

# Historical Necessity of the Third Angel's Message



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**Source:**

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald  
June 10 to July 1, 1884  
and  
The Signs of the Times  
March 2 to April 13, 1888

**Cover:**

The Three Angels of Revelation 14  
Daniel and the Revelation, 1912 edition

**Fonts:**

Eras Demi ITC  
Linux Biolinum  
Linux Libertine



August 2021  
[www.srac.info](http://www.srac.info)  
[www.practicaprophetica.com](http://www.practicaprophetica.com)

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# 1. The Reformation Begins

Signs of the Times, March 2, 1888

**T**HE Third Angel's Message of *Revelation* 14 is just as much a part of the Reformation, as is any other step that has been taken since Luther nailed his theses to the church-door in Wittenberg.

This we now propose to show, in a short series of articles in which we shall sketch the course of controversy from the Reformation onward; tracing the successive steps of Truth in her progress from the deep obscurity into which she had been plunged by the Papal supremacy, to the clear shining of this period of the nineteenth century. By this we shall prove that there is actually a historical, a logical, and a theological, necessity for the Third Angel's Message to complete the work of the Reformation.

## Beginning of the Reformation

Although the Reformation actually began in France by Farel, and in Switzerland by Zwingli, before Luther began his great work, yet as Luther's work was more positively aggressive than any other, and as he was singled out by the papacy as the one object of its direct attack, any view of the Reformation, to be just, must be taken from the point of Luther's appearance upon the scene.

Besides, any attempt to strike a balance, or draw a comparison, between the degrees of merit attaching to these great men would be unjust. D'Aubigne has well expressed the truth on this point, in these words:

The Reformation existed not in Luther only; it was the offspring of his age.<sup>1</sup>

And as it was the offspring of the age, so it existed in no

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Reformation*, book 3, chap. 4.

man; and any attempt to institute a comparison between men is to detract from the dignity of the work, and to imply that it was the work of men instead of the work of God.

At the same time we would not, in the slightest, attempt to rob any of these men of the tribute that is justly their due. Noble heroes they were, and all honor to them as such; yet the Reformation was the work of God, and these men were only His instruments.

Now, reader, I ask your thoughtful attention throughout; because I shall make no comment, nor application of any point, until the close; but then it will be summed up in few words, and you want to have the points well in your mind.

### **Justification by Faith**

As the Reformation was “the offspring of the age,” so the leading doctrine of the Reformation, i.e., *Justification by Faith*, was the logical deduction from the promises laid down by the age. And in view of the times and the events, it is difficult to conceive any other doctrine that might properly have been the leading one.

At the date of the Reformation, the beginning of the sixteenth century, the papacy had, from Gregory the Great, through Azcharias and Stephen III, Hildebrand and Innocent III, Alexander VI, and Leo X, reached that pinnacle of abusive power where she held the sway over this world and the world to come, and over the eternal destinies of the human race; and where she could traffic in immortal bliss, selling it for money, where, in the energetic words of another,

The church was omnipotent, and Leo was the church.<sup>2</sup>

In the exercise of that omnipotency, Leo proceeds to the sale of indulgences, covering both worlds for the past, present, and future. And now begins the Reformation. Luther

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<sup>2</sup> *Historical Studies*, Eugene Lawrence, 1876.

resists the sale of indulgences, and the claims upon which they are sold. It is plain that if both sides stand firmly to their principles, nothing else can come out of it but renunciation of the church of Rome, on the part of Luther, the adoption of Christ as Head of the church instead of the pope, and justification by faith instead of by money in the purchase of indulgences. For:

1. If the pope cannot grant remission of sin by an indulgence, can he grant remission at all?
2. If he cannot grant remission at all, can he bestow upon another the power to remit sin?
3. If he has not the authority, and those who receive authority from him have it not, then is such authority possessed by any one on earth?
4. If it stand thus with the pope, is he head of the church?
5. If he be not the head of the church, is not Christ alone the head of the church on earth as well as in heaven?
6. If Christ alone be the head of the church and the one alone through whose intercession and merits forgiveness of sin can be obtained, and if this forgiveness is to be obtained from God alone, through Christ alone, without the intervention of priest, bishop, or pope, must not every one go to Christ himself, for himself, for justification?

And therefore the logical consequence is justification by faith. And such was the course through which Luther was led. Not that Luther saw or realized it all when he began. Not at all. Had he realized even the half of it, doubtless he would have stood aghast.

When he opposed the indulgences, he saw only the wickedness of the indulgences as ministered by their vendors, and of the manner in which Tetzel conducted the traffic. And as the pope persisted in this course, and Luther persisted in his opposition, this first step carried him logically to the second,

and, as events shaped the course, finally to the logical consequence of all, justification by faith, and therefore the Reformation.

## The Lord's Supper

It was a natural and an easy step to the next point, the Lord's Supper instead of the papal mass. And here opens a new scene of controversy. Opposition is not confined between the reformers and the papacy; on this subject it opens between the reformers themselves. And the zeal that ought to have been exerted unitedly in maintaining a solid front in attacking the papacy, was in a great measure spent in opposing one another. The contending parties on this subject were Luther on one side, and Carlstadt and Zwingli on the other.

The papal doctrine of the mass is, that the bread and the wine in the sacrament are veritably the actual flesh and blood of the Lord; and that either is as much so as both together; and that therefore it is superfluous to administer both to the laity; and so the bread alone is given instead of bread and wine. This is *Trans-substantiation*; i.e., "change of substance".

Luther renounced this, and held that although the bread and wine are not the real body and blood of the Lord, yet Christ is really present with the bread and wine. This is *Con-substantiation*; i.e., "with the substance".

Carlstadt and Zwingli denied both, and held, as is now held by Protestants almost everywhere, that the bread and wine are only memorials of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Christ.

## Fanaticism

But Carlstadt was impetuous, and while Luther was a captive in the Wartburg, Carlstadt, being deprived of his counsels, went too far for that present time, and in a measure endangered the Reformation.



In every great religious movement, when the minds of men are unusually stirred, fanaticism is ever ready to break forth and bring reproach upon the truth. It was so in the first days of the Reformation, and there has been no exception from that time to the present. And in this way the Reformation was endangered by these premature movements under the leadership of Carlstadt.

At that very time fanaticism was showing itself in Wittemberg; and when the Reformers spoke against images, with other errors of the Romish church, the slightest spark was soon blown by the fanatics into a most vehement flame; they rushed into the churches, tore down the images and crucifixes, broke them to pieces, and burned them.

One excess led to another; the fanatics pretended to be illumined by the Spirit; despised the Supper, and held internal communion instead; claimed to have no need of the Bible nor of human learning, began to prophesy the destruction of all but the saints; and that when that should be accomplished, the kingdom of God would be established upon the earth, the chief fanatic would be put in supreme authority, and he would commit the government to the saints.<sup>3</sup>

Carlstadt was to a certain extent influenced for awhile by these enthusiasts; but only for awhile, and then only so far as to despise learning and advise his students at the College to return to their homes.<sup>4</sup>

Luther was informed of the state of affairs, and left his retreat, and returned to Wittemberg; and it fell upon him to quench this flame of enthusiasm, to put down this rule of fanaticism.

## **A Difference of Opinion**

In these events lies the secret of the difference of opinion

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<sup>3</sup> See D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, book 9, chap. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

between the Reformers on the Lord's Supper. In the beginning Luther had inclined to the symbolical explanation of the Supper, and even at this time was not decidedly against it.

