, in her motherly love for her children, had offered up a prayer.... And God...hears a righteous prayer, and honours the love of parents for well-disposed children."

### **152. Gregory Nazianzen on the lifelong faiths of his sister and their mother**

Hear too parts of Gregory Nazianzen's sermon at the funeral of his older sister Gorgonia, daughter of the Ex-Hyspistarian Gregory Sr. and his from-conception-onward faithful 'catholic' Christian wife Nonna. Exclaimed Gregory Jr..<sup>13</sup> "Who is there who knows not the Abraham and Sarah of these our latter days -- Gregory (Sr.) and Nonna his wife?

"He [the 'Abrahamic' Gregory Sr.] has been justified by faith.... He, beyond all hope, has become

'the father of many nations'; she, has spiritually travailed in their birth.... He escaped from the bondage of his father's gods; she is the daughter, as well as the mother, of the free.... This good shepherd [Gregory Sr.] was the result of his wife's prayers....

"From them, Gorgonia derived both her existence and her reputation. They sowed in her the seeds of piety.... Gorgonia's native land was 'Jerusalem above' [Hebrews 12:22f].... She consecrated herself entirely to God.... She also won over her husband to her side, and made of him a good fellow-servant [of God].... She further made the fruit of her body, her children and her children's children, to be the fruit of her spirit -- dedicating to God not [just only] her single soul, but the whole family and household [Isaiah 59:21 cf. First Corinthians 7:10-14]."

Hear too Gregory Nazianzen's description of his godly mother, in parts of his sermon at the funeral of his father. Declared Gregory Jr.:<sup>14</sup> "She applied herself to God and divine things as closely as if absolutely released from household cares.... What time or place for prayer ever escaped her? To this she was drawn before all other things in the day.... Who paid such reverence...or stood like a pillar at the...daily psalmody? ... It was on her part a great undertaking to promise me to God, before my birth....

"Through God's goodness has it been that she has not utterly failed in her prayer.... She fell before God night and day -- entreating for the salvation of her 'head' with many fastings and tears, and assiduously devoting herself to her husband.... For the salvation of my father, there was a concurrence of the gradual conviction of his reason.... His wife was frequent in her supplications and prayers.... So my father yielded himself to God."

### **153. Infant faith and infant baptism in the writings of Gregory Nazianzen**

We have already seen that Gregory Nazianzen was the covenant child of an ex-Hypsistarian father and a from-conception-onward 'catholic' Christian mother. Cf. Romans 11:16 & First Corinthians 7:14. Through the misunderstanding of his father Gregory Sr., Gregory Jr. himself -- just like the infants of misguided Baptist parents today -- was not baptized while a baby. Indeed, though sanctified from his conception onward, he was not baptized at all -- until fully thirty years of age.

In rectifying this former error of his own father, Gregory Jr. later wrote to those who were still in the situation in which he had been. He declared:<sup>15</sup> "Let us then be baptized, so that we may win the victory! Let us partake of the cleansing water..., more sacred than the ashes of the heifer sprinkling the unclean!"

For Gregory himself had now become a convinced and vigorous advocate of infant baptism. Hear him challenge some antipaedobaptizing wayward mothers: "Have you a speech-less in-fant (*nē pion*)? Do not let sin get any opportunity, but let him be sanctified from infancy (*ek brephous*)! From his very tenderest age, let him be consecrated by the Spirit! Do you fear the seal (*sphragida*) on account of the weakness of nature? O, what a small-souled mother [you are] -- and of how little faith!"

Gregory went on: "Hannah, even before Samuel was born, promised him to God; and after his birth, consecrated him at once.... You have no need of amulets or incantations.... Give your child the Trinity (*dos autō; tēn Triada*) -- that great and noble Guard!" That is -- give you infant trinitarian baptism!

Continued Gregory:<sup>16</sup> "Some will say, in the case of those who can desire baptism [*epizētoun tō n to baptisma*] -- what have you to say about those who are still infants [*nēpiōn*]? ... Are we to baptize them too?"

To this question, Gregory himself then replied: "Certainly!... A proof of this is found in the circumcision on the eighth day, which was a sort of typical seal, and was conferred on children.... But in respect of others (*allōn*)" -- namely the post-infantile children of Pagans -- "I give my advice to wait till the end of the third year, or a little more or less. Then they may be able to listen and to answer something about the sacrament."

So here, Gregory implies that also covenant babies themselves can desire (though of course not request) the seal of infant baptism. On the other hand, the children of "others first need to wait till the end of the third year." Those three years constituted the traditional period of continuous catechism -- for converts from Paganism before their baptism and consequent admission to the Lord's supper. It was also the traditional period (between ten and thirteen years of age) during which infantly-baptized covenant children were catechetically to 'improve their baptism' before their admission to the Saviour's Table.

Gregory Nazianzen also tells<sup>17</sup> us that the demons stole the [Biblical] rite of sprinkling -- for paganistic initiations -- from the Old Testament purifications which foreshadowed Christian baptism. Indeed, Gregory also tells us<sup>18</sup> that rebaptisms are wrong.

Gregory had been born in 330, and -- through the misunderstanding of his Ex-Hypsistarian father when Gregory Jr. himself was still an infant -- baptized only in 360. Yet even by 360, the unbiblical trend toward postponing baptism till one's deathbed -- was still only a trickle.

#### **154. Other fourth-century evidences of infant faith and infant baptism**

In his *Catechetical Lectures* (around 330 A.D.), Cyril of Jerusalem<sup>19</sup> connected sprinkling and baptism in respect of covenant children being prepared for their first communion service. Indeed, between A.D. 360 and 430, the baptism of newborn covenant infants is frequently cited as a well-established custom still being practised at that time. Thus: Zeno of Verona, Optatus of Milevus, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Pseudo-Clementine, Didymus the Blind, Siricius, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, the Sixth Synod of Carthage (canon 7), the Synod of Rome (canon 5), Jerome, Theodoret, Innocent, Mark the Deacon, and Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the 362 A.D. Zeno of Verona<sup>21</sup> called baptism a "second circumcision from the cradle." Also the 370 Basil the Great exhorted not just believing adults but also their covenant children to be baptized. For Basil regarded such covenant infants as -- believing babies.

As a maturing 'child of the covenant' the adult Basil specifically seems to have presupposed prebaptismal faith not just in adults but also in covenant infants -- even prior to their infant baptisms. For he wrote:<sup>22</sup> "One must **believe first**; and **then** be sealed with baptism." *'Pisteusai gar dei proteron eita tō; baptismati episphragisasthai!'*

**Believe first! Only thereafter: be baptized!** Compare Mark 16:16 -- even in respect of the infant baptism of infant believers like the covenant child Basil!

### **155. The adult Basil the Great insisted on infant baptism**

Basil the Great, we have already seen, was raised in the Christian faith from infancy. Indeed, his father was Rev. Basil Sr -- and his mother the godly Emmelia.

When an adult, Basil the Great himself explained:<sup>23</sup> "A Jew does not delay circumcision. Because of the threatening that 'every soul that is not circumcised the eighth day, shall be cut off from his people' [Genesis 17:14]."

Basil therefore then commanded: "Put off 'the circumcision made without hands in the putting off of the flesh' which is performed in baptism!" Colossians 2:11f. "Our Lord Himself says: 'Verily verily I say to you -- except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" John 3:3f.

According to the 450 A.D. church history writer Theodoret of Cyrhus,<sup>24</sup> Basil told Emperor Valens that the latter needed to have his little child (or *paidion*) baptized. Gregory of Nazianze (in his *Oration on Basil*) claimed he himself was an eye-witness of that event -- and he himself compared Valens's "little child" to David's dying infant (in Second Samuel 12:14-23). The fifth-century church historian Socrates called that child of the Emperor "the speech-less infant son of Valens (*nēpion huiou tou Oualentos*)."<sup>25</sup>

Contemporaneously, Gregory of Nyssa rightly taught that covenant babies receive  **blessing** -- not wrath.<sup>26</sup> Yet he also taught that Elijah's pouring of the water on the twelve-stone altar, representing all the tribes of Israel -- was a figure of Christian baptism.<sup>27</sup>

### **156. Ambrose on infant circumcision/baptism and on John's baptizing of babies**

The 380 A.D. Ambrose, Church Overseer of Milan rightly supported<sup>28</sup> the infant baptism of covenant children -- by appealing to the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision. Yet wrongly, he held that if an infant dies without having been baptized -- such a person will have no share in the Kingdom of God. He arrived at this horrendous conclusion by ignoring the **un**-circumcisedness of Israelitesses, and by wrongly equating baptism<sup>29</sup> with John 3:5. But in the latter text God merely says that all persons must be regenerated -- to enter into His Kingdom.

Ambrose wrongly took regeneration to mean baptism. He also confused the Kingdom of God alias the Visible Church with salvation. Indeed, he further misunderstood John 3:5 to mean that all must be baptized in order to enter into glory.



However, Ambrose rightly rebuked<sup>30</sup> all unbaptized adults who continued to postpone their baptism. He spoke of "that returning of the riverwaters backward, toward the springhead, which was caused by 'Elijah' [= John the Baptist] when the river was divided." Ambrose attributed this to "those infants that are baptized [who] are reformed back again -- from wickedness, to their original nature."

Ambrose not only implied that John/Elijah baptized also infants, by turning the whole nation of Israel as such back to her original estate. By equating baptism with spiritual circumcision, and thus infant baptism with infant circumcision -- and by insisting on baptism for salvation even as regards infants -- it seems certain Ambrose believed that John baptized not just penitent adults, but their infants too.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, his pupil Augustine commented<sup>32</sup> on this: "Ambrose does here say, in effect, that John...did baptize infants.... He does plainly speak of the baptism of infants [being] used in the apostles' time."

Moreover, even Ambrose himself presupposed that John the baptizer prenatally -- and therefore while still both uncircumcised and unbaptized -- indeed experienced the grace of God, and was right then filled with the Holy Spirit. For, in his *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (II:22f), he gave the following comment (on Luke 1:29-45):

"The arrival of Mary and the blessings of the Lord's presence, are also speedily declared.... Elizabeth was the first to hear the voice; but John was the first to experience grace.... The women speak of grace; the babies make it effective from within, to the advantage of their mothers....

"The infant leaped [up]; the mother was filled with the Spirit. The mother was not filled before the son. But after the son was filled with the Holy Spirit, he filled his mother too." Cf. also Malachi 4:5-6 and Luke 1:11-17.

### **157. John Chrysostom on infant faith and infant circumcision**

The (385 A.D.) Chrysostom of Constantinople stated<sup>33</sup> that "our circumcision" alias "the grace of baptism" is received by the Christian "in the very beginning of his age (*aōros hēlikia*)." Because "circumcision was to be given on the eighth day," so too with the similar "baptism.... It is lawful that one receives it...in infancy." Because a Jew was obliged to circumcise his child in infancy, so too a Christian parent needs to have his child baptized -- as an infant. Genesis 17:8-14 & Colossians 2:11f.

Chrysostom also enjoined<sup>34</sup> Christian parents to "imitate them of old. You women especially -- emulate those admirable women! Has a child been born to any one? Imitate Hannah's example [First Samuel 1:24]! Look at what she did [with her young baby Samuel]! She put him into the hands of God.... It was the faith of the mother and her earnest zeal, that wrought the whole.... Yet she did not say: 'I will wait till the child is grown up -- so that he may [only then] have a taste of the things of this life.'" No!

"She was absorbed in one object: how from the very beginning she might dedicate [her son Samuel] -- as the spiritual image [of God] -- to God.... Therefore was her married state more glorious...in that she dedicated the firstfruits to God. Therefore was her womb fruitful -- and she obtained other children besides." First Samuel 2:21.

Chrysostom also called baptism painless circumcision.<sup>35</sup> Cf. Colossians 2:11. He said it may be received by covenant infants who have the inward seal of the **Spirit**. Consequently, "we baptize little children also." Indeed, "some of those baptized...were children when they received it."<sup>36</sup>

In this, Chrysostom was followed by his students. Thus Theodoret of Cyrillus declared<sup>37</sup> that "we baptize infants." Similarly, Isidore of Pelusium explained<sup>38</sup> that "sucklings are baptized" -- '*ta brephē...baptizetai.*'

### **158. Chrysostom on infant faith and infant salvation**

"In the loss of children" -- Chrysostom explained<sup>39</sup> to Christian parents -- "while you see [that child of] yours die, you shall thank the God of love.... The deceased has removed into a better country, and bounded away to a happier inheritance....

"That is not your child which is lying there" -- but merely his discarded tabernacle or tent-like corpse [Second Corinthians 5:1f]. Your child himself "has flown away, and sprung aloft into boundless height.... He has gone on a journey, and will return with the King.... If then you seek your son -- seek him where the King [is, and] where the army of the angels is -- not in the grave; not in the earth. He is so highly exalted. Do not yourself remain grovelling on the ground!"

Here is no limbo or purgatory for dead covenant children. Here the infantly-dying believer goes straight to heaven -- whence he or she will return with the King to earth at the very end of history.

Chrysostom also gave a very interesting comment on First Corinthians 7:14 -- with implications for the baptism of certain infants. He referred to the text concerning the unbelieving spouse being sanctified by the believer -- precisely in order that their children be not unclean but holy.

Explained Chrysostom:<sup>40</sup> "So that the [married] woman need not fear being made 'unclean' by copulation," the apostle does not tell her that the believing wife is made unholy by the unbelieving husband. To the contrary, "the apostle tells her that 'the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife'....

"For on supposition that you, being unclean, brought forth a child; and that child not being from you alone -- the child would [otherwise] be 'unclean' or but 'half-clean'.... Therefore, he adds: 'otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, there are holy!'"

### **159. Infant faith and infant baptism even among the Donatists and the Pelagians**

The 397 Third Synod of Carthage informs<sup>41</sup> us that even the Donatists baptized their children -- after breaking away from the Universal Church in 312. And the 401 Sixth Synod of Carthage re-emphasizes<sup>42</sup> the customariness of infant baptism in the Universal Church -- even while the later Christian Emperor Theodosius II was that very same year being baptized in Byzantium, not long after his birth.

Now the Pelagians denied original sin and the imputation of its stain to all infants from their conception onward.<sup>43</sup> Yet the famous Irish Pelagian Caelestius nevertheless defended the practice of infant baptism -- at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 411-12.

The A.D. 418 Sixteenth Synod of Carthage anathematized<sup>44</sup> everyone who "says that newly-born infants should not be baptized when they come forth fresh from their mother's womb." Augustine too remarked<sup>45</sup> in A.D. 422 that "the infant must be baptized while he is alive.... Women would throw their sandals at the heads of Pelagians, if they should dare to say of infants: 'Let them not be baptized!'"<sup>46</sup>

In point of fact, however, the Pelagians never questioned infant baptism. Thus Caelestius the Pelagian told the deacon Paulinus: "As for infants, I always said that they stand in need of baptism -- and that they ought to be baptized."

Indeed, even after the Synod of Carthage condemned the Pelagians in 418 -- one of them sent a letter to Rome saying: "We do acknowledge that the grace of Christ is necessary for all, both grown persons and infants.... We renounce all that should say that one that is born of parents both baptized, ought not to be baptized.... We own baptism to be necessary for all ages."<sup>47</sup>

Thereafter, it seems Semipelagianism was promoted from 425 onward by Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia. Yet, in his lost book on *Sin* (fragments of which have been preserved elsewhere), he apparently did insist that "the holy mysteries [or baptismal signs] are given to infants.... They are accounted worthy of baptism...because they are full of sin."

As Wall concludes:<sup>48</sup> "Semipelagians...expressly renounced Pelagius as a heretic.... They called their [orthodox] adversaries, Praedestinarrians. But as to the matter we are treating of, they all agreed that there is original sin in infants [and] that all baptized infants dying in infancy are saved."

### **160. Jerome's covenant theology anent Laeta's Christian mother and her family**

When the transmission of Adam's sin to unborn infants was, quite rightly, still unquestioned in church circles (even by the Pelagians) -- the great Jerome of Bethlehem also asserted the prenatal holiness of covenant children. It was chiefly the later controversy against the Pelagians, who denied the sinfulness of babies, which propelled both Jerome and Augustine toward the opposite error of baptismal regenerationism.

Earlier, however, Jerome wrote:<sup>49</sup> "In days gone by, men rejoiced to hear it said of them, 'Your children shall be like olive-plants round about your table!'" They also rejoiced to hear it said: 'You shall see your children's children!' Psalm 128:3-6.

Now, "also in the Gospel...the Lord discusses that Commandment of the Law which says 'Honour your father and your mother!'" Matthew 19:19 & Ephesians 6:1-4. Consequently, Jerome referred to Cornelius -- that "devout man" of New Testament times who "feared God with all his house...and prayed to God always.... Truly did he 'fear God with all his house.'" Acts 10:1-4*f*.

Nowhere do we see Jerome's early 'covenant theology' more clearly -- than in his statements about the well-known family of Laeta. Her mother was a Christian. So too was -- Laeta herself; her husband Toxotius; their daughter Paula; and Paula's children too.

As Jerome wrote after Paula's death, and to her Christian daughter Eustochium:<sup>50</sup> "If all the members of my body were to be converted into tongues..., I could still do no justice to the virtues of the holy and venerable Paula. Noble in family, she was nobler still in holiness.... Other may go back...to Paula's cradle and...to her swaddling clothes."

Many years earlier, long before Paula's death and when she was still very young, Jerome had reminded<sup>51</sup> her mother the Christian Laeta how she had reared her daughter Paula. To that Christian mother Laeta, Jerome had then written: "You yourself are the offspring of a mixed marriage [between the Pagan Albinus and his Christian wife]. But the parents of Paula -- you and my friend Toxotius -- are both Christians. Who could have believed that to [Laeta's father] the heathen pontiff Albinus -- should be born, in answer to a mother's vows, a Christian granddaughter [Paula]!" First Corinthians 7:14.

Who could have believed "that a delighted grandfather should hear from the little one's faltering lips -- Christ's Alleluia?!... The one unbeliever [Albinus] is sanctified by his holy and believing family [*cf.* First Corinthians 7:14]. For, when a man is surrounded by a believing crowd of children and grandchildren -- he is as good as as candidate for the faith" in Christ.

### **161. Jerome's covenant theology for Laeta rooted in Holy Scripture**

"I speak thus to you, Laeta.... The same faith which has gained you your daughter [Paula], may win your father [Albinus] too. And that -- so you may be able to rejoice over blessings bestowed upon your entire family.

"In answer to your prayers...I [as a spiritual father] wish to address you as a mother -- and to instruct you how to bring up our dear Paula who has been consecrated to Christ **before** her birth and vowed to His service **before** her conception. Thus, in our day, we have seen repeated the story told us in the prophets about Hannah who -- though at first barren -- afterward became fruitful.... Samuel and Samson are both instances of this -- as is also John the Baptist who, when Mary came in, leaped for joy [Luke 1:41].... As then Paula has been born in answer to a promise -- her parents should give her a training suitable to her birth....

"It is written of the woman [in First Timothy 2:15], that 'she shall be saved by rearing children -- if they **remain** in faith'.... Parents are responsible for their children when these are of ripe[r] age.... How much more must they be responsible for them when...they cannot...'discern between their right hand and their left' [Jonah 4:11] -- when, that is to say, they cannot yet distinguished good from evil....

"While the son is a child and thinks as a child [First Corinthians 13:11], his parents are responsible for his actions.... Perhaps you imagine that, if they are not baptized, the children of Christians are liable for their own sins, and that no guilt attached to parents who withhold from baptism those who by reason of their tender age can offer no objection to it? The truth is, that...baptism...of the child...brings advantage to the parents.... In your case, [Christian Laeta,] you have no discretion -- having offered your child even before her **conception**.... When Hannah had offered in the tabernacle the son whom she had vowed to God -- she never took him back."

### **162. Jerome's covenant theology in the family of Paula's daughter Blaesilla**

When Paula herself had grown up -- we read in Jerome<sup>52</sup> that "Paula married Toxotius.... Thus, nobly born, Paula through her fruitfulness and her chastity won approval from all -- from her husband first, then from her relatives, then from the whole city. She bore five children" -- Blaesilla, Paulina, Eustochium, Rufina and Toxotius Jr. Here writing to the godly Eustochium on the death of her saintly mother Paula, Jerome reminded her: "Your mother has now -- after a long martyrdom -- won her crown!"

Of Paula's children, we know that Blaesilla was widowed as a teenager -- and died in Christ when herself but twenty, even predeceasing her mother Paula. For Jerome had then written<sup>53</sup> to Paula anent that bereavement: "Who can recall with dry eyes, the glowing faith which induced a girl of twenty to raise the standard of the cross?... Who can recall without a sigh, the earnestness of her prayers...and singing the psalms?"

Doubtless rhetorically, in his letter to Paula Jerome then 'assured' even the deceased: "Be at peace, dear Blaesilla, in full assurance that your garments are always white!" Ecclesiastes 9:8 *cf.* Galatians 3:27 . "The words to the dying robber are a pledge of this: 'Truly, I say to you -- today you shall be with Me in paradise.'" Luke 23:43.

Directly, Jerome then assured her grieving mother Paula: "After her long pilgrimage, she [too]...ascended up into her ancient heritage.... Therefore we should congratulate our dear Blaesilla that she has passed from darkness to light [Ephesians 5:8], and has in the first flush of her dawning faith received the crown of her completed work.... By the mercy of Christ she, four months ago, renewed her baptism in her vow of widowhood....

"David..., after interceding in vain for the life of his infant child, refused to weep for it -- knowing that it had not sinned [Second Samuel 12: 14-23].... Spare yourself, [Paula,] I beseech you! Spare Blaesilla -- who now reigns with Christ!... At this moment, she cries out to you..., 'Mother! If I was nourished at your breast; if I was taught by your precepts -- do not grudge me my exaltation! Do not so act that we shall be separated forever!'....

"Blaesilla's name shall be forever on my tongue.... Living as she does with Christ in heaven, she will live also on the lips of men."

### **163. Jerome's covenant theology in the family of Paula's daughter Paulina**

Paula's second daughter, Paulina, married the Christian Roman senator Pammachius. When Paulina died, Jerome wrote to comfort the grieving widower. He did this by reminding<sup>54</sup> Pammachius of the godliness of four Christians -- of his mother-in-law Paula and her three living Christian daughters: "three women closely united in blood and moral excellence."

Explained Jerome: "A mother with such daughters, wins for herself on earth all that Christ promised to give in heaven." Thus, including the still-living mother herself: "Four saints turned out by a single family."

Jerome then discussed the dead wife of the widower Pammachius. "Paulina," Jerome nostalgically reminded him, "kept the bed of marriage undefiled.... Reading the words of the apostle, 'marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled' [Hebrews 13:4]..., her one thought day and night was that...her union should be blessed with offspring.... She only desired children, [so] that she might bring forth virgins to Christ."

Finally, the godly Paula's other daughter Eustochium too seems to have served the Lord -- even from her infancy. So Jerome wrote<sup>55</sup> also to her: "Be not fearful, Eustochium! You are endowed with a splendid heritage. The Lord is your portion."

### **164. Other statements of Jerome suggesting prenatal sanctification**

Before the Pelagian controversy (which doubtless caused the Church to overreact into baptismal regenerationism), Jerome thus apparently presupposed prebaptismal infant faith within covenant children. By implication, he therefore indirectly presupposed also their **prebaptismal regeneratedness**.

For, then commenting on Matthew 28:19, Jerome further declared:<sup>56</sup> "First disciple all the nations! Then, when they are discipled..., baptize them with water! For it cannot be that the body should receive the sacrament of baptism -- until the soul has beforehand received the true faith."

Yet Jerome also said<sup>57</sup> -- and rightly so -- that it is a grievous sin in Christian parents not to bring their babies to receive infant baptism. Also as to the mode thereof, he defended<sup>58</sup> specifically the sprinkling of covenant babies -- with appeals to Psalm 51:2-7 and Ezekiel 16:4 & 36:21-25 and Zechariah 12:1.

Jerome elsewhere added:<sup>59</sup> "Marriage is a gift of God.... The apostle Peter says: 'as heirs together of the manifold grace of God.'" First Peter 3:7, joined with 4:10. Noah was preserved at the deluge...together with his wife and sons.... The ark, according to the apostle Peter, was a type of the Church -- [the ark] in which eight souls were saved" (namely Noah and his entire

family). Indeed, household baptism -- including infant baptism -- is the sign and seal of that family salvation. First Peter 3:20f.

### **165. Jerome on the glory of Christian child-bearing and child-rearing**

"The Jews," concluded Jerome, "gloried in children and child-bearing.... Blessed was he whose seed was in Zion, and his family in Jerusalem! And part of the highest blessing was: 'your wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of your home; your children like olive-plants, round about your table.'" Psalm 128:3.

Finally, when the baptismal regenerationist Bishop Paulinus of Nola asked a question of Jerome, the latter's answer still manifests his earlier theology -- namely a covenantal one. With obvious reference to First Corinthians 7:14, Paulinus had asked Jerome 'how those children that are born of...baptized parents, are holy?'

Even the Anglican Rev. Dr. Wall here rightly understood his meaning. Observes Wall of Paulinus:<sup>60</sup> "He seems at this place to have taken the obvious sense of St. Paul's words to be that the infants of Christian parents are holy from birth -- and desires to know what holiness this is that St. Paul ascribes to them from their birth, since...the parents be baptized Christians."

To the above question of Paulinus of Nola anent First Corinthians 7:14, Jerome replied:<sup>61</sup> "Tertullian has discoursed in his books on *Monogamy*" [II:2]. Tertullian further addressed the matter of the prenatal holiness of covenant children, also in his book *On the Soul* [chapter 39]. There, added Jerome, Tertullian "declares that the children of believers are called 'holy'.... There can be nothing 'holy' -- **except creatures** which know of and worship God."

### **166. The early Augustine's doctrine of infant faith within covenant children**

Ambrose of Milan's pupil was the greatest theologian of the Early Church, and possibly of all time -- the Carthaginian St. Augustine of Hippo-Regius in North Africa. First, however, the famous Augustine backslid into terrible wickedness before his dramatic reconversion when an adult. Yet it should not be forgotten that, though unbaptized in infancy, he was still a child of the covenant. His godly mother Monica had prayed for him before his birth -- and for the rest of her life, faithfully, thereafter. Indeed, it seems Augustine himself already knew the Lord when just a tiny boy -- before later drifting off for many years into the paths of sin.

For, after his above-mentioned adult reconversion, that greatest of all patristic theologians wrote<sup>62</sup> the following about himself: "O Lord my God..., when [at birth] I came hither into this...dying life..., I heard from my parents from whose substance You did form me...[that] Your merciful comforts sustained me.... For neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts. But You, by them, did give me the nourishment of infancy -- according to Your ordinance....

"As a boy, I began to pray to You -- my 'Help' and my 'Refuge'.... My elders -- yes, and my own parents too who wished me no ill, laughed.... And yet I [later] erred, O Lord God.... In doing contrary to the wishes of my parents..., I disobeyed them."

Though Augustine had himself been an unconfirmed catechumen ever since his late boyhood, he had thereafter: fallen away into immorality; contracted an unofficial union (in A.D. 372); and produced a godly son Adeodatus, who died in 390. Augustine himself was reclaimed for Christ in 386, and baptized together with his son in 387.

Rightly so! See Genesis 17:10-27. For Adeodatus was still the son of a formerly backslidden and now (re)converted covenanter -- and the grandson of the godly Monica. Isaiah 59:21.

In his *Confessions*,<sup>63</sup> Augustine wrote to God: "Being now clothed with the humility appropriate to Thy sacraments..., we took into our company the boy Adeodatus -- born of me carnally, of my sin. Well hadst Thou made him! He was barely fifteen years, yet in wisdom excelled many grave and learned men. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all, and of [Thy] exceeding power to reform our deformities.... That boy...we fostered...in Thy discipline....

"There is a book of ours, which is entitled *The Master*. It is a dialogue between him and me.... Thou knowest...his thoughts in his sixteenth year.... That talent was a source of awe to me. And Who but Thou couldst be the Worker of such marvels?... I fear nothing for his childhood.... We took him coeval to us in Thy grace, to be educated in Thy discipline."

### **167. The young Augustine on covenant infants' faith in Christ before their baptism**

Augustine also realized<sup>64</sup> that covenant children seem to have faith in Christ even before they are baptized in infancy. Thus, he wrote to Bonifacius: "The regenerating Spirit is possessed in common both by the parents who present the child [for baptism] -- and by the infant that is presented and is born again." Indeed, once a child receives Christ's saving grace, he cannot lose it -- neither by his own nor by his parents' later sins.

The doctrinaire Anglican Dr. Wall has given an accurate comment on the above statement of Augustine. "The guilt of original sin," explains Wall,<sup>65</sup> "descends from the parent to the [prenatal infant] child -- because the child is not yet a separate living person." However, "the faith and godly will of the parent bringing his [postnatal infant] child to baptism, is available -- because the same Spirit that sanctifies and regenerates the child, moves the parent to offer him to baptism."

Remarkable too is Augustine's following statement:<sup>66</sup> "Some Christian child[which died] has been lost. You have 'lost' a Christian child. Not that you have indeed 'lost' him, but have sent him before you. For he has not gone quite away -- but gone ahead. Ask your own faith: surely you too will presently go there -- where he hath gone ahead [*cf.* Second Samuel 12:18-23].

"I am unwilling to speak of the loss of a child.... Let us speak in some more happy and auspicious tone! I do not say, then, you will have one less. Reckon rather, that you have One more! Give Christ a place with your children! Let your Lord be added to your family!

"Let your Creator be added to your offspring! Let your Brother [Christ] be added to the number of your children! For, though there is so great a distance -- yet He has condescended to



be a Brother.... You have two children. Reckon Him [to be] a third...; keep the place of one child, for your Lord! For what you shall give to your Lord -- will profit both you and your children."

### **168. The intermediate Augustine on infant faith before infant baptism**

As Augustine remarked, the Holy Spirit is bestowed even upon infants.<sup>67</sup> Baptism corresponds to the Israelitic circumcision administered on the eighth day.<sup>68</sup> And circumcision in Old Testament times stood for baptism.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, infant baptism is of apostolic antiquity, and not of subsequent ecclesiastical manufacture. Declared Augustine:<sup>70</sup> "The custom...of infant baptism...is a tradition from the apostles. The age of infancy...bears a witness of great weight. For it was the first to have merited to shed its blood for Christ." Matthew 2:16.

In Leviticus 21:8-15, God says to the priests: 'I, the Lord Who sanctifies you, am holy.... He who is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and who has been consecrated to put on the garments..., shall not profane his descendants among his people. For I, the Lord, do sanctify him.'"

Augustine commented on this passage:<sup>71</sup> "Hence Cornelius and they who were with him appeared to be already sanctified invisibly by the Holy Ghost.... For all were baptized" -- but only thereafter. Acts 10:1-2,44-48.

One should also note the bearing on baptism of the high priest's consecration to put on the garments" in the above passage Leviticus 21:8-15. Compare too the statement in Galatians 3:27 that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ -- have put on Christ." Thus Augustine called<sup>72</sup> baptism a "wet tinge in water." He then added: "O, what a garment this is...that decently fits all ages and all phases! It is neither too big for infants, nor too little for men."

Remarkable too in Augustine, is both his initial and his mature understanding of First Corinthians 7:14. In 393 A.D., he rightly employed that text against divorce. At that time, commenting against adultery, he pointed out<sup>73</sup> that "an unbelieving husband has been sanctified in his believing wife, and an unbelieving wife in her believing husband.... Else were your children unclean; but now, they are holy." For: '*sanctificatus est...vir infidelis in uxore, et sanctificata est mulier infidelis in fratre.... Alioquin filii vestri immundi essent; nunc autem sancti sunt.*'

Even the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall concedes<sup>74</sup> that Augustine here means: "Were it not so that the faith of the one did generally prevail against the infidelity of the other [parent] -- the children of such would generally be left in their unclean state and be brought up in heathenism.... We see now, on the contrary, that those of you that live in a state of marriage with unbelievers do generally so far prevail by God's grace that your children are...holy or sanctified."

Augustine then further elaborated: "There were, then, Christian infants that had been sanctified -- some by the authority of one of their parents; some by the consent of both." For it

is the Holy Spirit Who, before the event, works both in those who bring the infant -- and in the infant thus brought unto baptism.

### **169. Augustine on the prebaptismal divine illumination of the covenant infant**

Here are Augustine's own words:<sup>75</sup> "Infants ought to be baptized.... Mere infants...are rightly called 'believers' -- because they in a certain sense profess faith by the words of their parents....

"If, however, the infant departs from the present life..., the guilt in which he was involved by original sin having been done away -- he shall be made perfect in that Light of truth Which, remaining unchangeable for evermore, illuminates those justified.... Even for the life of infants was His flesh given -- which He gave for the life of the world.... 'He who believes on the Son, has everlasting life; while he that does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him' [John 3:35f].

Now in which of these classes must we place infants -- amongst those who believe on the Son -- or amongst those who believe not the Son? In neither, some say.. . This, however, the [Biblical canon or] rule of the Church does not indicate. For it joins baptized infants to the number of the faithful....

"Others again, as Jeremiah [1:5], are sanctified even in their mother's womb. Whereas all men, if there is original sin, are equally guilty.... We therefore ought not to doubt that even for infants yet to be baptized, was that precious blood shed....

"Some, however, understand that as soon as children are born [or 'born again' alias regenerated], they are enlightened.... They derive this opinion from the passage: 'That was the true Light Who enlightens everyone that comes into the world' [John 1:9].... If they are...already illuminated..., they at all events ought gladly to receive baptism....

"No man is illuminated, except with that Light of the truth Who is God.... 'He that plants is nothing, nor is he that waters. But God Who gives the increase'" -- is everything. First Corinthians 3:7.

"Man indeed hears the speaker, be he man or angel. But in order that he may perceive and know that what is said is true -- his mind is **internally sprinkled** with that Light Who remains for ever and Who shines even in darkness."

