

CHAPTER XIV

BAPTIST SUCCESSIONISM

The devious strategy of associating the Received Text with the aforementioned medieval sects, which are alleged to have descended in an unbroken succession from the New Testament Church, has its roots in a larger movement known as “Baptist Successionism” or “Landmarkism.” This movement is based on a misapplication of Proverbs 22:28 which is removed from its context and applied to Baptist ecclesiology. In its context of Proverbs 22, “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” was a prohibition against removing ancient markers, usually stones, which identified the established boundaries of a piece of land. The Baptist Successionists claim that the “ancient landmark” of their movement is not the Protestant Reformation but the New Testament Church, and that their founder was John the Baptist.

Landmark Baptists reject, not only identification of Baptists with other Protestant denominations, they deny the existence of a universal Church and recognize only Baptists as having a direct succession from the apostles. The pseudo history of Baptist Successionism is today preached by Fundamentalist Baptist KJV-Only preachers such as David Cloud:

“We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists...were the original Waldenses, and have long in the history of the Church received the honor of that origin. On this account, the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages.” (David Cloud, *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, Roman Catholic Dominion 500-1500 A.D.)

The Landmark teaching was first introduced in the U.S. around 1850 but was popularized in J.M. Carroll’s book, *Trail of Blood*, published in 1931. It is worth mentioning that the brother of J.M. Carroll, B.H. Carroll, was not only a prominent Southern Baptist minister and a leader of the Baptist Landmark movement, but he was also a Freemason:

“B.H. Carroll (1843-1914), first president of Southwestern seminary, was a member of Waco Lodge No. 92 and Herring Lodge No. 1224, both located in Waco, Texas.⁵ Carroll was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Evangelism of the Home Mission Board in 1906. Carroll was the author of more than 20 books, including *The Bible Doctrine of Repentance* (1897), *Baptists and Their Doctrines* (1913), and *Evangelistic Sermons* (1913). It is said that his favourite causes were evangelism, prohibition, home missions, and Christian education... f.5. D.D. Tidwell, ‘Dr. George W. Truett,’ *The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine*, March 1960, p. 113, and letter from James D. Ward of Waco, Texas, December 9, 1992.” (Famous Baptists Who Were Freemasons)

James Edward McGoldrick has written a well-documented and very readable refutation of Landmarkism in his book, *Baptist Successionism: A Crucial Question in Baptist History*. The origins and history of Landmarkism are briefly summarized by Professor McGoldrick:

“Landmarkism originated in the nineteenth century, J.R. Graves (1820-93) and J.M. Pendleton (1811-91) being its two most influential early leaders. Graves, editor of the *Tennessee Baptist*, in 1851 called a conference to discuss the Baptist position on relations with other churches. The conference met at Cotton Grove, Tennessee, and its ecclesiological declaration became known as the Cotton Grove Resolutions. This was the first formal statement of Landmarkism.

“Pendleton, a pastor in Bowling Green, Kentucky, was coeditor of the *Tennessee Baptist*. In 1854 he published *An Old Landmark Reset*, in which he expounded upon the matters raised in the Cotton Grove Resolutions, contending that Baptist Churches alone qualify as New

Testament assemblies, so Baptist clergymen are the only true ministers of the Gospel. There should be no formal fraternal relations between Baptist Churches and other religious societies, which have called themselves churches illegitimately.

“In order to fortify the argument that Baptists alone are entitled to recognition as members of the true church, Graves reprinted Orchard’s History of the Baptists, thousands of copies of which have circulated among Baptist readers ever since... Orchard’s work, and later *The Trail of Blood* by J.M. Carroll, have had a terrific influence in popularizing Landmark teachings.

“Graves became prominent in disputes within the Southern Baptist convention and was excommunicated eventually...

“Landmarkism became a powerful force among Baptists of the southern United States especially, although its influence has in no way been restricted to that region. The Landmark view of the church has had its exponents in many agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention at various times, and it has been able to spread its message through publications of that body. Learned theologians and historians in Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries have, nevertheless, rejected it almost unanimously, and the twentieth century has seen a recession of Landmark beliefs within the Southern Baptist Convention... Although the Southern Baptist Convention never adopted Landmarkism officially, other denominations have done so, and they now maintain organized efforts to promote successionism as indispensable for the preservation of the true church. The American Baptist Association...and the Baptist Missionary Association of America...are the major Landmark bodies of the present. Many congregations within other Baptist associations continue to adhere to successionism in one of more of its tenets, as do countless unaffiliated congregations.