But now that Carlstadt preached it, and the fanatics pushed the symbolism to the length of despising the Supper entirely; and Carlstadt being in a measure, however slight, mixed up with them, Luther having to meet all this, rejected all idea of any symbolical meaning in the words, "This is my body," and adopted that view from which, to use his own words, he would not be moved by "reason, common sense, carnal arguments," nor "mathematical proofs."<sup>5</sup>

In the way in which the subject was brought prominently before him, it appeared to him that, to hold the view of the bread and wine being symbols was akin to fanaticism, if not fanaticism itself.

And when Carlstadt, after being banished from Saxony, went to Switzerland, and was admitted as pastor and professor of divinity at Basel; and when before this Zwingli's writings, maintaining the same views, had reached Luther, the whole company was held by Luther to be opponents of the truth; and he being as strenuous against this as against anything else that he deemed error, and his opponents in this holding the truth, and necessarily defending it, it could not but be that the result must be division.

It is true that in this controversy Luther was stubborn; but in view of all the circumstances amidst which it arose, surely our charity will not be unduly taxed in excusing it. If he had been less strenuous in defending what he held to be true, the world would not have had the Reformation then.

But however worthily our charity be bestowed in this instance, it fails to be so, when the scenes and the actors have all passed from the stage, when the Reformation has escaped

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, book 13, chap. 7.

the breakers and rides securely, and his successors stubbornly resist the truth for no other reason than that “Luther believed thus, and so do we;” and so cease to be reformers, and become rigid Lutherans.



## 2. Attempts at Unity

Signs of the Times, March 9, 1888

### Melancthon Proposes Unity

**T**HE death of Luther (February 18, 1546) left Melancthon at the head of the Reformation in Germany; and his views on the Supper were almost, if not identical with, those of the Reformed, i.e. the Swiss as distinguished from Lutherans.

His love of peace and his respect for Luther had caused him to hold his views in abeyance while Luther lived; but after Luther's death, this very love of peace led him into a war that lasted as long as he lived; for, holding views so favorable to those of the opposition, and believing besides that, even in the widest difference of opinion on this subject, there was nothing that justified any division, much less such bitter contention, between the friends of the Reformation, his desire for peace induced him to propose a union of Lutherans and Zwinglians.

This immediately caused a division among the Lutherans, and developed what Mosheim calls the "rigid Lutherans" and the "moderate Lutherans," the moderate Lutherans favoring union, and the rigid Lutherans attacking with renewed vigor all together, and Melancthon in particular.

### Calvin Proposes Unity

Just here also another element of contention for the rigid Lutherans was introduced. Calvin appeared as a king of mediation between the Lutherans and Zwinglians; and he proposed by modifying the opinions of both parties to effect a more perfect union.

But instead of his efforts being acceptable, the rigid Lutherans accused all who in the least degree favored the union of being Crypto-Calvinists; i.e. secret Calvinists. By thus adding an epithet the prejudice was increased against any effort toward conciliation; and besides, a bitter controversy was

opened between the Lutherans and Calvinists.

### **The Interim: More Division**

The bitterness of the opponents of Melancthon was increased by his connection with the “Interim,” which was this:

In 1547 a diet was held at Augsburg, and Charles V. required of the Protestants that they should submit the decision of religious contests to the council of Trent. The greater part of the members of the diet consented. But under the pretext of a plague raging in Trent, the Pope issued a bull transferring the council to Bologna. The legates and all the rest of the papal party obeyed the pope, but the emperor ordered all of the German bishops to remain at Trent. This virtually dissolved the council at Trent, and the Emperor refused to allow his bishops to go to Bologna. Plainly there could be no council to decide the religious contests, and the action of the diet was nullified.

Now, to keep the matter under control until the difference between the pope and the emperor could be settled, and the council re-assembled, Charles ordered Julius Pilugius, bishop of Nuremberg, Michael Sidonius, a creature of the pope, and John Agricola, of Eisleben, to draw up a formulary which might serve as a rule of faith and worship for both Protestants and Catholics, until the council should be ready to act upon the question.

This formulary, from its purpose of being only to cover the interval that should elapse till the council should act, was called the “Interim.” But instead of pacifying the contestants, it only led to new difficulties, and involved the whole empire in violence and bloodshed.

Maurice, elector of Saxony, affected to remain neutral in regard to the “Interim,” but finally in 1548 he assembled the Saxon nobility and clergy in several conferences, to take counsel about what should be done. In all these conferences,



Melancthon was accorded the chief place. He finally gave it as his opinion,

...that the whole of the book of “Interim” could not by any means be adopted by the friends of the Reformation; but declared at the same time that he saw no reason why it might not be adopted as authority in things that did not relate to the essential parts of religion, or in things which might be considered indifferent.

This decision set his enemies all aflame again; and with Flacius at their head, the defenders of Lutheranism attacked Melancthon and the doctors of Wittemberg and Leipsic...

...with incredible bitterness of fury, and accused them of apostasy from the true religion.<sup>6</sup>

Melancthon and his friends, however, defended his view, and a warm debate followed upon these two points:

1. Whether the points that seemed indifferent to Melancthon were so in reality?
2. Whether in things of an indifferent nature, and in which the interests of religion are not essentially concerned, it be lawful to yield to the enemies of the truth.

## The Rise of Scholasticism

And right here we are brought to the contemplation of the greatest hindrance that ever affected the Reformation: that is, scholasticism. Luther and all the other reformers stood upon the platform of:

*“The word of God,  
the whole word of God,  
and nothing but the word of God.”*

They abandoned the sophistries of the schools, and rested solely upon this declaration, which must be the basis of every

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<sup>6</sup> Mosheim. *Ecclesiastical History*, cent. xvi, sec. iii, part ii, chap 1, par. 28.

true reform in all ages. And just so far as that principle is abandoned, so much will the work be retarded.

While this principle was adhered to, the Reformation succeeded gloriously; when the principle was abandoned, the Reformation suffered accordingly. In the word of God, lies the strength of the work of God.

In this position there was another great advantage that the Reformers held over their papal antagonists. As long as they stood by the word of God alone, they occupied a field with which the papists were wholly unacquainted; and the more the Reformers studied and applied the word of God, the more easily they could defeat their adversaries.

Their adversaries knew it, and therefore they employed every artifice to draw the Reformers into the scholastic field; for there the papists had every advantage which the Protestants had in the other.

While the leaders of the Reformation lived, the papists were unsuccessful in every attempt in this direction, and so the Reformation was successful everywhere; but when these leaders were removed from the world, and their faith and zeal were not inherited by their successors, and when to the craftiness of the papists were added the zeal and artfulness of Loyola and his order, the Protestants were finally corrupted by the arts and stratagems of their opponents and induced to revive the subtleties of the schools in defending and illustrating religious truth.

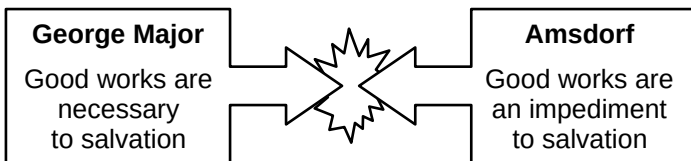
So it may be said with truth that, while the Protestants imbibed scholasticism from the Catholics, they allowed the Catholics to steal from them their zeal. All that will be needed to prove and illustrate it, will be simply to mention the subjects of controversy that engaged the Protestant disputants for more than a hundred years.

## Controversy Over Good Works

Out of the debate about things indifferent grew several others, from which arose yet others, and so on indefinitely. While Melancthon and his colleagues were at Leipsic discussing the “Interim,” among other things they had said,

The necessity of good works in order to the attainment of eternal salvation, might be held and taught, conformably to the truth of the gospel.