Augustine then concluded: "We affirm therefore that the Holy Spirit dwells in baptized infants...like a spark raked up, which will kindle as they grow in years." Thus Augustine's *Epistle to Dardanus*<sup>76</sup> -- anticipating Calvin's *Institutes*.<sup>77</sup>

### **170. Augustine: covenant infants of baptized parents themselves need baptizing**

Augustine rightly regarded infant baptism as an apostolic institution. But, after the start of the Pelagian controversy -- partly in overreaction against the Pelagians, he then wrongly claimed an equal apostolicity for the paganistic (and neopaganizing) theory of baptismal regenerationism. Thus Augustine falsely claimed,<sup>78</sup> in "the universal Church from the earliest times, that believing infants have obtained through the baptism of Christ the remission of original sin."

Yet Augustine also intimated that covenant children were **fit** for infant baptism **prior** thereto -- and that original sin remains even thereafter. For he further explained: "It is not without reason that the blessed [250f A.D.] Cyprian carefully shows [in his *64th Epistle*] how from the very first the Church has held this as a well-understood article of faith.... He was asserting the fitness of infants only just born -- to receive Christ's baptism...."

"It was on the eighth day that infants were previously circumcised.... However, after bestowing upon them the full support of his argument -- he still confessed that they were not free from original sin."

Of course, both the 250f A.D. Cyprian and the 400f A.D. Augustine should at this point have concluded -- as did the pre-Cyprianic Church -- that infant baptism (which at Calvary replaced infant circumcision) could no more wash away original sin than circumcision did. For even Cyprian and Augustine both admitted that circumcision did not render covenanters "free from original sin." Indeed, before Calvary, all faithful female covenanters had their sins washed away -- without ever being circumcised.

Largely following Cyprian, Augustine's subsequent remarks clearly and properly endorsed the Biblical doctrine of transmitted original sin -- as well as the Biblical doctrines of infant faith followed by infant baptism. However, they do so improperly. For they make the forgiveness of sin dependent upon infant baptism -- instead of (with the Bible) making infant baptism dependent upon God's gracious forgiveness of infant sin, by His grace and through infant's faith.

Explained Cyprian and Augustine: "To no one born of men ought God's mercy and grace to be denied. For since the Lord in His Gospel says, 'The Son of man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them' [Luke 9:56] -- so far as in us lies, not a soul ought, if possible, to be lost."

From this, Augustine then drew quite the correct conclusion: "Remission of sins is given even to the greatest sinners **after** they have **believed**.... How much more ought an infant not to be forbidden who, newborn, has done no sin except that -- from having been born carnally after Adam -- he has contracted from his very birth [and indeed even from his very conception] the contagion of the primeval death...."

"I do not recollect ever having heard of any other doctrine on this point from Christians who accept the two Testaments." That is the case, added Augustine, "whether [such doctrine was] established in the Catholic Church or in any heretical or schismatic body whatever."

### **171. The Paedobaptist Augustine refutes the paedobaptistic Pelagians on original sin**

"But surely," said some of the Pelagians, infant baptism cannot cleanse covenant babies who have not sin! So it cannot be that "baptism cleanses the primeval sin." For "they who are born of two baptized parents, ought to be free from this sin. For these could not [then] have transmitted to their children -- that thing which they did not themselves possess."

In answer to this objection, Augustine now rightly demonstrated that covenant infants of baptized parents themselves are still sinners; need the Saviour; and therefore need baptizing. "I should in my turn ask them some questions," said Augustine of the Pelagians. "How is it that the foreskin, after being removed by circumcision, should still remain in the sons of the circumcised? Or again, how does it happen that the chaff which is winnowed off so carefully by human labour -- still keeps its place in the grain which springs from the winnowed wheat?"

Augustine continued:<sup>79</sup> "We are contending with those who allow that the children of the baptized ought to be baptized [themselves].... It is quite possible for one who is not cleansed, to be born of parents who are cleansed.... Not generation, but regeneration makes Christians.... Thus, any child who is born of parents who are cleansed (because born again) -- -- must himself be born again, in order that he too may be cleansed."

The abovementioned paragraphs of Augustine, are great. The only trouble with them is that -- in combatting the rising and new heresy of Pelagianism -- he now more and more identified regeneration with baptism.

### **172. Pelagius on infant faith and salvation**

We must now say a few words about both the orthodoxy and the heterodoxy of two great northern theologians at that time. We mean the Briton or 'Welshman' Morgan (alias Pelagius), and the 'Scottish' Irishman Caelestius.

The British Pelagian Morgan was a man of vast learning and piety. He had -- before falling into heresy -- been beloved and respected even by Augustine himself. Indeed, especially Augustine mentions Morgan's works -- most of which have now been lost. His writings included: his *Three Books of the Trinity*; his work on *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*; his book on *The Law*; his famous *Confession of Faith* (often wrongly attributed either to Jerome or to Augustine); his anti-Manichaean work *On Virginity*; and his well-known writings opposing Jerome's denigration of marriage.

In his *Exposition on St Paul's Epistles*, apparently composed before 410 A.D., the great British theologian Pelagius rightly said<sup>80</sup> against the Romanists: "If Adam's sin hurts those that did not sin themselves, then Christ's righteousness may profit those who did not believe. For they are as much, nay more, saved by One -- than they were, before, dead by one.... If baptism does cleanse [as the Romanists allege], then they that are born of parents both baptized, must [themselves] be without this sin. For parents could not transmit that which they did not have."

Indeed, the Pelagians rightly argued<sup>81</sup> as follows concerning the words of Jesus in John 3:3-5. "He does not say 'Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit he shall not have salvation or eternal life'.... He merely said 'he shall not enter into the kingdom of God' [perhaps meaning only the visible Church, as distinct from having everlasting life]. Therefore infants are to be baptized, in order that they may be with Christ 'in the kingdom of God' -- where they will not be, unless they are baptized. Should infants die, however -- even without baptism they will have salvation and eternal life."

The Pelagians further rightly held:<sup>82</sup> "The Apostle indeed says 'Else were your children unclean but now they are holy' [First Corinthians 7:14].... There was no necessity for the children of believers to be baptized" -- even though they should be. Thus the Pelagians, according to Augustine's *Forgiveness* II:41:25.

### **173. Pelagius fell into error after rightly refuting Romanism**

The Romanists -- syncretizing Scripture with neo-paganistic 'magic' -- had been alleging that baptism (and baptism alone) indeed washes away original sin. Pelagius rightly withstood that heresy. For, just like Augustine (till then), Pelagius clearly and correctly saw that First Corinthians 7:14 teaches that the infants of at least one [either baptized or unbaptized] believing parent, were 'holy' prenatally (and therefore prior to their own baptism).

Indeed, Augustine concluded in his own (412 A.D.) work *On Forgiveness* that the exposition of First Corinthians 7:14 which Pelagius gave -- was correct. For also Augustine himself had presented that same exposition -- in his own earlier [393 A.D.] work *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount*.<sup>83</sup>

In that writing, Augustine himself had argued Paul's statement that "your children...now are...'holy'" means: "now the children were Christians, who were sanctified at the instance of one of the parents." At that time, on this matter, Augustine and Pelagius were still in agreement with one another.

Indeed, even in his (412 A.D.) work *On Forgiveness*,<sup>84</sup> Augustine was yet arguing that the verse First Corinthians 7:14 "must be understood both as we ourselves [= Augustine] elsewhere *and as Pelagius* (in his notes on this same Epistle to the Corinthians) has expounded it.... The Apostle's words seem...to indicate...some particular sanctification is here to be understood..., by which the children of the believing parents were sanctified.... A **sprinkling** of holiness [**internally**] -- arising out of the closeness of married life and children."

Even as late as 418, in his own work *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin*,<sup>85</sup> Augustine still spoke highly of the accomplishments of Pelagius. Admitted the African of the Briton: "He has discoursed a good deal on points about which no question was raised as to his views.... Having then terminated a discussion which he had conducted to his heart's content -- from the Unity of the Trinity to the resurrection of the flesh, on which nobody was questioning him -- he goes on to say, 'We hold likewise one baptism which we aver ought to be administered to infants in the same sacramental formula as it is to adults [Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Ephesians 4:4-6 & 6:1-4]'.... The sacrament is administered to children."

Good too was Pelagius's suggestion that "infants have redemption by the baptism of Christ" -- alias by virtue of Christ's work during and as depicted by His Own baptism. However, in subsequent years and partially in overreaction against Romanism -- Pelagius drew further (and quite incorrect) conclusions from First Corinthians 7:14 (and especially from Romans 5:12f).

For Pelagius then misconcluded that the infants of a believer were devoid of the guilt and stain of Adam's transmitted sin. Indeed, he even suggested that those infants could therefore themselves earn salvation -- through their own good works.<sup>86</sup>

#### **174. Augustine rightly refuted the final deception of the Pelagians**

In 417 A.D., Pelagius sent an *Epistle to Innocent*, Bishop of Rome. There, he alleged "that men slander him [Pelagius] -- as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." Indeed, Pelagius then added that "he had never heard even an impious heretic say this...about infants."

Pelagius next asked:<sup>87</sup> "Who indeed is so unacquainted with Gospel lessons, as...to attempt to make such an affirmation?... Who is so impious, as to wish to exclude infants from the 'kingdom of heaven' [perhaps meaning the visible Church] -- by forbidding them to be baptized?"

Indeed, according to Augustine,<sup>88</sup> the Pelagians were so surrounded or "beset both with the authority of God's Word and with the usage of the Church that was of old delivered to it, and has been since kept by it, in the baptizing of children -- that they dare not deny that infants are [to be] baptized." For they say that 'infants do indeed answer truly, by the mouths of those that bring them, that they believe in the forgiveness of sins."

The Ultrapelagian Caelestius -- author of the books *Definitions of Sinlessness*; and *Monastic Life*; and *Original Sin*; and *Statement of Faith*; and *Syllogisms* -- was a tenacious and successful propagandist. In his own *Prologue* to his own *Commentary on Jeremiah*, Jerome called Caelestius "by origin of the Scotch [*viz.* the Irish] nation" -- one "having his belly filled...with Scotch porridge."

Augustine regarded Caelestius as bolder than the more subtle Pelagius. In his *Confession*, published at Rome, Caelestius stated: "I have always maintained that infants require baptism and ought to be baptized."

Indeed, as Augustine pointed out:<sup>89</sup> "Caelestius here conceded baptism for infants.... This, accordingly, is the language which Caelestius used in the ecclesiastical process at Carthage: 'As touching the transmission of sin...many persons of acknowledged position in the Catholic Church deny it.... I have always maintained that infants require baptism, and ought to be baptized.'"

#### **175. Overreaction to Pelagianism pushes Augustine into baptismal regenerationism**

However, four decades later -- Augustine changed the views on baptism he had so orthodoxly set out in his earlier work *On the Sermon on the Mount*. We shall let the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall relate the saddening story.

Explains Wall:<sup>90</sup> "About forty years after the writing of this book, when Pelagianism had in the mean time arisen and sunk again, some Semipelagians in France who held...that infants dying unbaptized shall (though they miss...the kingdom of heaven) yet live eternally without punishment -- made use of these words of St. Au[gu]stin[e] to uphold their tenet."

In responding to this new sect, the Semipelagians, Augustine now taught the certainty of salvation for all baptized infants dying thus -- and the damnation of all the unbaptized so dying. Wrote he: "God forbid that I should leave the matter of infants, so as to say it is uncertain whether those that are regenerated in Christ -- if they die in infancy -- do come to eternal salvation.... Those who are not regenerated, do fall into the second death."<sup>91</sup>

This could be interpreted as meaning that Augustine did not categorically state that unregenerated babies actually die in infancy -- but only that dying regenerates definitely go straight to heaven. Unfortunately, however, Augustine here meant that only baptized babies were thereby regenerate -- and that all unbaptized infants were therefore *ipso facto* unregenerate.

Misinterpreting (and misappealing to) First Corinthians 7:14, the Pelagians and the Semipelagians had falsely assumed that merely the strong desire of a believing wife to win her unbelieving husband -- might well be sufficient to save him. Indeed, they had further concluded that the desire of just one parent that his or her infants be saved -- was quite sufficient to make them Christians (with or without infant baptism).<sup>92</sup> The truth, however, is that without a personal faith in Christ -- both the unbelieving spouse and the infant of a believer are still damned (whether they are baptized or not).

But Augustine now overreacted. In his great (412 A.D.) Anti-Pelagian work *On Forgiveness*,<sup>93</sup> he declared: "The Apostle indeed says 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy' [First Corinthians 7:14].... This certainly does not contravene our assertion.... The faithful 'holy' children..., unless they are baptized..., go into damnation.... The holy children of believers and the unclean children of unbelievers are -- notwithstanding their different circumstances -- equally prohibited from entering the kingdom of God [meaning heaven], if they have not been baptized."

### **176. Analysis of Augustine's Anti-Pelagian baptismal error**

Here, Augustine still upheld the same correct interpretation of First Corinthians 7:14 he formerly gave in his work *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount*. But Augustine had since then now also incorrectly added that it "is to be held without any doubt that whatever be the sanctification [or 'holiness'] meant, this must be held steadily -- that there is no other valid means of making Christians and remitting sins, except by men becoming believers through the sacrament.... Nor are the children who are born of parents howsoever just and holy, absolved from the guilt of original sin -- unless they have been baptized in Christ."<sup>94</sup>

Lastly, in his 418 A.D. work *On Original Sin*,<sup>95</sup> Augustine declared that "Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the [Roman] Bishop of the Apostolic See.... He [Pelagius] sent a letter to Rome to...[the ailing Bishop] Innocent of blessed memory.... When it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to...[Innocent's successor] Zosimus, and by him

directed to us.

"In this letter, he [Pelagius] complains of being 'defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants'.... The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they [the Pelagians] neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ.... The real objection against them, is that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man....

"The Apostle Paul says most plainly, that before they [infants] were born, they did neither good nor evil [Romans 9:11]. On what account, therefore, is an infant rightly punished with such ruin -- if it be not because he belongs to the mass of perdition and is properly regarded as born of Adam, condemned under the bond of the ancient debt unless he has been released from the bond not according to debt but according to grace.... Thus there is a whole and perfect cleansing in the self-same baptismal laver...of all the sins remitted now in our baptism."

Thus the false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism finally took root even in Augustine. Unfortunately, his semi-mechanical doctrine of the sacraments at **this point** overshadowed his glorious perspective of God's sovereign election. Nevertheless, Augustine rightly still admitted it is only in the elect that the sacraments accomplish what they represent.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, he also stated: "Though the sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common."<sup>97</sup>

Calvin says "by the mouth of Augustine...there is a sanctification without a visible sacrament -- and a visible sacrament without internal sanctification."<sup>98</sup> Yet for the rest, Augustine now promoted the false theory of baptismal regenerationism -- though rebuttably so.<sup>99</sup>

### **177. Augustine's baptismal errors versus Vincentius's Proto-Protestantism**

Immediately after the Universal Church's condemnation of Pelagianism in 418, a brilliant convert to [Universal and therefore Non-Roman] Catholicism from the Rogatian faction of Donatism -- a man called Vincentius Victor of Mauretania -- rebuked Augustine of Hippo. Vincentius did so, because Augustine had previously hesitated to reject the traducian theory anent the origin of the human soul (in favour of historic and traditional creationism).

Remarked Vincentius: "Who deserves without committing any sin, so immense a punishment as to be conceived in the sin of another before leaving his mother's womb and then to be no longer free from sin? But from this punishment, the free grace of God delivers the souls of such infants as are regenerated in Christ with no previous merits of their own. 'Otherwise grace is no grace.'" Romans 11:6.

Augustine replied in his 419 treatise *On the Soul and its Origin*. There, he first dealt with early-dying infants who had timeously received baptism. Said Augustine:<sup>100</sup> "In the case of those infants too in [respect of] whose baptism...he found something to say," Vincentius had argued that their "being involved in the sin of another could not possibly have been detrimental to them -- predestinated as they were to eternal life in the foreknowledge of God."



Next, Augustine presented Vincentius's view anent early-dying unbaptized infants. "When he wished to answer with respect...to those infants who are prevented by death from being first baptized in Christ, he was so bold as to promise them not only paradise but also the kingdom of heaven..., implying that without any grace of Christ the souls of infants are redeemed to everlasting life and the kingdom of heaven.... In their case, [Vincentius held that] original sin may be cancelled without Christ's baptism" -- alias without their own reception of the baptism offered by the Christ-ian religion.<sup>101</sup>

Although disagreeing with the above, even Augustine then slightly relented. Said the great Carthaginian:<sup>102</sup> "The thief...confessed the crucified Lord." Luke 23:42f. "His faith on the cross flourished.... There was discovered in him the full measure of a martyr [alias a witness to Christ's Lordship].... All this indeed was manifest to the eyes of the Lord Who at once bestowed so great felicity on one who, though not baptized, was yet washed clean in the blood.... This man [Vincentius]...acknowledges that infants are involved in original sin. He yet boldly promises them even without baptism the kingdom of heaven."

However, Augustine soon wrongly warned<sup>103</sup> his own followers against Vincentius and his associates: "Do not let them affirm that souls become sinful by another's original sin! Do not let them affirm that infants who die unbaptized, can possibly reach eternal life and the kingdom of heaven -- by the remission of original sin in any other way [than baptism] whatever!"

Vincentius and his followers were certainly not Pelagians. Yet Augustine nevertheless rightly warned: "Let them restrain their imagination, lest they should be driven in their difficulty to enunciate the now damnable and very recently condemned heresy of Pelagius -- to the effect that the souls of infants have not original sin!"

### **178. Augustine's critique could not refute Vincentius's prebaptismal salvationism**

Victorius's Proto-Protestant baptismal strengths and Augustine's Proto-Romanistic baptismal weaknesses subsequently become even more apparent. For Augustine observed<sup>104</sup> that Vincentius had come "to speak of those who...expire before they are baptized. He says in this place...: 'Infants who, being predestinated for baptism -- are yet, by the failing of this life, hurried away.... It is written of such, "Speedily was he taken away lest...wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. Therefore He hastened to take him away from among the wicked. For his soul pleased the Lord.'" Wisdom 4:11,14,13.

Vincentius had then continued: "I would be bold to say...that they [unbaptized early-dying predestinated infants] can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins.... Just as in the case of the thief on the cross who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord...gave him paradise.... The Lord acknowledges that in His Father's house are many mansions [John 14:2].... In these abodes, the unbaptized is brought.... And the baptized!"

""Responded Augustine:<sup>105</sup> "The new-fangled Pelagian heretics have been most justly condemned..., having dared to give to unbaptized infants a place of rest and salvation.... This they would not have dared to do, if they did not deny their having original sin.... This man [Vincentius], however, professes the catholic belief on this point -- admitting that infants are tied

in the bonds of original sin. And yet he releases them from these bonds without the laver...and says..., 'Infants do not pass into condemnation -- though no laver of Christian faith absolves them from the chain of original sin.'

### **179. Augustine's predestinarianism should have saved him from baptismal error**

So Augustine finally fell into baptismal regenerationism. However, if he had lived a little longer -- he may well have overcome that overreaction to Pelagianism. Instead, he may well have developed his predestinarianism much more strongly than he did his sacramentology. Indeed, already in his (426 or 427 A.D.) *Treatise on Rebuke and Grace*<sup>106</sup> -- he almost reached that position.

There, he argues no longer as a Proto-Romanist but as a Proto-Calvinist. Insisted Augustine: "They are children of God whom as yet we have not, and God has already.... The Evangelist John [11:51f] says 'that Jesus should die for that nation [of Israel] -- and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad'.... This certainly they were to become, by believing.... Yet, before this had happened, they had already been enrolled as sons of God....

"Those whom we call His enemies, or the infant children of His enemies -- whomever of them He will so regenerate that they may end this life in that faith which worketh by love -- are already and before this is done, in that predestination, His children; and have [already] been given to Christ His Son, [so] that they may not perish but have everlasting life.... Whosoever therefore in God's most providential ordering are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified -- I say...although not yet born again and even although not yet born at all -- are already children of God and absolutely cannot perish."

According to Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield in his 1897 *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, the great African here "speaks of men not yet born -- as [being] among those who are called according to God's purpose and [who are] therefore of the saved who constitute the Church." Augustine further "asserts that those who are so called..., are 'already children of God enrolled in the memorial of their Father with unchangeable surety'.... Those who are of the 'called according to the purpose [of God]' are predestinated...to salvation."

In later years, it was the Romish Church that increasingly followed Pelagius and especially the Semipelagians -- and the Calvinists who followed the gist of Augustine. Concludes Warfield:<sup>107</sup> "Both Pelagius and the Church of Rome consign infants dying unbaptized -- [not to heaven but] to a natural paradise....

"This natural paradise is formally assigned by Roman theologians to that portion of the other world designated 'hell' [or rather *limbus infantum* alias 'limbo'] .... It is precisely what the Pelagians taught should be the state of unbaptized infants after death!" So, by over-reacting against this particular error of Pelagius, Augustine and the Romanists ended up embracing it themselves in another way and under another term.

## **180. Fourth- and fifth century pseudepigraphical support for Paedobaptism**

During the fourth and fifth centuries, many pseudepigraphical documents were fabricated in the names of previous Church Fathers. Yet even those constructions attest the strength of Paedobaptism at that time.

Thus, around 375 A.D., we encounter the final form of a document now known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Its shorter form probably dates from at least 325 A.D., if not earlier. Though it might so imply, it could hardly have been written by the Apostles themselves. Yet it might well accurately reflect their teaching. Indeed, it certainly reflects the teaching of the Christian Church in the fourth century -- if not earlier, and possibly right from the very beginning.

These so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* declared<sup>108</sup> of the children of Israel that God "divided the Red Sea and...separated the waters...and had led the people through them -- as through a dry wilderness." Subsequently, however, He took the "prophetic rain" away from "the wicked synagogue" and commanded "the clouds that they rain **no** rain upon it."

Instead, He "poured" out "His Spirit" upon "the sons...and...daughters" of "the converted of the Gentiles." Psalm 77:15-20; Isaiah 5:6; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:1-18 . Consequently, God now forbids circumcision, and urges Christians to be "contented with one baptism alone" (*cf.* Ephesians 4:4f). For "they that attempt to [re-]baptize those already initiated, crucify the Lord afresh [*cf.* Hebrews 6:1-6]....

"The Lord says, 'except a man be baptized of water and of the Spirit -- he shall by no means enter into the Kingdom of heaven.' And again, 'he that believes and is baptized -- shall be saved' [John 3:3f & Mark 16:16].... You must also baptize your infants -- and 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord [Ephesians 4:4f & 6:1-4]!' For He says: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and do not forbid them [Mark 10:14f *etc.*]!'"

We next look at a work allegedly authored by Dionysius the Areopagite (*cf.* Acts 17:34 *sic*). There, Pseudo-Dionysius states "that also children who cannot yet understand the divine mysteries should be made partakers...of the most sacred signs of society with God.... Our divine instructors, considering this, have thought fit that children should be admitted."<sup>109</sup>

Even the (*circa* 375 A.D.) *Pseudo-Clementine documents* applied John 3:3f to baptism.<sup>110</sup> Thus, in their *Homilies*,<sup>111</sup> the apostle Peter is said to have explained to the mother of the Apostle Paul's associate Clement of Rome that no Christian should sit at the same table with an unbaptized person -- albeit even an unbaptized child. For no 'unbaptized' person can enter into the Kingdom of God."

Also important are Pseudo-Justin's *Questions to the Orthodox*. That work, in its 56th Question, discusses such "children that die in infancy...as have been baptized by the means of others." It then declares "that the baptized will be made partakers of the blessings granted by baptism."

Then there are the *Questions to Antioch* of Pseudo-Athanasius. That document, in its 115th Question, asks: "Whither do [faithful] infants go when they die -- into punishment, or into the kingdom? And particularly -- whither go the children of heathen? And where are placed the children of the faithful that die **unbaptized**? Are they placed with the believers, or with the unbelievers?"

The answer runs: "Our Lord says, 'Suffer little children to come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!' And again the Apostle says, 'Now are your children holy.' It is plain that the children of believers do...go as spotless and faithful into the **Kingdom**."

Finally, there are the *Homilies on Adam and Eve* of Pseudo-Chrysostom. On Psalm 14 Chrysostom himself had said: "One brings an infant to be baptized." Pseudo-Chrysostom now adds: "Let us consider the meaning of what the Church all over the world practises, in the baptizing of infants or adult persons."<sup>112</sup>

### **181. Baptismal regenerationism and the Post-Augustinian Church Fathers**

Especially after Augustine, there was an almost universal slide into full-blown baptismal regenerationism. Yet the Biblical doctrine of infantly baptizing covenant children -- still remained firmly entrenched. Thus, the 420 A.D. Mark the Deacon described how his superior (Rev. Porphyrius) baptized a couple together with their infant whom he himself had just delivered.<sup>113</sup>

In 430, Cyril Bishop of Alexandria not only did the same in respect of Leviticus 14:1*f* and Numbers 19:2*f* and Isaiah 4:4.<sup>114</sup> He also applied John 11:26's "Do you believe this?" -- to the confession a believer makes soon after becoming a father. This occurs "when a newborn child is brought forward to receive the anointing of initiation -- or rather of consummation -- through holy baptism."<sup>115</sup>

Around 440 A.D., Leo the Great strongly condemned all rebaptisms (which were even then still being practised by Neo-Marcionites, Neo-Montanists and Neo-Donatists). Wrote Leo:<sup>116</sup> "I know indeed that it is an inexcusable fault when, according to the fashion of the heretics which is condemned by the holy fathers, anyone is compelled to reiterate his baptism which has been given once for all.... The apostolic doctrine is directed against such a practice -- teaching us there is but one Godhead in the Trinity; one confession of faith; and one sacrament of baptism!"

Theodoret Bishop of Cyrrhus applied Psalm 52:2*f* and Ezekiel 36:25*f* and Zechariah 13:1 and Hebrews 9:10 -- to infant baptism by sprinkling. Indeed, with the false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism now fast asphyxiating the Early-Mediaeval Church, he gave perhaps the last correct exposition of First Corinthians 7:14 -- until the time of the later Pre-Reformers.

Explained Theodoret: "The unbelieving party [in the marriage] is 'sanctified.' That is, there is hope of salvation. But suppose either the [unbelieving] man or the woman do persist in unbelief?" Then, the unbelieving spouse will be lost. "Yet **the seed shall be saved!**" Indeed, these last words Theodoret "explains as Calvin has since done." Thus concedes the leading Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall in his *History of Infant Baptism*.<sup>117</sup>

## **182. Almost universal occurrence of Paedobaptism among all early Christians**

That same great Anglican, Rev. Dr. William Wall, also well summarizes the baptismal significance of this particular period of church history. He explains:<sup>118</sup> "Irenaeus, [Tertullian,] Epiphanius, Philastrius, St. Austin [alias Augustine] and Theodoret -- who wrote each of them catalogues of all the sects of Christians that they had heard of -- do none of them mention any that denied infants' baptism."

We have already seen Augustine pleading that he had never heard of any sect of Christian heretics denying infant baptism. The learned Pelagius did the same. The above seven ancient writers indeed do mention a few sects that used no baptism at all. But they do not mention any practising water-baptism who ever denied it to infants while giving it to adults.

Thus Irenaeus mentioned many sects, especially the Valentinians -- whom he traced back to the baptized apostate Simon the magician [Acts 8:13-23]. "Some of them," wrote Irenaeus<sup>119</sup> anent the way they initiated one of their converts, go "mixing oil and water together [and] then pour it on his head."

In the days of Cyprian, even the Novatianists practised infant baptism.<sup>120</sup> Later, also as regards the Donatists, Augustine often make use of the instance of infant baptism granted by them -- to overthrow some other errors they had about baptism.<sup>121</sup>

The (approximately 300 A.D.) heretical Hieracites taught that none dying in infancy could come to the kingdom of heaven -- whether they were baptized or not. But the Donatists, Arians, Pelagians and all other sects that Augustine or Pelagius had ever heard or read of, if they used any baptism at all, indeed gave it to infants.

Epiphanius said<sup>122</sup> that the Church "accounts it [baptism] to be to the Christians in the place of the old circumcision.... The law had the circumcision in the flesh...till the 'great circumcision' came -- that is, baptism...which circumcises us...and seals us unto the Name of God."<sup>123</sup>

No sect is said to have had any difference with the Church about the baptizing of infants in the first four centuries. Augustine noted Pelagians agreed with the Church that infants are to be baptized. Theodoret in his *True and Orthodox Doctrines and Usages of the Church* mentioned infant baptism as something undisputed and undenied by any sect.

A little later, both Prosper of Aquitaine and John Cassian opposed Pelagianism and Semipelagianism precisely by appealing to the universal practice of infant baptism among all kinds of Christians. Indeed, according to Wall,<sup>124</sup> "there is no passage in any author from this time to the year of Christ 1150 or thereabouts -- that speaks against it."

## **183. Increasing baptismal regenerationism only from third century onward**

Only around 210 A.D., the semimontanizing anti-paedobaptistic and immersionizing ritualist Tertullian had promoted the first seeds of the awful heresy of baptismal regenerationism. His student Cyprian then brought them further toward fruition. Together with this error that the water of baptism itself washes away sin, came the similar error that the more water used, the more sins were deemed to get washed away -- and/or the better those sins are expunged. From 350 (and especially from 450 A.D.) onward, the Biblical doctrine of infant baptism became grossly deformed.

Wall explains further that the Early-Mediaeval "Christians, when they were baptized by immersion, were all baptized naked -- whether they were men, women or children. Vossius has collected several proofs of this." In the ritualistic and superstitious Early Middle Ages, "they thought it better represented the putting off [of] the old man, and also the nakedness of Christ on the cross. Moreover, as baptism is a washing, they judged it should be the washing of the body, not of the clothes."

Particularly from 350 onward, the growing heresy of baptismal regenerationism had produced an increasing tendency for Christian parents to delay the baptism of their own children to adulthood, and even to their deathbeds. The superstition was, that the later in life the baptism was received, the greater the number of prior sins would thereby be washed away -- and the less the amount of time there would then be left to sin afresh before one died.

The Lutheran Jeremias has accurately assessed the situation. Thus, he observes:<sup>125</sup> "Certainly the large number of Christian parents in the fourth century who postponed the baptism of their children...were not moved by theological considerations, but were influenced by a magical misunderstanding of baptism."

However, especially from 450 onward, this pernicious doctrine led to full-fledged ritualism (as in both Western Romanism and Eastern 'Orthodoxy'). Thus, in 450, the Syrian Church decreed: "Let not the seal [of baptism] suck the milk of a mother that has been baptized!"<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, "it is not to Augustine [who died in 430 A.D.] but to Fulgentius (died 533)...or to Gregory the Great (died 604) to whom we must go for the strongest expression of the woe of unbaptized infants." Thus Warfield,<sup>127</sup> in his *Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*. It was therefore only in the two centuries following the death of Augustine, that absolute baptismal regenerationism reached its peak.

Thus Fulgentius declared:<sup>128</sup> "Not only men...but also children...in their mother's womb and [who] there die, or pass from this world after being born from their mothers without the sacrament of baptism -- are to be punished with the everlasting penalty of eternal fire. Because...they nevertheless incurred by their carnal conception and nativity -- the damnation of original sin." What a truly damnable doctrine!

Within less than fifty years after that, just before 600 A.D., Bishop Gregory the Great of Rome was declared the first sole and universal pope. On Job 1:16, Gregory wrote:<sup>129</sup> "Those who have done nothing here [on earth] of themselves, but have not been freed by the sacraments of salvation -- enter there [in the hereafter] into torments." Moreover, he added elsewhere:<sup>130</sup> "It is

perpetual torment which those receive who have not sinned of their own proper will at all."

Warfield concludes:<sup>131</sup> "The pelagianizing process [was] begun in the Middle Ages by ascribing to infants guilty only of original sin" -- inability to *poena damni* alone. This then "culminates in our day, in their assignment by the most representative theologians of modern Rome -- to a natural paradise which has not been purchased for them by Christ but is their natural right. This is the very essence of Pelagianism, and logically implies the whole Pelagian system."

#### **184. The mediaeval 'magic' of baptismal regenerationism**

To the Early-Mediaeval Church, one could almost apply the words of Isaiah 24:5 that "the earth is polluted" -- largely "because they have transgressed the laws; changed the ordinance; broken the everlasting covenant." It is true that the Deformed Church now abandoned the fourth century's tendency unnecessarily to delay baptism. Instead, it now began to administer baptism too hastily -- especially to dying infants. Yet this was done, chiefly because of the very same false fear -- of unbaptized persons going to hell.

In addition to parents, other baptismal sponsors and 'godfathers' now tended to become a *sine qua non* -- ultimately sometimes even *in lieu* of parents. Emperor Justinian (527-65 A.D.) made infant baptism compulsory -- by edict. Exorcism began to accompany baptisms. The latter were now accomplished by the laying on of hands, exsufflations, veiling of the face, opening of the ears, putting clay upon the eyes, adding fragrant oil and other substances to the baptismal water, wearing special baptismal gowns, tasting milk and honey, giving a kiss of peace, illuminating 'holy lamps' -- and using all kinds of other superstitious devices, such as secret passwords.

Mediaeval baptism thus became practically a 'carnal ordinance'; it led to an unspiritual 'materializing' of the element of water; and it became laden with neo-heathen encrustations. Such included even experimentations with 'nude' baptisms -- and especially with infant communion immediately after infant baptism in the East, and the blasphemous Mass for but seven-year-old children in the West.

Baptismal 'documents' (such as the *Pseudo-Clementina*) were falsely attributed to earlier authors -- such as the Clement of Philippians 4:3. Many of them were infiltrated by and/or synthesized with earlier heathen rites, like those of Apuleius. Ritualistic opposition to 'heretical baptism' predictably increased. In one word, the doctrine of magical baptismal regenerationism became fully unfolded.

