

Anti-Christ

Throughout most of the last 20 centuries, separate, independent, groups of Christians, generally labeled “anabaptist” and specifically called Paulicans, Novatians, Donatists, Henricans, Waldenses, Albigenses, Bogomils, Lollards, and many other less complimentary names, have been persecuted for holding fast the specific teachings of the New Testament. They consistently held the New Testament church to be a local, visible, autonomous body of believers covenanted together to serve their Lord and Savior. For this, they were horribly persecuted by their opponents. The fiercest of these opponents was not the pagans that they invariably lived among. Rather, it was a church that called itself “Christian” – the Catholic Church. Its head, the Pope, was declared to be the vicar of Christ by their own councils. In so doing, he became Anti-Christ. They shut up the Bible to the “common” man declaring that it would “only cause confusion,” and then proceeded to warp and twist the doctrines to insure that their followers have no chance for salvation. The list of the sins of this horrid institution are so numerous as to almost defy cataloging. Yet, the Pope is honored by the governments of today.

My how we have forgotten history!

So we will remember, the following is from J.M. Carroll’s Trail of Blood. This excerpt briefly details the falling away that led to the formation of the Catholic Church and it’s ungodly head. Many more works, such as The Martyrs Mirror, and A History of the Baptists detail it more completely.

From [The Trail of Blood](#) . . .

“During the first three centuries, congregations all over the East subsisted in separate independent bodies, unsupported by government and consequently without any secular power over one

another. All this time they were baptized churches, and though all the fathers of the first four ages, down to Jerome (A.D. 370), were of Greece, Syria and Africa, and though they give great numbers of histories of the baptism of adults, **yet there is not one of the baptism of a child till the year 370.**" (Compendium of Baptist History, Shackelford, p. 43; Vedder, p. 50; Christian, p, 31; Orchard, p. 50, etc.)

7. Let it be remembered that changes like these here mentioned were not made in a day, nor even within a year. They came about slowly and never within all the churches. Some of the churches vigorously repudiated them. So much so that in A.D. 251, the loyal churches declared non-fellowship for those churches which accepted and practiced these errors. And thus came about the first real official separation among the churches.

8. Thus it will be noted that during the first three centuries three important and vital changes from the teachings of Christ and His Apostles had their beginnings. And one significant event took place, Note this summary and recapitulation:

(1) The change from the New Testament idea of bishop and church government. This change grew rapidly, more pronounced, and complete and hurtful.

(2) The change from the New Testament teachings as to Regeneration to "baptismal regeneration."

(3) The change from "believers' baptism" to "infant baptism." (This last, however, did not become general nor even very frequent for more than another century.)

9. "Baptismal regeneration" and "infant baptism." These two errors have, according to the testimony of well-established history, caused the shedding of more Christian blood, as the centuries have gone by, than all other errors combined, or than possibly have all wars, not connected with persecution, if you will leave out the recent "World War." Over 50,000,000

Christians died martyr deaths, mainly because of their rejection of these two errors during the period of the “dark ages” alone—about twelve or thirteen centuries.

10. Three significant facts, for a large majority of the many churches, are clearly shown by history during these first three centuries.

(1) The separateness and independence of the Churches.

(2) The subordinate character of bishops or pastors.

(3) The baptism of believers only.

I quote now from Mosheim—the greatest of all Lutheran church historians. Vol., 1, pages 71 and 72: “But whoever supposes that the bishops of this golden age of the church correspond with the bishops of the following centuries must blend and confound characters that are very different, for in this century and the next, a bishop had charge of a single church, which might ordinarily be contained in a private house; nor was he its Lord, but was in reality its minister or servant. . . . All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies, or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the Apostles themselves frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, it is as clear as the noonday that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality.”

11. Up to this period, notwithstanding much and serious persecutions, Christianity has had a marvelous growth. It has covered and even gone beyond the great Roman Empire. Almost, if not all the inhabited world has heard the gospel. And, according to some of the church historians, many of the original churches organized by the Apostles are yet intact, and yet loyal to Apostolic teachings. However, as already

shown, a number of very marked and hurtful errors have crept in and gotten a permanent hold among many of the churches. Some have become very irregular.

12. Persecutions have become increasingly bitter. Near the beginning of the fourth century comes possibly the first definite government edict of persecution. The wonderful growth of Christianity has alarmed the pagan leaders of the Roman Empire. Hence Galerius, the emperor, sent out a direct edict of more savage persecution. This occurred Feb. 24, 303 A.D. Up to this time Paganism seems to have persecuted without any definite laws to that effect.

13. But this edict failed so utterly in its purpose of stopping the growth of Christianity, that this same emperor, Galerius, just eight years thereafter (A.D. 311) passed another edict recalling the first and actually granting toleration—permission to live the religion of Jesus Christ. This was probably its first favorable law.

14. By the beginning of the year A.D. 313, Christianity has won a mighty victory over paganism. A new emperor has come to the throne of the Roman Empire. He evidently recognized something of the mysterious power of this religion that continued to grow in spite of persecution. History says that this new emperor who was none other than Constantine had a wonderful realistic vision. He saw in the skies a fiery red cross and on that cross written in fiery letters these words—"By this thou shalt conquer." He interpreted it to mean that he should become a Christian. And that by giving up paganism and that by attaching the spiritual power of the Christian religion onto the temporal power of the Roman Empire the world could be easily conquered. Thus the Christian religion would in fact become a whole world religion, and the Roman Empire a whole world empire.

15. So under the leadership of Emperor Constantine there comes a truce, a courtship and a proposal of marriage. The Roman

Empire through its emperor seeks a marriage with Christianity. Give us your spiritual power and we will give you of our temporal power.

16. To effectually bring about and consummate this unholy union, a council was called. In A. D. 313, a call was made for a coming together of the Christian churches or their representatives . Many but not all came. The alliance was consummated. A Hierarchy was formed. In the organization of the Hierarchy, **Christ was dethroned as head of the churches and Emperor Constantine enthroned (only temporarily, however) as head of the church.**

17. The Hierarchy was the definite beginning of a development which finally resulted into what is now known as the Catholic, or "universal" church. It might be said that its indefinite beginnings were near the close of the second and beginning of the third century, when the new ideas concerning bishops and preacher-church government began to take shape.

18. Let it be definitely remembered that when Constantine made his call for the council, there were very many of the Christians (Baptists) and of the churches, which declined to respond. They wanted no marriage with the state, and no centralized religious government, and no higher ecclesiastical government of any kind, than the individual church. These Christians (Baptists) nor the churches ever at that time or later, entered the hierarchy of the Catholic denomination.

And the head of the Catholic Church is honored by the rulers and governments of today. How very shameful.