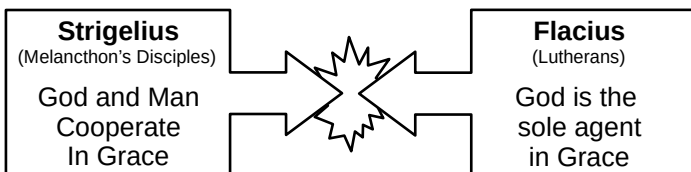
This declaration was severely censured by the rigid Lutherans, as being contrary to the doctrine and sentiments of Luther. George Major maintained the doctrine of good works, and Amsdorf the contrary. In this dispute Amsdorf was so far carried away by his zeal for the doctrine of Luther, as to assert that good works are an impediment to salvation.



This added new fuel to the flame, and on it raged.

## Synergistical Controversy

Out of this debate grew another, known as the “Synergistical” controversy, from a Greek word signifying co-operation. The disciples of Melancthon, led by Strigelius, held that man co-operates with divine grace in the work of conversion.



The Lutherans, led by Flacius, head of the university of Saxe-Weimar, held that God is the only agent in the conver-

sion of man.

## Controversy Over the Human Mind

This dispute led to yet another, concerning the natural powers of the human mind. On this subject a public debate was held at Weimar in 1560, between Flacius and Strigelius. Flacius maintained that

The fall of man extinguished in the human mind every virtuous tendency, every noble faculty, and left nothing but universal darkness and corruption.

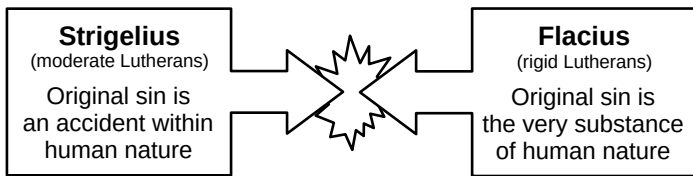
Strigelius held that this degradation of the powers of the mind was by no means universal. And, hoping to defeat his opponent by puzzling him, put this question:

Should original sin, or the corrupt habit which the human soul contracted by the fall, be classed with substances or accidents?

Flacius replied:

Original sin is the very substance of human nature.

This bold assertion opened another controversy on the nature and extent of original sin.



### 3. More Disputes

Signs of the Times, March 16, 1888

**I**N 1560 Melancthon died, glad, as he said on his deathbed, to be freed from the contentions of theologians. After his death, many who wished to see these divisions and animosities healed, endeavored to put an end to the controversies.

#### **Reconciliation at Altenburg Fails**

After many vain attempts, in 1568 the elector of Saxony and the duke of Saxe-Weimar summoned the most eminent men of each party to meet at Altenburg, and there, in an amicable spirit, sought to reconcile their differences. But this effort came to naught.

#### **“Form of Concord” Brings Discord**

Then the dukes of Wirtemberg and Brunswick joined in the effort; and James Andreas, professor at Tubingen, under their patronage traveled through all parts of Germany working in the interests of concord. At last, they were so far successful as to gather, after several conferences, a company of leading divines at Torgau in 1576, where a treatise, composed by Andreas, was examined, discussed, and corrected, and finally proposed to the deliberations of a select number, who met at Berg, near Magdeburg.

There all points were fully and carefully weighed, and discussed anew; and as the result of all, there was adopted the “Form of Concord.” And now that the “Form of Concord” was adopted, discord was fully assured; for it was only a source of new tumults, and furnished matter for dissensions and contests as violent as any that had gone before. Besides this, the field now widened, so that the Calvinists and Zwinglians were all included in the whirl of controversy.

## Calvinism Brings in New Disputes

Now that Calvin appears upon the scene, the field was not only enlarged, but new material was supplied; for he differed from both Lutherans and Zwinglians, not only with regard to the Lord's Supper, but his essential tenet of absolute decrees of God, in the salvation of men, was an entirely new element in the strife; and from the very nature of the case it propagated a multitude of new disputes.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon them, nor to draw them out in their full members. It will be sufficient merely to name the leading subjects.

Differing from both Lutherans and Zwinglians on the presence of Christ in the Supper, of course the controversy on that subject was re-opened, and again canvassed through all its forms:

1. What is the nature of the institutions called Sacraments?
2. What are the fruits of the same?
3. How great is the majesty and glory of Christ's human nature?
4. How are the divine perfections communicated to the human nature of Christ?
5. What is the inward frame of spirit that is required in the worship addressed to the Saviour?

On the divine decrees:

1. What is the nature of the divine attributes?
2. Particularly those of justness and goodness?
3. Fate and necessity?
4. What is the connection between human liberty and divine prescience?
5. What is the extent of God's love to mankind?
6. What are the benefits that arise from the merits of



Christ as mediator?

7. What are the operations of the divine Spirit, in rectifying the will and sanctifying the affections of men?
8. The final perseverance of the elect.

Other subjects:

1. What is the extent of external ceremonies in religious worship?
2. What are the special characteristics of things indifferent?
3. How far is it lawful to comply with the demands of an adversary in discussing things indifferent?
4. What is the extent of Christian liberty?
5. Is it lawful to retain, out of respect to the prejudices of the people, ancient rites and ceremonies which have a superstitious aspect, yet may be susceptible of a favorable and rational interpretation?

Bear in mind that these are only the leading subjects that lay between Calvinism on the one hand, and Lutheranism and the Zwinglians on the other. Calvin had yet other controversies to conduct on his own account. Among these were,

1. The Immortality of the Soul.
2. The Trinity.
3. Predestination (against his opponents in Geneva).
4. And above all, in acquiring and maintaining his own absolute supremacy in Geneva.

It will be seen at the first glance that this last list is almost nothing in comparison with that which agitated the Lutheran church, or with that which lay between the Calvinists and Lutherans. But there is an excellent reason for this; and that is, none but the most intrepid dared to question the doctrines of Calvin in Geneva. All opposers of Calvin there had to fairly take their lives in their hands. And some did not escape even

that way.

I am making no attack upon Calvin. I simply state facts as they come in the course of controversy. To give a proper view of affairs in Geneva, I will quote a passage of the highest authority:

His system of church polity was essentially theocratic; it assumed that every member of the State was also under the discipline of the church; and he asserted that the right of exercising this discipline was vested exclusively in the consistory, or body of preachers and elders.

His attempts to carry out these views brought him into collision both with the authorities and with the populace, the latter being enraged at the restraints imposed upon the disorderly by the exercise of church discipline, and the former being inclined to retain in their-own hands a portion of that power in things spiritual, which Calvin was bent on placing exclusively in the hands so of the church rulers.

His dauntless courage, his perseverance, and his earnestness at length prevailed....His work, as has been justly said, "embraced everything;" he was consulted on every affair, great and small, that came before the council.<sup>7</sup>

It is plain, therefore, that where "every member of the State" "was subject to the discipline of the Church," and where this discipline was exercised "exclusively by the body of preachers and elders," with Calvin the head of that body, his power was practically unlimited; and that opposition to his doctrines could have no chance at all to spread, if he should choose to exert his power. And that he did choose to exert it, needs no argument. I proceed to the controversies that arose in Geneva.

1. One of the first of his opponents was Gruet, who attacked him vigorously on his supremacy, called him "bishop of Asculum," and "the new pope." Among other

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<sup>7</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ninth edition, art. "Calvin", which was written by W. L. Alexander, D.D., one of the Bible revisers, and which is *prima facie* favorable to him.