Finally, the action of the baptismal water became regarded as in itself effective (*ex opere operato*). The Mediaeval Church had become the 'Deformed' Church of the 'Dark Ages.' Islamic imperialism against the Christian world from the outside, and corrupt ritualism from within -- would now hold sway for the next few centuries.

#### **185. Paedobaptist sprinkling continued even during the Dark Ages**

Yet even in the *Apostolic Liturgy* at the end of the fourth century, the baptismal prayer had continued to urge God to "wash him [the baptizee] with Thy holy hyssop [compare Psalm 51:2-7]. Also the *Old Roman Liturgy* (at the end of the fifth century), and even Pope Gregory's later version thereof (at the end of the sixth), prays for the heathen: "Let him come to the fountain of the washing" (*cf.* John 3:3-8 & 3:23-25). So, syncretistic submersionism had still not yet supplanted Scriptural sprinkling.

Indeed, the *Old Gotho-Gallican Collect* still prayed that the candidate be "bedewed...from above" -- by "the on-pouring of the Holy Spirit." Even in the *Liturgy of the Greek Church*, eight-day-old babies were anointed, immersed, and then sprinkled with pure water eight days later -- while adult converts received only triune affusion.

Thus, with all its immersionizing irregularities, Mediaeval Christianity still retained at least some vestiges of the true Church of Scripture. This was seen especially in Armenia.

In the 'Orthodox' Church of Armenia -- one of the first countries in the world to adopt Christianity -- the priest pronounced the child baptized, after pouring water on his head three times and before the child's parents themselves sometimes subsequently submersed him once. The latter was apparently a relic of an old Arian custom which had thus -- but unsuccessfully so -- attempted to de-trinitarianize the Church.

In 'Little Russia' (alias the Ukraine), baptism was by pouring.<sup>132</sup> In the more barbaric 'Great Russia' -- the child was thrice submersed. Compare J.D.C. Fisher's *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Mediaeval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*.<sup>133</sup> Yet John of Damascus in the eighth century still declared<sup>134</sup> that baptism into Christ signifies the baptism of those who believe in Him. And Theophylact Archbishop of Bulgaria wrote in 1070 A.D.: "It is impossible for one who has not **believed**, to be **baptized**."<sup>135</sup>

The great Calvinist theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius, writing around 1670, well describes the baptismal practices of those Middle Ages. There was not, he remarked, "especially in northernly climates, the necessity of being stripped naked and plunged all over.... In ancient [post-patristic] times...the persons to be baptized were...stripped naked. Yet afterwards, as the lewdness of others...increased, experience clearly testified it to the whole world [that] this could no longer be done with decency.....

"Therefore, for five centuries back, that custom has been gradually discontinued almost all over the West.... Gisbert Voetius, a [Calvinist] divine of immortal memory, [has been] proving...that the baptism of persons half-naked did not obtain in the [Apostolic and Patristic] Ancient Church.... The rite of affusion or aspersion seems safer, for which no such naked exposure of the body is requisite."<sup>136</sup>

## **186. The baptismal views of the Paulicians and the Bogomils**



Yet the wildcat sect of the adoptionistic Paulicians now arose in Armenia at the end of the seventh, and increased especially in the ninth century. Combining Marcionism and Manichaeism, most of the Paulicians rejected the Christian sacraments altogether. These were followed by the Athingians. They were strongly judaistic, observing all the Old Testament rituals excepting circumcision (for which they substituted baptism).<sup>137</sup>

As Professor Dr. Edwin Yamauchi has pointed out<sup>138</sup> in his article *Manichaeans*: "The Paulician movement, which spread in Armenia from the seventh to the twelfth century, though it repudiated Manichaeism, resembled it in its dualistic views. The Paulicians came to Bulgaria in the tenth century and helped to develop the Bogomils, who flourished in the Balkans in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The latter in turn stimulated the important Manichaeian-like heresy of the Cathars or Albigensians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."

In 1012, Neo-Manichaeans appeared even in Germany. A group in Treves rejected infant baptism. These were the so-called *Cathari* -- called 'Bogomils' in the East, and 'Albigensians' in the West. Instead of Biblical baptism, they substituted their own rite called the *consolamentum* -- which also women were allowed to administer. Thereby, they laid on hands -- and imposed John's Gospel onto the candidate's breast.<sup>139</sup>

As Professor Dr. Paul D. Steeves indicates<sup>140</sup> in his article *The Paulicians and the Bogomils*, "the Paulicians...held that only the Gospel and letters of Paul were divinely inspired. An evil deity...had inspired the rest of the New Testament, and the Old Testament. The Paulicians claimed that this evil deity was the creator and god of this world. The true God of heaven, they said, was opposed to all material things.... Physical and material...sacraments...must have come from the same evil spirit....

"Some of the Bulgars adopted Paulician ideas into a new religious system that acquired the name 'Bogomilism'.... Around the middle of the tenth century, Bogomil began to teach that the first-born son of God was Satanael.... This deity was expelled from heaven. He made a new heaven and earth, in which he placed Adam and Eve. Satanael and Eve became the parents of Cain.... Moses and John the Baptist, according to Bogomil teaching, were both servants of Satanael.... The Bogomils...despised marriage.... They rejected baptism and communion as Satanic rites."

### **187. The Petrobrusian denial of infant salvation and thus of infant baptism**

In Western Europe and especially in France, a group of Neo-Marcionistic Anti-Paedobaptists arose at the beginning the twelfth century. Around 1105 Peter de Bruys and his 'Petrobrusians' and Henry of Lausanne and his 'Henricians' denied infant salvation, rejected infant baptism, and practised rebaptism.

In 1147 Bernard of Clairvaux tried to stem the spread of that heresy. Bernard accused Henry the Petrobrusian of gross sexual immorality. He also wrote that "the sacraments are esteemed unholy [by the Henricians].... The infants of Christians are hindered from the life of Christ -- the grace of baptism being denied to them."<sup>141</sup>

Shortly after the commencement of the activities of Petrobrusians like Henry of Lausanne, their views also influenced a different group -- some marriage-denying Neo-Manichaeans. Bernard then wrote<sup>142</sup> of the latter: "They laugh at us for baptizing infants." Indeed, in 1192 Alanus said that some of the Cathari reject infant baptism -- and others of them reject all baptisms whatsoever.

According to the sixteenth-century scholar Cassender in his important book *On the Baptism of Infants*, the Petrobrusians were the first ever to deny infant baptism and infant salvation. Cassender stated<sup>143</sup> they believed "all the world had been blind hitherto -- and by baptizing infants for above a thousand years [from about A.D. 25 to 1105f], had given but a mock-baptism."

Those twelfth-century Petrobrusians held that precisely because infants are unsavable, it is useless to baptize them. Modern Baptists, however, generally hold that all dying in infancy -- whether baptized or not, and regardless of their parentage -- are saved.

Thus the Petrobrusians held that infants are incapable of being saved. They also revived the Donatistic view that piety is essential for the valid administration of a sacrament. Indeed -- even according to the British Baptist Erroll Hulse -- just like the later Anabaptists, "Peter de Bruys...rejected large parts of Scripture and embraced the false doctrine of 'soul-sleep.'"<sup>144</sup>

According to the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall,<sup>145</sup> "the Petrobrusians -- otherwise called the 'Henricians' -- did own water-baptism, and yet deny infant-baptism.... Peter Bruis and Henry [were] the two first antipaedobaptist preachers in the world.... I take this Peter Bruis...and Henry [of Lausanne] to be the first antipaedobaptist preachers that ever set up a church or society of men holding that opinion against infant baptism, and rebaptizing such as had been baptized in infancy."

However, denying infant baptism, they "quickly dwindled away -- or came over to those that owned it." Indeed, concludes Wall,<sup>146</sup> with the exception of these non-ecclesiastical and disorganized infant-damning twelfth-century Petrobrusians, "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant-baptism" -- till the sixteenth-century antireformational German Anabaptists from about 1522 onward.

### **188. The Waldensians maintained the infant baptism of tiny Christians**

Ritualistic Rome, with her rigid heresy of baptismal regenerationism, increasingly practised baptism specifically by submersion. For then, the theory became -- the more water used, the more sins erased and the more effectively they were deemed to be washed away. Yet from about 1180 onward, we also encounter the protests of the Proto-Protestant Waldensians.

While rejecting the various ritualistic additions to baptism, these disciples of Peter Waldo did not repudiate the validity of infant baptisms as such -- not even when performed in the Church of Rome. Indeed, when unable to avail themselves of the rather scarce services of their own very-itinerant pastors, some of them permitted their own children -- rather than remain unbaptized -- to be baptized even by Romish priests. Still others, with reluctance, even delayed those baptisms (because not necessary for salvation) -- until their own Waldensian pastors were later available and

able to officiate.

Thus, among the Waldensians -- observes Wall -- "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant baptism.... For the main body of the Waldenses, there is no probability at all.... The present Waldensians or Vaudois in Piedmont, who are the posterity of those old, do practise infant baptism....

"They were also found in the practice of it, when the Protestants of Luther's Reformation sent to know their state and doctrine.... They themselves do say that their fathers never practised otherwise.... They give proof of it from an old book of their called the *Spiritual Almanack*, where infant baptism is owned.... There is a *Catechism* of theirs...composed out of this old book that does expressly mention and own infant baptism....

None of those whom we now denote by the name 'Waldenses' that owned water baptism, held any thing against infant baptism.... Pilchdorf writes against them...*anno* 1395.... He says the Waldenses 'do dislike and even loath the Runcarians, Beghards and Luciferians' [alias Neo-Manichaeans].... He also supposes that from their beginning, they had been free from any false doctrine about the sacraments.... They betook themselves to preaching privately, and...they...reject all those means by which the [Romish] clergy...do gather their children -- except the sacraments only."

Martin Luther rightly wrote<sup>147</sup> that "the Waldensians baptize little ones.... They proceed, then, to baptize little children."

Indeed, as Rev. Dr. Wall explains,<sup>148</sup> apart from the Petrobrusians, "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant-baptism -- till those in Germany, [the Anabaptists,] A.D. 1522.... For the main body of the Waldenses, there is no probability at all."

So too the Baptist A.H. Newman, in his *History of Antipedobaptism*. He too rightly insists:<sup>149</sup> "The early Waldensian pastors...had scarcely anything in common with Baptists."

For "the *Waldenses*," as Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Miller rightly points out,<sup>150</sup> "in their Confessions of Faith and other writings drawn up between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries...for several hundred years before the Reformation...speak on the subject." The evidence leads to only one conclusion: "The great body of the Waldenses, were Paedobaptists."

Miller then cites from Waldensian historians themselves: "Baptism, say they, 'is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, to the end that he who is received into the church may be reputed and held by all as a Christian brother.... We present our children in baptism.... The things which are not necessary in baptism are the exorcisms; the breathings; the sign of the cross upon the head or forehead of the infant.'"

Note: "the head or forehead of the infant." Note again: "the head or forehead of the infant." Emphases ours -- F.N. Lee.

Later, under the influence of Calvinism, the Waldensians linked up with the Reformed Faith. The Waldensians' own historic adherence to infant baptism is seen very clearly in their 1655 *Waldensian Confession*. For there, they state<sup>151</sup> "that we do agree in sound doctrine with all the Reformed Churches of France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland...and others as it is set forth by them in their confessions -- as also in the *Confession of Augsburg*."

Indeed, that *Augsburg Confession* -- endorsed also by Calvin and the early Calvinists -- specifically states<sup>152</sup> "that children are to be baptized." It then goes on to "condemn the Anabaptists, who allow not the baptism of children."

### **189. The impact on baptism of Thomistic Roman Catholicism**

However, it was the magical view of baptism which predominated in the Late Middle Ages. For around 1250, Thomas Aquinas programmed 'baptismal regeneration' as the only view which would soon be standardized officially -- in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>153</sup>

Sometimes, Thomas upheld the right view -- for the wrong reason. Thus:<sup>154</sup> "A sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing -- inasmuch as it sanctifies a man." By the latter he meant, wrongly, that baptism itself regenerates. Again wrongly, he also held that it was originally administered by submersion.<sup>155</sup>

Indeed, centuries of baptismal regenerationism had by this time made submersionism very popular. Yet even Thomas conceded that "pouring and sprinkling are also allowable."<sup>156</sup> Baptism, he opined, is itself an "instrumental cause" -- initiating saving grace and bringing it to man.<sup>157</sup> Baptism is given this ability -- so that anybody is regenerated through it itself":<sup>158</sup> *ex opere operato*.

Baptism, believed Thomas, is therefore the door to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>159</sup> It is essential to salvation -- except for those desiring to be baptized yet who die before this can be accomplished. Baptism, he insisted, is regeneration.<sup>160</sup> Lay-baptism was and still is permitted -- chiefly because all unbaptized children were and are regarded as being excluded from heaven.<sup>161</sup>

Baptismal regenerationism was by now practically universal. Superstitious submersion (whether triple or single) was then thought to be a "safer" mode of baptism than sprinkling. No doubt "safer" -- because the more water used, the more effectively and the greater the number of sins were deemed to be washed away thereby.

Indeed, this superstition of submersionism can also be seen especially throughout ritualistic Eastern 'Orthodoxy' -- as well as in the entire Eastern Rite of Romanism. However, in the times of the Romanistic Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura -- immersion was the most common baptismal mode even in apostate Italy. "It is the safer way to baptize by immersion" (Thomas).<sup>162</sup> "Dipping into the water is the more common...and the safer" (Bonaventura).<sup>163</sup>

Yet the water still needed to be applied to the head -- as the most important part of the human body.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, the 1284 Council of Nemours limited head-sprinkling alone -- solely to cases of necessity.<sup>165</sup>

However, with the first beginnings of the Pre-Reformation at the end of the 1290 day-years of Daniel 12:11 (*cf.* Revelation 14:6-9) -- the 1304 Synod of Langres went back to the Bible. For it proclaimed: "Let the presbyter make three pourings or sprinklings of water on the infant's head!" Note well: "on the infant's head" -- and: "on the infant's head!" Emphases ours -- F.N. Lee.

Over the next decades, the Pre-Reformers and especially the Protestant Reformation, would erelong restore that Biblical mode -- head-sprinkling -- to its rightful place. Indeed, under pressure from the Pre-Reformation and the Reformation, by 1551 even the Church of Rome had by and large returned to the Biblical mode of sprinkling of infants.

Meantime, the Deformed Church had long abandoned the fourth century's tendency unnecessarily to delay baptism. It had instead, now for many centuries, administered it all too hastily. Yet it now did this -- chiefly because it was superstitiously terrified that unbaptized persons, dying such, would go to hell.

### **190. Wycliffe and his followers on infant baptism**

Fortunately, however, the Christian Gospel was still preserved -- especially in Northern Europe. In 1377, the English Pre-Reformer John Wycliffe (1324-84) assailed the Romish mass.<sup>166</sup> In 1402, the Wycliffite Huss did the same in Bohemia.<sup>167</sup>

Neither ever questioned the suitability of sprinkling -- nor the practice of infant baptism. Wrote Wycliffe in his *Trialogue* and in his *On Baptism*: "Nor is it material whether they [the baptizees] be dipped once or thrice, or water be poured on their heads."<sup>168</sup>

He continued: "On account of the words in the last chapter of Matthew [28:19], our church introduces believers who answer for the infant.... The child of a believer is carried into the church to be baptized, according to the rule of Christ."

Yet "it seems hard...to assert" like the Romanists "that this infant will be lost" if dying unbaptized -- "the people's pious intention continuing.... Where then is the merciful liberality of Christ?"

Consequently, even an unbaptized covenant "infant shall be saved -- as is pious to believe." Nevertheless, "without a doubt, infants are duly baptized with water."<sup>169</sup>

### **191. The faithful Paedobaptism of Wycliffe's Lollards**

Wycliffe and his English followers, the Lollards, rejected baptismal regenerationism. Hear Wycliffe's student Walter Brute before the Bishop of Hereford in 1393: "I greatly marvel at that saying in the decrees ascribed to Augustine -- that little children who have not been baptized, shall be tormented with eternal fire although they were born of faithful parents.... How shall the infant be damned that is born of faithful parents who do not despise but rather desire to have their children baptized?"

Very interestingly, the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall has pointed out<sup>170</sup> that in the time of Henry IV (who reigned from 1399 to 1413), "one of the [baptismal] articles usually enjoined [by their enemies] for the Lollards...to recant" -- was itself anti-regenerationistic. Amazingly, as the famous martyrologist John Foxe<sup>171</sup> recites it, it was this: 'that an infant, though he die unbaptized, shall be saved.'

Indeed, the Norfolk and Suffolk followers of the 1424 Wycliffite William White were constantly "speaking against women baptizing new-born infants in private houses. They also expressed themselves against the opinion of such as regard as damned those children who depart before they come to their baptism.

"Wycliffe had said that the water itself, without the baptism of the Spirit, is of little efficacy.... He and his followers had said that if the parents be good Christians and pray for their child, there is hope that it may be saved -- though it do by some sudden chance die before it can be baptized."

Moreover, there is the evidence of the Anti-Wycliffite Roger Dimmock. Around 1390, he wrote to King Richard II of England. There, Dimmock alleged<sup>172</sup> Wycliffe's Lollards condemned the papal doctrine of celibacy -- claiming it led to sins worse than heterosexual fornication. For, claimed the Lollards, though 'slaying of children ere they be christened be full[y] sinful -- yet sodomy was worse.

England's great 'Pre-Reformer' John Wycliffe was thus not only a convinced Paedobaptist, but apparently also an Antirebaptist. King Richard II's Queen Anne of England was herself a Wycliffite -- and the sister of Wenceslaus King of Bohemia (in the modern Czechoslovakia). It was probably chiefly through her agency that Wycliffe's views were taken over almost without amendment by the Bohemian 'Pre-Reformer' John Huss -- and also by his friend Jerome of Prague, who had become a Wycliffite while at Oxford University before returning to his native Bohemia.<sup>173</sup>

The followers of Huss were called the Hussites. "The Hussites of Bohemia," according to the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall,<sup>174</sup> were of the "opinion...that infants dying unbaptized, may be saved by the mercy of God.... Indeed, they were disciples of our Wycliffe."

## **192. The influence of Wycliffe through Huss upon Luther**

In due course, the Wycliffite Huss would influence Martin Luther himself -- and thus launch the Protestant Reformation. Rome's 'Holy Council' itself pronounced "John Huss to have been and to be...the disciple...of John Wycliffe."

Thus the Romish controversialist Eck, Luther later exclaimed, "vilifies me as a 'heretic' and a Bohemian" -- even "publicly accusing me of the heresy of and support for the Bohemian 'heretics.'" For Eck was indeed accusing Luther: "Many of the things which you adduce, are heresies of...Wycliffe and Huss."

Luther himself, however, insisted that "John Huss and Jerome of Prague were good Christians." Luther also insisted that "Paul and Augustine are in reality Hussites." And again:

"All this is not Luther's work. The credit belongs to John Huss." Thus, "it is high time that we seriously and honestly consider the case of the Bohemians, and come into union with them.... I have no desire to pass judgment...upon John Huss's articles.... I have not yet found any errors in his writings."

Luther even went back behind the Wycliffite Huss -- to the Englishman Wycliffe himself. Declared Luther: "As far as the [papal] 'decretals' are concerned..., they are...things it is not necessary to believe -- as John Wycliffe said." Indeed, in 1520 Luther boldly admitted: "I shall be called a Wycliffite!"

Where is the proof of all these above claims? See the documentation given in Francis Nigel Lee's 1989 monograph *Luther and Calvinism on Antichrist in the Bible*.<sup>175</sup>

### **193. The rebaptismal error of the Bohemian 'Minor United Brethren'**

Now after the Romanists' murder of Huss, his numerous followers unfortunately soon split up three different ways. Thus arose the Partially-Reformed Calixtines, the militant Proto-Protestant Taborites, and finally the separatistic 'Bohemian Brethren' (alias the later 'Moravians').

These latter "Bohemian Brethren" -- as the great church historian Philip Schaff has explained<sup>176</sup> -- rightly "denounced the Pope of Rome as Antichrist." Yet they also wisely recognized that something of the historic Christian Church, though grossly deformed, was still to be found even within Romanism -- in spite of its numerous papal perversions.

So: "At first, they received the sacraments from Calixtine and Romish priests who joined them." Yet "in 1467 they effected an independent organization...under the lead of Michael, formerly a Catholic priest." This was the 'Minor United Brethren' -- a minority party within the antirebaptist Bohemian Brethren as a whole.

Then, however, the minority party over-reacted. They forgot that in Biblical times Josiah and Paul had not recircumcisingly or rebaptizingly repudiated -- but rather reformed -- the deformed Church of God. For ex-priest Michael and his Minor United Brethren now went and "elected by lot...three priests out of their number -- and laid hands on them. Then they were all solemnly rebaptized."

This latter act, of course, was a Neo-Donatist and catabaptistic error -- itself not devoid of sacramentalism. Never, however, did these Bohemian Brethren either abandon infant baptism as such -- nor rebaptize as adults those they deemed to have been baptized in infancy. Thus, these Bohemians were not antipaedobaptistic Anabaptists. Still less were they adult-submersing Baptists.

As even the Pro-Mennonite Leonard Verduin has admitted:<sup>177</sup> "The Brethren did practice infant baptism in the case of children born to 'believing parents'.... Here the point was not anti-pedobaptism, but anti-Constantinianism."

## **194. The rebaptismal recantation of these United Bohemian Brethren**

Fortunately, some of the later and better theologians of the 'minor party' Bohemian Brethren soon rethought their catabaptistic position. They then abandoned that 'rebaptismal' radicalism -- perhaps still during the fifteenth century. Indeed, already by the time of their 1504 *Bohemian Confession* (subsequently published in 1535) -- they had also abandoned a 'purely symbolical' sacramentology.

Perhaps under Luther's influence from 1520 onward, they opted for consubstantiation. Later yet, they also gradually abandoned even that -- for the purer truth of Calvinism. See their letter sent to Beza in December 1575 -- and, further, their *Bohemian Confession* of that same year.

Now it seems this 1467f Bohemian Brethren 'minor party' had already abandoned its catabaptistic doctrines -- by 1504. No doubt its leaders informed the antirebaptistic Luther about this, before he supported them in 1520. At any rate, in their 1504 *Bohemian Confession* -- as well as in its later (1535) *Prologue* -- they courageously distanced themselves from the previous rebaptistic lapse of their own ancestors.

Thus, in the 1535 *Prologue*, the Ministers of the Church of the Bohemian Brethren assured the King of Bohemia and Hungary (Ferdinand I) that they were certainly not Anabaptists. This disclaimer was necessary. For their Romish opponents were then falsely alleging that very thing.

Explained these 'Bohemian Brethren':<sup>178</sup> "It is not unknown to anybody that we do not belong to the party of the Anabaptists. For we take our origin from the Church of the Bohemians.... We had already existed many years before them [the Anabaptists], and we do not defend their error-filled teachings.

"We have nothing in common with the Anabaptists...and have taken over nothing from them.... Our association has been in existence for much longer -- from before anyone ever first heard anything about the Anabaptists....

"However, although our ancestors were wont to rebaptize those who had been baptized by Romish priests in former years -- they [our ancestors] still had an altogether different viewpoint and another purpose and an entirely other reason than the Anabaptists. Now, however, even this rebaptism has been abolished completely among us. Pre-eminently hereanent, a short account will be given in this writing -- by the most excellent men of our Church....

"Further. Whenever we are, because of this rebaptism, regarded as Anabaptists -- by the very 'sophisticated' [Romish] priests of Bohemia -- even this weapon is necessarily turned against them. For their ancestors too 're-re-baptized' those who had been baptized by papal priests, but who had thereafter been dedicated in [re]baptism" by the Bohemian Brethren.

For the Romish priests then, "by way of reprisal, once again repeated the baptism [already given] by the Bohemian Brethren --to those [re-]renewed as Papists." The Romish priests in Bohemia thus "rebaptized those baptized by both us and by our ancestors -- and they forced



people, even with violence, to receive their baptism....

"Yet the priests maintain they had not faltered nor erred when they rebaptized those baptized by us. For they regarded us as heretics, sectarians and ecclesiastical excommunicatees. Thus it also seemed very right to them -- that our baptism was of no significance, effect and power. This is why they rebaptized....

"We answer that we..., just like they, give nothing to baptism...among ourselves.... We used to regard the baptism administered by them as invalid and void.... It is therefore clear that they have just as much guilt toward us, as we have toward them -- in rebaptizing the baptized."

### **195. The Bohemian Confession(s) from 1504 onward**

Thus the 1535 *Prologue* to King Ferdinand. However, even earlier -- also before Luther's conversion to Protestantism -- we already encounter a 1504 *Bohemian Confession* to King Vladislav (which was thereafter constantly updated). We now cite from the 1535 version.

Article 12 declares "that children are baptized...and dedicated to Christ...according to His words: 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the Kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 19:14]. Therefore, we baptize ours."

For we all "rest upon the words of the Lord for children, in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Indeed, this statement [Matthew 28:19] is general: 'Teach all nations, inasmuch as you baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!' We do not baptize them again thereafter; and we no longer rebaptize....

"They [a former generation of 'Bohemian Brethren'] previously rebaptized those who wished to be taken up into our churches from others.... When the Romanists violently fought against the 'Bohemians' in matters of faith and religion, the leaders of both Churches clashed with Scripture....

"In several localities the one repeated the baptism of the other, for as long as they persevered in the greatest hatred. For the ancestors of our faith, who then completely separated themselves from them [and indeed from all others], had their own particular association, and administered the sacraments -- and rebaptized all who wished to join their churches....

"This kind of rebaptism existed in our churches -- until we acquired a better insight about this. However, in the course of time -- after through the goodness of God the light of truth illuminated our men more brightly, and after they had investigated the Scriptures more carefully, and after they had at the same time been supported by the help of several learned men -- they realized that rebaptism is not necessary for the Church. And they then immediately discontinued and abolished it, with the approval of all.

"Hence, with the general agreement of our men, every repetition of baptism was abolished.... Nowhere is baptism any longer repeated among us. Yet some priests of the so-called Bohemian-Romish party -- just as in former times, even now still rebaptize our people -- although for the most part against their wishes, and in opposition to the parents."<sup>179</sup>

## **196. God maintained His baptism -- in spite of mediaeval meanderings**

To a much lesser extent than in Britain under the Wycliffites and in Bohemia under the Hussites, Christianity had continued -- even in Southern Europe. It had continued not only in the stagnant southeast, but also in the southwest -- in spite of the papal tyranny there. In 1520, Germany's Luther called this *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.<sup>180</sup> Also the French-Swiss Reformer Calvin described the oppressive papal antichrist with great precision.

For, as the Genevan genius explained,<sup>181</sup> even as regards "the Papists" -- there were and are "vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them.... The Lord...deposited His covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain and England.

"When these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of antichrist -- He [the Lord], in order that His covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there -- as an evidence of the covenant. Baptism..., consecrated by His lips, retains its power in spite of human depravity."

## **197. Luther on the faith of covenant children before their infant baptism**

According to Scripture, it is the Word which regenerates. James 1:18. According to the Anabaptists, the Spirit alone regenerates -- unmonitored by the Word. Rome, however, said that regeneration was effected by baptism -- and that baptism then produced faith.

Rome thus held that infants could not believe savingly until after and because they had been baptized. The Anabaptists held that infants as such cannot believe (nor even profess belief), so that infants should not be baptized -- but that adults could receive baptism (yet only after professing their faith). The Protestant Reformation objected first to Rome and then to the Anabaptists. Instead, it pointed both of them back to the **Bible**.

Probably even before his formal break with Rome, Luther had realized -- through studying Holy Scripture -- that baptism presupposes faith within the baptizee himself. From the Bible alone, Luther was led to deny the Romish error (and the later Anabaptist heresy) that unbaptized infants cannot believe -- and to demonstrate the contrary. On this, see Francis Nigel Lee: *Revealed to Babies*, Confederate Series, Commonwealth Publishing, Rowlett, Texas (1987).

To Luther, Genesis 17:7 teaches that God is the Lord not only of adult believers but also of their seed. For John the baptizer believed while yet in his mother's womb. Luke 1:41. Matthew 18:6*f* refers to a whole class of little ones who believe in Jesus. Indeed, in Matthew 19:14 -- Jesus even declares that only those adults are fit for the kingdom of heaven who believe like such infants.<sup>182</sup>

Thus Luther rightly realized that John the baptizer -- as a baby born to believing parents -- was himself already a believer in Christ, even before John's own birth. Luke 1:36-44. That was prior to any possible circumcision and/or baptism John may have received -- either in infancy, or thereafter.

Referring to Christ's blessing of the children in Mark 10:14f, Luther insisted<sup>183</sup> that infant faith is present "before or certainly in the baptism.... If any baptism is certain of success, the baptism of children is most certain.... In adults there may be deception, because of their mature reason [and such 'reason is a whore']. But in children, there can be no such deception -- because of their slumbering reason."

What is this 'slumbering' reason? Luther explained: "Tell me, is the Christian deprived of his reason when he is asleep? Certainly -- then -- his faith and God's grace do not leave him. If faith remains with the sleeping Christian while his reason is not conscious of the faith -- why should there not be faith [with]in children, before reason is aware of it? A similar situation obtains, when a Christian is engaged in strenuous labour and is not conscious of his faith and reason. Will you say that, on account of this, his faith has come to an end?" Of course not!

Luther later told the Anabaptists that Mark (16:16) does **not** say 'he who confesses he has faith and is baptized, shall be saved.' For Mark says instead -- that 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved.'

Explained Luther:<sup>184</sup> "It is true that a person should believe, for baptism.... But his faith, you do not know.... Because all men are liars, and only God knows the heart.... I do not get baptized because I am sure of faith, but because God has commanded it.... Who then can exclude the little children? We have a command to offer every one the universal gospel and the universal baptism. The children must also be included. We plant and water; and leave [it to] God to give the increase."

In First John 2:13, we read that "little children...have known the Father." Here, *paidia* means 'little children' -- and to 'know the Father' means to believe in Him. Explained Luther:<sup>185</sup> "It is certain that those are meant here, who are younger than the 'young men' -- that group which is under fifteen or eighteen years of age, down to the first year" [alias from their very birth].

Luther also quoted Augustine with approval.<sup>186</sup> For both Luther and Augustine held that "it is not the sacrament, but the faith of the sacrament which justifies."

### **198. Was Dr. Martin Luther a Baptismal Regenerationist?**

Whatever Luther believed about consubstantiation and the necessity of baptism, he apparently did not believe that uncircumcised dying infants in Old Testament times and unbaptized dying infants in New Testament times, were lost for that reason. Indeed, he even seems to have believed that all uncircumcised or unbaptized dying infants would be saved by grace and through their own personal faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ (little though that infant's faith may be).

This seems obvious from Rev. Professor Dr. Martin Luther's comment on Genesis 17:14 -- in the 1961 Concordia or St. Louis edition of his *Works* (III:143f). Luther there discusses Moses' words: 'Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, shall be cut off from his people'.... He then comments: "The words must be understood of a cutting-off from the church. This, however, does not pertain to the Gentiles at all.... For even though the Gentiles are excluded from circumcision, they are nevertheless not excluded from the blessing -- **if** they

**believe** with faithful Abraham....

"The Jews...if they [through **dis-belief** went and] **slighted** circumcision...ceased to be the people of God..., and [then] their reward was hell and its fire.... This statement [however], as we have also pointed out above, does **not** involve **infants** who died before the eighth day. Even though they have original sin, a merciful God will nevertheless find a way to deliver them....

"One must have the same opinion about the little boys who were not circumcised either because of the carelessness or the wickedness of their parents, just as today there are some who are not baptized.... Such little children should be committed to the dispensation of the goodness of God.

"For what guilt against this law have the little children who either die or are neglected by ungodly parents? Therefore they should be left to the goodness of God, and should not be condemned as the Scholastics have condemned them."

### **199. Luther on infant faith even before infant baptism**

Well-known is Luther's (quasi-Calvinistic!) emphasis on 'infant faith' at, and even before, infant baptism. For, he insists, "**children must themselves believe** -- lest the majesty of the Word and sacrament be obscured."<sup>187</sup> So "we are of the opinion and the expectation -- that the **child should believe**, and we pray that God give it **faith**. Yet we do not baptize it for that reason, but because God has so commanded."<sup>188</sup>

Already in 1521, Luther clearly stated<sup>189</sup> that "without faith no sacrament is of any use.... The sacrament of baptism is a divine sign or seal given by virtue of the promise and Word of Christ in the last chapter of Mark [16:16]. He that **believes** and is baptized, **shall be saved.**"

Again, Luther insisted<sup>190</sup> that the Church should pray to God to pour out His blessing upon the one to be baptized -- "so that he may **become** worthy to come to grace at his baptism.... The **children themselves believe**...and have their own faith which God works within them -- through the faithful intercession of their parents who faithfully bring them to the Christian Church.... Through their [parental] intercession and assistances, the **children** receive their own **faith** from God."

Luther appealed to infant circumcision (Genesis 17:10f), and asserted against the Anabaptists that children actually believe. Matthew 18:6 & 19:14 . "Baptism helps no one. It is also to be given to **no one** -- **except he believes for himself.** Without **personal** faith, **no one** is to be **baptized!**"

In his *Large Catechism*, Luther added: "Baptism without faith, remains a mere ineffectual sign. Those who receive baptism without full faith, receive not the Spirit but only water.... **Children also believe, and can rightly be baptized**.... We bring the child [to baptism], with the belief and hope that it **believes.**"

In his contemporaneous *Swabach Articles*, Luther said: "Who is the person who receives what baptism gives, and profits? This is at once most beautifully and clearly expressed in the word: 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved!' Mark 16:16."

## **200. The roots and the rise of the Anabaptist heretics**

Only around 1522, did the Anabaptists emerge. They were subdivided into many different varieties, with some similarities yet also with great differences among each another.

The great German church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Albrecht Ritschl, in his famous three-volume *History of Pietism*, attributed their origin to the mediaeval 'spiritual Franciscans.' Drs. G. Kramer, the noted Dutch historian of doctrine, considered<sup>191</sup> the Anabaptists to have agreed with Romanism in many weighty matters of faith.