“As indicated above, genuine scholars have perceived the faulty methodology that has characterized successionist efforts to reconstruct Baptist history. Substantial refutations have, prior to the present work, however, been relatively few... Among the most vigorous exponents of this teaching are pastors who lack an understanding of historical theology and critical historiography. To such pastors, and to all students of the Baptist heritage, the present volume is offered in an effort to answer some crucial questions in Baptist history.” (*Baptist Successionism*, pp. 147-49)

The main criterion for inclusion in the “apostolic succession” of Landmark Baptists seems to be aggressive opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, whose clerical abuses fill endless lists published by Landmarkists. However, the central doctrine of the Albigenses, Cathari, Bogomils and other Manicheans – the divinity of man – would require that their fundamental controversy with the Catholic Church was the deity of Jesus Christ, which the Catholic Church upheld but the radical dualists rejected. McGoldrick identified this doctrine as the point of contention as well:

“Because the person and work of Christ constitute the heart of Christianity, the teaching of any sect on Christology is the test by which its claims must be measured. Applying this test to the Albigenses and other Cathars reveals that they should not be regarded as Christians at all. They rejected the Trinity and with it the eternity and deity of Christ. Most Cathars believed that Christ was a perfect creature, a spiritual being, who came to the earth in the guise of flesh in order to liberate human souls from their imprisonment in fleshly bodies. Christ did not redeem men by his death; his mission was that of a teacher who had come to proclaim the true way of salvation, and only those who became Cathars would enjoy the benefits of his work. When he appeared for his public ministry, Christ was opposed by John the Baptist with his water baptism, a material ablution which Christ abhorred. Radical dualist Cathars taught that the death of Christ was without suffering because his celestial body could not experience physical pain.” (*Baptist Successionism*, pp. 62-3)

“LANDMARKS” OF FREEMASONRY

We think it is most interesting that the concept of “Landmarks” is found in Freemasonry, also with reference to Proverbs 22:28, and in Rosicrucianism as the “Manifestos and Secret Symbols of that Order.” Masons are told

that “Landmarkism” refers to the obligation to preserve the teachings and customs of Freemasonry that have passed down through the generations. These so-called “Landmarks of Freemasonry” were enumerated by Albert G. Mackey (1807-81), who was Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States. According to the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon:

“The term ‘Landmark’ is found in Proverbs 22:28: ‘Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.’ In ancient times, it was customary to mark the boundaries of land by means of stone pillars. Removal of these would cause much confusion, men having no other guide than these pillars by which to distinguish the limits of their property. Therefore to remove them was considered a heinous crime. Jewish law says ‘Thou shalt not remove thy neighbours’ landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance.’ Hence landmarks are those peculiar marks by which we are able to designate our inheritance. They define what is being passed on to us. In the case of freemasonry, they are called the landmarks of the order.

“‘The Landmarks are those essentials of Freemasonry without any one of which it would no longer be Freemasonry,’ said MW Bro. Melvin M. Johnson, Past Grand Master of Massachusetts in 1923. In 1720 the Grand Master of England compiled the General Regulations, which were approved by the Grand Lodge of England and published in 1723. One Regulation reads ‘Every Annual Grand Lodge has an inherent power and Authority to make new Regulations or to alter these, for the real benefits of this Ancient Fraternity; provided always that the old Land-Marks be carefully preserved.’ The Landmarks were not defined.

“Until 1858 no attempt had been by any Masonic writer to write out the landmarks. In that year, Albert Mackey made the first attempt, when he published ‘The Foundation of Masonic Law’ in a Masonic review, where he laid out twenty-five landmarks. He subsequently published the list in a book entitled *Text Book of Masonic Jurisprudence*. These twenty-five were generally accepted by the American Freemasons of the day. Since then his list of twenty-five has been adopted by a number of North American Grand Lodges.” (“The Landmarks of Freemasonry”)

The fact that there seems to be little agreement about the “Landmarks” of Freemasonry suggests there may be an esoteric meaning for this term to which so much importance is attached. Since Freemasonry is based upon Talmudic Judaism, is it possible the term “landmark” retains the literal meaning of Proverbs 22:28? This Old Testament command refers to the ancient boundaries of Israel which God established when He promised the land to Abraham, those boundaries being defined in Gen. 15:18.

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The land of the Kenites, Kenizites, Kadmonites; the Chitties, Perizites, Refaim; the Emorites, Canaanites, Gigashites and Yevusites.” (Gen. 15:18)

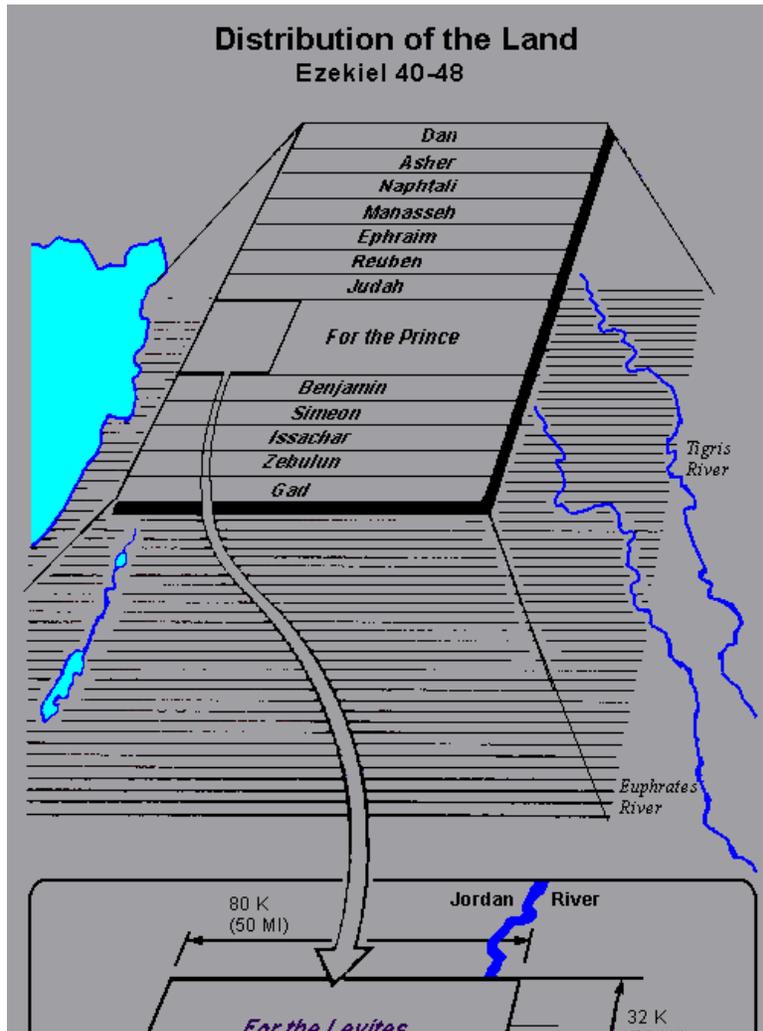
God repeated the promise to Moses: “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.” (Deut. 11:24)