- points of dissent, Gruet denied the immortality of the soul. He may have been an infidel, but it is not certain; at any rate he was brought before the council, by which he was condemned and punished with death.
2. Another opponent was Castalio, master of the public schools of Geneva who attacked Calvin's doctrine of unconditional predestination. He was deposed from his office and banished.
  3. Another was Jerome Bolsec, a monk who had been converted to Protestantism. He, too, attacked the doctrine of absolute decrees. He was thrown into prison, and after a two days' debate with Calvin before the council, was banished.
  4. Out of this grew still another. Jacques de Bourgogne, a lineal descendant of the dukes of Burgundy, and an intimate friend and patron of Calvin, had settled at Geneva solely to have the pleasure of his company. Bourgogne had employed Bolsec as his physician, and when Bolsec became involved in his difficulty with Calvin, Bourgogne came to his support, and tried to prevent his ruin. This so incensed Calvin that he turned his attention to the nobleman, who was obliged to leave Geneva, lest a worse thing should befall him.
  5. Another, and the most notable of all the victims of Calvin's theocracy, was Servetus, who had opposed the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and also infant baptism; and had published a book entitled *Christianity Restored*, in which he declared his sentiments. He had been condemned to death by the Catholics for heresy, but he escaped from their prison in Dauphiné, in France, and in making his way to Italy, passed through Geneva, and there remained a few days. He was just about to start for Zurich, when at the instigation of Calvin he was seized, and out of the book before mentioned, was accused of blasphemy. The result, as everybody knows, was that he was burned to death. Dr.

Alexander says further,

The heresy of Servetus was not extirpated by his death; but none of his followers were visited with severer penalties than banishment from Geneva. The trials of several of these, with the conferences and controversies connected with them, occupied much of Calvin's time for several years.

From the foregoing it is very easy to see why the Calvinistical body was so much more exempt from divisions and tumults than was the Lutheran.

## 4. More Factions

Signs of the Times, March 23, 1888

### All United Against the Anabaptists

**B**UT however bitter the opposition between Lutherans and Calvinists, and amongst the Lutherans themselves, and again, between all of these on one hand and the Catholics on the other, they could call a truce upon all their differences, and unite, all, Catholics, Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Calvinists, in one common onset against Anabaptists.

The name "Anabaptist," signifies re-baptizers, and was applied indiscriminately to all who denied the validity of sprinkling for baptism, and especially of infant baptism, or sprinkling, rather. Before the period of the Reformation, there were, scattered throughout almost all the countries of Europe, and persecuted everywhere, lineal descendants, in point of doctrine, of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, who did not practice infant baptism (sprinkling), but held to the genuine doctrines of baptism, the sleep of the dead, and some to the true Sabbath.

Of course, these doctrines caused them even then to be considered abominable heretics; but when, unfortunately, in the early days of the Reformation, some of the name ran into wild fanaticism, all of the name were classed together in it; and the severest of penal laws of those severe times, were enacted against all who could be classed as Anabaptists.

In almost all the countries of Europe, an unspeakable number...preferred death in its worst forms to a retraction....Neither the view of the flames that were kindled to consume them, nor the ignominy of the gibbet, nor the terrors of the sword, could shake their invincible...constancy, or make them abandon tenets that appeared dearer to them than life and all its enjoyments....

And it is much to be lamented that so little distinction was

made between the members of this sect, when the sword was unsheathed against them. Why were the innocent and the guilty involved in the same fate? Why were doctrines purely theological...punished with the same rigor that was shown to crimes inconsistent with the peace and welfare of civil society?

Those who had no other marks of peculiarity than their administering baptism to adult persons only, and their excluding the unrighteous from the external communion of the church, ought undoubtedly to have met with milder treatment than that which was given to those seditious incendiaries, who were for unhinging all government and destroying all civil authority....

It is true that many Anabaptists suffered death, not on account of their being considered rebellious subjects, but merely because they were judged to be incorrigible heretics; for in this century the error of limiting the administration of baptism to adult persons only, and the practice of re-baptizing such as had received that sacrament in infancy, were looked upon as the most flagitious and intolerable of heresies.<sup>8</sup>

As before remarked, the Anabaptists became the one object of the attack of all parties, civil and religious. Their opposition to infant baptism somewhat disconcerted Melancthon in the presence of the fanatics at Wittemberg. He owned that they had hit upon a "weak point;" and his doubts on this point led him to make the familiar statement, "Luther alone can decide" the question of their inspiration.

It was the fear of being landed in Anabaptism that was the reason that "Luther did not face this question thoroughly." The Protestant Council of Zurich ordered "that any one who administered anabaptism should be drowned;" and the order was actually executed upon Felix Mantz, "who had formerly been associated with Zwingli at the commencement of the Reformation."

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<sup>8</sup> Mosheim, *Church History*, Cent. 16, sec. 3, part 2, par. 6.



One of the very earliest of Calvin's theological efforts, was the composition of a book entitled, "Psychopamychia," on the immortality of the soul, in opposition to the Anabaptists in France.<sup>9</sup>

And the claim of the true Sabbath was not the least of the causes of Luther's bitterness against Carlstadt.<sup>10</sup>

England was not entirely exempt from these scenes; yet while exempt from some she was subject to others from which the continental nations were free.

### **England: Conformists and Non-Conformists**

To escape the persecutions of "Bloody Mary," many of the English Protestants fled to Germany. Worship while in exile was conducted by some with the rites of the Church of England as established under Edward VI.; while others preferred the Swiss or Calvinistic form of worship. This caused a division, and the former were called Conformists, the latter Non-Conformists or Puritans; and thus the Puritans appear upon the scene.

After the death of Mary, at the accession of Elizabeth, these exiles returned to England, and carried their controversies with them; and England not only supplied a better field for their propagation, but there the Scotch Presbyterians, who had spread to a considerable extent in England, allied themselves with the Puritans.

These controversies turned, as stated above, upon the forms of worship; whether the clergy should wear vestments; whether the church should be governed by bishops; about cathedral churches, and the archdeacons, deans, canons, and other officials of the same; about festivals and holy days; the

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<sup>9</sup> For these points, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, articles: "Melancthon", "Baptism", "Baptists", and "Calvin".

<sup>10</sup> For a full and fair discussion of this point, see J. N. Andrew's *History of the Sabbath*, chap. 23.

sign of the cross; about godfathers, and godmothers, etc., etc.

## **Controversy Over Bishops**

There were, again, branch controversies from some of these. For instance: on the office of bishops, the question at first was whether bishops are allowable as they stand in the Church of England?

But Bancroft, afterward archbishop of Canterbury, asserted that bishops are superior to all other offices in the church, by divine right of the appointment of God himself. To sustain this claim, they were compelled to hold, not the Bible alone as authority, but the Bible and the church of the first five centuries, especially as illustrated in the forms of church government.

The Puritans and Presbyterians, in denying this, and asserting the sufficiency of the Bible alone, and charging all these other things to the account of Rome, as being

...vain, superstitious, idolatrous, and diametrically opposite to the injunctions of the Gospel,

—were involved in a serious dilemma. When they inveighed so heavily against the rites, ceremonies, and festival days of the Conformists, as being of Rome, and “superstitious, idolatrous,” etc., the Episcopalians retorted upon them, that the observance of Sunday was only an ordinance of the church, and that therefore if they renounced the authority of the church, and held “the Bible and the Bible only,” they must give up the observance of Sunday.

## **Controversy Over Sabbath**

But the Non-Conformists, instead of facing this question boldly, and instituting an honest inquiry at the oracles of God, “What day is the Sabbath?” determined that they would keep Sunday anyhow, and if anything must yield, it should be the Scripture.

And so Mr. Nicholas Bound, D.D. invented the, to them, very pleasing doctrine, which is yet perpetuated by many who will not obey the commandment of God, that the fourth commandment requires only one day in seven. And such is the origin of the *seventh-part-of-time-one-day-in-seven* fraud. This was adopted by all the Puritans and Presbyterians with wonderful celerity.