Even modern Baptist(ic) church historians have agreed with this assessment. Thus, in his book *The Anabaptist Story*, Rev. Professor Dr. W.R. Estep rightly insists<sup>192</sup> that "not one of the Swiss Anabaptist leaders came from a Waldensian background.... All of the early Anabaptist leaders came originally from the Roman Church...or directly out of Catholicism into Anabaptist life."

Even more interesting is the admission of history professor Dr. K.R. Davis in his book *Anabaptism and Asceticism*, published by the modern Mennonite Anabaptists themselves. "The Marburg Anabaptists," explains Davis<sup>193</sup> of their clearly communistic leanings, "question[ed] prospective members and those requesting the sign of baptism thus: 'If need should require it, are you prepared to devote all your possessions to the service of the brotherhood?'"

Based on his Hutterite studies, Friedmann -- the author of the informative Mennonite book *The Theology of Anabaptism* -- has observed "that Anabaptist baptism might perhaps be compared to a monastic vow.... Anabaptism represents a laicization of the Catholic monastic spirituality."

Many were the errors of the Anabaptists. Quite apart from their unanimous antipaedobaptism, most of them were riddled with other heresies too. Such included denials of: the Trinity; the incarnation; the oath; private property; the calling of the civil magistrate; postmortal consciousness; and everlasting punishment. Such also included assertions favouring: antinomianism; pseudo-glossolalia; revolutionism; communism; polygamy; community of wives; dispensationalistic hyperpremillennialism; and soul-sleep.

## **201. Points of agreement and disagreement among the Anabaptists**

Some of Anabaptism's views seemed to derive -- also *via* Francke and Paracelsus -- even from the paganizing Pre-Renaissance. This is unquestionably so in the cases of Campanus, Denck, Münzer and Servetus. See Francis Nigel Lee: *A Christian Introduction to the History of*

*Philosophy*.<sup>194</sup> With semi-pagan monastic communism as its root -- Anabaptism was later to yield Neo-Paganistic Marxian Communism as its fruit.

Most Anabaptists departed much further from Scripture than Romanism had ever done. Admits the foremost sympathetic authority on Anabaptism, Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams:<sup>195</sup> "The ancient heretical Christology (originally developed by Valentinus and assimilated by Apollinarius)...was variously communicated to the sixteenth-century Radicals...in part indirectly by the perpetration of the 'celestial flesh heresy' in Bogomile and Cathar circles."

Williams has also rightly pointed out that Anabaptism "broke on principle with the Catholic-Protestant *corpus christianum*" -- alias the idea that the lands of Europe then constituted a Christian body. Indeed, Anabaptism "induced currents in history and the interpretation thereof which pulsate today...through democratic progressivism to Marxism."<sup>196</sup>

It is, of course, quite true that many of the simpler Anabaptists -- such as the widow Idelette Stordeur, even before she presbyterianized and married the great Protestant Reformer John Calvin -- were indeed sincere Christians. Yet as to their distinctives -- the Anabaptist leaders themselves can, at best, only be described as Sub-Christian. What was good in the Anabaptists, did not originate with them. What did originate with them, was not good.

The Anabaptists were divided into many varieties. Yet they were nevertheless all apparently influenced by the dualistic, Neo-Manichaeic, Anti-Oldtestamentistic and Antipaedobaptistic Oriental sect of the ninth-century Paulicians.<sup>197</sup>

Indeed, most of the Anabaptists were also tinged by the infant-damning and antipaedobaptist Petrobrusian and Neomarcionistic soul-sleepers of the twelfth century. Thus even modern Baptist church historians like Rev. Professor Drs. H.C. Vedder and W.M.S. West.<sup>198</sup>

West divides those "Anabaptists" *inter alia* into 'Spiritualists' and 'Anti-Trinitarians.' He holds that the 'Spiritualists' include "Thomas M nzer...and...eventually Andreas Carlstadt.... The most famous names among the 'Anti-Trinitarians' are Miguel Servetus...and Faustus Socinus."

Some Anabaptists believed babies were 'safe.' But others believed infants were lost -- because those infants were (rightly) deemed incapable of professing and (wrongly) deemed incapable of believing in Christ. Again, some Anabaptists believed baptism was merely a sign of faith; others believed it made prior faith secure. Yet others believed faith was vain without baptism. But all Anabaptists believed it was sinful to baptize babies.

## **202. The attacks of the Anabaptist Thomas M nzer against Luther**

The Protestant Reformation had already commenced -- when the Paedobaptist Martin Luther of Wittenberg issued his *Ninety-Five Theses* against the Romish deformation of Christ's Church. That occurred on Reformation Day, 31st October, 1517. However, five years later, by 1522 not just reactionary Romish priests (from the ultra-right wing) but also revolutionary Anabaptist

weavers (from the lunatic left) were all viciously attacking the great Reformer.

As Professor Dr. Robert D. Linder has pointed out,<sup>199</sup> the weavers "Nicholas Storch, Thomas Drechsel and Marcus Stübner...preached a radical biblicism -- which included rejection of infant baptism; denial of the need for a professional ministry and organized religion (because all 'godly' men were [said to be] under the direct influence of the Spirit); special revelation through visions and dreams; the imminent return of Christ; and perhaps psychopannych[ian]ism.

"Driven from the Saxon town of Zwickau where they originated and where they had influenced Thomas Münzer, they visited Wittenberg in December 1521 during Luther's absence.... Their millennial 'enthusiasm'...led to their expulsion in 1522."

Significantly, also the modern British Baptist historian Erroll Hulse has rightly called<sup>200</sup> these first German Anabaptists "radical prophets." Explains Hulse: "The leaders of this group were Storch, Stübner and Münzer -- the latter of ill-fame, because of his...claim of prophecy: the ability of inspired speech similar to the claims of Neo-Pentecostals today.... Carlstadt, a well-known personality in town, was much influenced by the visitors. Eventually he came to the position where he refused to administer infant baptism."

In his important article on Thomas Münzer, the historian Prof. Dr. Robert G. Clouse has rightly indicated<sup>201</sup> that "he preached in a violent way.... He also organized his followers into bands, ready to take up arms.... At Muhlhausen...he preached to the townsmen and helped to involve them in the Peasant Revolt....

"His teaching against infant baptism and his emphasis on the [alleged new] inspiration of the Holy Spirit, influenced other Anabaptists.... Marxist historians emphasize Münzer, because he anticipated later social revolutionaries."

Sympathetically, Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams has stated<sup>202</sup> "that Thomas Münzer was a fierce fanatic, possessed of a demoniac spirit." When previously a Romanist, "he became father confessor" -- yet was plagued with "radical doubt as to the existence of God." However, after "he entered the circle of the three so-called Zwickau prophets," Münzer went "preaching... direct revelation in visions and dreams..., the abandonment of infant baptism, [and] belief in the millennium.... He appears to have encouraged the postponement of baptism until children should be of sufficient age to understand the action."

In his communistic 1524 *Sermon Before the Princes*, Münzer called apparently Luther "Brother Fattened Swine" and "Brother Soft Life" and even "Mr. Liar" -- and the Lutheran theologians "vicious reprobates."<sup>203</sup> Preaching revolution, he called upon the common people to crush the 'godless.'<sup>204</sup>

As Williams has explained:<sup>205</sup> "Münzer warned that if the princes should fail to identify themselves with the 'covenantal people' -- the sword would pass from them to the people.... "Sovereignty resided in the godly people" -- meaning Münzer's people!

"He took the outpouring of the Spirit in himself and others as confirmation of the prophecy of Joel (chs. 2:27-32 & 3:1-4)." This, Münzer combined "with the equalization of the saints in the

common possession both of the gifts of the Spirit and the goods of life." Compare George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* -- and Ron Sider's 1984 *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger!*

### **203. Hübmaier the Anabaptist and the road to revolution**

Münzer was apparently much encouraged by his fellow South German, Balthasar Hübmaier of Wausthut (or Waldshut). He had been a Roman Catholic priest who had studied under Luther's implacable opponent, Dr. John Eck. Hübmaier himself had persecuted Jews -- and helped promote the burning down of their synagogue in Regensberg.<sup>206</sup>

According to the Baptists Vedder and Estep,<sup>207</sup> "foot washing was practised by Hübmaier even before believer's baptism was introduced." Yet by Easter 1525, after not baptizing but merely 'dedicating' most infants (yet still baptizing them when parents demanded it), Hübmaier introduced rebaptism in Waldshut. He himself rebaptized some three hundred Christians. This he did by sprinkling or pouring, but not by submersion.<sup>208</sup>

Those who practise infant baptism, Hübmaier now averred, "rob us of the true baptism.... One must not baptize infants.... If so, I may baptize my dog or my donkey; or I may circumcise girls.... I may make idols out of St. Paul and St. Peter -- I may bring infants to the Lord's Supper."<sup>209</sup>

To Hübmaier,<sup>210</sup> "infant baptism is a deception invented and introduced by men.... The sprinkling of infants...is no baptism, nor is it worthy of such a name."

1527 saw the publication of Hübmaier's work *The Reason and Cause Why Every Man Who Was Christened in Infancy Is Under Obligation to be Baptized According to the Ordinances of Christ Even Though He Be One Hundred Years Old*.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, in his last polemic writing, *On Infant Baptism*,<sup>212</sup> Hübmaier not only condemned infant baptism but even declared that it actually harms the infant.

Hübmaier was an *anti-pacifistic* Anabaptist. See his work *On the Sword* (translated by the Baptist Vedder).<sup>213</sup> Indeed, Hübmaier made common cause even with the revolutionistic Anabaptist Thomas Münzer.

Bullinger charged Hübmaier with a restless spirit of innovation. The latter was certainly very brazen. Boldly, Hübmaier had claimed even Luther in support of his views.

So Luther retorted<sup>214</sup> that "Balthasar Hübmoer [Hübmaier] quotes me, among others, by name -- in his blasphemous book on rebaptism -- as if I were of his foolish mind. But I take comfort in the fact that neither friend nor foe will believe such a lie -- since I have sufficiently in my sermons shown my faith in infant baptism." In addition, Luther classed the Anabaptists with the Jewish fanatics at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He also compared them to the Donatistic Circumcellions who had ravaged the African Church from the beginning of the fourth century onward.



## **204. The Anabaptists and the 1525 Peasant War in Germany**

Matters exploded early in 1525, upon the publication of the *Twelve Articles of all the Peasants* (allegedly and indeed apparently authored by Hübmaier). As the Lutheran theologian Charles M. Jacobs has pointed out:<sup>215</sup> "The social ferment out of which the Peasants' War arose, had its beginning far back of the Reformation. It had been in progress for a full century before the Reformation began.... Heretical ideas of many kinds had combined.... The hope of the coming millennium glowed most brightly in the hearts of those who had the least to hope for this side of it....

"This view of it was zealously spread by radical...preachers of religious revolution. The best know of these men, were Thomas Münzer and Balthasar Hübmaier.... Münzer, Hübmaier and others were preaching religious revolution.... The *Twelve Articles*...were adopted originally by the peasants...from January or February 1525....

"On the basis of extensive research, Wilhelm Stolze [*Peasant War and Reformation* (1926)] has suggested that they were written by Hübmaier.... A valuable edition of the most important sources, is that of Böhmer: *Documents for the History of the Peasant War and the Anabaptists*, Bonn (1910)."

Also the Dutch *Christian Encyclopaedia* has linked Hübmaier to the Peasant War.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*<sup>217</sup> even mentions his acquaintance with Thomas Münzer -- the monster of Muhlhausen.

Now of the 1525 *Twelve Articles of all the Peasants*, the Fourth condemned the 'custom hitherto that no poor man has had the power to be allowed to catch game, wild fowls, or fish in running water.... This seems to us altogether improper.' Further, the Tenth Article communistically demanded what it called "the common fields" -- which, it alleged, "once belonged to a community. We would take these back again into the hands of our communities."<sup>218</sup>

Revolutionary insurrection spread rapidly across the whole of Southwestern and Central Germany. Soon, all was in uproar. Palaces, castles, convents and libraries were all put to the torch by Münzer's Anabaptists. Ten years later, they even ruled -- from the City of Münster.

## **205. The Atheist Friedrich Engels on the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer**

As Karl Marx's colleague the famous communist Friedrich Engels remarked,<sup>219</sup> "the peasants and plebeians...united in a revolutionary party whose demands and doctrines were most clearly expressed by Münzer.... The millennium and the day of judgment over the degenerated church

and corrupted world proposed and described by the mystic, seemed to Münzer imminently close....

"Under the cloak of Christian forms, he preached a kind of pantheism...and at times even approached atheism.... There is no heaven in the beyond.... There is no devil but man's evil lusts....

"His political program approached communism.... Even on the eve of the [1848] February Revolution, there was more than one modern communist sect that had not such a well-stocked theoretical arsenal as was Münzer's in the sixteenth century....

"By 'the kingdom of God' Münzer understood a society in which there would be no class differences or private property and...authority independent of or foreign to the members of the society.... A union[!] was established to implement all this.

"Münzer set to work at once to organize the union. His sermons became still more militant and revolutionary.... He depicted the previous oppression in fiery colours, and countered it with his dream vision of the millennium of social[istic] republican equality. He published one revolutionary pamphlet after another and sent emissaries in all directions. 'All the world must suffer a big jolt' [proclaimed Münzer]. 'There will be such a game that the ungodly will be thrown off their seats, and the downtrodden will rise.'" Thus the modern communist Engels.

Proclaimed Münzer:<sup>220</sup> "All things shall be common, and occasionally they shall be distributed according to each one's necessity.... Whatever prince, count or lord will not submit to this, and being forewarned -- his head shall be stricken off or he shall be hung."

Münzer then collected together eight thousand peasants, and ransacked the cloisters and the houses of the rich throughout Thuringia. However, he was solidly defeated at the Battle of Frankhausen in 1525, and beheaded shortly thereafter.

## **206. Münzerite Anabaptists still continued spreading the sedition**

The death of the Anabaptist Münzer was by no means the end of the bloodshed. From Thuringia, the revolt now spread to Swabia. There, the preaching of Hofmann (later the leading Anabaptist) inspired the peasants to make their demands laid down in the *Twelve Articles*.

Without waiting for the nobility to reply, the peasants revolted. In eight days, 179 castles and twenty-eight cloisters were burnt down. Many of the nobility were butchered. But the princes finally arose against the fanatics, and the revolt ended in the bloody death of nearly one hundred thousand peasants.

Friedrich Engels was by no means the only leading communist to praise these Anabaptists (in his 1850 book *The Peasant War in Germany*). Marx's other associate, Karl Kautsky, did the same -- in his 1894 book *Communism in the Middle Ages and in the Time of the Reformation*, and also in his 1897 book *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*. Ever since, communist text-books world-wide have been doing exactly the same.

In the same year of the Peasant War, Luther published his 1525 essay *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*. Clearly referring to the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer and his supporters, Luther insisted<sup>221</sup> that the Peasant War was "the devil's work...and in particular...the work of the archdevil who rules at Muhlhausen...."

"The peasants are not content to be themselves the devil's own, but they force and compel many good people against their wills to join their devilish league and so make them partakers of all of their own wickedness and damnation.... How many martyrs could now be made -- by the bloodthirsty peasants and the murdering 'prophets!'"

### **207. Luther on the antinomian antipaedobaptistic Münzerites**

Luther later asked:<sup>222</sup> "What was Münzer seeking, except to become a new Turkish emperor? He was possessed of the spirit of lies, and therefore there was no holding him back. He had to go at the other work of the devil, take the sword and murder and rob, as the spirit of murder drove him -- and he created such a rebellion, and such misery."

Then Luther again warned<sup>223</sup> against "poisonous and dangerous' preachers' who take the side of one party alone and call the lords names -- in order to tickle the people and court the peasants like Münzer, Carlstadt and other fanatics.... If Münzer and Carlstadt and their comrades[!] had not been allowed to sneak and creep into other men's houses and parishes whither they had neither call nor command to go -- that whole great calamity [of the Peasant War] would not have happened."

Luther further contrasted the Biblical basis of the Lutherans with the pseudo-spiritualistic fanaticism of Thomas Münzer's Anabaptists. "They devised the slogan: 'Spirit! Spirit! The Spirit must do it! The letter kills!'" -- exclaimed Luther. "Thus Münzer [derisively] called us Wittenberg theologians, 'men learned in the Scriptures' -- and [deludedly called] himself, 'the man taught of the Spirit'.... There you see how the devil had armed himself -- and built up his barricades!"<sup>224</sup>

Indeed, Luther soon regarded<sup>225</sup> Revelation 8:8 as a picture of those "who boast their spirits above all the Scripture and move -- like this 'burning mountain' -- between heaven and earth." Such, he insisted, "in our day, do Münzer and the fanatics."

Now the average German Anabaptist, wrote Luther, wished to have "nothing to do with baptism" -- meaning infant baptism. Yet that was just one of the many errors of these Anabaptists. For -- added Luther -- "another rejects the sacrament; still another teaches that there will be another world between this one and the last judgment; and some assert that Christ is not divine."<sup>226</sup>

All the Anabaptists rejected infant baptism. Indeed, many of them further rejected even adult baptism -- whenever administered by the Romanists, or even by the Protestants. Clearly, the Anabaptists were not interested in the Reformation of Christ's Church.

But with their new and sectarian "gathered church" concept, the Anabaptists were indeed interested in revolution -- against what they regarded as a Christless social order. Consequently, in 1525 Luther now rightly called them "the new false-prophets"<sup>227</sup> of Germany.

### **208. Luther's antirebaptistic work *Concerning Rebaptism***

In his own work *Concerning Rebaptism* (1528), Luther thrashed the Anabaptists. They had over-emphasized the subjective and downgraded the objective side of the rite. Yet, Luther retorted, important as faith is -- the **Word**, and not faith, is the basis of baptism. Any would-be baptizer who regards faith on the part of the baptizee as essential for the validity of the baptism -- can never consistently administer baptism. For he can never be certain that faith really is present.

It is possible, conceded Luther, that some might conceivably doubt the validity of their own infant baptisms. For they might well have no irrefutable evidence that they even then already truly believed. They might then conceivably wish to request (re-)baptism -- when adults.

That request, however, should not be granted. Instead, insisted Luther, the one making this request should be told that even if he were thus to be 'baptized' a second time -- Satan might well soon trouble him again, as to whether he then too really had faith. Then he would have to be 'baptized' yet again -- a third time -- and so on, *ad infinitum*, for just as long as any such doubts kept recurring.

"For it often happens that one who thinks that he has faith," explained Luther, "has none whatever -- and that one who thinks that he has no faith but only doubts, actually believes. We are not told 'he who knows that he believes'...but 'he that believes [and is baptized] shall be saved!' [Mark 16:16]....

"The man who bases his baptism on his faith -- is not only uncertain.... He is...godless and hypocritical.... For he puts his trust in what is not his own, *viz.*, a gift which God has given him -- and not in the Word of God alone." Consequently, even though at the time of baptism there be no faith -- the baptism, nevertheless, is still valid.<sup>228</sup>

### **209. The condemnation of Anabaptism in the Lutheran Symbols**

The Lutheran 1530 *Augsburg Confession* (later endorsed also by John Calvin), declares<sup>229</sup> that the Lutheran churches "condemn the Anabaptists...who imagine that the Holy Spirit is given to men without the outward Word, through their own preparation and works.... They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the baptism of children....

"They condemn the Anabaptists...who teach that those who have once been holy, cannot fall again.... They condemn the Anabaptists who...contend that some men may attain to such a perfection in this life, that they cannot sin.... They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid Christians...civil offices.... They condemn the Anabaptists who think that to condemned men and the devils shall be an end of torments."

Augsburg's 1530 above statement on baptism was later explained by Luther's close colleague, Rev. Professor Dr. Philipp Schwartzerd (alias Melanchthon). For Melanchthon's own 1531 Lutheran *Apology* adds:<sup>230</sup> "Faith alone makes the person worthy to receive the beneficial divine water.... Nothing else can be received, than that we so believe from the heart." Indeed, the sacrament of baptism is nothing other than a "picture of the Word" -- or a "visible Word" which expresses to the eye what the Word causes the ear to know.

From 1530 till 1540, Melanchthon (and apparently with the full approval of Luther himself) constantly improved the 1530 '*Unvaried*' *Augsburg Confession* alias the *Confessio Augustana Invariata* -- until it had become the 1540 '*Varied*' *Augsburg Confession* alias the *Confessio Augustana Variata*. The latter added a few words to the article on baptism -- thus moving further away from the absolute necessity of baptizing infants. This enabled also Calvin to endorse the *Augustana* some five times between 1540 and 1557.

Only after the death of Melanchthon in 1560, did these slight additions begin to attract the attention of the more doctrinaire Gnesio-Lutherans. They then accused Melanchthon of crypto-calvinism. Indeed, especially after the adoption of the *Formula of Concord* (1576 & 1584), the Gnesio-Lutherans became increasingly more hostile to Calvinism -- and increasingly insistent on the necessity of baptism.<sup>231</sup>

In that *Formula of Concord*, the later Lutherans declared<sup>232</sup> that "the Anabaptists are divided into many sects, of which some maintain more, some fewer errors. Nevertheless, in a general way, they all profess such a doctrine as can be tolerated neither in the Church, nor by the police and in the commonwealth, nor in daily [domestic and social] life."

The *Formula* then mentions "Anabaptist Articles which cannot be endured in the Church." It claims that "this 'righteousness' of the Anabaptists consists in great part in a certain arbitrary and humanly devised sanctimony, and in truth is nothing else than some new sort of monkery."

These intolerable Anabaptist Articles include those "that infants not baptized are not sinners before God but just and innocent." Of "baptism..., in the opinion of the Anabaptists, they [infants] have no need.... Infants ought not to be baptized until they attain the use of reason, and are able themselves to profess their faith...."

"They [the Anabaptists] neither make much account of the baptism of children, nor take care to have their children baptized, which conflicts with the express words of the divine promise (Genesis 17:7 sqq.). For this only holds good to those who observe the covenant of God and do not contemn it."

Further, the *Formula* also condemns the "Errors of the [Anabaptist] Schwenkfeldians." Among these, it mentions the error "that the water of baptism is not a means whereby the Lord seals adoption in the children of God."

## **210. The degeneration of the baptismal views of the later Lutherans**

Even after his protestantization, Luther's own baptismal views had still remained somewhat encrusted with remnantal post-biblical and mediaeval sacramentalistic accretions. See his 1523 *Little Baptism Book Germanized*, and his 1525 *The 'Order of Baptism' Newly Revised*.

Indeed, especially Luther's 1525 to 1529 controversy with Zwingli on the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper, propelled Luther more and more in the direction of an inadequate view of both sacraments. Thus, even Luther himself -- and especially the later Gnesio-Lutherans -- asserted that the Holy Spirit regenerates not before but usually only during baptism (yet still not because of baptism). This marks a shift somewhat away from Luther's earlier and more Biblical position outlined in our sections 197 to 199 above.

Yet according to Warfield,<sup>233</sup> the 1485-1558 German Reformer John Bugenhagen -- under Luther's direction -- taught "that Christians' children intended for baptism are not left to the hidden judgment of God if they fail of baptism." Instead, they "have the promise of being received by Christ into His kingdom."<sup>234</sup> This is underscored "also [by] Gerhard."<sup>235</sup>

Warfield discussed the baptismal difficulties of Lutheranism. He rightly maintained:<sup>236</sup> "The distinctive principle of the Lutheran system, is doubtless the cause of the great embarrassment exhibited by Lutheran writers in dealing with this problem..."

"Thus for example Kliefoth knows nothing better than to suggest that unbaptized children dying in their infancy, whether children of Christian parents or of infidels, stand in the same category with adult heathen -- and are to have an opportunity to exercise saving faith when the Lord calls them before Him for judgement on His second coming. And the genial Norse missionary bishop Dahle...says...'we may entertain a hope of salvation and bliss for our unbaptized children immediately after death -- yet no more than a hope!'"<sup>237</sup>

## **211. The re-romanizing tendency of Gnesianism after Luther's death**

'Gnesianism' became the official view of the Lutheran State Church denominations after the death of Luther in 1546 and especially after the death of Melanchthon in 1560. Even though Luther himself had apparently approved it, the Gnesio-Lutheran Flaccius Illyricus attacked and condemned Melanchthon's 1540 'crypto-calvinistic' *Confessio Augustana Variata*. That Flaccius did at the 1660 Colloquy of Weimar. In this he was followed by Chytraeus, Heshusius and others.

This Gnesio-Lutheran interpretation of baptism was confessionally 'frozen' into the *Formula of Concord* from 1576-80 onward. Among many other (generally excellent) provisions, the *Formula* unfortunately also regards<sup>238</sup> "the view that infants...may without baptism...attain unto salvation" -- as one of the "Anabaptistic Articles which cannot be endured in the Church."

Fanatical Gnesio-Lutherans would later employ these words also against Calvinism. Thus, Gnesio-Lutheranism's anti-Calvinistic *Saxon Visitation Articles* reject what they wrongly term "the false and erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists on Holy Baptism."

There, those 1592 *Articles* rightly allege, Calvinism teaches firstly "that baptism does not work nor confer regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and salvation -- but only signifies and seals

them." Calvinism teaches secondly, "that salvation does not depend on baptism." Calvinism teaches thirdly, that "when the ordinary Minister of the Church is wanting, the infant should be permitted to die without baptism." Calvinism teaches fourthly, that "the infants of Christians are already holy before baptism in the womb of the mother." Fifthly, Calvinism teaches that such covenant infants "even in the womb of the mother are received into the covenant of eternal life."

Most unfortunately, the Gnesio-Lutheranistic 1592 *Saxon Articles* -- though excepting what it calls "cases of necessity" -- reject<sup>239</sup> the above Proto-Lutheran (and Calvinian) views. Yet nevertheless, even some of the Classic-Lutheran divines, such as Chemnitz,<sup>240</sup> maintained that infants indeed have faith -- and do believe in a certain manner. Indeed, Gerhard even conceded that while "baptism is indeed the ordinary sacrament of initiation...., in the event of privation or impossibility -- the children of Christians are saved by an extraordinary and peculiar private dispensation.... God does not so bind His grace and saving efficacy to baptism as that, in the event of privation, He may not both wish and be able to act extraordinarily."

So too the eighteenth-century Lutheran Rev. Professor Dr. J.F. Buddaeus regarded the condition even of the unbaptized heathen infants as 'to some extent tolerable.'<sup>241</sup> Likewise the great nineteenth-century American Lutheran, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Krauth.<sup>242</sup>

Indeed, also some of the more modern of the famous Lutheran theologians -- such as the conservatives Cremer and Althaus -- fortunately follow Luther's original view of "infant faith." In so doing, however, they technically put themselves at variance with the official semi-sacramentalistic views of the Gnesio-Lutheran State Churches.

## **212. Luther and the Lutheran Dorner on infant faith before and at baptism**

Luther himself, in his *Commentary on Genesis* (chapter 17) -- from the fact that Hebrew children dying before circumcision were not lost -- argues that neither are Christian children dying before baptism. Thus too the great Lutheran theologian Rev. Professor Dr. I.A. Dorner.

For Dorner has rightly shown<sup>243</sup> that the De-Romanized "Luther, in order to leave no place for the *opus operatum*, **assumed...the personal faith of the child in order to baptize**" him or her. See the "*Catechismus Major*.... Luther assumed that God gives the child faith for baptism....

"**Faith and regeneration are already brought to baptism**," explains Dorner of Luther. "The only meaning left to the latter, is that of sealing what has been done.... In the *Large Catechism*, he says [anent] whether children have faith -- let the learned decide.... On the occasion of the *Wittenberg Concord*, 1536, he conceded that...**children have...an analogon of faith**: namely a natural bias of the soul to God -- just as Calvin also spoke of *fides seminalis* in children."

Indeed, Dorner concludes<sup>244</sup> of Luther that "in reference to the children of Christians who have died unbaptized, he says: 'The holy and merciful God will think kindly of them.... What He will do with them, He has revealed to no one, [so] that baptism may not be despised -- but has reserved [them] to His own mercy. God does wrong to no man'" -- and hence still less to a little man, alias a tiny human being.

### **213. The Lutheran Pieper on infant faith and infant baptism**

The renowned modern conservative theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Pieper explains his own contemporary Lutheran understanding of the character of the renunciation of Satan and the profession of Christ at baptism. Pieper writes<sup>245</sup> that "by baptism the child is transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of Christ...through the child's own faith.... The child is asked whether he believes; the sponsors answering in the stead of the child.... The child has a faith of his own [both before and] in baptism -- and is not being baptized on the faith of the sponsors; or of the Christian Church; or even on his own future faith.

"The personal faith of the child, must by all means be upheld. Any doctrine that would put the child in possession of the blessing of baptism without faith (*opus operatum*) as the receiving hand on the part of the child [himself or herself] -- is anti-Christian.... We are in fact more certain of [a presupposed infant] faith in the baptism of a child, than [of adult faith] in the baptism of adults.

"In the baptism of adults, we [can only, and] must, accept their word. If they deceive us or themselves, that is their own lookout." Such deceit, however, is never perpetrated by the child at infant baptisms.

"The question as to faith," continues Pieper, "is no less appropriate in pedobaptism than in the baptism of adults.... We know of children -- and that, more certainly than of adults -- that in or at their baptism they do believe....

"Adults will have to become like the children, if they would participate in the kingdom of heaven.... We shall have to desist from our own calculations and learn how to think correctly, by faith in the words of Christ, about the faith and salvation of children."

As Pieper rightly insists:<sup>246</sup> "True faith, and works of faith, are found in infants. Psalm 8:2 -- 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength'.... Scripture predicates saving faith of children and infants directly. **Matthew 18:6** -- 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me.' There is...no reason to take the *paidion* of verse 5 in a sense different from the *paidion* of verse 4: 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child'.... Even de Wette adheres to the literal interpretation."

Pieper continues: "First John 2:13[-14] -- 'I write unto you, little children [*paidia*], because ye have known the Father.' To 'know the Father' means, of course, to believe in Him. *Paidia* means children...'down to the first year' [Luther]." Indeed, Holy Scripture is constantly "ascribing to children the fruit and effect of faith, namely, eternal life. Mark 10:14 --'Of such is the Kingdom of God.' Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:16.

"The denial of infant faith, springs from rationalistic considerations.... John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost while yet in his mother's womb. Luke 1:15.... It proves beyond doubt that it is not above the power of the Holy Ghost to create faith in infants" -- even before infant baptism (thus F.N. Lee).



Pieper concludes: "Scripture states explicitly that little children 'believe in Me.' Matthew 18:6. The Lutheran teachers follow this statement of [Christ in] Scripture, by describing the **faith of children as *fides actualis*** [alias an 'actual faith'] -- and never as a *habitus otiosus* (idle habit), or a *mera potentia*: a mere ability to produce faith at some future time.... The faith of infants is indeed...*fides directa* -- that is, faith which [directly] lays hold of its object, Christ, the Savior of sinners."

#### **214. Switzerland disturbed by the Anabaptist heresies**

In the years culminating in 1525, the Anabaptists had torn Germany apart. Ominously, a similar situation was now threatening to develop in Switzerland too. For the rumblings of the Peasant War in Germany soon reached Switzerland.

Zwingli was rightly alarmed. The Anabaptists were radical revolutionists. Their baptismal views were relatively unimportant. But their social views -- as reflected in their demand that Christians get themselves rebaptized -- made Luther's previous controversy even against Rome now seem peripheral.

Schaff has rightly suggested<sup>247</sup> that "radicalism was identical with the Anabaptist movement, but the baptismal question was secondary. It involved an entire reconstruction of the Church and of the social order. It meant revolution.... Nothing is more characteristic of radicalism and sectarianism, than an utter want of historical sense and respect for the past.... It rejects even the Bible as an external authority, and relies on inward inspiration....

"The radical opinion...rejected Luther's theory of forensic, solifidian justification." The radical Anabaptists replaced *sola fide* (by faith alone) with *sola revolutione* (by revolution alone). "They hoped at first to carry Zwingli with them, but in vain....

"They then charged him with treason to the truth, and hated him worse than the pope.... The demand for rebaptism virtually unbaptized and unchristianized the entire Christian world, and completed the rupture with the historic Church." Thereby, they existentialistically and indeed also revolutionistically cut the continuous cord connecting the present to the past generations -- and to the future.

Unlike the Communists, modern Antipaedobaptists are understandably embarrassed by the German Thomas M nzer. Instead, they hasten to claim their descent rather from the 'milder' Anabaptists -- such as Conrad Grebel and his Swiss circle. Thus the British Baptist Hulse has claimed<sup>248</sup> it was "the first baptism -- when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Manz on January 21 1525." However, Hulse is silent about an adulatory letter from Grebel to M nzer some four months earlier, written on September 5th 1524.

#### **215. The Swiss Anabaptist Grebel's admiration of Thomas M nzer**

That letter Grebel addressed<sup>349</sup> "to the sincere and true proclaimer of the Gospel, Thomas Münzer at Allstedt in the Hartz, our faithful and beloved brother with us in Christ." It started off: "Dear Brother Thomas."

Soon thereafter, it further stated: "Thy book against false faith and baptism was brought to us, and we were more fully informed and confirmed.... It rejoiced us wonderfully that we found one who was of the same Christian mind with us...."

"On the matter of baptism, thy book pleases us well, and we desire to be further instructed by thee. We understand that even an adult is not to be baptized without Christ's rule of binding and loosing.... All children who have not yet come to the discernment of the knowledge of good and evil and have not yet eaten of the tree of knowledge...are surely saved by the suffering of Christ the new Adam...."

"As to the [Protestant] objection that faith is demanded of all who are to be saved, we exclude children from this and hold that they are saved without faith[!]..... We do not believe that children must be baptized.... Infant baptism is a senseless, blasphemous abomination[!] -- contrary...even to the papacy...."