And to Joshua: “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” (Joshua 1:4)

When today’s Zionists refer to “Eretz Israel” or “Greater Israel,” they have in mind the original boundaries of the Promised Land which God gave as an inheritance to Abraham. Today, “Eretz Israel” includes all of modern-day Israel as well as the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, Jordan, and Lebanon, much of Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait, as well as parts of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey. This explains the U.S. war against Iraq and why it will continue until the entire Middle East is fully under Israeli control.

“It is clear that the preparations to attack Iraq are part of a series of attacks prepared for nations of the region including Syria, Iran, Egypt and Sudan. The aim of the Crusaders’ campaign is to prepare the atmosphere for the establishment of the so-called greater Israel state, which includes great parts of Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and large portions of (Saudi Arabia).” – Osama bin Laden, February 2003 (“Eretz Israel HaShlema / Greater Israel”)

There is yet more evidence of a connection between Landmarkism in Freemasonry and Greater Israel. On the Great Seal of the United States, the unfinished pyramid is, in fact, a structural symbol of “Eretz Israel” which extends from the Nile to the Euphrates.



Source: Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible KJV, p. 891
(Christian Connections)

“The Masonic Foundations of the United States” reveals that the secret agenda of the Judeo-Freemasons has been to use the United States for the conquest of Israel and the regathering of world Jewry to Greater Israel where the False Messiah will inaugurate his New Order of the Ages.

See also: “The Death of the Phoenix: Final Act for the USA”.

Interestingly, the Landmark Baptists trace their spiritual lineage back to John the Baptist, the patron saint of Freemasonry, which celebrates his feast day on June 24, the Summer Solstice:

“The literature produced by Successionists abounds with denials that Baptists are Protestants, and even authors who admit that no unbroken line of true churches from Apostolic times to the present can be verified sometimes concur with that judgment... S.E. Anderson acknowledged that no uninterrupted continuity of baptistic churches can be discerned in history, but he contended, nevertheless that Baptists should claim John the Baptist as their founder. (ff. *The First Baptist*)... Holliday contended that the ‘first Baptist (John) was beheaded for preaching separation from sin and self to Christ. The next Baptist to die was Jesus Christ. (ff. *Baptist Heritage*)” (*Baptist Successionism*, p. 123)

“Landmarkers believe that there has been a succession of essentially pure Baptists from the days of John the Baptist until now, and that during all this period they have ‘suffered violence,’ not only from the hand of their enemies, but, as now, from their professed friends. They believe that visible churches of Baptists have existed through all these centuries, though they do not profess to be able, as yet, to demonstrate the fact. They believe that Christ declared a succession would be preserved.” (J.R. Graves, *The Baptist*, Jan. 29, 1876)

“...Free-Masonry, vulgarly imagined to have begun with the Dionysian Architects or the German Stone-workers, adopted Saint John the Evangelist as one of its patrons, associating with him, in order not to arouse the suspicions of Rome, Saint John the Baptist...” – Albert Pike, *Morals & Dogma*

By taking Baptist successionism back to John the Baptist instead of Jesus Christ, Landmarkist cofounder J.R. Graves was misdirecting Christians into the Old Covenant Law and the Kingdom promises which God gave to Israel, rather than into the new Covenant which Jesus Christ gave to His Church. For John the Baptist was a prophet under the Old Covenant and his baptism of repentance was replaced in the New Testament by baptism into Jesus Christ:

“And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matt. 11:7-11)

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...” (Heb. 1:1-2)

However, the problems with the Landmarkist patronage of John the Baptist are even more serious. All Grand Masters of the Prieuré de Sion are given the title “Jean” (I, II, III...), which is the French variant of “John,” and at least one of their more illustrious Grand Masters regarded John the Baptist as the “Christ”:

“It has been alleged that Hughes de Payens, first Grand Master of the Knights Templar, had been inducted into the Johannites, a sect which chose John the Baptist as their prophet. According to the Dossiers Secrets, each of the alleged Grand Masters of the Priore de Sion took the name Jean in succession (supposedly influencing the name chosen by Pope John XXIII). One of the Grand Masters on the list, Leonardo da Vinci, displayed a strong interest in John the Baptist...