And so a second time the Sabbath of the Lord pleaded for release from condemnation at the hands of men, and was denied as was its Lord: "Not this man, but Barabbas."

### **Thomas Cartwright's Extreme Views Divide**

Another subject that grew out of the differences between the Conformists and Non-Conformists was sprung Thomas Cartwright, in an attempt to establish Calvin's system of church government in England, and which also frustrated all hopes of any compromise. I will give this in the words of Mr. Green:

So difficult, however, was her [Elizabeth's] position that a change might have been forced on her had she not been aided at this moment by a group of clerical bigots, who gathered under the banner of Presbyterianism.

Of these, Thomas Cartwright was the chief. He had studied at Geneva; he returned with a fanatical faith in Calvinism, and in the system of church government which Calvin had devised; and as officer of divinity at Cambridge, he used to the full the opportunities which his chair gave him of propagating his opinions. No leader of a religious party ever deserved less of after sympathy.

Cartwright was unquestionably learned and devout, but his bigotry was that of a medieval inquisition. The relics of the old ritual, the cross in baptism, the surplice, the giving of a ring in marriage, were to him not merely distasteful, as they were to the Puritans at large; they were idolatrous, and the mark of the beast.

His declamation against ceremonies and superstition, how-

ever, had little weight with Elizabeth for her primates; what scared them was his reckless advocacy of a scheme of ecclesiastical government which placed the State beneath the feet of the Church. The absolute rule of bishops, indeed, Cartwright denounced as begotten of the devil; but the absolute rule of presbyters he held to be established by the word of God. For the church modeled after the fashion of Geneva he claimed an authority which surpassed the wildest dreams of the masters of the Vatican.

All spiritual authority and jurisdiction, the decreeing of doctrine, the ordering of ceremonies, lay wholly in the hands of the ministers of the church. To them belonged the supervision of public morals. In an ordered arrangement of classes and synods, these presbyters were to govern their flocks, to regulate their own order, to decide in matters of faith, to administer "discipline." Their weapon was excommunication, and they were responsible for its use to none but Christ.

The province of the civil ruler in such a system of religion as this, was simply to carry out the decisions of the presbyters, "to see their decrees executed, and to punish the condemners of them."

Nor was this work of the civil power likely to be light work. The spirit of Calvinistic Presbyterianism excluded all toleration of practice or belief. Not only was the rule of ministers to be established as the legal form of church government, but all other forms, Episcopalian or Separatist, were to be ruthlessly put down. For heresy there was the punishment of death.

Never had the doctrine of persecution been urged with such a blind and reckless ferocity. Cartwright wrote:

"I deny that upon repentance there ought to follow any pardon of death....Heretics ought to be put to death now. If this be bloody and extreme, I am content to be so counted with the Holy Ghost."

The violence of language such as this was as unlikely as the dogmatism of his theological teaching, to commend Cartwright's opinions to the mass of Englishmen. Popular as the Presbyterian system became in Scotland, it never took any popular hold on England. It remained to the last a cleri-

cal, rather than a national, creed; and even in the moment of its seeming triumph under the commonwealth, it was rejected by every part of England save London and Lancashire.

But the bold challenge which Cartwright's party delivered to the government in 1572, in an "admonition to the Parliament," which denounced the government of bishops as contrary to the word of God, and demanded the establishment in its place of government by presbyters, raised a panic among English statesmen and prelates, which cut off all hopes of a quiet treatment of the merely ceremonial questions which really troubled the consciences of the more advanced Protestants. The natural progress of opinion abruptly ceased, and the moderate thinkers who had pressed for a change in ritual which would have satisfied the zeal of the Reformers, withdrew from union with a party which revived the worst pretensions of the papacy.<sup>11</sup>

## The Rise of Independents

Shortly after this, in 1639, there occurred a division among the Puritans, which was followed by very notable results. Robert Brown drew off in a revolt from the government of synods and presbyteries, as well as from the government of bishops; and held that each church or assembly of worshipers was entirely independent of all others, and self-governing, and all points of doctrine or discipline were to be submitted to the congregation for discussion and final decision; that each congregation should elect its own pastor, etc. The sect that thus arose were called Independents, or Congregationalists.

To escape the persecution that arose against them as a matter of course, they fled to Holland, and founded churches in Middleburg, Amsterdam, and Leyden. Shortly after going to Holland, Brown deserted his followers, returned to England, and took a benefice in the English church. This left John Robinson in charge, who remodeled the whole society, and in 1620 sent a company to America, who were the Pilgrims that

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<sup>11</sup> *Larger History of English People*, book 6, chap. 5, paragraph 31.

landed at Plymouth Rock, and the first settlers of New England.

# 5. Controversies

Signs of the Times, March 30, 1888

## Philosophical Controversies

**I**N ENTERING the seventeenth century we find a new element upon the sea of controversy. Philosophy of the different schools was in each school striving for ascendancy; and if not a direct cause of many of the disputes of this century, it gives a coloring to them.

At this time philosophy was represented in the two classes of Peripatetics (followers of Aristotle) and Fire-Philosophers, from their proposition that “the dissolution of bodies by the power of fire is the only way in which the first principles of things can be discerned”.

The Peripatetics held the professorships in almost all the places of learning; and held that all who questioned Aristotle were little less criminal than downright heretics; and so there was a lively contest kept up between them and the Fire-Philosophers, or chemists.

But there was a union of the interests of these two, when, about 1640, the Cartesian gauntlet, *Cogito, ergo sum* (i.e., “I think, therefore I am”), was thrown into the arena; and they both turned with all their energy against the new philosophy;

...not [says Mosheim,] so much for their philosophical system as for the honors, advantages, and profits they derived from it.

And,

Seconded by the clergy who apprehended that the cause of religion was aimed at and endangered by these philosophical innovations, they made a prodigious noise and left no means unemployed to prevent the downfall of their old system....

They not only accused Descartes of the most dangerous and pernicious errors, but went so far, in the extravagance of

their malignity, as to bring a charge of atheism against him.

In opposition to Descartes, Gassendi also entered the lists, and this gave rise to yet another school of philosophy, the Mathematical. That of Descartes was called the Metaphysical, or Cartesian, philosophy. As the Peripatetic was the only philosophy taught in the Lutheran schools, the rise of the new philosophy was a new subject for discussion and opposition there, and gave scope for yet more exercise of the controversial propensity.

### **Liberty for Calvinists Troubles the Lutherans**

Another thing that greatly troubled the Lutherans was, that in 1614 John Sigismund, elector of Brandenburg, entered the communion of the Calvinists, and granted to all his subjects entire liberty in religious matters, and left to the free choice of all whether they would embrace one religion or another, or any at all.

But the Lutherans “deemed it intolerable that the Calvinists should enjoy the same privileges as themselves.” And this was carried to such a length that the people of Brandenburg were prohibited from studying at the university of Wittenberg.

### **Attempts to Bring Harmony**

But that which gave the Lutherans the most trouble in this century was the efforts of a succession of persons to bring about a state of harmony between them and the Calvinists. James I of England tried it, and failed.

In 1631, in a synod of the Calvinists at Charenton, an act was passed, which granted that the Lutheran religion...

...was conformable to a spirit of true piety, and free from pernicious and fundamental errors,

—but the overture was not accepted. In the same year, a conference was held at Leipsic, between several of the most eminent doctors of both communions, in Saxony and Branden-



burg. And although the Calvinists showed all possible fairness, and made concessions that the Lutherans themselves could scarcely expect, yet all their efforts were looked upon and regarded with suspicion, as being only schemes to ensnare them; and the conference broke up with nothing done.