"Thou knowest this ten times better, and hast published thy protests against infant baptism.... I have already begun to reply to all (excepting thyself) who have hitherto misleadingly and knowingly written on baptism and have deceived concerning the senseless blasphemous form of baptism -- as, for instance, Luther.... I, C[onrad]. Grebel, meant to write to Luther in the name of all of us, and to exhort him to cease from his caution."

Then, in a "Postscript or Second letter," Conrad Grebel continued: "Dearly beloved Brother Thomas!" Condemning again "the idolatrous caution of Luther," Grebel then stated that especially the Zwinglians "rail at us as knaves from the pulpit in public, and call us 'Satan changed into angels of light.'" Cf. Second Corinthians 11:14.

Grebel concluded by urging Münzer to "establish and teach only...unadulterated baptism.... Thou art better informed than a hundred of us.... Ye are far purer than our men here, and those at Wittenberg.... [Signed:] Conrad Grebel..., Felix Mantz...and seven new young Münzers against Luther."

## **216. Zwingli's first condemnation of the Anabaptists' views on baptism**

When first contacted by Anabaptists in Zurich, even as early as 1524 the Protestant Reformer Zwingli never countenanced the rebaptism of those already baptized in infancy. To the contrary, even then he was already declaring:<sup>250</sup> "I leave baptism untouched.... We must practice infant baptism, so as not to offend our fellow men."

Zwingli first enjoyed some little friendship with the incipient Anabaptists in Switzerland. They seemed allies against Romanism, and initially supported his reforms. But when he clung to Paedobaptism, they opposed him.

For the Swiss Anabaptists at length began not only to get themselves 'rebaptized' -- but also steadfastly to refuse baptism to their own covenant infants. So Zwingli later condemned their views in his 1525 *Christian Introduction of the Zurich Council to the Pastors and Preachers* (in the section *Concerning the Abrogation of the Law*).

Now Zwingli had invited the Anabaptists to have private discussions with him. In vain. So a public disputation followed -- by order of the magistrate -- on January 17th 1525.

In his accompanying letter to Vadian, Zwingli wrote: "The issue is not baptism, but revolt!" Yet, as regards baptism, Zwingli rightly believed that John the baptizer had baptized not just God-professing adults but also their babies.<sup>251</sup> He further believed that First Corinthians 7:14 implies those babies' eligibility also for visible church membership.<sup>252</sup> So he rightly launched a vigorous verbal attack against the Anabaptists.

Exclaimed Zwingli: "Their rebaptism is a clear sign that they intend to create a new and different church. Biblical baptism, however -- just like circumcision -- can be performed once only. Once in the covenant, a man remains there. The New Testament knows only one baptism. Neither Christ nor the holy apostles ever repeated it -- or taught that it needed to be repeated."<sup>253</sup>

Zwingli further pointed out that "the soul is cleansed by the grace of God, and not by any external thing whatever." Consequently, "baptism cannot wash away sin."

Furthermore, Zwingli rightly saw that "the children of Christians are not less the children of God than their parents are -- or than the children in Old Testament times were." So, seeing they "belong to God -- who will refuse them baptism?"<sup>254</sup>

The antitrinitarian Anabaptist leaders Jan Denck (a pantheistic universalist) and Ludwig Hätzer (an adulterer and accused bigamist)<sup>255</sup> then denounced Zwingli. He was, they said<sup>256</sup> -- worse than the pope! The Anabaptists had stubbornly rejected the baptism of covenant infants. So Zwingli now finally -- and publically -- condemned their views.<sup>257</sup>

The Reformer Bullinger was an eye-witness at that great debate. It took place in the Zurich Council Hall on January 17th 1525. The Anabaptists argued that infants cannot believe. But Zwingli showed that infant baptism had replaced infant circumcision (Genesis 17 *cf.* Colossians 2:11-13), and that the infants of Christians are themselves 'holy' (First Corinthians 7:14). He published his arguments (five months later) in a book: *On Baptism, Rebaptism, and Infant Baptism*.

Zwingli won that the debate, hands down. Another disputation was held in March, and a third in November -- with the same result. As Bullinger later declared, the Anabaptists just could not answer Zwingli.<sup>258</sup>

## **217. The formal birth and coming forth of Switzerland's Anabaptists**

Within four days of being trounced by Zwingli in the great debate of 17th January 1525, at one of their sectarian meetings the ex-priest Blaurock defiantly asked his colleague Grebel to

rebaptize him in the home of Manz. Blaurock then in turn rebaptized all the others present. Thus was Swiss Anabaptism formally launched.

The Baptist Hulse has well described<sup>259</sup> this situation. "This idea crystallised in the first baptism, when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Mantz on January 21 1525.... Evening gatherings in the homes of the dissenters continued, and represented the first informal beginnings of gathered Baptist churches in the area. In the course of the week following the first baptism, thirty-five were baptised by affusion (pouring) at Zollikon."

What a concession from the Baptist Hulse! The members of "the first...Baptist churches" -- Hulse has assured us -- were "baptised by affusion" alias pouring, and not by submersion. Subsequently too, Blaurock baptized by sprinkling; and Mantz by pouring.<sup>260</sup> As Richard Nitsche has shown, in his *History of the Anabaptists in Switzerland at the Time of the Reformation*: "We hardly encounter a single formal submersion, such as indeed occurred later."<sup>261</sup>

Blaurock himself then lashed out. According to the 1525 Anabaptist *Hutterite Chronicle*,<sup>262</sup> Blaurock insisted that both Luther and Zwingli had "let go of the true baptism of Christ" -- and had "followed instead the pope with infant baptism...into a false Christianity.... Luther and Zwingli defended...this false teaching [Pedobaptism] -- which they really learned from the father and head of Antichrist."

It will be recalled that Grebel had rebaptized Blaurock in the home of Mantz. Fortunately, Mantz had rightly told his Swiss Anabaptist colleagues that John the baptizer had sprinkled [and not submersed]. Consequently, the three of them now did the same. Unfortunately, however, they did not follow John's sprinkling of also the babies of believers. Nor did they follow John (who baptized once and for all) -- in their frequent 're-baptisms' of those already baptized.

Mantz himself later recounted these dramatic events among the Swiss Grebelites. He then wrote:<sup>263</sup> "Just as John baptized..., so they -- were poured over with water."

However, having thus upheld the right mode of (re)baptism -- albeit, wrongly, for those already previously baptized -- Mantz then wrongly prescribed the wrong age for that ordinance. It should, he insisted, be received not merely in adulthood -- but also specifically at age thirty. For he bizarrely decreed that "infant baptism...is also against the example of Christ Who...was baptized at thirty years.... Christ has given us an example, that as He has done -- so also ought we to do."

Yet, according to the Baptist Hulse,<sup>264</sup> after "Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Mantz" -- the latter Anabaptist himself was subsequently killed when only twenty-nine. Consequently, in getting himself (re-)baptized before his early death, Mantz rejected his own inane injunction that baptism "ought" to be received precisely when thirty. One must indeed also wonder just how many Anabaptists -- and Baptists like the Mantz-admiring Hulse -- were themselves precisely thirty when also they were baptized according to Mantz's prescription (to which even Mantz did not submit himself).

## **218. Hätzer the heretical hymnwriter and anabaptistic adulterer**

We have already referred<sup>265</sup> to the anabaptistic hymnwriter Hätzer and his colleague the pantheistic universalist Denck. Both of them hated Zwingli even more than they did the pope. However, Denck himself has been described by the famous church historian Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Kurtz as 'the pope of the Baptists,'<sup>266</sup> And Hätzer was not only antitrinitarian, but also a repeated adulterer -- and indeed also a bigamist.

According to the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*,<sup>267</sup> in 1523 Denck became involved in the trial of the three impious painters of Nuremberg. There, "the ideas of Thomas Münzer and Andreas Karlstadt influenced him greatly.... About October 1525, he was forced to leave Nuremberg, and he became a wanderer....

"He was rebaptized by Hübmaier...[and became] a leader of the Anabaptists.... He opposed the doctrines of predestination, the bound will, justification by faith, the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, the authority of the Scriptures...and the ministry."

Also in the *New International Dictionary*, the Scottish Baptist J.G.G. Norman has stated<sup>268</sup> that Hätzer "came to Zurich, and wrote advocating an iconoclasm like that of Carlstadt.... Tending to antitrinitarian spiritualism, he was accused of adultery.... He composed hymns which were highly prized." Indeed, to this the English Baptist Hulse has added: "Hätzer, Hübmaier and Blaurock -- all ex-priests" raised in Romanism -- "were other influential characters involved in the Anabaptist movement."<sup>269</sup>

Harvard's noted scholar G.H. Williams is clearly sympathetic to the Anabaptists. Yet even he has frankly admitted the truth about Hätzer. Williams explains<sup>270</sup> how "Hätzer in Worms in 1527...was engaged with Denck in translating.... He attacked the Magisterial Reformation for disparaging the apocryphal books.... The clearest evidence of Hätzer's final antitrinitarian spiritualism, is a stanza from one of the many hymns that he composed and which were cherished....

"There survives the following explicitly antitrinitarian utterance placed in the mouth of God: I am He who created all things.... I am not three persons, but I am one. And I cannot be three persons, for I am one."

Williams continued: "Hätzer was exposed in the house of Georg Regel to his besetting temptation, for which he earlier had been asked to leave Basel. This time, however, it was adultery with the mistress herself of the little Anabaptist maid he had earlier taken to wife.... He was clearly guilty."

## **219. The Anabaptists, rebaptizing defiantly, expelled from Switzerland**

From the above, it is very clear that both Zwingli and Zurich would be well rid of the likes of Hätzer and his Anabaptists. The latter had been trounced in three successive public debates against Zwingli -- respectively in January, March and November 1525. After the first debate, they had: defiantly started rebaptizing Christians in and around Zurich; created public disturbances; and

threatened even the very maintenance of law and order.

So the City Council of Zurich then decided against them. Yet it still followed Zwingli's clement advice. Anabaptist parents with unbaptized children, should be given eight days to get them baptized -- or face banishment from the city and canton (yet with full benefit of their goods) as obvious seditionists.

The great church historian Schaff has rightly described<sup>271</sup> what then ensued. "The Anabaptists refused to obey, and ventured on bold demonstrations. They arranged processions and passed as preachers of repentance, in sackcloth and girdles, through the streets of Zurich" -- all the time "abusing 'the old dragon' (Zwingli) and his horns [Revelation 12:9 & 13:11 & 20:2]; and exclaiming: 'Woe, woe unto Zurich!'"

Schaff continued: "The leaders were arrested.... A commission of Ministers and Magistrates were sent to them, to convert them. Twenty-four professed conversion, and were set free.... Fourteen men and seven women were retained...but made their escape April 5 [1526]. Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock were rearrested -- and charged with communistic and revolutionary teaching.

"After some other excesses, the magistracy proceeded to threaten those who stubbornly persisted in their error.... Six executions in all took place in Zurich [not for rebaptism but indeed for revolutionism], between 1527 and 1532....

"The foreigners were punished by exile, and met death in Roman Catholic countries.... [The German Anabaptist] Hübmaier, who had fled from Waldshut [or Wausthut in Germany] to Zurich [in nearby Switzerland], was tried before the magistracy...and was sent out of the country."

## **220. Zwingli's various writings against the errors of the Anabaptists**

According to Zwingli, "the Anabaptists have their wives in common and meet at night...for lewd practices." He accused them openly: "As often as you [Anabaptists] confess Christ, you make a confession which is worse than that of the demons. For they had experienced His power in such a measure that they sincerely confessed Him to be the Son of God. But you, when you confess Him, do so hypocritically!"<sup>272</sup>

Again, insisted Zwingli: "Give up the oath in any state, and at once -- and in keeping with the Anabaptists' desire -- the magistracy is removed.... [Then,] all things follow as they would have them -- what confusion and up-turning of everything!"

In 1527, Zwingli wrote his refutation of the Anabaptist Balthazar Hübmaier's little book *Concerning the Christian Baptism of Believers*.<sup>273</sup> In that same year, Zwingli also published his own *Polemic against the Catabaptistic Catastrophe*. There, he showed that rebaptism amounts to recrucifying Christ [Hebrews 6:1-6].

In that latter work, he rightly remarked that "the Hebrews' children, because they with their parents were under the covenant, merited the sign of the covenant [circumcision]. So also

Christians' infants -- because they are counted within Christ's Church and people -- ought in no way to be deprived of baptism, the sign of the covenant."<sup>274</sup>

Zwingli thus saw that the Church "distributes the sacrament [of baptism] -- to those who according to human judgment are to be regarded as elect."<sup>275</sup> He therefore insisted that Christ-professing people (and their infants) are to be regarded as saved -- before their baptisms. For "by the time the sacrament is administered, [even] the Anabaptist does not need it." This is so, because baptism certifies "something already given and accomplished in the heart" of a person "who knows that God has forgiven his sins long ago."

According to Zwingli<sup>276</sup> "we are certain of the election of nobody more -- than of infants who are taken away in youth.... There cannot be any stain (*labes*) -- in infants who spring from believers. For original sin is expiated by Christ.... No stain of [personal] misdeeds (*labes facinorum*) can contaminate them."

Of course, by this Zwingli did not mean that covenant children cannot sin. He meant that they were to be deemed to have been regenerated and therefore forgiven the guilt of Adam's sin -- even before their own infant baptism.

While conceding that some Anabaptists were indeed Christians, Zwingli did not accept that all of them were. For Zwingli also insisted that many Anabaptists were more immoral than even the weakest Paedobaptists. Indeed, precisely their revolutionary rebaptisms tended toward the revolutionary communism of the Anabaptists (both as to goods and as to wives). Proto-Pentecostally, it also promoted their revolutionary and epilepsy-like "babbling under the claim of inspiration."<sup>277</sup>

## **221. Zwingli's antirebaptistic Questions Concerning Rebaptism**

Zwingli also published a work about *Questions Concerning the Sacrament of Baptism*. Indeed, in his *Confession of Faith*, he declared<sup>278</sup> that "specifically the children of Christians belong without exception to the Church of God's people -- and are Members of His Church.... However, the children [of Israel] just as much as the [adult] Jews themselves belonged to that Church. No less do our children belong to the Church of Christ, than was formerly the case with the children of the Jews....

"All who descend from them according to the flesh, were reckoned to the Church. Yet if ours were not counted together with the parents, Christ would appear to be mean and stingy toward us -- if He had denied us what He gave to the [Hebrew] Ancients.... Hence, in my opinion, those who damn the children of Christians -- are acting godlessly and arrogantly. So many open testimonies of Scripture speak against them that the Gentile Church would become not merely just as large but larger than that of the Jews." Behold Zwingli's optimism -- *versus* the pessimism of the Anabaptists!

Continued Zwingli: "Were John and Paul not chosen -- even when they were still children -- and indeed, from the foundation of the world? However, the word 'Church' is taken quite generally -- namely for all who pass as Christians; that is, for those who relate themselves to

Christ.... [In Old Testament times,] Isaac, Jacob, Judah and all descendants of Abraham were members of this Church -- even in their childhood; yes, even those children whose parents turned to Christ through the preaching of the apostles at the start of the [New Testament] Church....

"That was also the case of the young children of the first Church. For this reason, I believe and acknowledge that they were marked with the sacrament of baptism.... For the promise is not given to our children more narrowly but rather more extensively and more richly than it was to the children of the Hebrews in olden times.

"These are the foundations according to which the children are baptized and the Church is to be commanded. The attacks of the Anabaptists have no power against this....

"Isaac was circumcised as a child, even though he did not [then] make a profession of faith.... We are prepared -- without the sacrament -- so that we may receive the sacrament.

"The Spirit works with His grace, **before** the sacrament. The sacraments serve as general testimonies of that grace which already previously inhabits each one in particular. Thus, baptism is conferred in front of the congregation -- to him who **already** has the promise **before** he receives **baptism**."

"From this, it is acknowledged that he is a member of the Church... . Our children are no less regarded as belonging to the Church, than were those of the Hebrews. When members of the Church bring their child, it is baptized. For as a child of Christian parents it is regarded as belonging among the members, according to the promise. By baptism the Church thus openly takes in him who was previously already accepted by grace.

"Consequently, baptism does not bring grace; but the Church testifies that he who has baptism imputed to him, has **already** received grace.... The sacrament is the sign of something holy, namely of the grace already **received**.... The Anabaptists err thoroughly, inasmuch as they refuse baptism to the children of believers -- and err in many other ways too.... But now, by God's grace, this pest in our midst has much abated."

## **222. Zwingli's antirebaptistic Declaration of Christian Faith**

Finally, in Zwingli's *Declaration of Christian Faith*, he declared<sup>279</sup> that "the sacraments...are for us signs and symbols of holy things, not the things themselves which they imply. For who could be so simple as to regard the sign as the thing signified?"

"The sacraments are to be honoured.... For they signify the holiest things -- both those things which have happened, as well as those things we should do.... Thus, baptism indicates that Christ has cleansed us with His blood; and that, as Paul teaches, we 'put Him on' or are to live according to His example. Romans 13:14 & Galatians 3:27....

"Would the sacraments then have no power?" -- just because they are given only to those deemed to be believers already? "No, they have a big power!"



Firstly, they are holy and honourable. For they were constituted and received by Christ the High Priest. For He not only instituted but also Himself received baptism....

"Secondly, they testify about an event.... Because baptism now indicatively proclaims the death and the resurrection of Christ, these must have been actual events....

"Thirdly, they represent the state of things which they indicated. This is why they also receive their names.... Fourthly, they signify high things....

"Fifthly, the signs are similar to the things signified. For in each sacrament, one can measure two things. The one is the external sign, like the water in baptism.... The other and the more important, is the essential in the sacrament.... In baptism, through the water of grace, the really essential matter is that we are inwardly cleansed and washed from sins by the blood of Christ; that we are a congregation of Christ; that we are incorporated into Christ; that we are buried with Him in His death; and that we are raised with Him to a new life, *etc.*....

"Sixthly, the sacraments offer support and help to faith.... The sacraments thus support faith.... The hearing and the feeling are all attracted to the operation of faith.... For the faith of the Church or of those baptized, acknowledges that Christ died and rose and triumphed for His Church. One hears and sees and feels that -- during baptism....

"Seventhly, it represents the condition of an oath.... The Anabaptists...hold all things in common.... [They say that] a man could have...more than one wife, in spirit.... They have distanced themselves from us, and they never belonged to us.... That anabaptistic pest crawls particularly into places where the pure doctrine of Christ begins to emerge.... From this...it can clearly be seen that it is sent by Satan, in order to strangle healthy seed while the latter is germinating!"

### **223. Vicious Antipaedobaptism of the Anabaptist Melchior Hofmann**

We first hear of the colourful Swabian Melchior Hofmann in the time of the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer. Already in 1525, while Hofmann was in Dorpat, there was uproar and iconoclasm.<sup>280</sup> The same year he clashed with the Lutheran Ministers there; began to show deviant views about political government; and rejected the oath. After he falsely predicted that Christ's second coming would occur in 1533, the King of Sweden forbade him to preach there. Lutheran Ministers then attacked him, and Luther himself opposed him. Next succumbing to the influence of Schwenckfeld, Hofmann slid even more deeply into the various heresies of Anabaptism.

Hofmann denied Christ's humanity,<sup>281</sup> alleging that Jesus merely travelling through Mary 'like water through a pipe.' To Hofmann, the Saviour 'has not two but only one nature' and was solidified as heavenly dew in the womb of Mary -- like a spiritual pearl in a carnal oyster.

In April 1530, Hofmann was 'rebaptized'<sup>282</sup> (*sic*). Understandably, his fanaticism then increased. For now he wrote<sup>283</sup> that baptism "is the sign of the covenant God instituted solely for the old...[but] not for...immature children.... There is absolutely no order enacted by the apostles or Jesus Christ...about it.... It has not been discovered that they ever baptized any [infant] child,

nor will any such instance be found in all eternity....

"Paedobaptism is absolutely not from God, but rather is practised out of wilfulness by Anti-Christians [alias Antichrist-ians] and the satanic crowd in opposition to God and all His Commandments.... Verily, it is an eternal abomination to Him. Woe, woe to all such blind leaders who wilfully publish lies for the truth -- and ascribe to God that which He has not commanded and will never in eternity command! How serious a thing it is to fall into the hands of God!... Their inheritance and portion, is rather eternal damnation!"

Hofmann next claimed that baptism was bridal: "The bride of the Lord Jesus Christ has given herself over to the Bridegroom in baptism...and has betrothed herself and yielded herself to Him of her own free will and has thus in very truth accepted Him and taken Him unto herself." This language is not only clearly antipaedobaptistic, but also almost erotic. It doubtless played a major role in promoting the emergence of polygamy and even community of wives among many of the Hofmannites.

While preaching in the border region of Germany and Holland, Hofmann made many converts. They themselves later 'converted' the Dutch lechers Matthys and Beukels, and two of Matthys's own 'apostles' then rebaptized and ordained the Dutchman Obbe Philips as well as the German city Münster's Rothmann. Hofmann himself was then imprisoned in Strassburg, where he died in captivity.

Hofmann was a false prophet. His prediction that one hundred and forty-four thousand would soon go forth from Strassburg and convert the world<sup>284</sup> -- never came to pass. Nor did his prediction that Christ's second coming would occur in 1533!

#### **224. The Dutch Anabaptist Leaders Obbe and Dirck Philips**

After the imprisonment of Hofmann in 1533, the Hofmannite baker Jan Matthys alias 'Elijah' emerged as the new leader. His 'commissioned apostles' Boekbinder and Cuyper then rebaptized the famous Dutch Anabaptist Obbe Philips in the same year -- before they then went forth to Münster, and rebaptized its cathedral's ex-priest Rothmann.

Obbe himself then ordained his own brother Dirck Philips -- and then rebaptized and ordained the famous Anabaptists David Joris in 1534 and Menno Simons around 1536. So renowned did Obbe become, that the Dutch Anabaptists were then often called Obbenites.<sup>285</sup>

Obbe's brother Dirck alias Dierick or Dietrich later became the leading Mennonite theologian. As History Professor Dr. K.R. Davis has pointed out:<sup>286</sup> "Son of a Dutch priest[!], he...left the Franciscans and converted to Anabaptism in 1533.... His elder brother[!], Obbe, ordained him...in 1534.... He wrote extensively and systematically, and was probably the leading theologian of the early Dutch and North German Mennonites. But largely because of his greater severity and rigidity, he was...responsible for schism within the Mennonite brotherhood."

Dirck Philips spurned the Old Testament. He also rejected the incarnation -- and denied infant baptism.

As the Pro-Mennonite Leonard Verduin has rightly maintained:<sup>287</sup> "In the words of Dirck Philips, one of the most influential thinkers in the camp of the Anabaptists: 'The false prophets cover and disguise their deceptive doctrines by appealing to the letter of the Old Testament.... It is from this fountain that the sacrilegious ceremonies and pomp of the Church of Antichrist [alias Rome] and the deplorable errors of the seditious sects [alias the Lutherans and the Calvinists] have come.'"

The Hofmannite Dirck Philips also derived both his christology and his sacramentology from the 'bridal baptisms' of Hofmann himself. To Philips, there was no link between the infant circumcision of the 'carnal' Old Covenant and the adult baptism of the 'spiritual' New Testament.<sup>288</sup>

The ones regenerated, as a reward for their obedience in following Christ's command, receive the forgiveness of sin -- so that "in baptism the regenerated children of God are washed through the blood and the Spirit of Christ."<sup>289</sup> Synergism and crypto-sacramentalism are both present in this statement of Dirck Philips.

## **225. The awful actions of Anabaptism in its 'millennium' at Münster**

News reached the Hofmannite Anabaptist Beukels in Holland that the cathedral priest Bernard Rothmann of Münster in Germany had defended Antipaedobaptism (but not yet adult rebaptism). So Beukels concluded that Hofmann's eschatological predictions were then being fulfilled in Münster.

Matthys, the henchman of Beukels, therefore promptly resumed the rebaptisms previously suspended by Hoffmann. After two of his 'apostles' (Boekbinder and Cuyper) had rebaptized and ordained Obbe Philips to lead the 'Obbenite' Anabaptists in Holland, the Dutch Anabaptist Matthys then sent them to Münster -- where they promptly rebaptized the ex-priest Rothmann.<sup>290</sup>

After Matthys was killed in one of the predictable skirmishes, Beukels immediately took over and proclaimed a yet stricter form of communism. He enforced the death penalty even for merely complaining -- and then established polygamy.<sup>291</sup> On this, we shall now let Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams tell the story.

Matthys and Beukels and other Dutch Anabaptists themselves sped to Münster, and supported Rothmann and his stooge Mayor Knipperdolling. Matthys proclaimed himself King of Münster, and announced his intention of killing all his enemies. Catholics and Lutherans both fled the city. Matthys then and there introduced communism and confiscated all money, food and real estate.<sup>292</sup>

Rothmann taught this radical sharing of property and its public ownership -- in his 1533 *Confession of Both Sacraments*. He based it on spurious rewritings (allegedly by Isidore) of the pseudepigraphical *Fourth and Fifth Epistles of [Pseudo-]Clement*. Rothmann's programme led to a community where the sharing of goods and wives was compulsory.<sup>293</sup>

While Rothmann had a mere nine wives, Beukels took fifteen -- and Knipperdolling seventeen.<sup>294</sup> "*Koning Jan*" alias 'King John' Beukels had deserted a wife in Leyden; had next married the beautiful young widow of Matthys; and then soon had a whole harem.

A 'law' was passed, forcing all women under a certain age to marry -- under pain of capital punishment. Quarrels among plural wives were also capitally punished. Finally, divorce had to be permitted -- which 'transubstantiated' polygamy into gross licentiousness.<sup>295</sup>

Just like Melchior Hofmann before them, the Melchiorite Rothmannites in Münster held both baptism and marriage to be an image of the relation of Christ to His bride (alias the community of the faithful). However, explains G.H. Williams,<sup>296</sup> these "Rothmannites...could think of Christ with many individual brides -- and hence each husband with a plurality of wives. But since plural marriage was also bound up with faith, the marriage of believers with unbelievers was not true marriage but the equivalent of adultery -- and therefore to be annulled by a rigid communal discipline....

"After a fearful battle, the city was taken on 25 June.... [The Anabaptist leaders] Knipperdolling and Krechting remained loyal to their Anabaptist faith, but John Beukels made a partial recantation before his death and even offered, if his life were spared, to persuade the remaining Anabaptists to give up all thoughts of violence."<sup>297</sup>

History had repeated itself. Centuries earlier, the Circumcellion circuit-riders had rebaptized Donatistically -- and then gone plundering and burning, murdering traditional Christians in many areas of North Africa. Now, revolutionary rebaptists rode again!

A then-contemporary writer described it all perfectly. See U. Rhegius's *Refutation of the Neo-Valentinians and Neo-Donatists of Münster* (Wittenberg 1535). See too the classic statement by the modern liberal Roman Catholic scholar C.A. Cornelius -- in his *History of the Münster Revolution*.<sup>298</sup>

Interestingly, in his essay *The Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement*, the modern Baptist scholar Rev. Dr. West of Oxford has rightly described Münster's Jan Beukels as "scarcely sane." Nevertheless, in all candour, West has then also honestly added: "It is certainly not right to divorce Münster entirely from Anabaptism."<sup>299</sup>

## **226. Obbe Philips's Recantation in his *Recollections of the years 1533-1536***

Long after the fall of Münster in 1536, and indeed even until 1540, the famous Obbe Philips continued to lead the Dutch Anabaptists: his Obbenists. Then, however, he became convinced that Anabaptism was fraudulent. Withdrawing from it at that time, around 1560 he published his *Confession* -- alias his *Recollections of the years 1533-1536*. That is an account of what had helped to open his eyes to all of those deceptions.

Obbe's frank and honest *Confession* is of very great importance in exposing neo-Anabaptism (such as Pseudo-Pentecostalism and other heresies) today. Consequently, we now present important excerpts therefrom.

Wrote Obbe:<sup>300</sup> "The first church of Christ and the Apostles, was destroyed and ruined in early times by Antichrist.... All who with us are called 'Evangelical' know that the whole of the papacy is a Sodom, a Babylon and Egypt, and an abomination of desolation -- the work or service of Antichrist.... Its ordinances...and teachings are false....

"Fieriness became apparent in some [Anabaptists] who could no longer contain themselves.... They presented themselves as teachers and envoys of God, professing to have been compelled in their hearts by God to baptize, preach and teach.... Among these were Doctor Balthasar Hübmaier..., John Hut, John Denck, Louis Hätzer, and Thomas Münzer....

"Among these, Melchior Hofmann stood out.... This Melchior was a very fiery and zealous man, a very smooth-tongued speaker who...wrote heatedly against Luther and Zwingli concerning baptism and other articles.... I know of no one who has so much calumniated and damned in his writings, as this Melchior -- whereby also we all taught many blasphemies.... All who did not say yes and amen -- were 'devilish and satanic spirits'; 'godless heretics'; and people 'damned to eternity'....

"Great dissension and insurrection daily broke out among the burghers.... Baptism [of adults only] came rapidly into vogue -- among many plain and simple souls. At the same time, Melchior had written from prison that baptism should be suspended for two years....

"There arose a baker of Haarlem named John Matthys, who had an elderly wife whom he deserted.... He took with him a brewer's daughter, who was a very pretty young slip of a girl.... He enticed her away from her parents with sacred and beautiful words -- and told how God had shown great things to him, and that she would be his wife.... He professed to have been greatly driven by the Spirit; and how God had revealed great things to him...; and that he was the other witness 'Enoch'....

"When the friends or brethren heard of this, they...attached themselves to John Matthys and became obedient. John Matthys as 'Enoch'...sent out 'true apostles' in pairs.... Some, such as Gerard Boekbinder and John [Beukels] of Leyden, departed for Münster.... They also comforted us and said...no Christian blood would be shed on earth, but in a short time God would rid the earth of all shedders of blood.... Thus did we on that day almost all permit ourselves to be [re]baptized.

"The following day...they summoned us...and, with the laying on of hands, laid upon us the office of preaching.... We could feel the laying on of hands and...many loose words which had neither strength nor lasting effect -- as afterward we amply discovered....

"After this, some others arose who were made teachers by the previous ones mentioned.... Such strange instruction was heard among them! One corrupted marriage. The second taught nothing but parables. The third would pardon no one nor recognize him as brother who fell into

apostasy after baptism.... Others stood firmly by visions, dreams and prophecies....

"I am still miserable of heart today, that I...was so shamefully and miserably deceived that I did not stop forthwith but permitted myself to bring poor souls to this -- that I through the importuning of the brethren, commissioned to the office: Dietrich Philips in Amsterdam, David Joris in Delft, and Menno Simons in Groningen.... It is this which is utter grief to my heart, and which I will lament before my God as long as I live....

"I shall be silent about all the false commissions, prophecies, visions, dreams, revelations and unspeakable spiritual pride which immediately from the first hour stole in among the brethren.... As soon as anyone was 'baptized' he was at once a 'pious Christian' -- and slandered all people and admitted no one on earth to be good but himself and his fellow brethren.

"Was that not a great and terrible pride? And who can express the great wrangling and dissension among the congregation -- of debating and arguing about...the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ on earth; about the incarnation, baptism, belief, Supper, the promised David, second marriage, free will....

"A reasonable, impartial Christian may truly say that it is no Christian congregation but a desolate abomination -- that it can be no temple of God but a cave of murderers full of hate, envy, jealousy, spiritual pride, pseudo-piety, hypocrisy, contempt, defamation. They could suffer neither the love nor benefit of another who was not of their belief."

## **227. The not-so-peaceful Anabaptist Menno Simons**

About 1534, the priest Menno Simons had renounced Romanism. Around 1536, he was 'rebaptized' and '(re-)ordained' by the above-mentioned Obbe Philips (then himself still an Anabaptist).<sup>301</sup>

After Obbe withdrew from his own Obbenites around 1540, his brother Dirck and the Unitarian Anabaptist Adam Pastor and Menno Simons reorganized the Dutch Obbenites under the new name of Mennonites.<sup>302</sup> Indeed, Menno promptly branded<sup>303</sup> Obbe as "a Demas" (Second Timothy 4:10) -- but never denied that Obbe was the one who had ordained Menno!

Menno wrote three important books. The first bore the title *Christian Baptism*. The second was called *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*. The third purported to describe *True Christian Faith*. Together with Dirck Philips, Menno ordained Adam Pastor in 1542. Pastor taught that Christ did not exist before the incarnation. However, only after 1547 did the Mennonites excommunicate and 'shun' him.

As the Baptist Estep has admitted: "Menno was never quite able to shake off the memory of that unpleasant experience. Like himself, Pastor had been a priest.... In other respects, he was apparently a true Anabaptist.... Rationality led him to doubt the deity of Christ....

"Menno felt that the threat to the faith was so grave that he wrote a small book to counteract Pastor's influence, *Confession of the Triune God* [1547].... Menno's own view of the incarnation,

however, became a source of controversy.... Menno's position differed from the historic view, in denying that Christ received His human body from Mary."<sup>304</sup>

Simons not only forbade oaths, but also lacked love. Not only did he perfect the practice of 'shunning' and often wield the ban. He also untruthfully denounced Paedobaptism as: "nothing other than a ceremony of the Antichrist; a public blasphemy; a sin of sorcery; a graven image; yes, an abominable idolatry!"<sup>305</sup>

To Menno, infant baptism was "a human invention of which not one jot or tittle is found in God's Word." He condemned it as "a sin of sorcery; a graven image; a falsification of the ordinance of Christ; a work of superstition and idolatry; a public abomination; and a sacrament of the churches of the antichrist -- just as absurd as the baptism of church bells in the Papacy."<sup>306</sup>

Thus spake not the Lord God, but thus spake Menno Simons. Let it not be forgotten that this Menno is the very man British Baptist Erroll Hulse has recently called<sup>307</sup> "probably the most successful of the early Baptists."

To Menno, Christians should regard the paedobaptistic sacrament as "the baptism of the antichrist." Therefore "we must resist infant baptism not only with our mouth, but also unto blood and death." For "we must be baptized on our own faith." Infants cannot believe or share in regeneration, "because reason[!] teaches they do not have ears to hear God's Word."