“The only surviving sculpture that involved Leonardo in its making is the statue of John the Baptist in the Baptistry in Florence, on which he collaborated with the utmost secrecy with Giovan Francesco Rustici, a known necromancer and alchemist. And Leonardo’s last painting was ‘John the Baptist’, showing him with the same half-smile as ‘The Mona Lisa’, and pointing

straight upwards with the index finger of his right hand. This in Leonardo's work is a sign always associated with John: in the 'Adoration of the Magi' a person stands by the elevated roots of a carob tree – John's tree, symbol of sacrificial blood – while making this gesture. In his famous cartoon of St. Anne the subject also does this, warning an oblivious Virgin...The disciple whose face is perhaps accusingly close to Jesus' in 'The Last Supper' is also making this gesture. All these gestures are saying 'remember John.' – Lynn Picknett & Clive Prince, *Turin Shroud – In Whose Image? The Shocking Truth Unveiled* (Priuré de Sion)

Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting of John the Baptist was funded by Medici Pope Leo X during the years 1513-16, that is, immediately preceding the Protestant Reformation which began in 1517. Note in Da Vinci's painting the upraised forefinger of John the Baptist, and also that John has an effeminate look which is typical of Da Vinci's many portrayals of John the Baptist. The upraised finger signifies "The One," an esoteric allusion to the Messiah whom the Rosicrucians believe will be androgynous, two sexes combined in "one."

Merovingian literature portrays John the Baptist as an Essene monk, an ascetic of the Qumran Community that was built on the ruins of ancient Gomorrah. The Essenes worshipped the bisexual goddess, Diana, whose male component was Jana or Janus, the Roman god. "Janus" anglicized is "John", therefore the Templar's Church of St. John or "Johannite Church" clandestinely worshipped the bisexual god, Diana/Janus, not John the Baptist. The hidden agenda of the Knights Templar was revealed in Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*:

:

"The Templars, like all other Secret Orders and Associations, had two doctrines, one concealed and reserved for the Masters, which was Johannism; the other public, which was the Roman Catholic. Thus they deceived the adversaries whom they sought to supplant. Hence Free-Masonry, vulgarly imagined to have begun with the Dionysian Architects or the German Stone-workers, adopted Saint John the Evangelist as one of its patrons, associating with him, in order not to arouse the suspicions of Rome, Saint John the Baptist, and thus covertly proclaiming itself the child of the Kabalah and Essenism together.

"[For the Johannism of the Adepts was the Kabalah of the earlier Gnostics, degenerating afterward into those heretical forms which Gnosticism developed, so that even Manes had his followers among them...]

"The better to succeed and win partisans, the Templars sympathized with regrets for dethroned creeds and encouraged the hopes of new worships, promising to all liberty of conscience and a new orthodoxy that should be the synthesis of all the persecuted creeds."
(*Morals & Dogma*, Chapter XXX)

Some Kabbalists have reported discovering "Bible codes" in the King James Version which associate John the Baptist with Leonardo Da Vinci, Mary Magdalene and the Knights Templar. Chapter 4 of this report documented how one Kabbalist "decoded" Francis Bacon's message in the KJV that Jesus is the "Antichrist," and it seems another Kabbalist discovered yet another coded message that John the Baptist is the "Christ." Found on The English King James Version Bible Code website are the portions of Scripture which Kabbalists claim divulge that Christians have been wrong about the identity of the Christ. According to them, it was John the Baptist who rose from the dead!

"This next matrix is at Proverbs 4:10 – Jeremiah 48:2, and it contains:

-- DA VINCI (ELS=-24932)

-- CODE

-- SECRET

-- TREASURE (the Templar treasure?)

-- **JOHN (as in John the Baptist)**

(...)

"Next is a New Testament matrix at Matthew 27:57 – Mark 6:26, and it contains:

-- DA VINCI (ELS=2288)

-- CODE

-- JOHN
 -- BAPTIST
 -- MARY MAGDALENE
 -- JESUS
 “And also:
 -- SUPPER (as in “The Last Supper”, the Da Vinci painting where there is much debate on this subject)
 -- **JOHN WHOM I BEHEADED HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD (John the Baptist)**
 (...)
 “The next matrix on the Knights Templar is in the New Testament at Mark 13:1 – Luke 3:22, and it contains:
 -- TEMPLAR (ELS=3800)
 -- ITALY
 -- CODE
 -- **JESUS**
 -- **CHRIST**
 -- MARY MAGDALENE
 And note that before I resized this matrix it was **666x604 pixels (666 being the number of the Antichrist).**”

Of course, such mystical Bible codes can only be deciphered using a computer software program and the King James Version (of which not one word, syllable or letter can be altered without “grave consequences”) and this is precisely Gail Riplinger’s recommended method of mining the “deep and secret” treasures the KJV:

“[F]or there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed’ (Matt. 10:26. The ‘deep and secret things’ he has not concealed (Dan. 2:22). ‘But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God’ (I Cor. 2:10)... This is the first book to unveil treasures in the word of God, using tools from the new field of **computational linguistics**... The ‘miraculous’ phenomena documented in this book are found in *every line* of the KJV...