In 1645 Udislaus IV, king of Poland, called a conference at Thorn, but it only increased the party zeal.

In 1661 William VI, Landgrave of Hesse, called a conference at Cassel, in which the doctors there assembled came to an agreement, embraced one another, and declared that there was nothing between them of sufficient importance to prevent union and concord. This was no sooner learned by the Lutheran brethren, than they turned all their fury against their delegates, and loaded them with reproaches of apostasy, Calvinism, etc.

Besides these public efforts, there were others of a private character. John Duraeus, a Calvinist, a native of Scotland,

...during a period of forty-three years, suffered vexations, and underwent labors which required the firmest resolution, and the most inexhaustible patience; wrote, exhorted, admonished, entreated, and disputed; in a word, tried every method that human wisdom could suggest, to put an end to the dissensions and animosities that reigned among the Protestant churches....

He traveled through all the countries in Europe where the Protestant religion had gained a footing; he formed connections with the doctors of both parties; he addressed himself to kings, princes, magistrates, and ministers....

But his views were disappointed....Some, suspecting that his fervent and extraordinary zeal arose from mysterious and sinister motives, and apprehending that he had secretly formed a design of drawing the Lutherans into a snare, even attacked him in their writings with animosity and bitterness, and loaded him with the sharpest invectives and reproaches: so that this well-meaning man, neglected at length by his

own communion....spent the remainder of his days in repose and obscurity at Cassel.<sup>12</sup>

That which he proposed as the foundation upon which they might unite, was, *The Apostles' Creed*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *The Lord's Prayer*.

Another of the most zealous of the peacemakers was John Matthias a Swedish bishop, who with George Calixtus, attempted to carry on the work of Duraeus. But the opposition was so bitter that Matthias was obliged to resign his bishopric; Calixtus was accused, and...

...[to his] charge many other things were laid, besides the crime of endeavoring to unite the disciples of the same Master in the amiable bonds of charity, concord, and mutual forbearance.<sup>13</sup>

This "crime" was called syncretism.

## **The Pietistical Controversy**

The Pietistical controversy was another that engaged the attention of the Lutherans during this century. This originated in the efforts of Philip James Spener, of Frankfort, who...

...had in view the promotion of vital religion, rousing the lukewarm and indifferent, stemming the torrent of vice and corruption, and reforming the licentious manners of both the clergy and people.<sup>14</sup>

And the better to accomplish this, Spener and his adherents proposed that, besides the stated times for public worship, private assemblies for prayer and other religious exercises should be held. For these laudable and most necessary aims they were nicknamed Pietists, and the opposition to them and their designs, was as strong as was that to any of the others.

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<sup>12</sup> *Church History*, 17th cent., sec. 2, part 2, chap. 1, paragraph 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 26

This subject was carried further by some of the professors at Leipsic, who for the purpose of instructing the candidates for the ministry in something better than how to perpetuate broils,

...undertook to explain in their colleges certain books of Scripture in order to render these genuine sources of religious knowledge better understood, and to promote a spirit of practical piety and vital religion in the minds of their hearers....Accordingly these lectures were much frequented, and their effects were visible in the lives and conversation of several persons, whom they seemed to inspire with a deep sense of the importance of religion and virtue.

But immediately the cry arose that this was “contrary to custom.”

Hence rumors were spread, tumults excited, animosities kindled, and the matter at length brought to a public trial, in which these pious and learned men were indeed declared free from the errors and heresies laid to their charge, but were at the same time prohibited from carrying on that plan of religious instruction which they had undertaken with so much zeal.<sup>15</sup>

But this did not put down the good work thus begun; for the contest spread rapidly through all the Lutheran Churches in Europe. Therefore the doctors and pastors of Wittemberg thought themselves obliged to proceed publicly, first against Spener in 1695, and afterward against his disciples, which gave rise to new debates. The Pietists held:

1. That none should be admitted to the ministry but such as had been properly educated, and were distinguished by wisdom and sanctity of manners, and who had their hearts filled with divine love.
2. That the scholastical theology should be abolished.
3. That polemical divinity, that is, the controversies be-

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 37.

tween Christians, should be less eagerly taught.

4. That all mixture of philosophy and human learning with the Holy Scriptures should be abandoned; and
5. That no person who was not himself a model of piety, was qualified to be a public teacher of piety, or a guide to others in the way of salvation.

Out of these sprung other debates on such questions as,

1. "Can the religious knowledge acquired by a wicked man be termed theology?"
2. "How far can the office and ministry of an impious ecclesiastic be pronounced salutary and efficacious?"
3. "Can an ungodly and licentious man be susceptible of illumination?"

The Pietists further demanded the suppression of certain propositions that it was customary to deliver from the pulpit publicly, which, unqualified, were certainly capable of being interpreted as granting indulgence. Such as:

"No man is able to attain that perfection which the divine law requires."

"Good works are not necessary to salvation."

Also the Pietists prohibited dancing, pantomimes, theatrical plays, etc., among their members; and this again gave an opportunity for the scholastics to display their ingenuity. They raised the question, first, whether these actions were of an indifferent character; and then from that, whether any human actions are truly indifferent; i.e., equally removed from moral good on one hand, and from moral evil on the other.

### **Calvinist Controversy Over the "Divine Decrees"**

In the Calvinist Church, after the death of its founder, the controversy over the "divine decrees" continued through the seventeenth century. From the college at Geneva the doctrine of Calvin spread to all parts of Protestant Europe, and into the

schools of learning.

But there arose a difference of opinion, not about the “decrees” in themselves, but about the nature of the decrees. The majority held that God simply permitted the first man to fall into transgression; while a respectable minority maintained with all their might, that “to exercise and display His awful justice and his free mercy,” God had decreed from all eternity that Adam should sin, and had “so ordered the course of events that our first parents could not possibly avoid their unhappy fall.”<sup>16</sup>

These last were called Supralapsarians, while their opponents were called Sublapsarians.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 2, par. 10.



## 6. Controversies and Revivals

Signs of the Times, April 6, 1888

### Arminian Controversy

**H**OWEVER sharp the contention was at any time between those who would have it that God decreed that man should sin, and those who held that He only permitted it, their differences were all laid aside whenever and wherever there appeared those who...

...thought it their duty to represent the Deity, as extending His goodness and mercy to all mankind.

For both the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians held alike to the decrees of unconditional election and reprobation. This new controversy arose in the early part of the century, and is known as the Arminian controversy, from James Arminius, professor of divinity in the university of Leyden, who was the originator of it.

Arminius had been educated a Calvinist, at the College of Geneva, and because of his merit had been chosen to the university of Leyden.

After leaving Geneva, and as he grew older, his mind more and more revolted from the doctrine of Calvin on predestination, and entertained the Scriptural doctrine that the grace of God is free to all, and brings salvation to all men; that none are prohibited, by any decree, from its benefits, nor are any elected thereto, independent of their own actions, but that Christ brought salvation to the world, and every man is free to accept or reject this offer as he chooses.

But as Calvinism was at that time flourishing in Holland, the teaching of Arminius drew upon him the severest opposition.

Arminius died in 1609, and Simon Episcopius, one of his

disciples, carried the work forward with unabated vigor, and in a little while the controversy spread through all Europe, and created as much tumult in the Calvinist Church as Calvinism had formerly caused in the Lutheran. And the stubbornness of the Lutherans was repeated on the part of the Calvinists. With these, also, some sought to bring the contending parties to an accommodation, but with no success.

At last, in 1618, by the authority of the States-General, the national synod was convened at Dort, to discuss the points of difference and come to an agreement. Deputies assembled from Holland, England, Hesse, Bremen, Switzerland, and the Palatinate; and the leading men of the Arminians came also.