Thus Menno<sup>308</sup> -- the 'apostle of reason.' However, as Luther rightly pointed out, in our fallen world -- 'reason' is a whore.

As a false-prophet, in 1536 Menno also -- just like many dispensationalists today -- mispredicted the second coming of Christ as then being "imminent." So too did the other Anabaptists.<sup>309</sup>

Today, more than four-and-a-half centuries later, the second coming of Christ has still not yet occurred. Thus, even the uneminent Menno of the Mennonites stands 'imminently' exposed as a false-prophet indeed. Deuteronomy 13:1-11 & 18:10-22.

## **228. The Antitrinitarian Anabaptist Servetus (or Miguel Serveto)**

Miguel Serveto (alias Michael Servetus) was probably quite the most dangerous of all the Anabaptists. Harvard's Professor Williams, very sympathetic to the Anabaptists, has described himself<sup>310</sup> as having "spiritual connections with Calvin's principal foe Michael Servetus.... Servetus [w]as a Spaniard brought up in contact with Moriscos and Marranos."

The Moriscos were Ex-Moors or converts to Romanism from Mohammedanism, and the Marranos [alias 'Pigs'] were Ex-Jews or rather Sephardic Judaists who had submitted to Christian

baptism with reluctance and resistance. However, such Islamic Moors and Spanish Jews then surreptitiously continued practising their cordial Unitarianism -- even after their own purely nominal baptism by the Church in Spain.

Indeed, often before and sometimes even after their baptism -- many of them usually swore a secret oath to try to destroy the Church's Trinitarianism from within. And it was with such Moriscos and Marranos that Servetus the Spaniard had been raised.

Understandably, after Servetus published his books *On the Errors of the Trinity* (1531) and *Concerning the Trinity* (1532) -- the whole of Christian Europe was deeply shocked. Then, in his 1553 *Restitution of Christianity*, Servetus also vilified infant baptism in the Name of the Triune God. No wonder that Calvin in 1556 denounced him as "that vilest of men" -- and "an Anabaptist and the worst of heretics."<sup>311</sup>

"Servetus," explains the sympathetic Williams,<sup>312</sup> "repudiated as a philosophical sophistication -- the claim of the 'Trinitarians' that the mundane [or 'economic'] generation of the Logos-Son had been preceded by an eternal [or 'ontological'] generation of the Logos-Son.... For Servetus, the Holy Spirit was a power -- and not a Person -- of the Godhead....

"The Prologue of John was seen to be a parallel to the Prologue of Genesis, and the identification of the Word with Light had now made it possible for Servetus to think of the Word itself (*cf.* Dietrich Philips)...before the mundane incarnation as also a kind of 'celestial flesh'.... For Servetus, as of 1553, Christ was also the eternal idea of man in the mind of God....

"His basic proposition was...that there were not three intradeical Persons.... As for the continuous but invisible outpouring of the Spirit of God, Servetus was aware of it everywhere as the mundification of the divine *substantia* in all creatures which could therefore be considered full of divinity. Hence, all things, from the heavenly bodies to the smallest flowers, could be looked upon as gods....

"According to Servetus, God's Spirit is present in a special way at baptismal regeneration or deification -- to clarify the mind of the convert." Thus Servetus coupled his repudiation of the Ontological Trinity and his confession of a purely economic 'trinity' -- to his repudiation of infant baptism and his advocacy of a baptismally-regenerationistic or rather a baptismally-deificationistic adult Anabaptism.

More importantly, Servetus failed to see that the denial of personality to the ruling Spirit and the spoken Word within <sup>></sup>*Elōh̄ym* at Genesis 1:2-3, implies an equally impersonal <sup>></sup>*Elōh̄ym* at Genesis 1:1. Yet such a denial is untenable in terms of Genesis 1:26. For the latter text proves the personality of God *vis-a-vis* mankind -- just as much as it proves the individual personalities of God's "We" (the ruling Spirit and the spoken Word of Genesis 1:2-3) *vis-a-vis* One Another also within <sup>></sup>*Elōh̄ym* Himself. Hence, an unexegetical view of Genesis 1:1-26 -- is the very root of Servetus's unitarian heresy (as it is of also every other possible heresy).

As the great church historian Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Kurtz has indicated<sup>313</sup> regarding the viewpoint of Servetus, to that heretic "Son and Spirit are only different *dispositiones Dei* [or dispositions of God]. The Father alone is *tota substantia et unus Deus* [the whole substance and



one God]. And as the 'trinity' makes its appearance in connection with the redemption of the world, it will disappear again when that redemption has been completed.

Yet the polemic of Servetus extended beyond the doctrine of the Trinity to an attack upon the church doctrine of original sin and the repudiation of infant baptism.... He denounced views opposed to his own as 'doctrines of devils' -- among other reproachful terms applying to the church doctrine of the Trinity the name of *triceps Cerberus*, the three-headed dog of hell."

## **229. The influence of Servetus among Anabaptists internationally**

The influence of the rabid Antitrinitarian Servetus soon spread to Italy -- and then, also with that of the Unitarian Socinus, to Hungary and Poland. Soon Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, was a centre of Anabaptism.<sup>314</sup> There, the Calvinist Georg Weigel stated that the Antitrinitarian Anabaptists "tell their dreams and visions...[and] introduce plurality of wives, community of goods, contempt of the magistrate, of the courts, and of every rank."

As the Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. H. Bouwman has shown: "In Bohemia, Italy and Poland -- many still remained Anabaptists." There, "they intermixed especially with the Antitrinitarians..., absorbing themselves into the Socinians."<sup>315</sup> Interestingly, even the American Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. H.C. Vedder has admitted<sup>316</sup> that "we find definite proofs of immersion only among the Anabaptists...in Poland" -- namely, among the Antitrinitarians.<sup>317</sup>

These serious heresies were then indeed general among Anabaptists. As the eminent church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Kurtz has explained:<sup>318</sup> "It was agreed...to summon an Anabaptist Council to meet at Vienna in September 1550.... About sixty deputies...laid down the following doctrinal propositions as binding upon all their congregations: 'Christ is not God but man...; there are neither angels nor devil...; there is no other hell than the grave in which the elect sleep...till they shall be awaked at the last day...; the souls of the ungodly as well as their bodies, like those of the beasts, perish in death.'"

The Anabaptist Servetus spread his Antitrinitarianism to Italy, and his fellow heretic Faustus Socinus then exported Unitarianism from Italy to Poland and thence to Holland and even to England. Walter Klaassen's *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* and I.B. Horst's *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558*, substantiate these facts.<sup>319</sup>

"The Anabaptists," claims the Baptist Estep, "made the New Testament alone normative for the Christian life." Even the 'moderate' Anabaptist Pilgram Marbeck (alias Marpeck) held to "an absolute distinction between the Old Testament and the New."<sup>320</sup>

Too, the Neo-Anabaptist Harold Bender states<sup>321</sup> the case quite rightly in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. "Anabaptism was not fully conformant to Reformation Protestantism.... It refused to place the Old Testament on a parity with the New Testament..., relegating therefore the Old Testament to the position of a preparatory instrument.... Baptism is not the counterpart of circumcision therefore."

However, the Bible teaches the very opposite. Romans 4:10f & 6:1f; Galatians 3:6-29; Colossians 2:11-13.

### **230. Candid assessment of the Anabaptists' faith and practice**

The famous Swiss-American German Reformed church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has explained<sup>322</sup> that "the early history of the Anabaptists exhibits...violent revolutions, separatism, mysticism, millenarianism, spiritualism, contempt of history, ascetic rigour, fanaticism, communism, and some novel speculations concerning the body of Christ as being directly created by God and different from the flesh and blood of other men....

"They rebaptized those baptized in infancy.... They themselves denied the validity of infant baptism...and regarded voluntary baptism in 'years of discretion' as the only true baptism."

To Schaff, the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer was the "evangelist of the social revolution." He anticipated the later Marxists and Leninists (who praised him). Thus, as a 'revolutionary communist' he signed his pamphlets: "Münzer with the hammer" [and the sickle] -- and "Let not the saint's sword grow cold from blood!"

Sympathetic even to the Antitrinitarian Servetus,<sup>323</sup> Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams has admitted<sup>324</sup> that among the Anabaptists in general "the imminent advent...was discussed and calculated with enthusiasm. Group confession led to disclosures that alarmed spouses.... Glossolalia broke out. There was lewdness and unchastity, and the extraordinary declaration of a deranged woman that she was predestined to give birth to the Antichrist."

According to the American Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. McGlothlin,<sup>325</sup> it was not till 1527 that the first Anabaptist 'Articles of Confession' were drawn up -- inculcating, however, the teachings of communism. This was done by the ex-priest Michael Sattler -- at Schleithem, on the border of Germany and Switzerland. The full title of that document is *The Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles*.

Those *Seven Articles* of Schleithem were the ecumenical 'basis of agreement' defining the Brotherly Union of German and Swiss Anabaptists. They consisted of: (1) the total rejection of infant baptism; (2) the rigid affirmation of the mandatory ban; (3) a heretical view of the Lord's supper; (4) an unbiblical doctrine of ministry; (5) a statement on the need to separate from political 'abominations'; (6) rejection of the state's sword; and (7) repudiation of the oath.<sup>326</sup>

The great church historian Philip Schaff has noted<sup>327</sup> that "the earliest Anabaptist articles" in these "Swiss statements of 1527...bear solely on practical questions. Two of the teaching inculcate communism, and that the Lord's supper be celebrated as often as the brethren come together."

For a refutation of this communism of the Anabaptists, see Francis Nigel Lee's *Biblical Private Property Versus Socialistic Common Property*<sup>328</sup> and also his recent monograph *The Anabaptists and their Stepchildren*.<sup>329</sup> For a refutation of their overly-frequentative use of the Lord's supper, see Francis Nigel Lee's *Quarterly Communion at Biblical Seasons Annually*.<sup>330</sup>

### **231. Further assessment of Anabaptism (by its admirers)**

The *Articles of Association* of the Moravian Anabaptists forbade the Lord's supper to persons holding private property.<sup>331</sup> Also those of the Dutch Mennonites upheld many heterodox beliefs. Thus the various editions of the 1580 *Confession of Waterland*<sup>332</sup> still deny the guilt of hereditary sin (art. 4); teach that God predestinated all men for salvation (art. 7); reject war, secular office-holding, and oaths (arts. 18 & 37 & 38); and repudiate infant baptism as 'unscriptural' (art. 31).

Significantly, the Mennonites in the Netherlands later called themselves *Doopsgezinden* alias Baptist-minded. This occurred even before the yet later establishment of the Dutch Baptist congregations.

Now while all of the Anabaptists attacked infant baptism, most of them 'rebaptized' adults only by pouring. The first clear case of submersion among the Anabaptists -- thus the Baptist M'Glothlin<sup>333</sup> -- occurred when the altogether naked Ulimann got himself submersed in the Rhine. Only in the seventeenth century did the first English-speaking (Re-)Baptists baptize and/or rebaptize by submersion alone. Fortunately, they then did so only by way of non-naked submersions.

As even Wheaton College's Rev. Professor Dr. Donald M. Lake has honestly insisted<sup>334</sup> in his article on *Baptism*: "Only with the English Baptists about 1633 did the issue of immersion arise among the Particular Baptists. Prior to this, even the Baptists practiced affusion or sprinkling."

Most of the Anabaptists were intolerant and violent, although some of the later ones were pacifistic. Some Anabaptists killed all who refused rebaptism. Most affirmed soul-sleep and denied the existence of hell and of the devil. Many were communists, polygamists and/or advocates of 'group marriage' alias 'free love' (*sic*). The majority seem to have been a miscellaneous assortment of Antitrinitarians -- namely Binitarians, Pantheists, Tritheists and/or Unitarians *etc.* The Anabaptist Servetus denounced the Holy Trinity as a 'dog with three heads' -- and already by 1534 Anabaptism had been exported even to England.<sup>335</sup>

All of the Anabaptists, to a man, rejected infant baptism. Practising community of property and community of wives, the violent Anabaptists were the forerunners of the Red Revolutions of 1848 and 1917 and thereafter -- even till today. Communists of the world -- unworking men of all nations -- ignite!

### **232. Character of the baptistic views of the Anabaptists**

Appreciating that most Anabaptists did not immerse under water, we need not dwell on the maverick plunging of the Anabaptist Ulimann in the Rhine -- nor on the single submersionisms of the Unitarian Anabaptists in Poland. Accordingly, we here confine our attention only to the widespread Anabaptist denial of sealing during baptism -- and especially their individualistic denial of household baptism (and thus that of covenantal infants).

The Anabaptists did not heed the Biblical statements about the sealing (or confirmatory) effect of baptism -- especially in respect of covenant children (Romans 4:11 *cf.* Colossians 2:11f). Nor did they understand that believers' children, even before their birth, are already to be regarded as being among the faithful.<sup>336</sup>

Thus the Anabaptists denied the possibility of regeneration and faith within unborn babies, and also in newly-born children.<sup>337</sup> Consequently, they also denied that any newly-born children should receive baptism as the sign of regeneration and faith.

Holy Scripture, however, teaches that only those sinners who have been regenerated can enter into the Kingdom of God. See John 3:3-8. This clearly means that all unregenerates, even if still very tiny, are lost. Yet the Anabaptists held that babies are: neither lost; nor sinners; nor regeneratable. Denying the covenant of election, they maintained that all babies are 'innocent' (just as were Adam and Eve before the fall).<sup>338</sup>

The Anabaptists correctly saw -- that faith is not acquired by baptism. Neither is faith obtained for the very first time only at that sacrament's administration.<sup>339</sup>

However, that believers' babies should be seen as obviously residing already among the faithful even before their birth -- never dawned upon the Anabaptists. These heretics accordingly denied the possibility of regeneration and faith inside believers' unborn infants themselves -- and also inside just-born babies and other very young children.<sup>340</sup>

Indeed, following Pelagius, the Anabaptists quite wrongly held that all children -- even those of pagan parents -- were devoid of guilt.<sup>341</sup> Sinless infants (said the Anabaptists) need neither repentance; nor faith in Christ; nor baptism. Indeed, they concluded that even the infants of believers can have no faith at all -- at least while still infants. Scripture, however, teaches quite the opposite -- Psalm 22:9f; Matthew 18:6; Luke 1:44 & 18:15f; Second Timothy 1:5 & 3:15f.

### **233. Bucer, Oecolampadius and the 1532 First Basle Confession**

In 1530, the Reformed *Tetrapolitan Confession* appeared. This was drawn up by Calvin's mentor Martin Bucer, and others. It rightly states<sup>342</sup> -- even in respect of infants -- that without faith it is impossible to please God [Hebrews 11:6].

Declares the *Tetrapolitana*: "Baptism is a sacrament of the covenant which God makes with those who belong to Him. There, He promises to protect them and their descendants and to regard them as His people.... It should be imparted even to the children.... Every promise applies just as much to us, as to those of old; 'I will be the God of you, and of your seed!'" Genesis 17:7-14.

Bucer also wrote to the Anabaptist Margaret Blaures in 1531 about the well-known Anabaptist Pilgram Marbeck. Asked Bucer:<sup>343</sup> "What is the view of your Anabaptist of whom you write to me -- but that of the ancient Cyprian, who wanted to rebaptize all those who had been baptized by heretics?"

Also Rev. Professor Dr. Johann Heuszgen or Hausschein (alias Oecolampadius) -- Zwingli's friend in Basle -- firmly believed that regeneration often precedes infant baptism. In his *Instruction Against Rebaptism*, he urged Christians not to trust in baptism itself. For not the earthly water but only the Spirit of Christ washes away sins and brings about regeneration. Yet baptism is necessary, so that people can regard us as belonging to the number of the Christians. Infants too need forgiveness of sin, and regeneration. For they follow the sinful Adam.<sup>344</sup>

"If that were not so," explained Oecolampadius, "it would be incorrect to baptize them. For then, it would be a lying sign."

For baptism indicates the forgiveness precisely of sin, through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus. The fact is, however, that God "provides" the "Holy Spirit" to at least such of His elect who die in their infancy before receiving baptism. At the same time, He also provides that those who do not die before their baptism in infancy, but who live till early childhood and beyond, then have "**further grace poured over**" them. See Oecolampadius's 1527 *Answer to Balthazar Hubmaier's "Little Book Against...Infant Baptism."*<sup>345</sup>

Above, it should be noted that Oecolampadius advised "to baptize" even the babies of believers in their infancy -- and then to expect them to have further grace "poured over" them. Very clearly, these words indicate his conviction that also the babies of believers should be baptized -- and indeed not by submersion, but precisely by having the water "poured over" them (alias by way of sprinkling).

It was probably Oecolampadius who wrote the 1532 *First Basle Confession*.<sup>346</sup> That was subsequently revised in 1534 by his Zurich successor, Rev. Professor Dr. Oswald Myconius. Significantly, it ends with a final section under the heading: *Against the Errors of the Anabaptists*.

There, the *First Basle Confession* proclaims: "We openly declare that we not only do not accept but that we reject those strange erroneous teachings as abominable and as blasphemous. For these weird swarms (*Rottengeister*) also say -- among other damned and evil opinions -- that one should not baptize children. We, however, do get them baptized -- according to the custom of the Apostles and of the Primitive Church, and also because baptism has come in the place of circumcision."

#### **234. The "unashamed" wickedness" of the Anabaptist Pfistenmeyer**

With this, one should compare the 1531 work *Unashamed Wickedness* (about Pfistermeyer and his followers) -- written by Zwingli's successor. Wrote Henry Bullinger of these Swiss Anabaptists:

"They be wholly given over to such foul and detestable sensuality.... They do interpret it to be the commandment of the Heavenly Father, persuading women and honest matrons that it is impossible for them to be partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven -- unless they do abominably

prostitute and make common their own bodies to all men."

According to Bullinger, these Anabaptists further taught that "we ought to suffer all kinds of infamy or reproach for Christ's sake. Besides that, the publicans and harlots [held the Anabaptists] shall be preferred to the 'righteous' in the Kingdom of heaven.... [Furthermore, they also taught that] Christ was but a prophet -- saying that ungodly persons...and the devils also should enjoy the heavenly bliss."<sup>347</sup>

The *Second Basle Confession* alias the *First Helvetic [or Swiss] Confession* of 1536, was drawn up by the same Bullinger --in association with Myconius, Megander, Leo Judae, Bucer and Capito. Martin Bullinger was Zwingli's successor in Zurich. There, Myconius succeeded Oecolampadius as Professor of Theology. Megander was recommended by Zwingli for a Zurich Professorship. Leo Judae was Zwingli's co-worker in Zurich. And Bucer and Capito were Reformed theologians from Strassburg.<sup>348</sup>

### **235. The 1536 Second Basle or First Helvetic Confession on baptism**

Now this *First Helvetic Confession* is directed largely against the Anabaptists. It insists<sup>349</sup> that Christ "has two different unmixed natures in one individual person.... He took our flesh upon Himself (yet without sin)...from the virgin Mary."

It further declares<sup>350</sup> that the "sacraments...are not merely empty signs -- but consist of signs and the things signified. For in baptism, the water is the sign. The signified thing itself, however, is regeneration and adoption in the family of God."

The *First Helvetica* continues: "We baptize our children with this holy washing" -- literally, 'we tinge our infants' (in the original Latin). "It would be unfair if we were to rob those born from us [who are God's people] -- of the fellowship of God's people" [namely the fellowship of the parents of such infants]. For "our children are predestined through the divine Word -- and they are those whose pious election is to be presumed."

In the last sentence, the official Latin text reads: *infantos nostros...tingimus...de eorum electione pie est praesumendum.*" The official German translation here runs: *taufen wir unsre Kinder...von denen man vermuthen soll, sie seien von Gott erwählt.*" To prove this 'presumed election' of the infant children of believers -- the *Confession* itself then immediately goes on to cite: "Titus 3; Acts 10; Genesis 17; First Corinthians 7; and Luke 18."

Note here that the word 'presume' is used. The *First Helvetica* thus teaches not the false and hypercalvinistic heresy of irrebuttable and asserted regeneration, but the glorious 'Calvinistic' (and indeed also Pre-Calvinistic) doctrine of the rebuttable but nevertheless (pre-)supposed regeneration of covenant infants.

Later apostasy after infant baptism (and also after adult baptism) could certainly rebut this prebaptismal presumption. Where such apostasy then occurs and remains, it proves the previous presumption to have been incorrect. Yet, until such post-baptismal apostasy might occur --

prebaptismal regeneration is indeed to be presumed -- as a necessary prerequisite for the right administration of baptism.

The *Helvetica* then concludes with a warning against "all those who hamper the holy congregation and fellowship of the Church, and who introduce ungodly doctrines.... These are signs which in our time are displayed mostly by the Anabaptists....

"They should be suppressed, so that they do not poison nor harm nor pollute the flock of God with their false doctrines.... The Magistrate should punish and eradicate all blasphemy."<sup>351</sup>

### **236. Peter Martyr on the 'presumed regeneration' of holy babies before baptism**

Perhaps as early as 1540, the Italian ex-monk and ex-prior Pietro Martire Vermigli alias Peter Martyr (1500-62) was soundly converted. He then became a leading Reformer. Indeed, he also became a Protestant Professor of Theology -- first, with Bucer, in Strassburg; then, through Cranmer, at Oxford; and finally, through Bucer, in Zurich. Thus, the Italian Protestant Peter Martyr laboured in England -- as too did the Scottish Reformer John Knox -- even in the days of the Anglican Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.<sup>352</sup>

From Oxford, Peter Martyr wrote in a letter to Henry Bullinger in 1552 that infants of believers are regenerated before baptism (*regeneratus ante baptismum*).<sup>353</sup> Indeed, in his *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), Martyr stated:<sup>354</sup>

"Those are truly saved, to whom the divine election extends -- [even if or] although baptism does not intervene. Just so, I hope well concerning infants of this kind.... I see nothing to the contrary.... It is right to hope well, concerning the salvation of such infants."

Further:<sup>355</sup> "It cannot be denied but that they which be of full age if they believe, are justified even before they be baptized.... Neither would we baptize infants, but that we suppose that they **already** pertain unto the Church and unto Christ....

"The 'holiness' (First Corinthians 7:14) is that they **belong** unto the Church of God.... The young children of the faithful may have the Spirit and **grace** of Christ. For this cause, the Apostle seemeth to call them 'holy.' Wherefore, unto the Romans it is said: 'But, and if so be the root be holy, the branches also are holy: and if the first fruits be holy, the lump also shall be holy [Romans 11:16]....

"If you demand how the children of Christians belong unto the Church or unto Christ, we will answer: no other wise, than the children of the Hebrews, being of the posterity of Abraham, were said to be contained in the covenant of God.... Our little ones enjoy the benefit of them which were sprung forth from [out] of the stock of that patriarch [Abraham]. So verily, the salvation of our children is altogether of the mere election and mercy of God, which oftentimes goeth together with natural propagation. Weigh with thyself, that even they be elected by God which be also born of the saints."

Martyr went on: "We judge the **children** of the saints, to be **saints**.... We exclude them not from the Church, but embrace them as Members thereof.... We hope well of the children of the faithful.... And for **this** cause, we **baptize** them.... They therefore which be so born of Christians, are called holy -- because they are judged to belong unto **grace** and election, seeing nothing persuadeth otherwise.

"Now, then, the Church doth seal these things unto them in baptism.... The children of the Hebrews which died **before** the eighth day, might be saved [Genesis 17:10*f* *cf.* Second Samuel 12:18*f*].... They belonged unto Christ.... It is sufficient for the salvation of infants, if they be endued with the Holy Ghost."

### **237. Peter Martyr on the prebaptismal regeneration of covenant children (continued)**

Peter Martyr continued:<sup>356</sup> "By election and predestination, they belong unto the treasure of God; are endued with the Spirit of God which is the root of faith, hope, charity and of all virtues which He afterward sheweth and declareth in the children of God.... Such young children may be called 'faithful'.... And that that age may be adorned with the Holy Ghost, John [Luke 1:15] and Jeremy[ah 1:5] may witness, who were inspired with the Spirit of God even from their mother's womb.... Everyone is saved by his **own** faith, **not** by that of others." Thus, every justified infant is saved by his or her own faith in Christ --not by that of his or her parent(s).

So God has im-pressed faith into covenant infants. "Touching them which be of ripe age, we require a faith ex-pressed --and in act. But in the young children of Christians which are offered to be baptized, we saw that the same is begun.... I mean in their beginning and root, because they have the Holy Ghost -- from Whom both faith as well as all other virtues flow.... Therefore, young children who truly belong to the election of God -- before they can be baptized, are instructed by the Spirit of the Lord [if not also by holy people]. **Otherwise**, as we alleged before, they could not be saved -- if they died before circumcision or baptism."

Martyr even stated:<sup>357</sup> "The holiness of children consists of their belonging to the Church of Christ and their possessing the Holy Spirit and the grace of Christ.... Election often coincides with natural reproduction, so that those born from saints are at the same time the elect of God.... These little children, because they belong to God's inheritance by election and predestination, for their preservation, have poured over them the Holy Spirit -- Who is the Root of faith and hope and charity.... They can thus be called 'believers'....

"Everyone, says the prophet, is saved through his own faith [in Christ]. Consequently, the little children too have their own faith -- not a faith which is actively expressed, but an 'embryonic faith' as regards its beginning and its root.... Indeed in the little children of Christians which are brought to be baptized, we say faith has begun -- from the root, I say, in its principle."

Covenant children, continued Peter Martyr, possess faith even before their infant baptism. "For they have the Holy Spirit -- from Whom faith proceeds, just like all other virtues.... Thus, children belong to the Church not just after but even before baptism. Yet they could not be Members of the Church, unless they had already been filled by the Spirit of Christ [*cf.* Romans



8:9,15f]. For this reason, those children who truly belong to the Church, have been furnished with the Spirit of the Lord **before baptism.**"

Indeed, "those belonging already to the Church -- are visibly implanted into it" by infant baptism. For "outward signs do not join us to Christ, but are given when we are already joined to Him.... We judge the children of saints to be saints -- so long as by reason of age they do not declare themselves to be strangers from Christ.... For this reason, we baptize them."<sup>358</sup>

### **238. The baptismal views of George Wishart and Benedict Aretius**

The famous Scot George Wishart, the forerunner of the greater Scottish Reformer and erstwhile Romish priest John Knox, lived for some time in Europe. There, Wishart became deeply impressed by the *First Helvetic Confession*. Returning to Britain in 1542, he taught at Cambridge. In 1544, he went back to his native Scotland, introducing there the standards and faith of the Swiss Reformation.<sup>359</sup>

Wishart had a profound influence on John Knox, especially through the former's translation of the *Confession of Faith of the Churches of Switzerland*.<sup>360</sup> Once again, this document broadcast its doctrine anent the "presumed election"<sup>361</sup> of covenant children -- and, this time, also into Scotland.

Rev. Dr. Benedict Aretius, the 1542f well-known Calvinistic botanist, was first Professor of Philosophy at Marburg in Germany and later Professor of Theology at Berne in Switzerland. Referring to First Peter 3:18-21 and First Corinthians 10:1-4, Aretius stated:<sup>362</sup> "The great flood is a figure of baptism, inasmuch as **Noah and his family were saved**" there. Aretius also stated that "according to the Apostle, the Israelites were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. For the cloud overshadowed and the sea **sprinkled all of them** equally."

Those **infants** who "have faithful parents, **have the Holy Spirit**.... We ought to cherish the good expectation that God's election is hidden" there. For such children "are holy; belong to the Church; and have the Holy Spirit -- Who is the Administrator of the true baptism."<sup>263</sup>

### **239. The road to Trent and Rome's classic doctrine of baptismal regenerationism**

So God, in His blessed providence, had sent the Protestant Reformation. Now, all enlightened Christians could rejoice in the famous Lutheran Schwarzerd's later defence of the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*. Schwarzerd alias 'Melanchthon' --meaning 'Black Earth' -- was Professor of Greek and New Testament at the University of Wittenberg. He was also Martin Luther's "right-hand man."

Wrote this Rev. Professor Dr. Melanchthon:<sup>364</sup> "Here we condemn the whole rabble of Scholastic doctors, who teach that the sacraments confer grace upon him who interposes no obstacle, *ex opere operato*, without any good motion on the part of the recipient.... This impious and superstitious opinion is taught with great authority in the whole kingdom of the Pope."

The Vatican then replied to this at her historic Romish *Council of Trent*, in 1545*f*. For Trent firmly repudiated both Lutheran and Calvinistic Protestantism. Indeed, it implicitly further rebuffed some of the counter-reformational claims even of Cardinal Cajetan himself.

Writes the modern Romanist theologian Professor Dr. Murphy:<sup>365</sup> "The theologian Cajetan...expressed the opinion that in the case of infants dying in their mother's womb, the prayers of the parents could secure the justification and salvation of the children. He thought that a blessing of the child in the womb -- given in the Name of the Blessed Trinity -- would secure this.

"This opinion was regarded with great disapproval by the theologians of the Council of Trent [Session V, Decree 1].... Though it was not actually condemned, Pope Pius V ordered that it should be expunged from the works of Cajetan.... Even St. Bonaventure seems to have nodded. For he says<sup>280</sup> that an infant would be deprived of grace if unbaptized -- unless God made it the object of some special privilege."

Thus did Rome reply to the Reformation (and to reformist Romanists like Cajetan) at the Council of Trent in 1545*f*. There, she re-iterated that the sacrament of baptism comes not to the justified but to "the damned" -- and "totally expunges" the guilt of all pre-baptismal sin. She declared that baptism itself translates" a man from the state of death into spiritual life --"by its own working" (or *ex opere operato*). Indeed, she insisted that baptism itself impresses a certain "spiritual and indelible" character into the soul.<sup>366</sup>

#### **240. The baptismal tyranny of Trent**

The implications of this for baptism now unfolded -- especially among Protestants in general and Calvinists in particular. Rome had just reacted against the Reformation -- and with renewed rigour. Down through the previous centuries, the Mediaeval Church had entrenched baptismal regenerationism. That of scholastics like Thomas Aquinas, had been especially influential. All of this was now frozen into an inflexible dogmatism -- at the tyrannical Council of Trent from 1545 onward.

At its famous *Fifth Session*, on June 17th 1646 Rome decided on some important decrees at Trent. She said:<sup>367</sup> "Whosoever affirms that new-born infants are not to be baptized even though they are the children of baptized parents, or says that they are indeed baptized for the remission of sins but derive no original sin (from Adam) which required to be expiated by the laver of regeneration in order to obtain eternal life, whence it follows that in them the form of baptism for the remission of sins is not true but false -- let him be *anathema!*"

Further: "Infants who of themselves could not have committed sin, are truly baptized for the remission of sins -- in order that what they have contracted by generation, may be cleansed by regeneration.... Whosoever denies that the guilt of original sin by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, or even asserts that that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not wholly taken away, but is only rased or not imputed -- let him be *anathema!*"

At Trent's *Sixth Session*, on her 'Decrees as to Justification,' she decreed<sup>368</sup> that "the instrumental cause [thereof] is the sacrament of **baptism**, which is the sacrament of faith without

which justification is never obtained.... This faith, before the sacrament of baptism, catechumens...seek from the Church....

"They immediately hear the words of Christ, 'If ye would enter into life -- keep the commandments!' Therefore, [in baptism they are] receiving true and Christian righteousness as a first robe (instead of that one which Adam by his disobedience lost both for himself and for us) -- a fair and immaculate robe presented to them by Jesus Christ which, on being born again, they are enjoined to preserve [so] that they may produce it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ and have eternal life."

In Trent's most important *Seventh Session*, Rome decreed:<sup>369</sup> "Whosoever shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and are either more or fewer than seven -- viz. Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, [Holy] Orders, and Matrimony (or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a Sacrament) -- let him be *anathema!*"

"Whosoever shall say that these seven Sacraments are so equal among themselves, that no one is in any respect of greater dignity than another -- let him be anathema! Whosoever shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary to salvation...and that without them or a wish for them men by faith alone obtain the grace of justification, though all are not necessary for each -- let him be *anathema!*"

"Whosoever shall say that these Sacraments were instituted for the sake of nourishing faith alone -- let him be *anathema!*"<sup>370</sup> "Whosoever shall say that by these Sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred *ex opere operato* (from the work performed), but that faith alone in the Divine promise suffices to obtain grace -- let him be *anathema!*"<sup>371</sup>

"Whosoever shall say that in the Roman Church (which is the mother and mistress of all Churches) there is not the true doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism -- let him be *anathema!*"<sup>372</sup> "Whosoever shall say that baptism is free, *i.e.*, not necessary to salvation -- let him be *anathema!*"<sup>373</sup> "Whosoever shall say that infants, in respect they have no act (capacity) of believing, are not to be counted among believers after they have received baptism..., let him be *anathema!*"<sup>374</sup>

The only other really significant baptismal statement in the *Decrees of Trent* themselves, is that made at its November 25th 1551 *Fourteenth Session* 'On the Most Holy Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction.' There, the following cryptic but very telling statement is made:<sup>375</sup> "Penance is, for those who have fallen after baptism, necessary unto salvation; as baptism itself is, for those who have not as yet been regenerated."

Trent was a reaction against Protestantism (both Lutheran and Calvinist). Thereafter, Lutheranism and Calvinism were both quick to react to Trent. Later, when we deal with Calvin himself, we will present especially his reaction to Trent (as published from 1547 onward).

#### **241. John Laski on the presumed regeneration of covenantal infants**

Meantime, the 1499-1560 Polish nobleman and great Reformed theologian Jan Laski (alias John á Lasco) had been a Romish priest and even the Dean of Gniezno. However -- after his conversion to Protestantism in 1538, almost fifteen years after meeting Zwingli -- he went to Germany. There, he had a massive influence on the Palatine theologians (and hence on the germination of their later *Heidelberg Catechism*).

Laski also established the Presbyterian Church in Friesland (south of Denmark near the Dutch/German border).<sup>376</sup> Then, through Cranmer's influence, he migrated to England -- from 1550 onward.