“...The new field of computational linguistics, with research from the nation’s leading universities, such as Stanford and MIT, has confirmed letter meanings as seen in the book of Genesis. Just as the electron microscope allowed scientists to see things that had *always existed* at the molecular level, so computer technology and computational linguistics allow linguists to see and uncover a pattern of meanings for letters that have always been there.” – Gail Riplinger (*In Awe of Thy Word*, pp. 6, 16)

When David Bay “defended” the 1611 King James Version by claiming that King James gave the final draft to the Rosicrucians for one year, to our knowledge not one of the many veteran “KJV-Only defenders” published a rebuttal of his spurious claims. Surely, as “scholars,” they would be in possession of historical evidence that would have exposed David Bay’s deception, yet not a word of protest was heard from the leadership of the “KJV-Only” camp. Moreover, prior to David Bay’s foray into Bible criticism, not one of these “scholars” refuted Gail Riplinger’s Kabbalistic and historically inaccurate book, except for a short critique by David Cloud who used the occasion to promote the corrupt Old Latin translations, of which more will be said later.

Where are the KJV-Only defenders at this critical point in the battle for the Bible?

NOT ONLY “KJV-ONLY” BAPTISTS

The false teaching that the Cathars, Albigenses, Bogomils, Waldenses, etc., were the “true Christians” of the Middle Ages is not found in the KJV-Only camp alone. Cutting Edge Ministries is hardly “King James Only,” yet David Bay has posted several articles on his website which also reimagine these Gnostic predecessors of the Landmark Baptists:

“WHY DOES THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CONSISTENTLY GO AGAINST GOD'S WORD, WHEN IT IS BY HIS VERY WORD WE WILL ALL BE JUDGED ON THAT LAST DAY?”...

“Becky Sexton, Former Catholics For Christ...”

“29. Rome not only has killed her enemies, but has granted ‘indulgences’ (time out of purgatory) for the murder of ‘heretics’. ‘At the Council of Siena, in 1425, a plenary indulgence was offered to those who took arms against the Hussites...Waldenes...Albigenses....’ (*Catholic Dictionary*, 442)”

“ROMAN CATHOLIC POPE DECLARED TO BE TOP RELIGIOUS LEADER IN KINGDOM OF ANTICHRIST!”

“Former Catholics For Christ...”

“...during the crusades they promised plenary (full) indulgence for killing ‘heretics’!

“The period of the crusade marks a turning point in the history of indulgences, for they were given more and more freely from that time onward... For example at the council of Siena, in 1425, a plenary indulgence was offered to those who took arms against the Hussites; while wars against the Waldenes, Albigenses, Moors, and Turks were stimulated by the same means’ (*Catholic Dictionary*, 442).”

“ANSWERS TO ROME'S 25-QUESTION TRACT WHICH TRIES TO REFUTE THE 'BIBLE-ONLY THEORY”

“Becky Sexton, Former Catholics For Christ...”

“When was the New Testament placed under one cover?”

“The true Bible was placed under one cover no later than 145A.D., and was known as the Syrian Peshitto. The ‘Old Latin Vulgate’ was the next Bible to be compiled by the year 157 A.D. The corrupted Latin version of Jerome, translated by order of Constantine, was published in about 380 A.D. The RCC chose the name "Vulgate" or "Common" for Jerome’s translation in an attempt to deceive loyal Christians into thinking that it was the true common Bible of the people. It was rejected by real Christians such as the Waldenses, Gauls, Celts, Albigenses, and other groups throughout Europe who held doctrinal purity dear to their hearts. According to Dr. Bill Grady, in his book *Final Authority*, page 34:

“For the Syrian people dwelling northeast of Palestine, there were at least four major versions: the Peshitta (A.D. 145); the Old Syriac (AD. 400); the Palestinian Syriac (A.D. 450); and the Philoxenian (A.D. 508), which was revised by Thomas of Harkel in A.D. 616 and henceforth known as the Harklean Syriac. True to the meaning of its name (straight or rule), the Peshitta set the standard because of its early composition and strong agreement with the Greek text underlying the King James Bible.”

“Dave Hunt’s *A Woman Rides the Beast*”

“Pagan Rome made sport of throwing to the lions, burning and otherwise killing thousands of Christians and not a few Jews. Yet ‘Christian’ Rome slaughtered many times that number of both Christians and Jews. Beside those victims of the Inquisition, there were Huguenots, Albigenses, Waldenses, and other Christians who were massacred, tortured, and burned at the stake by the hundreds of thousands simply because they refused to align themselves with the Roman Catholic Church and its corruption and heretical dogmas and practices. Out of conscience they tried to follow the teachings of Christ and the apostles independent of Rome, and for that crime they were maligned, hunted, imprisoned, tortured, and slain.”

In his other best-seller, *What Love Is This? Calvinism’s Misrepresentation of God* (2002, 2004), Dave Hunt also portrays the Albigensians, the Waldensians, the Donatists and the Hussites as the “true Christians” who were persecuted by Rome:

“The fourth century Donatists believed the church should be a pure communion of true believers who demonstrated the truth of the gospel in their lives. They abhorred the apostasy

that had come into the church when Constantine wedded Christianity to paganism in order to unify the empire. To the Donatists, the church was a ‘small body of saved surrounded by the unregenerate mass.’ This is, of course, the Biblical view.

“...Augustine identified the Donatists as heretics...”

“...the Donatists...concerned for purity of the faith, separated from the official state churches, rejected their ordinances, and insisted on rebaptizing clergy who had repented after having denied the faith during the persecutions that arose when the Emperor Diocletian demanded that he be worshipped as a god.