Episcopius addressed the assembly in a discourse, “full of moderation, gravity, and elocution.” But his address was no sooner finished than difficulties arose, and the Arminians found that instead of their being called there to present their views for examination and discussion, it was that they were to be tried as heretics.

And when they refused to submit to the manner of procedure proposed by the synod, they were excluded from the assembly, and the famous synod of Dort tried them in their absence, and, as a natural consequence, they were pronounced “guilty of pestilential errors,” and condemned as “corrupters of the true religion:” and all this after the solemn promise which had been made to the Arminians that they should be allowed full liberty to explain and defend their opinions, as far as they thought necessary to their justification!

After this the doctrine of “absolute decrees” lost ground from day to day; and the way in which the synod had treated the Arminians only increased their determination, and besides drew to them the sympathy of many, so much so indeed, that the whole provinces of Friseland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelderland, and Groningen, never would accept the decisions of that assembly.



Immediately after this, too, the controversy over the Cartesian philosophy entered the Calvinist Church, and set it all aw whirl again, and kept it so.

## **Controversy Between Episcopalians and Puritans**

James I came to the English throne in 1603. He had been raised a Puritan, and therefore that party supposed they would be greatly favored by him as king. Accordingly, before he reached London, they presented to him a petition signed by eight hundred and twenty-five ministers from various countries, desiring a redress of ecclesiastical “abuses,” and asking for a conference.

On January 14, 15, and 16, 1604, the king summoned to Hampton Court the Archbishop of Canterbury, eight bishops, five deans, and two doctors, of the Church of England, “who were to oppose all innovation.” To meet these he called four members of the Puritan party.

James, to avenge himself for the humiliations that had been put upon him by the Puritans in Scotland when he was a boy, sided with the Episcopalians, and became the chief talker in the conferences of the three days. This so pleased the bishops that one of them, (Bancroft, of the divine right contest before mentioned) fell upon his knees with his eyes raised to James, and cried out,

“I protest, my heart melteth for joy that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king as since Christ’s time hath no been.”

And the Archbishop (Whitgift) was so transported with joy as to declare that “undoubtedly his majesty spoke by the special assistance of God’s Spirit.” Whether these men were exactly in the right in speaking thus may doubtless be questioned; but there was one grand result of this Conference: James ordered a new translation of the Scriptures by which we have our present “King James’s” version.

When his delegates returned from Dort, and reported what had been done, James gave the Puritans another snub, by expressing in strong terms his dislike, and declared that the position of Arminius on the divine decrees was preferable to that of Calvin.

After James came Charles I, a rigid Episcopalian, and therefore a bitter opponent of all dissenters, Puritans as well as others; and through Laud carried things with a high-hand. He finally pushed civil matters so far that he brought upon his kingdom the civil war, and by that, through Cromwell, the complete ascendancy of the Puritans.

When affairs had grown somewhat quiet after the close of the civil war, there were peace-loving men in England who wished to heal the divisions between the Episcopalians and the Puritans; but about all the recognition they received was to be called Atheists, Deists, Socinians, and to cap the climax a new epithet was invented, Latitudinarians.

After the Commonwealth, came Charles II, who reduced everything again to the jurisdiction of bishops. After him came James II, who tried to bring the kingdom under the papal rule. This danger, of course, led all to make common cause against it, till finally to save the kingdom to Protestantism, William of Orange, with his wife Mary, daughter of James II, was invited to come over from Holland and take the kingdom and reign. In 1688 they came; James ran away to France, and the kingdom was settled upon William and Mary jointly, and pledged to a Protestant succession forever.

But as soon as James was out of the kingdom, and the bishops were required to take the oath of allegiance to the new king, many of them discovered all at once that James was king by "divine right," and that it was treason to swear allegiance to any other while he lived. It mattered not though he had, like the coward that he was, basely run away in disguise; no matter though he, in his flight, had thrown the great seal of

the kingdom into the Thames, and by thus throwing away “that mystic symbol of legal government” had left the realm a prey to every unlawful element; no matter for all this and more, they refused to take the oath of allegiance to one of the best rulers that England ever saw.

This caused a division and endless discussion within the Episcopalian Church. Those who refused to take the oath were denominated Non-jurors and High Church; those who took the oath were called Low Church. This controversy lasted through the century, till James, William and Mary all were dead, and Anne succeeded.

### **Tumult Over the Quakers**

In 1650 another tumult arose in England. The Quakers began their preaching, and excited great commotion and fearful persecution, till in 1680 William Penn obtained a grant of a portion of land in America, to which his brethren might go and be secure.

### **The Rise of Atheism**

In the eighteenth century, both in England and on the continent, infidelity caused the principal proportion of controversy. Under the leadership of Voltaire and the patronage of Frederick the Great, it grew stronger and stronger, until it finally culminated in the barbarities of the French Revolution, that so shocked the world.

### **Trinitarian Controversy**

In England, however, there were some notable controversies on other subjects. In the early part of the century, William Whiston (the translator of Josephus) revived the Trinitarian controversy, by boldly announcing himself as an Arian. He was followed soon by Samuel Clark, a prelate of the English Church.

## The Wesleyan Revival

But that which caused the greatest commotion of the whole century in religious circles was started in 1738 by John Wesley's preaching of conversion, and a "present, free, and full salvation" by the "witness of the Holy Spirit."

Wesley was a member of the established Church of England, and his "doctrines offended the clergy." "The churches were shut against him," and he had to preach in the open air. But "immense crowds" flocked to hear him.

In 1740 the clergy, not content with excluding the preachers of these doctrines from their pulpits, "repelled them and their converts from the Lord's Supper." Being thus cut off from all fellowship or recognition by the orthodox, there was no course open but to establish communion, amongst themselves, to have their own meeting-houses, and for the preachers to administer the sacrament themselves.

The trials, perplexities, and persecutions of the early Methodists are too well known to require any further mention in this place; though it might not be out of place for us to express the wish that the Methodists now would call to mind the former days, when unpopular doctrine is brought to their notice.

In 1747 the Baptists, or Anabaptists, as they were also called, were brought into particular notice again, by Mr. Whiston's openly joining their communion.

The controversy on the immortality of the soul was again revived by Dr. Priestly's asserting the unconsciousness of the dead.

## Second Advent Revival

In the nineteenth century, the first prominent movement was in relation to the second coming of Christ. In 1827 it began in England, and in 1833 in this country by William Miller. This, however, was not so much a controversy as a warning

voice, and it soon spread to all nations.

### **A System of Morality Needed**

Look over again the subjects that have formed this course of controversy for in our next chapter we shall present the point which is the object of these articles, that is, the necessity for the Third Angel's Message to bring into prominence the commandments of God. And by reviewing what we have now given, the truth which we shall present in the next will be more plainly seen.



## 7. A Moral Reformation

Signs of the Times, April 13, 1888

**A**NYONE who has carefully read the preceding articles in this series, can very readily see that the following statements of Mosheim are the exact truth:

None of the famous Lutheran doctors attempted to give a regular system of morality.<sup>17</sup>

The science of morals...was for a long time neglected among the Lutherans....Hence it happened that those who applied themselves to the business of resolving what are called cases of conscience, were holden in high esteem, and their tribunals were much frequented.<sup>18</sup>

He also gives an excellent reason for this. He says:

Had not the number of adversaries with whom the Lutheran doctors had to contend given them perpetual employment in the field of controversy, and robbed them of that precious leisure which they might have consecrated to the advancement of real piety and virtue, they would certainly have been free from the defects now mentioned....All the divines of this century [the sixteenth] were educated in the school of controversy, and so trained up to spiritual war that an eminent theologian, and a bold and vehement disputant, were considered as synonymous terms.