There, he pastored an exiled congregation. While in Britain, he -- together with Martin Micron of Flanders -- worked out a famous liturgy with very important baptismal implications and with widespread influence (also in Holland from 1580 onward).

Perhaps already from 1542 onward, Laski began to write especially on the subjects of infant faith and infant baptism. In his work *Concerning the Sacraments of Christ's Church*, he wrote<sup>377</sup> that "**we are not first sanctified to God and incorporated into Christ only when baptized**; but we were already sanctified from the foundation of the world, in the sacrifice of the promised Seed [Genesis 3:15 *cf.* Revelation 13:8]. Already in Adam's loins, we were...incorporated into Christ, according to the determinate will and gracious mercy of God." Indeed, "in baptism, this is what is sealed: being born again, or to **have** put on Christ (*renasci seu Christum induisse*)!"<sup>378</sup>

#### **242. Laski on the 'unconvertedness' of regenerated covenant infants**

Laski is probably the first Reformed theologian who clearly distinguished between regeneration and conversion -- especially with reference to children.<sup>379</sup> "Conversion or the renewal of our [conscious] mind is the...fruit of our regeneration.

"For, after growing up, we come to know of this renewal -- and that we have been born again.... We are not reconciled with God through baptism -- but by the power of God's mercy in Christ, through the promise by which even original sin was forgiven before we were baptized."<sup>380</sup>

Laski continued:<sup>381</sup> "We are incorporated through baptism into the Church of God, but not because we did not belong to her before baptism.... Baptism is the visible testimony of our incorporation.... We have already, from the origin of the world, long **belonged to the Church** in an invisible manner."

Laski did not hesitate to include their children among the believers.<sup>382</sup> This is clear from his *London Baptismal Formula*. Therein he asked the parents of the tiny baptizees whether the former believe that "**these children** brought here by you, **are** also the seed of our Church?"<sup>383</sup>

Laski also asked the parents:<sup>384</sup> "Do you also acknowledge...that our children...are now included with us in the divine covenant [for Christ's sake], and at His command certainly ought to be sealed with the seal [baptism] of accepting Christ's righteousness?"

After the parents would assent, their children would be baptized. Then Laski would pray:<sup>385</sup> "Almighty and merciful God and Father! We thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Your dear Son; and that through Your Holy Spirit You have received us as members of Your only-begotten Son and thus as Your children; and that You seal and ratify this for us by holy baptism."

Similarly, in Laski's *London Catechism*, we read that "everything children lack in themselves -- they possess in Christ our Lord Who has loaded their weakness upon Himself...and Whose faith and obedience are imputed to them by grace, and through Whose Spirit they are also sanctified as a temple of God.... Should we then, with clear consciences, permit our children to be baptized as believers?"

"Without doubt! For inasmuch as they are in God's judgment regarded as believers by Christ Who has fulfilled all things for them..., one should also baptize them as believers. Thus it is testified to them, by the ministry of the churches, that they are members of the Lord Christ."<sup>386</sup>

Laski's formative influence not only on the English in and around London but also on Martin Micron of Flanders as well as on Peter Datheen -- and thus on the latter's *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* -- was tremendous.<sup>387</sup> So too, in a subsequent century, Laski's writings were highly instrumental in helping to bring about the conversion of that great but then-as-yet-still-unconverted modernist, Rev. [later Professor Dr.] Abraham Kuyper.<sup>388</sup>

### **243. The Hungarian Reformed Confession on the baptism of covenantal infants**

In 1557, Hungarian Reformed theologians drew up their *Czenger Confession of Faith* alias the *Hungarian Reformed Confession*. It was published in 1570, in the Hungarian city of Debrecin. The latter is the site of the oldest Reformed University in the world, often nicknamed 'the Calvinist Vatican.'

This magnificent confession commenced with a heavy emphasis on the Triune God -- and, by implication, also upon the importance of trinitarian baptism. It was directed against the many Unitarians then troubling Eastern Europe. Here it cites, *inter alia*: Exodus 3; Isaiah 6 & 63; Ezekiel 2; First Corinthians 2 & 10 & 12; Colossians 1 & 2; Hebrews 3; First John 5; *etc.*

Later, it launched a section headed 'On Child Baptism' especially against the Anabaptists. There, it taught that except the offspring of those who are 'dogs' and 'pigs' -- all "children brought to the Church are to be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Giving a good reason, it then declared: "For the sacrament of circumcision was instituted also for children. Romans 5:6; First Corinthians 15; Colossians 2." Indeed, a powerful rhetorical

question (obviously expecting a negative answer) was asked in "Acts 10. 'May anyone refuse the water -- so that those who have received the Spirit should not be baptized?'" No!

The *Hungarian Confession* then drew the obvious conclusion. "So Peter commanded that they [*viz.* Cornelius and his entire household] be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>389</sup> Acts 10:2,22,24,27,47-48.

This (rebuttably) presupposed the existence already, of saving faith -- even in tiny baptizees. For the sacrament of baptism is a real "seal of the covenant." Thus, "we also reject the error of those who teach...it is only a mere sign."

#### **244. Bullinger on the presumed regeneration of covenantal infants before baptism**

Henry Bullinger was Zwingli's successor in Zurich. Bullinger held that covenant infants possess imputed faith, and also the renewal of regeneration. For he deemed that they too had received the impartation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>390</sup>

In 1536, together with others, Bullinger drew up the *First Helvetic Confession*. As previously seen,<sup>391</sup> this "presumed" that covenant children are elect before their baptism.

In 1545-51, together with Calvin, Bullinger drew up the *Consensus Tigurinus*. This states believers partake of Christ before baptism. "**Faith is required of them before they come to the sacrament....** Those who are baptized in earliest infancy, are regenerated by God" *etc.*<sup>392</sup>

In Bullinger's 1560 book *Against the Anabaptists*<sup>393</sup> --compare too his 1561 work *The Origin, Developments, Sects, Increase, Aims and Common Doctrines of the Anabaptists*<sup>394</sup> -- he appealed to Matthew 18:10's statement that "these 'little ones' believe in Me." Indeed, Bullinger himself added that such "children are rightly called 'believers' in the Gospels." He also applied Acts 10:47 to such children, saying: "Can anybody refuse the water and not baptize them, seeing they **have** received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?"

Indeed, in his 1566 *Second Helvetic Confession*,<sup>395</sup> Bullinger states that baptism is a sign of the "adoption" of covenant children -- prior to their own infant baptism. By "adoption," Bullinger meant legal inclusion in the very family of God's own children.

#### **245. Infant faith and baptism in Bullinger's Homebook and his Decades**

In Bullinger's 1568 *Homebook*, he declares<sup>396</sup> that "God's elect saints do not first receive the grace and gift of God only when they receive the sign. For they **partake** of the thing signified **before** they partake of the sign." Thus, speaking of covenant children, he asked: "Do we not baptize them when immature...., because we believe that **God has** cleansed them with the blood of Jesus Christ -- and received them by pure grace and mercy, and made them heirs of His everlasting Kingdom?"

Bullinger then concludes: "Because we baptize children for these reasons, we sufficiently advertise that they do not first receive that grace through baptism. Instead, children thus receive the seal of that which they possessed even previously. They therefore already belonged to Christ's fellowship [before baptism]; but by baptism, they are visibly incorporated, just like adults."

In his famous *Decades*, Bullinger affirmed<sup>397</sup> that "the young babes and infants of the faithful are in the number or reckoning of God's people -- and partakers of the promise touching the purification through Christ. It followeth of necessity that they too are to be baptized...."

"Whosoever He receiveth and acknowledgeth for His -- these, no man without an horrible offence may exclude from the number of the faithful. And God promiseth that He will not only be the God of them that confess Him, but of [their] infants also. He promiseth to them His grace and remission of sins. Who, therefore -- gainsaying the Lord of all things -- will yet deny that [such] infants belong to God, [and] are His?"

Further, Bullinger also commented on Jesus' statement in Matthew 18:1-6. There, Jesus said: "It is not the will of My Father Who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish!" Bullinger insisted that Jesus was here speaking of early-dying covenant infants. They would not perish, explained Bullinger --because they are "holy branches of a holy root." Romans 11:16.

"We baptize immature children...because God...promised us and our seed, to be our God.... From pure grace and mercy, God has purified them through the blood of Jesus Christ.... They are not first given grace through baptism. But thereby they have sealed to them -- that which they already previously possess."<sup>398</sup> Indeed, the saints are justified and sanctified before they are sealed and confirmed by the sacraments.<sup>399</sup>

Further, in his *Summa of the Christian Religion*, Bullinger added<sup>400</sup> that although the infants of believers had previously been received in the covenant as children of God, in baptism they actually receive His "Name." Consequently, they are thereafter not only the children of God which they were even before their infant baptism. But subsequently, they are even 'name-d' children of God (the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit) -- just like believing adults.

#### **246. Martin Micron presumed prebaptismal regeneration in covenant infants**

It was Bullinger's student Martin Micron,<sup>401</sup> the 1523-59 Flemish Reformer, who most contributed toward the later Dutch Reformed *Formula for the Administration of Baptism to Children*. Micron did so together with the Reformer Laski -- and *via* the 1562 Peter Datheen.

Micron went to London in 1549, where he ministered in Austin Friars to Flemish Reformed Christians then exiled in Britain. There, he wrote his *Christian Order of the Flemish Congregations of Christians*, and his *Short Catechism*. Indeed, he also edited a shortened version of his associate Laski's own *Church Order*.<sup>402</sup>

Micron's own *Baptismal Formula* first sets out the meaning of the ordinance, and then gives a moving *Prayer Before the Baptism*. This latter was a 'calvinization' derived from Luther's

*Noah's Ark Prayer* -- which that German Reformer had previously protestantized from an earlier mediaeval version in a traditional baptismal rite.<sup>403</sup>

Micron's own *Baptismal Formula* was used in the German Reformed Palatine, from the late 1550's onward.<sup>404</sup> In that *Formula*, Micron asked the baptizees' parents if they believe their babies had already been sanctified. For Micron rightly regarded covenant children themselves as already justified and purified possessors of faith in Christ, even before their own infant baptisms.<sup>405</sup>

At the beginning of the baptismal ceremony,<sup>406</sup> Micron the baptizer would say to the infant baptizees' parents: "Baptism was instituted by the Lord Christ as a seal of God's covenant with us. Our children may not be kept from it. For they participate in that same covenant.... The promises of God in Christ Jesus are given to us and our children [Acts 2:28f].... Declare to me whether you acknowledge that these children you are presenting to me [to be baptized], **are** the seed of this Church of ours, by the power of God's covenant!"<sup>407</sup>

Micron's *Short Catechism*, published in London in 1561 (with a *Foreword* by Laski himself),<sup>408</sup> was even more specific. There, Micron stated<sup>409</sup> that "nobody should withhold from baptism those who possess the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:2,24,47f)." For such "little children are the most special members of Christ's Church . They **belong to Him**, and therefore are not required to profess their faith before being baptized -- as adults are."

The reason for this, maintained Micron, is "because the Church has much more certain testimony of their salvation from the Word of God, than one may get from the profession of adults.... For Christ's sake, they are blessed -- that is, regarded as holy, justified, pure and faithful -- no less than adult believers are."<sup>410</sup>

Indeed, on Mark 16:16 -- 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved' -- Micron further remarked<sup>411</sup> that it is "by Christ's imputation that immature children of the Church are regenerated as believers. For the righteousness of faith is in them (Romans 4:11)."

So then, with both Laski and Bullinger's student Micron resident in England, the Reformed Faith began to be propagated there too. Indeed, this was even before Bullinger's associate John Calvin had won the hearts of Regent Somerset and his ward (young King Edward VI).

## **247. The Early British Anabaptists from 1534 onward**

The Protestant Reformation represents a gigantic step forward in the Church's understanding of the Biblical doctrine of baby belief before baptism. Maintained Warfield:<sup>412</sup>

"That all children of believers, dying in infancy, are included in the covenant of God and enter at once into glory -- was the characteristic feature of the Reformed doctrine.... With this great advance, the minds and hearts of most men were satisfied..., happy in teaching from positive Scripture the certain salvation of all the children of Christian parents departing from their arms -- to the arms of Jesus."



There is no trace of Antipaedobaptism in Britain before the year 1534. Indeed, in 1533 Henry Frith -- who was martyred for his Protestantism later that same year -- wrote in his *Declaration of Baptism* about German and Dutch Anabaptists that "there is an opinion risen among certain which affirm that children may not be baptized until they come unto a perfect age; and that, because they have no faith. But verily, methinketh that they [the Anabaptists] are far from the meekness of Christ and His Spirit -- Which, when children were brought unto Him, received them lovingly.... I trust the English (unto whom I write this) have no such opinions."<sup>413</sup>

Indeed, in 1538 Henry VIII and his Parliament declared:<sup>414</sup> "1. That the sacrament of baptism was instituted and ordained in the New Testament by our Saviour.... 2. That it is offered unto all men, as well infants.... 3. That the promise of grace and everlasting life...adjoined to the sacrament of baptism, pertaineth...also to infants.... 4. Infants must needs be christened.... They be born in original sin.... 6. That they [Englishmen] ought to refute and take all the Anabaptists' and Pelagians' opinion in this behalf, for detestable heresies and utterly to be condemned."

However, the Anabaptists did infect even Britain at an early date -- between the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. According to the Baptist Estep,<sup>415</sup> "it seems...to be fully substantiated that continental Anabaptists were numerous and not without influence in England from about 1534.... In 1538 the English authorities learned that the Anabaptists had published and distributed a book on the incarnation [denying it]. For this effrontery, they were asked to leave the country."

#### **248. Laski and Bullinger combat the first English Anabaptists**

Even the Unitarian Anabaptists in Poland soon spread their influence among their brethren in Holland, and thence also into England. There, as G.H. Williams has stated, they were vigorously opposed by the Polish Calvinists in London's Stranger's Church at Austin Friars, "where Laski served as the first superintendent. The king recorded in his journal that the Stranger's Church was organized 'for the avoyding of al sectes of Anabaptistes and such like.'"<sup>416</sup>

Also the Swiss Calvinist Bullinger had massive influence in England against the Anabaptists. See his *Wholesome Antidote* (London 1548), his *Most Sure and Strong Defence of the Baptism of Children* (Worcester 1551), and his *Most Necessary and Fruitful Dialogue Between the Seditious Libertine or Rebel Anabaptist and the True Obedient Christian* (1551).

The followers of "Henry Hart, a leader of a congregation of dissenters in Kent..., were referred to as Anabaptists. They were also accused of Pelagian heresy and libertinism. From Hart's own tract, printed in 1548 and reprinted in 1549, it is clear that...his teachings regarding free will, the new birth and discipleship were true to Anabaptist insights." Thus the American Baptist, Professor Estep.<sup>417</sup>

On English soil in the middle of the sixteenth century, we also find the evangelical Anglican Rt. Rev. Dr. Bishop John Hooper. Before he died in 1555, he maintained:<sup>418</sup> "It is ill done to condemn the infants of the Christians that die without baptism, of whose salvation by the Scripture we be assured. *Ero Deus tuus, et seminis tuis post te*" -- 'I shall be a God to you, and to your seed after you!' Genesis 17:7.

"Anabaptists," Hooper complained to Bullinger in 1549, "give me much trouble with their opinions respecting the incarnation of the Lord." For Kent and Sussex were then hotbeds of Anabaptism. Indeed, between 1549 and 1550 there were no less than three editions of Hooper's *Lesson of the Incarnation of Christ*, against the Anabaptist heresy of the 'celestial flesh' of Jesus even from before His earthly conception onward.<sup>419</sup>

In 1553, Thomas Cole published his *Godly and Fruitful Sermon Against the Anabaptists*. Soon thereafter, also Bishop John Jewel rightly called them "a large and inauspicious crop of Arians, Anabaptists and other pests."<sup>420</sup> No wonder, then, that the most important creedal formulation of the Church of England -- the *Forty-two Articles* of 1553 -- included no less than seventeen articles against the Anabaptists.<sup>421</sup>

### **249. The anti-Anabaptist Edwardine Articles of 1553**

Indeed, the above-mentioned (1553) 'Edwardine Articles' of the Church of England were drawn up largely against the Anabaptists. The Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. W.A. Curtis of the University of Aberdeen states in his book *History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* that<sup>422</sup> "the framers of the *Forty-Two Articles* had not only the earlier English attempts in mind, but also...the medley of eccentric or heretical opinions roughly classed as Anabaptist.... Artt. I-IV, VI-VIII, XIV, XV, XVIII, XIX, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXVI-XLII explicitly or implicitly condemn the varied opinions classed as Anabaptist."

Those opinions "impugned the Creeds, Catholic Christology, faith in the Trinity, rights of individual property, the need of Scriptures, infant baptism, avoidance of excommunicated persons, reverence for traditions and ceremonies, obedience to magistrates, military service, [and the] taking of oaths." Positively, those Anabaptist opinions also "affirmed Christian perfection[ism], inefficacy of services and sacraments conducted by unworthy Ministers, [and] ultimate universal salvation."

This opinion of Rev. Professor Curtis is quite in agreement with the well-known Anglican scholar Rev. Professor Dr. E.J. Bicknell. He declared<sup>423</sup> "that the *Forty-two Articles*...are a double-edged weapon, designed to smite two opposite enemies. On the one hand they attack mediaeval teaching and abuses.... They oppose even more keenly the teaching of the Anabaptists.... The name Anabaptists was given to them from their denial of infant baptism and their custom of re-baptizing converts. There is hardly any error of doctrine or morality that was not proclaimed by some of them. They were a very real danger to all order in Church and State alike....

"The Anabaptists are only mentioned by name twice, but...they had revived all the ancient heresies about the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ.... Many of them were Pelagians.... Others claimed that, being regenerate, they were unable to commit sin.... Some depreciated all Scripture and placed themselves above even the Moral Law.... Some denied any need of ordination for Ministers, and claimed that the efficacy of all ministrations depended on the personal holiness of the Minister.... Infant baptism was denied.... All church discipline was repudiated.... Many held strange views about the descent into hell, the nature of the resurrection -- and the

future life, the ultimate salvation of all men, and millenarianism..... The authority of the State was impugned, and communism demanded."

### **250. Philpot the paedobaptistic Protestant martyr's Anticatabaptism**

The Catholic Sir P. Philpot of Hampshire had become a father. His son John was baptized in the Church of Rome in 1516. She burned John at the stake in 1555.

Rev. Dr. John Philpot (Bart.) was a great Protestant. Educated at Oxford and qualifying in the Law, he then went to the Continent of Europe. There, he was almost arrested by the Inquisition -- for expounding 'heretical' (*viz.* 'Pro-testant') ideas in a controversy with a Franciscan.

Philpot greatly admired Calvin, and translated some of his homilies. On his return to England, he became Archdeacon of Winchester under the Calvinistic King Edward VI. However, when Philpot later attacked transubstantiation, Edward's successor the Romish Queen 'Bloody Mary' had him arrested and imprisoned. Ultimately, and very appropriately, he was kept in the Lollard's Tower.

Eleven "Examinations" followed. His Fifth Examination was before the Romish Bishops of London and Coventry and others. There, Bishop Bonner asked Philpot:<sup>424</sup> "Pray tell me into what Faith were you baptised?" Philpot replied: "I acknowledge one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, whereof I am a member. I praise God, and am of that Catholic Faith of Christ whereinto I was baptised."

The Bishop of Coventry then soon asked him: "Why will you not admit the Church of Rome to be the Catholic Church?" Philpot replied: "Because it follows not the Primitive Catholic Church, nor agrees with it -- no more than an apple is a nut."

Saverson then remarked: "I wonder [if] you will stand so stedfast in your error -- to your own destruction!" Philpot retorted: "Where is there one of you all, that ever hath been able to answer any of the godly learned Ministers of Germany who have disclosed your counterfeit religion? Which of you all, is able to answer Calvin's *Institutes*?"

Saverson savagely sniped back. Concerning Calvin, he sarcastically said: "A godly minister indeed -- of cutpurses and runagate traitors!"

In Philpot's Sixth Examination, his interrogator Lord Rich exploded. "All heretics do boast of the Spirit of God, and every one would have a church by himself -- as Joan of Kent and the Anabaptists. I myself had Joan of Kent a week in my house, after the writ was out for her to be burned.... But she went wilfully unto the fire; was burned -- and so do you now!"

To Lord Rich, Philpot responded: "As for Joan of Kent, she was a vain woman (I knew her well) and an heretic indeed.... She stood against one of the manifest articles of our faith -- contrary to the Scriptures." For Anabaptist Joan had stood against infant baptism.

In Philpot's Seventh Examination, Bishop Bonner slandered him. Philpot then calmly replied: "Your libel, my lord, contains two special points. The first pretends that I am of your diocese.... The second is that I -- being baptised in the Catholic Church and in the Catholic Faith -- am gone from them. This is not so! For I am of that Catholic Faith and Church which I was baptised into.... I am of the same Catholic Faith, and of the same Catholic Church which is of Christ -- the pillar and ground of the truth!"

Bishop Bonner bit back: "Your godfathers and godmothers were of another faith than you are now!" But Philpot protested: "I was not baptised either into my godfather's faith or my godmother's -- but into the Faith and into the Church of Christ!"

Asked Bishop Bonner: "How know you that?" Replied Philpot: "By the Word of God, which is the touchstone of faith and the limits of the Church."

### **251. Philpot's last stand: ever loyal to his infant baptism!**

Philpot's Eleventh Examination was before the Bishops of Durham and Chichester and others. Durham asked Philpot: "Will you be of the same Catholic Faith and Church with us, which you were baptised in and your godfathers promised for you and hold as we do -- and then you may be out of trouble?" Philpot replied: "I am of the same Catholic Faith and Catholic Church I was baptised into -- and in that I will live and die."

Chichester then insisted: "Are you of the same Faith your godfathers and godmothers were -- or not?" Philpot responded: "I cannot tell certainly what Faith they were of. But I am of the Faith I was baptised into -- which is the Faith of Christ. For I was not baptised into the Faith of my godfathers -- but in the Faith of Christ."

Philpot further wrote to the members of a Christian Congregation, exhorting them to refrain from papist idolatry. He insisted that "we can do no greater injury to the true Church of Christ -- than to seem to have forsaken her...."

"Woe be unto him by whom any such offence cometh! Better it were for him to have a millstone tied about his neck, and to be cast into the bottom of the sea [*cf.* Matthew 18:1-6]! Such are traitors to the truth -- like unto Judas who with a kiss betrayed Christ. Our God is a jealous God, and cannot be content that we should be of any other than of that Unspotted Church of which He is the only Head -- and wherein He hath planted us, by baptism."

Philpot also wrote a letter of encouragement to the discouraged Christian John Careless. There, he urged him not to be too 'care-full' (or 'full of cares'). Instead, like his name, he should rather be 'care-less.'

Persuaded Philpot: "The Spirit Which is in you, is mightier than all the adversary's power.... Tempt, he may -- and lie wait at your heels, to give you a fall unawares. But overcome, he shall not.... For you are sealed up already with a lively faith, to be the child of God for ever...."

"Whom God hath once sealed for His own -- him He never utterly forsakes.... Since God hath willed you, at your baptism in Christ, to be 'care-less' -- why do you make yourself 'care-full'? Cast all your care -- on Him!"

While in jail, Philpot further wrote to a fellow prisoner who had begun to doubt the lawfulness of infant baptism. Philpot cited from both Scripture and the Patristics. Then he concluded: "Antiquity is on our side.... The Anabaptists have nothing but lies, for them. And new imaginations -- which feign the baptism of children to be the pope's commandment!"

Rome was furious. Understandably, in 1555, the pope's puppet 'Bloody Mary' then burned the Pro-testant Philpot -- at the torture stake. But heaven above was richer. For thereby heaven had gained yet one more citizen.

## **252. The anti-Anabaptist 1563f *Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England***

"In the Church of England," writes the great Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield,<sup>426</sup> "the *Thirty-nine Articles* in their final form are thoroughly Protestant and Reformed. And many of the greatest English theologians...from the very earliest day of the Reformation have repudiated the 'cruel judgment' of the Church of Rome as to the fate of infants dying unbaptized."

Thus Rt. Rev. Bishop John Hooper, who was martyred under 'Bloody Mary' in 1555, condemned<sup>427</sup> "the ungodly opinion that attributeth the salvation of man unto the receiving of an external sacrament..., as though the Holy Spirit could not be carried by faith into the penitent and sorrowful conscience except it ride always in a chariot and external sacrament."

So too Rev. Dr. Richard Hooker -- in his famous 1593 *Ecclesiastical Polity*. He admitted the unavoidable failure of baptism in the case of Christian children, cannot lose them salvation.<sup>428</sup>

Now the *Thirty-nine Articles* of 1563 and 1571 are but the revision of the *Forty-two Articles* of 1553. As regards the former, Bicknell has shown<sup>429</sup> specifically that Article I (on "Faith in the Holy Trinity") was indeed "called forth by the teaching of the Anabaptists, who were reviving all the ancient heresies." Bicknell further insisted<sup>430</sup> that Article II (on the "Son of God which was made very man") had as its object "to oppose the revival of ancient heresies on the Person of Christ by Anabaptists."

Article IV ("Of the Resurrection of Christ") was worded, explained Bicknell,<sup>431</sup> "so as to assert...also the reality of our Lord's risen and ascended manhood -- in opposition to a form of Docetism revived by the Anabaptists, which regarded our Lord's humanity as absorbed into His divinity after the resurrection." Article V 'Of the Holy Ghost' -- Bicknell maintained<sup>432</sup> -- is "one of the new Articles added in 1563...due to the revival of ancient heresies by the Anabaptists."

Article VI ("Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation") was directed against "certain among the Anabaptists [who] regarded all Scripture as unnecessary," explained Bicknell.<sup>433</sup> "An Article of 1553 describes them as those 'who affirm that Holy Scripture is given only to the weak and do boast themselves continually of the Spirit -- of Whom (they say) they have learnt such things as they teach, although the same be most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture.' In

other words, if men claim to be under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit and to have received a personal revelation -- does not this supersede Scripture? Such a view ignored the corporate and social nature of all truth."

Article VII ("Of the Old Testament") stated *inter alia* that "no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral." Bicknell has shown<sup>434</sup> that the Article was "directed against...errors...maintained by sections of Anabaptists."

Of those Anabaptists, "some rejected the Old Testament entirely, and claimed -- in virtue of their illumination by the Spirit --to be superior even to the Moral Law contained in it." Similarly, also Article VIII ("Of the Three Creeds"), explained Bicknell,<sup>435</sup> "was composed as a protest against Anabaptists who rejected all creeds" in general -- and in particular the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Apostles' Creeds.

Article IX ("Of Original or Birth Sin") -- Bicknell maintained<sup>436</sup> -- was "directed against the Pelagian views of Anabaptists." The 1553 Article, after the words 'as the Pelagians do vainly talk' -- had the further words 'which also the Anabaptists do nowadays renew.' Observed Bicknell: "This sufficiently shows the object of the Article."

Article X ("Of free will") -- Bicknell elucidated<sup>437</sup> -- asserted "the need of grace against Pelagian Anabaptists." Article XV ("Of Christ alone without Sin") -- Bicknell has insisted<sup>438</sup> -- "was directed against certain Anabaptists who denied our Lord's sinlessness."

### **253. Continuation of the Anti-Anabaptist *Thirty-nine Articles***

Article XVI ("Of Sin after Baptism") -- thus Bicknell<sup>439</sup> --was "aimed at Anabaptist errors." The 1553 Article dealt with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,<sup>440</sup> and dealt with what the Anglican scholars Maclear and Williams have rightly called<sup>441</sup> "erroneous views...reproduced in the sixteenth century by a section of the Anabaptists who appeared in great numbers in Essex and Kent." Indeed, they have drawn attention to "a letter from Bishop Hooper to Bullinger, June 25 1549, describing the appearance of the Anabaptists in England."<sup>442</sup>

Then there is Article XVIII ("Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the name of Christ"). It too, Bicknell has shown,<sup>443</sup> "is aimed at Anabaptists" -- namely such as "rejected Christ as Saviour and treated any definite Christian belief as unimportant."

Article XIX ("Of the Church") -- thus Bicknell<sup>444</sup> --"would...exclude various Anabaptist sects." Indeed, the 1553 Article also stated that "all men are bound to keep the Moral Commandments of the Law."

This -- Maclear and Williams have insisted<sup>445</sup> -- "had reference to the teaching of a branch of the Anabaptists who 'by putting forth the plea of preternatural illumination made themselves superior to the Moral Law." Indeed, they "circulated opinions respecting it -- most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture."

Article XXIII ("Of Ministering in the Congregation") -- thus Bicknell<sup>446</sup> -- showed that "the Anglicans wished to oppose Anabaptists who held...to ecclesiastical anarchy." Article XXV ("Of the Sacraments") -- Bicknell elucidated<sup>447</sup> -- had as "its object...to condemn as inadequate, teaching about the sacraments held by Anabaptists."

Similar was Article XXVI ("Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers which hinder not the Effect of the Sacrament"). That, stated Bicknell<sup>448</sup> -- would "condemn the idea of Anabaptists that the personal holiness of the minister was a necessary condition for any valid preaching of the Word or ministration of the Sacraments."

Article XXVII ("Of Baptism") insisted that "the Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Bicknell has stated<sup>449</sup> that this was "aimed at (i) the inadequate view of Baptism taken by...the Anabaptists; (ii) the denial of Infant Baptism." Similarly, Article XXVIII ("Of the Lord's Supper") according to Bicknell<sup>450</sup> "excludes...Anabaptist views which made the Lord's Supper a mere love feast."

Article XXXVII ("Of the Civil Magistrates"), Bicknell has shown,<sup>451</sup> would "condemn Anabaptist attacks on the authority of the State." Also Article XXXIX ("Of a Christian man's oath"), explained Bicknell,<sup>452</sup> is against "the objection of the Anabaptists...to the use of oaths."

Article XXXVIII -- "Of Christian men's Goods, which are Not Common" -- merits more attention. It states that "the riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the...title and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast." According to Bicknell,<sup>453</sup> this Article was drawn up because "certain Anabaptists advocated communism."

Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has pointed out<sup>454</sup> that "in the *Forty-two Articles* of Edward VI, there are four additional Articles -- on the Resurrection of the Dead, the State of the Souls of the Departed, Millenarians, and the Eternal Damnation of the Wicked." These Articles, Schaff added,<sup>455</sup> are: "against the Anabaptist notion of the psychopannychia (XL)"; and "against the millenarians (XLI)," compare "the *Augsburg Confession* where the Anabaptists and others are condemned." All of these additional Articles, as Maclear and Williams have explained,<sup>456</sup> refer to the heresies of "the Anabaptist sect whose theories had previously been denounced."

#### **254. Thomas Becon on the salvation of those dying in infancy**

According to Warfield,<sup>457</sup> "many of the greatest English theologians, from the very earliest days of the Reformation -- even among those not most closely affiliated with Geneva -- have repudiated the 'scrupulous superstition' of the Church of Rome as to the fate of infants dying unbaptized...and far different from the opinion of the Church of England.'" Thus the *Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*, drawn up by a Commission with Cranmer at the head of it...(published by Parker in 1571)....

Already in the fifteen-sixties, with his treatise *The Demands of Holy Scripture*, the famous Rev. Thomas Becon -- Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer and to Protector Somerset -- had raised

the question 'What if the infants die before they receive the sacrament of baptism?'" Becon then himself answered his own question, as follows:-

"God's promise of salvation unto them is not for default of the sacrament [de]minished, or made vain and of no effect. For the Spirit is not so bound to the water that He cannot work His office when the water wanteth.... In the chronicle of the apostles' Acts [10:44f], we read that while Peter preached the Holy Ghost came upon them that heard him. Yea, and that -- before they were baptized.

"By the reason whereof Peter brast out in these words, and said: 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' True Christians, whether they be old or young, are not saved because outwardly they be washed with the sacramental water -- but because they be God's children by election through Christ."<sup>458</sup>

In his *Catechism* which he wrote for his own covenant children, Becon further declared:<sup>459</sup> "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed' [Genesis 17:7]. Again, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thy buds' [Isaiah 44:3]....

"With the children of the faithful, God hath made a sure and an everlasting covenant.... Holy Scripture in every place attributeth our salvation to the free grace of God, and not either to our own works or to any outward sign or sacrament....

"Baptism is to Christians what circumcision was to the Jews -- not a thing that makes righteous but 'a seal of righteousness' [Romans 4:11] and a sign of God's favour toward us.... Therefore 'if any of the Christian infants, prevented by death, depart without baptism..., they are not damned but saved by the free grace of God.... They have faith, and be endued with the Spirit of God!'"

Condemning baptismal regeneration, Becon then added thereanent: "They therefore that teach and hold this doctrine -- are not only enemies to the salvation of the infants.... They also utterly obscure (yea and quench) the grace and election of God and the secret operation of the Holy Ghost, in the tender breast of the most tender infants -- and attribute to an external sign more than is right."

## **255. The English Anabaptists called the 'Family of Love'**

Also the [*circa* 1554-1600] Rev. Professor Dr. Richard Hooker took a similar position. He maintained:<sup>460</sup> "There may be in divers cases life, by virtue of 'inward baptism' -- even when outward [baptism] is not found.... Grace is not absolutely tied into sacraments."

Further: "There is a presumed desire and even purpose in Christian parents and the Church, to give these children baptism.... Their birth of Christian parents marks them, according to Scripture, as holy." First Corinthians 7:14.



They are made holy by the grace of God. "He Which...from heaven hath nominated and designed them unto holiness, by special privilege of their very birth" (and **not** because of their subsequent baptism). Thus even the Anglican Hooker.

Yet the heresies of the Neo-Marcionitic and Neo-Manichaeon Paulicians and even of the antitrinitarian Servetus himself were already afoot even in Britain! Indeed, prominent among the British Anabaptists was the so-called 'Family of Love' in England.

As Williams has explained:<sup>461</sup> "The English 'Familists' were communitarian pacifistic Anabaptists." They, "like the Paulicians and the Servetians, received believers' baptism at the age of thirty."