“Frend explains. ‘In the spring of 327, he [Constantine] followed up his decision by publishing a ‘most severe’ edict against the Donatists, confiscating their property and exiling their leaders...’ ‘While Augustine and the clergy emphasized the unity of the church, the Donatists insisted upon the purity of the church and rebaptized all those who came to them from the Catholic Church—considering the Catholics corrupt...’

“Luther himself said, ‘We are not the first to declare the papacy to be the Kingdom of Antichrist, since for so many years before us so many and so great men...have undertaken to express the same thing so clearly.’ For example... The Waldensians identified the Pope as the Antichrist in an A.D. 1100 treatise titled ‘The Noble Lesson.’ In 1206, an Albigensian conference in Montreal, France indicted the Vatican as ‘the woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs’... Jumping ahead... In 1429, Pope Martin V commanded the King of Poland to exterminate the Hussites.” (*What Love Is This?*, pp. 52-3, 68-9, 212)

The Donatists, like the later medieval heretics, believed themselves to be the “pure ones” and regarded orthodox Christians as nonbelievers. They were separatists in the extreme, not unlike the Fundamental Baptists who claim them as their spiritual ancestors. The issues over which the Donatists separated from other Christians have no basis in Scripture. For example, they did not recognize baptism by any church group other than their own since they alone were “pure” enough to administer the ordinances:

“John Owen, the learned Puritan writer, said of the English Baptists in Volume 13, page 184, of his works:

“The Donatists rebaptized those who came to their societies (churches) because they professed themselves to believe that all administration of the ordinances not in their assemblies was null, and that they were looked upon as no such thing. Our English Anabaptists do the same thing.” (“Resetting an Old Landmark,” Tom Ross)

According to the Columbia Encyclopedia and other sources, the Donatists descended from the hyper-Charismatic ascetics and heretics of the 2nd century, the Montanists, and later merged with the Novations, another “puritistic” sect that were the original “Cathari” which meant “the pure.” Descendants of the Montanists also included the medieval Cathari, as well as the 18th and 19th century ecstatic cults of Emmanuel Swedenborg and Edward Irving:

“[Montanism] arose in Phrygia [c.172] under the leadership of a certain Montanus and two female prophets, Prisca and Maximillia, whose entranced utterances were deemed oracles of the Holy Spirit. They had an immediate expectation of Judgment Day, and they encouraged ecstatic prophesying and strict asceticism... [T]he movement...died [c.220] as a sect, except in isolated areas of Phrygia, where it continued to the 7th cent. But the puristic anti-intellectual movement had many descendants – Novations, the Donatists, the Cathari and even Emanuel Swedenborg and Edward Irving...”

“After 325 the sect [of Novatian] was merged with that of Donatism.” (Columbia Ency., (Columbia Ency., “Montanism, p. 1817; “Novatians,” p. 1976)

“Novatians...spread through Europe, through Africa, and Asia. In the mountains of Armenia they still lingered, till the name Donatists was lost in Montenses and Paulicians. In the recesses of the Alps the Novatians (called from the first Puritans) were persecuted as Paterines and Waldenses. Up through the darkness we have traced their crimsoned footprints. We have found

them here, in the third century, contending for a pure and independent church, baptized on a profession of faith, and persecuted as Anabaptists. The people called Novatians were Baptists.” (Reformed Reader)

“The Novations were the followers of Novatus, in the third century. They assumed to themselves the title of Cathari, or the pure.” – Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, Vol. 7, p. 133, n.9 (341:133)

ANABAPTISTS

After documenting the heresies of the medieval sects in *Baptist Successionism*, James McGoldrick concluded that modern Baptists have more in common with the Roman Catholic Church than they have with the radically heretical cults acclaimed to be their predecessors by Baptist successionists. He wrote, “Baptists arose in the seventeenth century in Holland and England. They are Protestants, heirs of the Reformers... A careful examination of Baptist history shows...that Baptists are Protestants.” (*Baptist Successionism*, pp. 2, 141) According to McGoldrick, the Baptists were an offshoot of the Puritans, who were Calvinists:

“The Baptist movement grew out of English Puritanism/Separatism... These ‘Separatists’ shared the Anabaptist conviction that the true church would restore the doctrine and government of the New Testament, which, it appeared, the Anglicans had no intention of doing. Separatists sought to establish free churches with a congregational form of government, but, unlike the Anabaptists, most of them retained the Protestant/Calvinist view of salvation, and all of them practiced infant baptism...” (*Baptist Successionism*, pp. 124-5)

Professor McGoldrick has admirably documented the history and heresies of the various Gnostic cults which the Baptist successionists claim as their spiritual ancestors. However, his conclusion that “Baptists are Protestants” does not therefore make their spiritual ancestors Christians, for the Protestant movement quickly became the breeding ground of heretics and revolutionaries. Norman Cohn’s book, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, aptly subtitled “Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages,” describes the madness and mayhem to which the town of Munster, Germany, fell victim at the hands of the Anabaptist prophets from the Netherlands:

“During February 1534, the power of the Anabaptists in Munster increased rapidly...