It could scarcely indeed be otherwise, in an age when foreign quarrels and intestine divisions of a religious nature threw all the countries of Europe into a state of agitation, and obliged the doctors of the contending churches to be perpetually in actions, or at least in a posture of defense.<sup>19</sup>

What was true of the Lutherans was also true of the Calvinists in this respect, as well as in others. The same writer says of these:

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<sup>17</sup> *Church History*, 16th century, sec. 3, part 2, chap. 1, paragraph 17.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 17th cent., sec. 2, part 2, chap. 1, paragraph 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

The progress of morality among the Reformed [Calvinists] was obstructed by the very same means that retarded its improvement among the Lutherans. It was neglected amidst the tumult of controversy; and while every pen was drawn to maintain certain systems of doctrine, few were employed in cultivating or promoting that noblest of all sciences, which has virtue, life, and manners for its objects.<sup>20</sup>

This same course continued through the seventeenth century also. Says Mosheim, further:

It must be acknowledged that, during the greater part of this century [the seventeenth], neither the discourses of the pulpit nor the instructions of the schools were adapted to promote among the people just ideas of religion, or to give them a competent knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel.

The eloquence of the pulpit, as some ludicrously and too justly represent it, was reduced in many places to the noisy art of bawling (during a certain space of time measured by a sand-glass) upon various points of theology, which the orators understood very imperfectly, and which the people did not understand at all....The ministers of the gospel had their heads full of sonorous and empty words of trivial distinctions and metaphysical subtleties, and very illy furnished with that kind of knowledge which is adapted to touch the heart, and to reform the life.<sup>21</sup>

The point in these quotations is illustrated in the necessity for the work of the Pietists, and is emphasized in the prohibition that was pronounced against that work.

There is another reason for the lack of the development of the genuine principles of morality. As shown above, in the very nature of the case, every leader in any reform was compelled to devote his whole attention to the discussion of the points which he was advancing. But the next great trouble was, that when the leader died, the followers utterly refused

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, cent. 16, sec. 2, part 2, chap. 2, paragraph 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 17th cent., sec. 2, part 2, chap. 1, paragraph 13.



to take a single advance step. On this Mosheim says:

The doctrine of the Lutheran church remained entire during this [the seventeenth] century; its fundamental principles received no alteration, no could any doctor of that church, who should have presumed to renounce or invalidate any of those theological points which are contained in the symbolical books of the Lutherans, have met with toleration and indulgence.<sup>22</sup>

And of the Calvinists, he says:

The method...observed by Calvin...was followed, out of respect for his example, by almost all the divines of his communion, who looked upon him as their model and their guide.<sup>23</sup>

This has been true in almost every instance. Therefore, as there has been in the course of the reformation no definite reform on the principles of morality, we lay down the proposition:

## **A Reformation Based on Morality**

If ever there is to be a clearly defined reformation upon the true principles of morality, those principles must be the one leading subject, above all others, set forth in that reform. Will anyone deny that the necessity of such a reform is as great as for any one of the ones that have been taken from the days of Luther to this day?

We do not say that absolutely none of the principles of morality have been believed in, nor practiced; for with the wide dissemination of the Scriptures consequent upon the Reformation, it were impossible but that some rays of light should be discernible in that direction.

But we do say that, until the present time, morality as a system has never had a place in the Reformation. What, then,

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17th cent. sect. 2, part 2, chap. 1, paragraph 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 16th cent., sec. 3, part 2, chap. 2, paragraph 37.

must be the characteristic of such a reform when it shall come?

We answer, As the ten commandments presuppose the moral law; as they are the sum of all duty toward God or man,<sup>24</sup> when such reform shall have presented itself to the world, it must bear high and prominent upon its crest those same ten commandments, demanding obedience thereto as the supreme effort of moral obligation.

Now the Third Angel's Message does just that thing; for that message proclaims with a loud voice to every nation and kindred and tongue and people,

**Revelation 14**

<sup>12</sup> Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Therefore, by thus tracing the reformation through its course of controversy, we have proved to a demonstration, the historical necessity of the Third Angel's Message.

Moreover, the truth of God is as much an exact science as any of those that are called the exact sciences. Therefore no true reform can deny, or be made independent of, any principle of true reform that may have gone before.

Consequently, when this reform upon the principles of morality shall have come, it will deny the truth and efficacy of no single step in the progress of the Reformation.

- With Luther, it will hold justification by faith;
- with Zwingli, it will hold the Lord's supper as a memorial of "the Lord's death, till he come;"
- with the genuine Anabaptist, it will hold that we are buried by baptism into the Lord's death;
- with Arminius, it will hold that the grace of God is free to all men;

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<sup>24</sup> *Ecclesiastes* 12:13.

- with Wesley, it will hold the genuine conversion of the soul, and the witness of the Holy Spirit;
- with the Puritan, it will hold simplicity of worship;
- with William Miller, it will hold, “Behold I come quickly,” says the Lord;
- with the general grand result of the Reformation as a whole, it will hold the most perfect toleration of religious belief, and the inestimable boon of freedom of thought and liberty of discussion.

### **The Third Angel's Message**

Now in holding all these truths, they may be summed up in the one expression, that it will hold “the faith of Jesus.” So when this Reformation shall have presented itself to the world, equally with the ten commandments it must bear just as high and just as prominent “the faith of Jesus;” and combined its insignia will read,

*“The Commandments of God  
and the Faith of Jesus.”*

Now the Third Angel's Message does just that thing. Therefore by this course of controversy, we prove to a demonstration the logical necessity of the Third Angel's Message.

Again: the very aim of the principles of the Reformation is the law of God. Take justification by faith: what is the aim of that but...

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.

Take sanctification by the Holy Spirit: what is the aim of that but...

#### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...unto obedience.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

<sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Sooner or later, then, these aims must be met, and the principle of obedience to the law of God must be inculcated, which of necessity must be a reform in morality. So, then, it would appear that there is a theo-logical necessity for the Third Angel's Message.

The work of Christ also demands that the law of God be held up before all people, by which they must compare their lives; for the place and work of Christ in heaven are in the most holy place, blotting out the sins of his people from Abel onward. And that requires a comparison of their lives with the law of God.

Now, if that be the work of Christ in heaven, what can his work logically be on earth but, through his ambassadors, comparing the lives of the people of earth with the law of God?

So, therefore, the Third Angel's Message supplies this demand when, following the angel who had gone before, crying,

## **Revelation 14**

<sup>7</sup> The hour of His Judgment is come,

—he says with a loud voice,

<sup>12</sup> Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Several times in the course of controversy, the Sabbath of the Lord, as the basis of the acknowledgment of the sovereign rights of God and the claims of His holy law, has presented itself for recognition; but it was beaten back, beaten back, yet not to stay. No; these appearances of the Sabbath on the sea of controversy should rather be considered (to borrow De-

Quincey's splendid figure), as...

...one of those ambitious billows which sometimes run far ahead of their fellows in a tide steadily gaining ground, but which inevitably recede in the next moment, marking only the strength of that tendency which sooner or later is destined to fill the whole capacity of the shore.

And now once more the glorious Sabbath of the Lord has appeared, not to be beaten back, not to recede even to gather greater strength, but rolling in with all the impulse of a mighty tide, irresistible, soon "to fill the whole capacity of the shore" indeed.

And we who see it should realize, must realize, that it is the one and only tide in our affairs which taken at the flood, will lead on, not to fortune, but to EVERLASTING LIFE AND ETERNAL GLORY.







The Holy Spirit

Come

Babylon is fallen

is fallen

The Comandments of God

Jesus

the faith of