They were very well-described by John Rogers, in his 1579 book on *The Horrible Sect of Gross and Wicked Heretics naming themselves the 'Family of Love.'* There, explained Rogers, "marriage is made by the brethren.... These had never met before.... All men not of their congregation, or revolted from them, are as dead.... If they have anything to do touching their temporal things, they must do it...through one of their bishops."<sup>462</sup>

Rome rides again -- toward the sunset of the modern Moonies! California -- here I come! Weirdo's of the world -- unite!

The *Forty-two Articles*, however, effectively checked the further spread of English Anabaptism. Nevertheless, by 1587 the majority of the population of Norwich alone consisted of refugee Dutch Anabaptists.<sup>463</sup>

Yet they were stoutly opposed by Anglicans and Puritans alike. Compare the English Presbyterian Thomas Cartwright's 1589 book *The Anabaptists' Error Confuted*. Consequently, in 1593 some English 'Barrowists' fled to Holland -- where they soon became Anabaptists.<sup>464</sup>

## **256. Summary: baby belief from Nicea to the Reformation**

In this chapter, we have seen that the (325 A.D.) *Council of Nicea* and the *Arabic Canons* both mentioned baptism. Asterius the Sophist stated that the eighth day after birth was the best time to receive this seal. Gregory Nazianzen advocated such sealing during infancy; alleges the demons stole Biblical sprinkling for their own pagan initiations; and insisted that all repetitions of Christian baptism are wrong.

Cyril of Jerusalem regarded baptismal sprinkling as a prerequisite for a youth's first communion service. Zeno of Verona called baptism a second circumcision. And Basil the Great exhorted that all covenant infants be baptized.

Gregory of Nyssa, though regarding even unbaptized covenant babies as blessed, also saw Elijah's outpouring of the water on Mt. Carmel as a figure of Christian baptism. The *Apostolic Constitutions* taught similarly -- and added that "you must also baptize your infants and 'bring them

up in the nurture...of the Lord.'" Indeed, the *Pseudo-Clementina* even went so far as to state that no unbaptized person can enter into God's Kingdom.

Ambrose taught that both John the baptizer and Christ's Apostles sealed even infants. Chrysostom called baptism 'painless circumcision' -- for even "little children." The A.D. 397 and the 401 Synods of Carthage taught that even the Donatists baptized babies, just as the Universal Church did. Jerome called the neglect of infant baptism a grievous sin -- which even the Pelagians did not commit. And, even though Augustine toward the end of his life strongly advocated baptismal regenerationism, he sometimes also quite rightly presupposed faith within covenant babies even before their baptism.

Although Theodore of Cyrus and Cyril of Alexandria sometimes took the latter 'calvinistic' view -- the Early Middle Ages soon eclipsed it, in favour of absolute baptismal regenerationism. Thus, Justinian made infant baptism compulsory -- even though sprinkling was still maintained in the *Old Gotho-Gallican Collect*. But ritualistic submersionism increased in most of the churches. For soon the dominant theory was: the more water used, the more sins washed away!

Islam quickly all but annihilated the many varieties of Christianity -- from Persia to Morocco. Eastern Orthodoxy reached its zenith in the thought of the baptismal regenerationist John of Damascus. Thereafter too, the mediaeval church continued to deteriorate.

Ritualistically, the Slavic Churches opted for mandatory triple submersion. Plagued by ever-increasing baptismal regenerationism within, and by Neo-Semimanichaeian antipaedobaptist heresies without (like those of the Paulicians, the Cathari and the Petrobrusians) -- the Church Universal somehow muddled along into the Late Middle Ages.

Roman Catholic scholasticism reached its peak under Thomas Aquinas. A consistent baptismal regenerationist, he preferred submersion to sprinkling -- the more water, the merrier!

Yet movements for genuine reform, such as those of Waldo and Wycliffe and Huss, re-affirmed their commitment to the validity of all triune baptisms. That they did -- in spite of their own misgivings about the regenerationistic claims then being attributed to the rite.

After becoming an almost exclusively submersionistic establishment, Late-Mediaeval Roman Catholicism somewhat relented in favour of sprinkling. But the Church was soon to diverge into various different directions.

Some fell away into the apostasy of the Renaissance. Others lapsed into 'Mid-Bohemian' rebaptism, and later into Anabaptist revolutionism. Luther and Zwingli reformed a large part of Christ's Church -- at the Protestant Reformation. The Waldensians and the Bohemian Brethren finally became Calvinists. Rome herself reacted sacramentalistically -- by way of updating herself as the Counter-Reformation.

Romanism thus again denied the presence of pre-baptismal saving grace and faith in those baptized (whether as infants or as adults). Even today, it still 'transubstantiates' the sacrament of

baptism from being a Scriptural seal of an already-present faith. It changes baptism into a 'magical mandrake' claimed to create a love and a faith the previous existence of which it wrongly denies.

It took the Protestant Reformation in general and Calvinism in particular to correct this error. The Pre-Calvinian Swiss Reformers all did so -- by returning to the Biblical and Early-Patristic view of 'Baby Belief Before Baptism.'

Both initially and consistently, Luther re-affirmed his antirebaptistic commitment to triune baptism. While castigating Rome for imprisoning the Church in 'Babylonian captivity' -- he sought to get people to understand their baptism, and to live by the grace of God Who had sealed them there. Opposing both ancient Donatism and the Neo-Donatism of the Anabaptists, Luther solidly upheld the Word of God -- against both the reactionaries and the revolutionists.

Zwingli did the same. He was initially somewhat more sympathetic than was Luther toward the Anabaptist view of baptism. However, his own ongoing study -- and especially the increasing catabaptistic fanaticism of the Anabaptists -- finally led him to wash his hands of them altogether.

Indeed, Zwingli ultimately understood the sealing nature of baptism even better than did Luther. Naturally, all of the Protestant Reformers -- Lutheran, Zwinglian and Calvinist -- also very solidly repudiated the baptismal regenerationism re-asserted in 1545*f* by the Romish *Council of Trent*.

The Anabaptists themselves had richly deserved to be repudiated by the Reformers Luther and Zwingli. For they had not only opposed the Protestant Reformation. But, by themselves promoting revolution under colour of challenging Romanism, they had also greatly obscured and indirectly discredited the work of Luther and Zwingli in the eyes of the Roman Catholic establishment.

Their violent opposition to non-anabaptistic baptisms in general (including those administered by Protestants) -- and to infant baptism and organized denominations in particular -- had brought Europe into an extremely explosive state. Indeed, Karl Marx's communist colleague Friedrich Engels warmly commended the Anabaptists for this achievement.

Many of the Anabaptist leaders became not only sex-sodden socialists, but also dangerous apostates. As a direct result of their revolutions, some one hundred and fifty thousand persons perished in civil disobedience and seditious bloodshed. Many Anabaptists denied either the trinity and the incarnation of the Son of God (or both). Even the more pacifistic Dutch Mennonites, were riddled with heresy. As a group, the Anabaptists did incalculable harm -- in setting the European stage for the Anti-Christian French and Bolshevik Revolutions.

Some Anabaptists were enthusiastic polygamists. Many advocated community of goods -- and community of women. All of them downplayed the family, and thoroughly detested infant baptism. Yet they themselves rebaptized principally by pouring, and not by submersion. Indeed, also the later Baptists continued to prefer pouring, until deep into the seventeenth century. Then,

especially in their London and Philadelphia 'Confessions' -- these Baptists immersionistically reacted against the sprinkling of infants prescribed in the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession*.

The glorification of the Anabaptists by certain modern Baptists, is quite astonishing. Luther rightly recognized Anabaptism as the logical conclusion of rebaptistic Cyprianism and revolutionary Donatism. His views were enshrined in his *Augsburg Confession* and later perfected in the *Formula of Concord* -- both of which set out the errors of the Anabaptists.

Anabaptism was revolution, not reformation. Indeed, it was a catabaptist catastrophe universally opposed not just by Roman and Greek Catholicism -- but also by all the Protestant Reformers, without exception.

The Early Lutheranism of Luther and Melanchthon sometimes emphasized prebaptismal faith within covenant children, and has always insisted that baptized babies possess real faith. Especially the former position was progressively emphasized by Zwingli. The same was done by Bucer, Capito, Hedio, Oecolampadius, Myconius, the *First Basle Confession*, the *First (and Second) Helvetic Confessions*, Peter Martyr, Wishart, Aretius, Laski, the *Hungarian Reformed Confession*, Bullinger, Micron -- and Edward VI's England.

On the basis of Luther's foundation, and Zwingli's walls -- Calvin would next come and build the roof of the edifice of the Protestant Reformation. For -- as we shall see in our next chapter -- that genius of Geneva would soon elevate both prebaptismal faith and the Christian baptism of infants to their highest pinnacle yet.

## ENDNOTES

- 1) *Council of Nicea*, canon 2. 2) *Ib.* canon 9.
- 3) *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (hereinafter referred to as *NPNF*), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971, XIV, p. 24.
- 4) *Arabic Canons* (attributed to the Council of Nice), can. XXII (in *NPNF* XIV p. 47) & *Arabic Canons* XXX (in *NPNF* XIV p. 47).
- 5) See Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 160-62, citing Optatus Milevitanus's *On the Donatist Schism* III (*prope finem*) and Augustine's *Against Cresconius* II:3 -- and D.F. Wright's *Optatus (fourth century)*, in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 731.
- 6) *African Code* (419 A.D.), Ancient Epitome of canons XLVII & XVIII (cited in *NPNF* XIV p. 464).
- 7) *African Code*, canon CX (cited in *NPNF* XIV pp. 496f); and the *Ancient Epitome* of canon XLVIII of the *African Code* (as cited in *NPNF* XIV p. 464).
- 8) Greg. Naz.: *Oration* 43:10f & 70f. 9) Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 165-68.
- 10) So cited in Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 110-13. 11) *Op. cit.*, at n. 21. 12) *Orat.* 7:4f. 13) *Orat.* 8:4f.
- 14) *Orat.* 18:8f. 15) Greg. Naz.: *Concerning Holy Baptism*, *Oration* 40:11,17.
- 16) *Ib.*, *Oration* 40:28. Greek in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 117. 17) Greg. Naz.: *On the Holy Lights*, *Oration* 39:1-3,17.
- 18) Greg. Naz.: *Discourse Against the Arians*, *Oration* 34:17.
- 19) Cyril of Jerusalem: *Catechetical Lectures* 3:4.12.16 *etc.* 20) Thus J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* p. 94.
- 21) Zeno of Verona: *Tract on Baptism* I:13. 22) Basil: *Homily 13* and his *Against Eunomias* III:5.
- 23) Basil's *Exhortatory Oration on Baptism*, Benedictine ed., Paris, 1721, Tom. II, p. 113 (cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 132).
- 24) Theodoret: *Church History* IV:19. 25) Socrates *Church History* IV:26
- 26) Greg. Nys.: *On the Untimely Death of Infants*, in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca et Latina* XLVI:161-92.
- 27) Greg. Nys.: *On the Baptism of Christ*, in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca et Latina* XLVI:592.
- 28) Amb.: *On Abraham* II:11:81,84. 29) Amb.: *On Elijah* 84-85.
- 30) Amb.: *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 1:37 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 138). 31) See n. 28 above.
- 32) Aug.: *Against Julian* I:2 (in Wall I p. 138). 33) J. Chrysostom: *39th & 40th Homilies on Genesis*.
- 34) J. Chrys.: *21st Homily on Ephesians* (6:1-4).
- 35) J. Chrys.: *Homily to Neophytes* (cited in Aug: *Against Julian the Pelagian* I:6:22), and his *Homilies* 40 on Gen. 17, and *Hom.* 3:7 on II Cor.
- 36) J. Chrys.: *23rd Homily on the Acts of the Apostles* (9:3). 37) Theodoret of Cyrillus: *Heretical Fables* V:18:4.
- 38) Isidore of Pelusium: *Epistles* III:195. 39) Chrysostom's *Homilies on Second Corinthians* I:6 (on II Cor. 1:4f).
- 40) J. Chrys.: *Homily on First Corinthians* 7:14. 41) 397 Third Synod of Carthage, can. 48.
- 42) 401 Sixth Synod of Carthage, can. 7.
- 43) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. 176. Inconsistently, the two leading Pelagians (Pelagius and Coelestinus) both accepted infant baptism. See Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 264.
- 44) 418 Sixteenth Synod of Carthage, can. 2.
- 45) Augustine: *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* X:23ff, as cited in Wall's *op. cit.*, ed. 1862, I p. 242. The 1982 Newman Press (N.Y.) edition of Aug. (*op. cit.* X:14:25) has: "Even an infant as long as he is alive should be baptized...."
- 46) Aug.: *Against Julian the Pelagian* III:5:1.
- 47) Cited in Augustine's *First Book to Boniface* 22, and *Second Book to Boniface* 25.
- 48) Wall: *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 477f. 49) Jerome: *Epistles* 123 & 79. 50) Jer.: *Ep.* 108:1-3.
- 51) Jer.: *Ep.* 107:6. 52) Jer.: *Ep.* 108. 53) Jer.: *Ep.* 39. 54) Jer.: *Ep.* 66. 55) Jer.: *Ep.* 108:32.
- 56) Jer.: *Commentary on Matthew* 28:19.
- 57) Jerome: *Dialogue Against the Pelagians* III:17-19, and comp. his *Ep.* 107.6.
- 58) Jerome: *Books VII & XI* (in Migne: *op. cit.*). 59) Jer.: *Ep. to Jovinus* I:7:22.
- 60) Paulinus: *Questions for Jerome* (in Wall's *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 343f).
- 61) Jer.: *Reply to Paulinus* in Jerome's *85th Epistle* (in Wall's *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 343f).
- 62) Aug.: *Confessions* I:6:7b & 9:14 & 10:19. 63) *Ib.* IX:6:14. 64) Augustine *Epistles* 98 (23).
- 65) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. 144.
- 66) Augustine: *Sermons on New Testament Lessons* [XXXVI:11-13 (LXXXVI Ben.)] on Mt. 19:21.
- 67) Aug.: *Baptism* III:17:22. 68) Aug.: *Against Julian* 6:18 and *Original Sin* 32 & 38. 69) Aug.: *Ep.* 187:11:34.
- 70) In Aug.: *Lit. Meaning Gen.* X:23, Newman Press, N.Y., ed. 1982, II p. 127.

- 71) Aug.: *Questions on Leviticus* 84.
- 72) Augustine: *Against Cresconius* II:3 & *On the Donatist Schism* V:10 p. 89 (cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 100f).
- 73) Aug.: *The Lord's Sermon on the Mount* I:16:45. 74) *Op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 243f.
- 75) Aug.: *On Forgiveness of Sins and Infant Baptism* I:24:37 (= 412 A.D.). 76) 57:17. 77) IV:16:18f.
- 78) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:9:4f. 79) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:16:8f.
- 80) Pelagius: *Exposition on St Paul's Epistles* (as cited in Aug.: *On Forgiveness of Sins and Infant Baptism* III:16:8).
- 81) *Ib.* I:58:30. 82) *Ib.* II:41:25. 83) I:16:45. 84) III:21:12. 85) I:35:32.
- 86) See in Aug.: *89th Epistle [to Hilary]*. 87) Cited in Aug.: *On Original Sin*, chs. 17f.
- 88) Aug.: *194th Epistle* [to Sixtus Bishop of Rome]. 89) Aug.: *On Orig. Sin*, II:3:4ff & II:26:23.
- 90) Wall's *op. cit.*, I pp. 246. 91) See Aug.: *On the Gift of Perseverance*, ch. 12.
- 92) Aug.: *On the Merits of Sins*, III:12. 93) II:25:41. 94) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:21:12.
- 95) II:19:17 & II:36:31 & II:44:39. 96) *Concerning the Baptism of Tiny Children*. 97) *On Psalm 78*.
- 98) *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV:19:16, citing Augustine's: *Old Testament Questions* Bk. III; his *80th Homily on John 13*; and his *On Baptism Against the Donatists* Bk. V. See too in ch. IV??? at our nn. 494 & 539 & 541 & 594 below. \*\*\* ??? ??? ??? ???
- 99) For a good Calvinian refutation of these unbiblical baptismal views of Augustine, see at nn. 614-16 (in F.N. Lee's *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!*, M.Div. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland Fla., 1990).
- 100) Aug.: *On the Soul and its Origin* I:9:8. 101) *Ib.* I:10:9f. 102) *Ib.* I:11:9. 103) *Ib.* I:34:19.
- 104) *Ib.* II:13:9f. 105) *Ib.* II:17:12. 106) Aug.: *Treatise on Rebuke and Grace* 20-23.
- 107) *Op. cit.* pp. 136ff & 164f. 108) *Apostolic Constitutions* VI:1:3 & VI:2:5 & VI:3:14f.
- 109) Pseudo-Dion.: *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7:11.
- 110) *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 7:8:1 & 11:26:7f & 11:27:2, and *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 6:9. Rev. Prof. Dr. Joachim Jeremias observes (Origins} p. 28): "The passages concerned, occur in the *Homilies* as well as in the *Recognitions* -- and are therefore to be attributed to the earliest version of the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which came into existence about A.D. 220 - 230."
- 111) *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 13:4:4 & 13:21:2f & 15:1:2 *cf.* Phil. 4:3.
- 112) Most of these pseudepigraphical documents are discussed at the very end of Vol. I in Wall's *op. cit.*
- 113) J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* p. 95 n. 2. 114) Wall's *op. cit.* pp. 104f & 382f.
- 115) Cyril of Alexandria: *Commentary on John VII*, in Migne's *Pat. Graec.* 74,79. 116) Leo Gt.: *Ep.* 37 (166).
- 117) Ayres's *op. cit.* pp. 379f; and Theodoret's *Opera* III p. 151, ed. Paris 1642 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 242).
- 118) Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. xxxviii, 498ff & 510f. 119) Iren.: *Her.* I:21:4. 120) Wall's *op. cit.* I p. xlii.
- 121) *Ib.* I pp. 412 & 523. 122) Epiphanius: *Heresies* I:22-24. 123) *Ib.* I:8.
- 124) *Op. cit.* I p. 591 (*cf.* too pp. 514 & 516) and II ch. 7. 125) *Inf. Bap.* p. 87.
- 126) Assemani: *Oriental Bible* I:221. 127) *Op. cit.*, 1891 ed. pp. 8ff; and 1897 ed. p. 150 & n. 1.
- 128) Fulgentius: *On Faith to Peter*, ch. 27. 129) Greg. Gt.: *Exposition of Job* 1:16.
- 130) Greg. Gt.: *Moralium* ix & xii. 131) *Two Stud.* pp. 150f. 132) See Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 610-24.
- 133) Compare J.D.C. Fisher's *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Mediaeval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (S.P.C.K., London, 1965).
- 134) John of Damascus: *On the Orthodox Faith* IV:9.
- 135) Theophylact of Bulgaria: *On John VIII*, in Migne *Pat. Graec.* 124,20. 136) *Op. cit.* II pp. 426f.
- 137) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* IV pp. 574-79.
- 138) E. Yamauchi: *Manichaeans* (in ed. T. Dowley: *The History of Christianity*, Lion Handbook, Anzea books, Surry Hills NSW, 1978 rep., pp. 48f).
- 139) Schaff *Ch. Hist.* V pp. 472f, 475, 477.
- 140) Paul D. Steeves: *The Paulicians and the Bogomils* (in ed. T. Dowley: *op. cit.*, pp. 245f).
- 141) Bernard of Clairvaux: *Epistle 240*. In *Works*, Paris, 1586 ed., II p. 275.
- 142) Bernard: *Sermons on the Canticles* 65 & 66. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 260ff & 277.
- 143) Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 258f.
- 144) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V pp. 483-85; S. Miller's *op. cit.*, p. 30; Hulse's *op. cit.* p. 6 n. 1.
- 145) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. xlv & II p. 273. 146) *Ib.* I p. 497 & II pp. 240ff & 270f.
- 147) M. Luther's *Postille on Matthew 8:1*, in his *Works*, Weimer ed., I:172 pp. 81f (cited in L. Verduin's *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, Paternoster, Exeter, 1964, p. 196).
- 148) Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 497 (*cf.* Ayres's *Christian Baptism*, Kelly, London, n.d.).
- 149) A.H. Newman: *History of Anti-pedobaptism* Philadelphia, 1897, p. 61.

- 150) S. Miller: *Infant Baptism*, in *Baptism and Christian Education* (Presb. Heritage, Dallas, 1984 rep., pp. 28-30).
- 151) 1655 *Waldensian Confession* art. 33 (cf. 29 & 31), in Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 757 & 766-69.
- 152) *Augsburg Confession* art. 10. 153) Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae* III Q. 66-69. 154) *Ib.* Q. 60,2.
- 155) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V p. 671.
- 156) *Sum. Theol.* P. III; Qu. LXVI; *De Bapt.* art. 7 (cited in Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* III p. 250 n. 3). 157) *Summa* Q. 62,4-5.
- 158) *Ib.* Q. 68,1. 159) *Ib.* V pp. 708f (citing Thomas's *Summa* III.62.6). 160) *Ib.* III.66.9; 67:3; 68:9; 72:1.
- 161) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V p. 711. 162) *Part.* iii, *Quaest.* 66, *Art.* 7. 163) *Sentences* IV:13:2:2.
- 164) *Ib.* p. 712 (compare Thomas's *Summa* P. III *qu.* LXVI and his *On Baptism* art. vii).
- 165) See Steitz's *op. cit.* (in Schaff-Herzog's *ERK* I p. 201).
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- 169) Vaughan: *op. cit.* pp. 156 & 159 *cf.* p. 59.
- 170) *Op. cit.* I p. 466 & II pp. 215ff, citing W. Brute from Foxe's *Martyrology* (2nd ed. I p. 453).
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- 210) B. Hübmaier's *Discussion of Mr Ulrich Zwingli's 'Little Table Book on Infant Baptism'*, 1526 (in Hübmaier's *Works*, trans. G.D. Davidson, 1939), pp. 132-33 & 92-93. Cited in Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 158f & 175f.
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- 212) Original title: B. Hübmaier's (1527) *On Infant Baptism; Oecolampadius etc.; a Discussion Held by the Preachers at Basle with Several Anabaptist Authorities*. The latter phrase is the title of a 1525 work by Oecolampadius, to which Hübmaier was now replying. See Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 165f & 176 n. 32.
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- 223) M. Luther's 1530 *The Eighty-Second Psalm Translated and Explained*, in his *Works* (Muhlenberg ed.), IV pp. 287,298,313.
- 224) *The Councils and the Church* (1539), in Luther's *Works*, Muhlenberg ed., Philadelphia, 1931, V, pp. 131 & 292.
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- 235) J. Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*, ed. Cotta, vol. IX., p. 284. 236) *Dev. of Doct. of Inf. Salv. (1897)*, p. 173.
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- 238) *Formula of Concord* XII:1 heading & XII:1:IV.
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- 243) I.A. Dorner: *System of Christian Doctrine*, ET, Clark, Edinburgh, 1882, IV pp. 282 (citing Luther's *Catechismus Major* 544, 47f, 546).
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- 257) See his *Christian Introduction of the Zurich Council to the Pastors and Preachers* (in the section 'Concerning the Abrogation of the Law').
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- 260) Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VIII p. 78 & nn. 4-5: "It was first done mostly in houses, by sprinkling or pouring" (respectively "*bespritzt*" and "*begüßsen*").
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- 262) Cited in Williams & Mergal: *op. cit.*, pp. 41f.
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- 270) *Rad. Ref.* pp. 192-93. 271) Schaff: *op. cit.* VIII pp. 82f.
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- 323) See his *Rad. Ref.* pp. XX,268-73,311-17,322f,335f,605f,621f,858f. 324) *Ib.* p. 133.
- 325) See Schaff's *Creeds I* p. 844 n. 3 para. 2; and W.J. M'Glothlin's art. *Anabaptism* (in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, Clark, Edinburgh, 1925, I, xii & 406f).
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- 328) F.N. Lee: *Biblical Private Property Versus Socialistic Common Property*, art. in *Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*, Sunnybank, Brisbane, Australia, III, 1988.
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- 336) M. Simons's *Opera Omnia* f. 778, 264 sqq. & 493; D. Philips's *Handbook of the Christian Doctrine and Religion* f. 32 & 264.
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- 338) Simons's *op. cit.* f. 30a,176,756b,811; Philips's *op. cit.* f. 34.
- 339) Simons: *Opera Omnia* f. 778, 264sqq. & 493. See too Philips: *op. cit.* f. 32 & 264.
- 340) Simons: *op. cit.* f. 155sqq., 175sqq., 471sqq., 751sqq., 881sqq.; Philips: *op. cit.* f. 32sqq. & 269sqq.
- 341) Simons: *op. cit.* f. 30a, 176, 756b, 811; Philips: *op. cit.*, f. 34. 342) Ch. 17.
- 343) Cited by J.C. Wenger in *Mennonite Quarterly Review XII*:148. See too J.J. Kiwiet's *Pilgram Marbeck*, Oncken, Kassel, 1957, pp. 101f.
- 344) J. Oecolampadius: *Instruction Against Rebaptism*, cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 159.
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- 346) J. Oecolampadius: *First Basle Confession* (1532), art. 12. 347) Cited in G.H. Williams: *op. cit.* pp. 201f.
- 348) Schenck: *op. cit.* p. 28. 349) *First Helvetic Confession*, art. XI.

- 350 Arts. 20-21 (21-22). The official Latin text runs: "*non nudis signis, sed signis simul et rebus constant. In baptismo enim aqua signum est; at res ipsa regeneratio adoptioque in populum Dei.... Baptisma quidem ex institutione Domini lavacrum regenerationis quam Dominus electis suis, visibili signo per ecclesiae ministerium (qualiter supra expositum est) exhibeat. Quo quidem sancto lavacro infantes nostros idcirco tingimus, quoniam e nobis (qui populus Domini sumus) genitos populi Dei consortio rejicere nefas est tantum non divina voce huc designatos, praesertim quum de eorum electione pie est praesumendum.*" See too Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 223-24 & p. 224 n. 2.
- 351) Arts. 25f (26f).
- 352) Thus (Rev. Principal Prof. Dr.) John Macleod's *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History*, Free Church Pubs., Edinburgh, 1943, p. 15. The writer possesses a copy personally autographed by Principal Macleod.
- 353) First published by Rev. Wm. Goode, in 1850. See Schenck: *op. cit.* p. 42.
- 354) P. Martyr: *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), I:4:16 (cf. IV:100), cited in Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* 1891 p. 40).
- 355) *Ib.*, ET, Vautrollier, IV:8 pp. 113-19.
- 356) P. Martyr: *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), Classis IV, Geneva, 1529 ed., cap. 8, p. 381 sqq. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 169f. Also in A. Kuyper Sr.'s *E Voto Dordraceno: Explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Wormser, Amsterdam, 1894, III p. 59; and in Kuyper's *On the Sacraments* (in his *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kok, Kampen, 2nd ed., 1909, IV p. 142).
- 357) Cited in J.C. McLelland's *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli A.D. 1500-1562*, Grand Rapids, 1957, pp. 33 & 149 & 159. Also cited in R.B. Vincent: *The Efficacy of Baptism in the Westminster Confession of Faith*, Alexandria La., 1973, nn. 32, 33 & 35.
- 358) Schenck: *op. cit.* pp. 35f.
- 359) Cf. G. Wishart's *Confession of Faith of the Churches of Switzerland*. Translated from the Latin by George Wishart. MDXXXVI (1536).
- 360) Art. 21.
- 361) H.F. Kohlbrugge: *Historical-Theological Conversation Between Two Reformed Ministers Regarding the Administration of Holy Baptism*, Scheffer, Amsterdam, 1882, p. 31.
- 362) B. Aretius: *Theological Problems*, 1617, 3.p., col. 430 & 457. Cited in Kramer: *op. cit.* p. 172.
- 363) P. Melancthon: *Apology* (cited in R. Bellarmine's *De Sacramentis* I:iii).
- 364) J.P. Murphy: *The Sacrament of Baptism*, Burns Oates & Washbourne, London, 1929, p. 31.
- 365) J. Bonaventura: IV *Sentences* I iv, dist. iv. 366) *Acts of the Council of Trent* V,5; VI,4,8; VII,9.
- 367) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* V:1. Cited in J. Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958 ed., III pp. 79f.
- 368) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VI:8. Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 96.
- 369) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of the Sacraments in General. I). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 163.
- 370) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of the Sacraments in General. III-V). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 164.
- 371) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of the Sacraments in General. VIII). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 164.
- 372) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of Baptism. III). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 165.
- 373) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of Baptism. V). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 165.
- 374) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of Baptism. XIII). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 166.
- 375) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* XIV:1-2. Cited in Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983 rep., II pp. 139 & 143.
- 376) Thus Kohlbrugge: *op. cit.* pp. 54f.
- 377) J. Laski: *Concerning the Sacraments of Christ's Church*, ed. A. Kuyper Sr., pp. 142f.
- 378) J. Laski: *Summary of Doctrine* pp. I,1 & 523. 379) Kramer: *op. cit.* p. 189.
- 380) Laski: *Summ. of Doct.* p. 518. 381) *Ib.* p. 519. 382) J. Laski: *Form and Reason*, I p. 508.
- 383) *Ib.* II p. 113. 384) Cited in B. Wielenga's *Our Baptismal Formula*, Kok, Kampen, 1920 pp. 204 & 247.
- 385) In *ib.* pp. 290f. 386) *O.l.*, II, p. 469. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 194.
- 387) H.H. Barger: *Our Church Book*, Bredee, Rotterdam, 1907, pp. 190 & 206.
- 388) *Ib.* p. 206 n. 1. Compare Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 186 n. 1; and any good biography on Kuyper.
- 389) *Czenger Confession of Faith* chs. I & XXXI (cf. Acts 10 & 11). In Boeckel's *op. cit.* pp. 858-60.
- 390) See Kramer's *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68. Compare too our next note. 391) See our main text at nn. 348f above.

- 392) H. Bullinger & J. Calvin: *Consensus Tigurinus* (1545f). Presented in ed. Hughes's *Register of the Company of Pastors in Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1966, pp. 115 & 121f.
- 393) H. Bullinger: *Against the Anabaptists*, Zurich, 1560, VI:5, fol. 220.
- 394) H. Bullinger: *The Origin, Developments, Sects, Increase, Aims and Common Doctrines of the Anabaptists*, Zurich, 1561, f. 193 sqq.
- 395) See our main text at n. 401. 396) H. Bullinger: *Homebook* (1568).
- 397) H. Bullinger: *Fifty Godly and Learned Sermons Divided into Five Decades Containing the Chief and Principal Points of Christian Religion*, London, 1587, pp. 382f; and Parker Soc. Cambridge ed. IV p. 373, and *cf.* too pp. 382, 313 & 344. Compare too Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 243.
- 398) *Ib.*, Gorichem, translation Gnapheum, p. 148. 399) *Ib.*, Dec. V serm. 7; *cf.* Dec. III serm. 6 p. 169.
- 400) H. Bullinger: *Summa of the Christian Religion* (1608). 401) See our main text at n. 395 above.
- 402) See M. Micron's *Christian Order of the Flemish Congregations of Christians*; his *Short Catechism*; and his shortened version of Laski's *Church Order*.
- 403) M. Micron: *Baptismal Formula*; compare M. Luther's *Noah's Ark Prayer*. Cited in Berger's *op. cit.* pp. 211f. Compare too: Wielenga's *op. cit.* pp. 175n-76n; Kohlbrugge's *op. cit.* p. 55. Compare too our own main text in ch. V at nn. 94ff & 120ff below. ??? \*\*\*
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- 408) J. Laski: *Foreword to Micron's 1561 'Short Catechism'*, London, 1561. See too our main text at nn. 268f above.
- 409) M. Micron: *Short Catechism*, London, 1561, f. 21f. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 195, and in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 241.
- 410) *Id.* Q. 90. See Kohlbrugge's *op. cit.* p. 55. 411) Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 196. 412) *Two Stud.* p. 199.
- 413) J. Frith: *Declaration of Baptism* (1533), London, ed. 1573 (in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 306f).
- 414) Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 308f. 415) *Op. cit.* pp. 209. 416) *Two Stud.* p. 199. 417) *Ib.* p. 778.
- 418) *Op. cit.* p. 210.
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- 420) Williams: *Rad. Ref.* pp. 780f. 421) J. Jewel's *Works* (1560), ed. Ayre, Cambridge, 1850 ed., IV:1240f.
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- 426) Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* pp. 32f.
- 427) J. Hooper's *op. cit.* pp. 129-31, cited in Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* (1891) pp. 33f.
- 428) R. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* V,IX,6. Cited in Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* (1891) pp. 15f.
- 429) *Ib.* p. 28. 430) *Ib.* p. 70. 431) *Ib.* pp. 121f. 432) *Ib.* p. 154. 433) *Ib.* pp. 161-63. 434) *Ib.* p. 165.
- 435) *Ib.* p. 188. 436) *Ib.* pp. 218f. 437) *Ib.* p. 219. 438) *Ib.* p. 220. 439) *Ib.* p. 221.
- 440) G.F. Maclear & W.W. Williams: *An Introduction to the Articles of the Church of England*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1896, pp. 16 and 200f.
- 441) *Ib.* p. 201. 442) *Ib.* p. 201 n. 3. 443) *Ib.* pp. 279 & 289f. 444) *Ib.* p. 291.
- 445) *Op. cit.*, pp. 16 and 236f & n. 1. 446) *Ib.* p. 404. 447) *Ib.* pp. 442f. 448) *Ib.* pp. 443f.
- 449) *Ib.* pp. 463f. 450) *Ib.* pp. 479f. 451) *Ib.* pp. 527f. 452) *Ib.* p. 528. 453) *Ib.* p. 556.
- 454) *Creeds* III p. 514. 455) *Ib.* I p. 615 & n. 2. 456) *Op. cit.* p. 20 n. 2.
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- 463) Williams's *Rad. Ref.* p. 784. 464) *Ib.* p. 216.