“From Antwerp a scholar could write to Erasmus of Rotterdam: ‘We in these parts are living in wretched anxiety because of the way the revolt of the Anabaptists has flared up. For it really did spring up like fire. There is, I think, scarcely a village or town where the torch is not glowing in secret. They preach community of goods, with the result that all those who have nothing come flocking.’ How seriously the authorities took the threat is shown by the repressive measures which they adopted. Anabaptism was made a capital offense not only throughout the diocese of Munster but in the neighboring principalities... During the months of the siege countless men and women in the towns were beheaded, drowned, burnt or broken on the wheel.

“By then end of March Matthys had established an absolute dictatorship; but a few days later he was dead... This event gave an opening to Matthys’s young disciple, Jan Bockelson, who so far had played no great part but who was in every way fitted to seize such a chance and use it to the full...

“Bockelson’s first important act was – characteristically – at once a religious and a political one. Early in May he ran naked through the town in a frenzy and then fell into a silent ecstasy which lasted three days. When speech returned to him he called the population together and announced that God had revealed to him that the old constitution of the town, being the work of men, must be replaced by a new one which would be the work of God. The burgomasters and Council were deprived of their functions. In their place Bockelson set himself and – on the model of Ancient Israel – twelve Elders... This new government was given authority in all matters, public and private, spiritual and material, and power of life and death over all

inhabitants of the town. A new legal code was drawn up, aimed partly at carrying still further the process of socialization and partly at imposing a severely puritanical morality. A strict direction of labour was introduced... At the same time the new code made capital offenses not only of murder and theft but also of lying, slander, avarice and quarreling. But above all it was an absolutely authoritarian code; death was to be the punishment of every kind of insubordination – of the young against their parents, of a wife against her husband, of anyone against God and God’s representative, the government of Munster...” (*The Pursuit of the Millennium, Chap. 13*)

MONOPHYSITE ANABAPTISTS

The Anabaptists were not only revolutionaries but heretics as well, whose Christology constituted a revival of the ancient heresies, as did the Cathars, Albigenses, Donatists, etc. before them. McGoldrick states, “a large majority of Anabaptists...were quite unorthodox in their perceptions of the Incarnation,” citing as examples Thomas Muntzer, Melchior Hoffman and a leader of the Munster Anabaptists who also denied that Christ received His human flesh from Mary. This false teaching was a revival of the ancient Monophysite heresy that Christ had only one nature:

“Bernard Rothman (c. 1495-1535), an Anabaptist prominent in the ill-fated attempt to build New Jerusalem at Munster in Westphalia, wrote: ‘If it had been Mary’s flesh [that is, Christ born of Mary] that died for us, my God, what comfort and courage could we derive from that? That would be like paying for one sin with another and to wash and cleanse one uncleanness with another.’” (*Baptist Successionism*, p. 102)

Another Anabaptist leader who taught Monophysitism was Menno Simons, a disciple of Melchior Hoffman and the founder of the Mennonites. Menno Simon’s view of the Incarnation is described in Harold O.J. Brown’s book, *Heresies*:

“...Menno Simons (1496-1561)...advocated the concept of a heavenly flesh of Christ in order to spare the deity contact with our sinful human flesh. Menno spoke of Jesus as born ‘in’ Mary’s body, but not of it; as a ray of light passes through a glass of water and is refracted by it but does not take on substance from it, so the heavenly flesh of Jesus passed through Mary’s body without taking anything from it...”

“The most influential of those who taught the doctrine of the Heavenly Flesh, and the one whose name is most likely to be recognized today, was Menno Simons. Menno has earned an honorable place in Christian history by his leadership in gathering the shattered and dispersed Anabaptists following the disastrous end of the Anabaptist ‘Kingdom of God’ at Münster in 1534-35... Menno succeeded in rallying a large number of the Anabaptists, in winning them away from the extreme, eschatologically colored fantasies of the Munsterites, and in instituting a system of congregational discipline that rapidly won the respect of the more traditional Christians. Menno retained the distinctive view of the Heavenly Flesh he had learned from Melchior Hoffmann.

‘For Christ Jesus, as to his origin, is no earthly man, that is, fruit of the flesh and blood of Adam. He is a heavenly fruit or man. For his beginning or origin is of the Father [John 16:28], like unto the first Adam, sin excepted.’ [ff. Menno Simons, *Complete Writings*, ed. Harold S. Bender,...1956) p. 863]...

“...Menno and his followers represent a Reformation-era revival of monophysitism. The heritage of Menno Simons is perpetuated and honored in Mennonite communities scattered throughout North America, and existing to a lesser extent in Europe, the Soviet Union, and South America.” (*Heresies*, pp. 328-30)

The writings of David Cloud abound with erroneous information about the Anabaptists, the Cathars, Albigenses, and other medieval heretics, all of whom are portrayed as the “true Christians” who preserved the Textus Receptus. In the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, David Cloud identifies the Mennonite Brethren as Anabaptists, and therefore in the Baptist succession from the New Testament Church. Describing their doctrine, Cloud refers to articles of the 1632 Dutch Mennonite Confession; however, there is no mention of the “celestial flesh” heresy of Menno Simons:

“Simons, a converted Roman Catholic priest, organized so many Anabaptist congregations that his name became identified with the movement. Because they rejected infant baptism and statism, the Mennonites were persecuted by the Protestant Reformers as well as by the Roman Catholic Church. Many crossed over to England at the invitation of Henry VIII, but they met bitter persecution there as they had in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. In 1683 the first Mennonite families settled in America, and Mennonite immigrants quickly spread across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, as well as into Canada. The 18 articles of the Mennonite faith, signed in Dordrecht, Holland, in 1632, includes the belief in the fall of man, the deity of Christ, the necessity of repentance and regeneration for salvation, baptism as a public testimony of faith, Heaven, and Hell...” (Way of Life Encyclopedia)

Article IV of the 1632 Dutch Mennonite Confession to which David Cloud refers incorporates the Monophysite heresy, that Jesus was conceived “in” Mary, rather than “of” Mary: “

“We believe and confess further, that when the time of the promise, for which all the pious forefathers had so much longed and waited, had come and was fulfilled, this previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior, proceeded from God, was sent, and, according to the prediction of the prophets, and the testimony of the evangelists, came into the world, yea, into the flesh, was made manifest, and the Word, Himself became flesh and man; that He was conceived in the virgin Mary...” (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia)

In contrast, Luke 1:31 states specifically that Mary herself conceived Jesus, and was not merely a vessel “through” which Jesus’ “heavenly flesh” was conceived by some other agency:

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” (Luke 1:30-31 KJV)

The heresy which Menno Simons taught the Anabaptist and Mennonite congregations was explicitly and frequently stated in his works:

“...I have shown and confessed to you the firm foundation of. the incarnation of the Lord, **that he did not become flesh of Mary**, but that he became flesh **in Mary**... Thus Christ Jesus remains the precious, blessed fruit of the womb of Mary, according to the words of Elizabeth, which was **conceived not of her womb** but *in* her womb wrought by the Holy Spirit through faith, of God the omnipotent Father, from high heaven, as we have frequently shown...”

“They say and teach, without any Scripture, ‘That the Word has put on a whole man of Mary’s flesh and seed;’ and we say and teach, according to the plain testimony of John, That the Word was made flesh, **not of Mary, but in Mary**. They teach, ‘That there are two different persons and sons, one divine, the other human, in the one Christ,’ without Scripture; and we say that there is but one undivided person and Son, according to the Scriptures.” (*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*: Book 2, pp. 332-3, 397) (See also: The Confutation: Part Third)

The “heavenly flesh” doctrine was not a “new revelation” to the Anabaptists and Mennonites, but a major heresy that had been refuted in every particular over a millennium earlier, at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD).

“We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, perfect God, and perfect Man of a reasonable soul and flesh consisting; begotten before the ages of the Father according to his Divinity, and in the last days, for us and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin according to his humanity, of the same substance with his Father according to his Divinity, and of the same substance with us according to his humanity; for there became a union of two natures. Wherefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of this unmixed union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God; because God the Word was incarnate and became Man, and from this conception he united the temple taken from her with himself.” (Council of Chalcedon Confession)

Mormon doctrine also contains the *heavenly flesh* heresy, with God the Father and Jesus Christ being the same person, as previously discussed in Chapter 2:

“Sabellianism...holds that the Son was the same person as the Father. The Book of Mormon even alludes to the heavenly flesh (the peculiar preserve of Anabaptists and equivalent to the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation), since the Father of Heaven and Earth is said to come to earth and dwell in a tabernacle of clay...

“While much of the Christological discussion in the Book of Mormon has a Trinitarian ring to it, the text clearly favors a Sabellian, or Monophysite/Unitarian interpretation. The brother of Jared, sees the finger of God and then, on account of his great faith, the face of God. The God of the Old Testament, **Jehovah, he discovers, is none other than Jesus Christ**. As Steven Epperson argues, this is not the orthodox understanding. Jesus and Jehovah are not the same person in Christian theology. It is an ‘egregious error,’ Epperson writes, and ‘we do violence and disrespect to the person of the Father.’ Yet, in the Book of Mormon, at least, the Father is spirit and the Son is flesh, and, as Sabbelius taught, the two are one person in Jesus Christ.” (*Equal Rites: The Book of Mormon, Masonry, Gender, and American Culture*, Clyde R. Forsberg, Columbia Univ. Press, 2003, p. 169)

This heresy borders on another false teaching: If Jesus had “heavenly flesh,” the argument could be made that He was an angel, even Michael the Archangel as Jehovah’s Witnesses believe. Even worse, the “heavenly flesh” doctrine allows for the mating of the human woman, Mary, with the “strange flesh” of a fallen angel, as occurred in Genesis 6.

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” (Gen. 6:4)

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after **strange flesh**, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.” (Jude 6-7)

The outcome of these unholy unions was a hybrid demonic race which God judged with a flood. Since the *Nephilim* are the acclaimed progenitors of the Merovingian bloodline, the false “heavenly flesh” doctrine allows for the heretical interpretation that Jesus Christ was one of the *Nephilim*, an angel among the ancient gods who ruled the pre-flood world. This interpretation provides support for the claims of the popular Astrotheology movement which assigns Jesus Christ a place alongside the solar deities worshipped in ancient religions. (See: “Comparative Mythology & Astrotheology”)

CHAPTER XV

ANABAPTIST UNITARIANS

CONTEND FOR THE FAITH: THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

<http://watch-unto-prayer.org/TR-0-intro.html>

WATCH UNTO PRAYER

taho@watch-unto-prayer.org

<http://watch-unto-prayer.org>