

The Paulician Churches

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It is to be regretted that most of the information concerning the Paulicians comes through their enemies. Our sources are two-fold. The first source is that of the Greek writers which has long been known and was used by Gibbon in the preparation of the brilliant fifty-fourth chapter of his history. Not much has been added from this source since then. The accounts were deeply prejudiced, and although Gibbon suspected the malice and poison of these writers, and laid bare much of the malignity expressed by them, he was at times misled in his facts. He did not have the completeness of information which was necessary for a full delineation of their history.

The two original Greek sources are Photius (*Adv. recentiores Manichaeos*, Ed. by Ch. Wolf, Hamburg, 1772) and Petros Sikeliotes (*Historia Manichaeorum qui Pauliciani dicuntur Gr. et Lat.* Ed. Matth. Raderus, Ingolstadt, 1604.)

Photius was a man of ability; but as Patriarch of Constantinople he was more interested in crushing the Paulicians and in making black their character than he was in giving a correct history of their practices and doctrines. In order to obtain his place as Patriarch he was guilty of many cruelties and irregularities. He was excommunicated by Nicholas I., in 682, as a usurper, and a synod deposed him as a "liar, adulterer, parricide and heretic." He was also accused of irregularities in public monies. This is the first witness against the Paulicians.

Petros Sikeliotes was a nobleman who was sent by the Emperor Basil to treat with the Paulicians for the exchange of prisoners, and he remained within their borders for nine months. Some writers accuse him of "borrowing," in his book, from Photius. This is the second witness against the Paulicians.

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These writers impute the worst of principles and practices to the Paulicians whom they uniformly describe as heretics. The historian Mosheim gives the preference for candor and fairness to Petros Sikeliotes and yet Mr. Gibbon states that "the six capital errors of the Paulicians are defined by Petros Sikeliotes with much prejudice and passion" (Gibbon, "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", V). Testimony from such sources must be received with caution.

The second source of information in regard to the Paulicians is Armenian in its origin and has only recently been brought to light and illustrated. There was an old book of the Paulicians called the "Key of Truth" mentioned by Gregory Magstros, Duke of Mesopotamia, in the eleventh century. Unhappily that book was lost. Fortunately Mr. Fred C. Conybeare, M. A., formerly Fellow of University College, Oxford, is much interested in affairs in Armenia. In 1891 he was for the second time in that country in quest of documents illustrative of the ancient history of the Paulicians. He fell upon a copy of the "Key of Truth" in the Library of the Holy Synod, at Edjmiatzin. He received a copy of it in 1893 made by the deacon Galourt Ter Mkherrshohian; and the ancient text together with an English translation was printed by Mr. Conybeare in 1898 (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth, A Manual of the Paulician Church of

Armenia". Oxford, 1898.) He also accompanied the text with important data received from Armenian historians and from other sources. As may be judged this is not only a new but a very important source of information. The Paulicians are at length enabled to plead, in a measure, for themselves. We are also able practically to reconstruct the Paulician history.

The Paulician churches were of Apostolic origin, and were planted in Armenia in the first century. "Through Antioch and Palmyra, this faith must have spread into Mesopotamia and Persia; and in those regions became the basis of that Nestorian Christianity which spread over Turkestan, invaded China, and still has a foothold in Urmiah and in Southern India. From centers like Edessa, Nisibis and Amida it was diffused along the

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entire range of the Taurus, from Cilicia as far as Ararat, and beyond the Araxes into Albania, on the Southern slopes of the Eastern Caucasus. Its proximate center of diffusion in the latter region seems to have been the upper valley of the great Zab, where was the traditional site of the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew, to whom the Armenians traced back the succession of the bishops of the canton of Siunig, north of the Araxes. In Albania, Atropatene, and Vaspurakan to the east of Lake Van, and in Moxoene, Arzanene, and Taraunitis to its south and west, as most of the early Armenian historians admit, Christianity was not planted by the efforts of Gregory the Illuminator, but was long anterior to him and had an Apostolic origin" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", VIII).

The historical Church of Armenia, the Nestorian, was a compromise between the Roman Catholic Church of the Nicene faith and original Christianity; but the Paulician churches represented primitive Christianity. These churches in the Taurus range of mountains formed a huge recess or circular dam into which flowed the early Paulician faith to be caught and maintained for centuries, as it were a backwater from the main for centuries by the Greek theologians of Constantinople and the other great centers" (Bury, ed. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall, VI. 543).

The "Key of Truth" which belongs in its origin to from the eighth to the twelfth century always refers to the Paulicians as apostolic in origin. It says: "Thus the universal and apostolic church learned from our Lord Jesus, and continued to do so, as is clear in their Acts and especially in the traditions of our Savior Jesus Christ, which he imposes on the universal and apostolic church, saying, Mark 16:15: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures. Whoever shall believe, shall be baptized, shall live; and. he who shall not believe, shall be judged' " (Ibid, 73). Another passage where the churches are declared to be apostolic is: "Let us then submit humbly to the Holy Church Universal, and follow .their works who acted with one mind and one faith and taught us. Now

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still do we receive in the only proper (lit. necessary) season the holy and. precious mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the heavenly Father:—to wit, in the season of repentance and of faith. As we learned from the Lord of the universal and apostolic church, so do we proceed: and we establish in perfect faith those who (till then) have not holy baptism (Margin, That is to say, the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians, who are not baptized); nay, nor have tasted of the body or drunk of the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, Therefore according to the word of the Lord, we must first bring them into the faith, induce them to repent, and then give it

(margin, baptize) unto them" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", 76, 77). Thus the Paulicians claimed apostolic origin and practice; and that they were the holy apostolic and universal church.

They always declared that the sects were not members of the church of God and they would say: "We do not belong to these; they have long ago broken connection with the church, and have been excluded." Such is the testimony of Gregory Magistros, A.D. 1458, whose history is one of the chief Armenian sources of information. The Paulicians asserted we belong to the true church; and they always answered any who asked them: "We are Christians." They claim that they handed down the true faith from age to age: "Or as the holy universal and apostolic Catholic Church having learned from our Lord Jesus Christ did proceed; so also must ye after them do as we said above. For they first taught; secondly asked for faith; thirdly induced to repent; and after that granted holy baptism to those who were of full age, and in particular were cognizant of their original sin" (Ibid, 91.)

Gregory of Narek, A. D. 987, says that the Abbot of Kdjav and Mushel probably the governor of Kars, had both satisfied themselves that the Paulician faith was not "alien to the apostolic tradition" (Father Basil Sarkisean, *Manichaeism Paulician Heresy*, Venice, 1893.) That two learned officials like these should claim the Paulicians to be an apostolic church and to possess the apostolic tradition as a valid one, is both important and interesting. On the next page Gregory of Narek

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further says: "Such, then, are the apostolic men of your Muschel who examines and finds them to be people of unswerving faith." The claim here is that the Paulicians were the only true and apostolic church. Gregory of Narek again hints at their faith that they were apostolical when he says that they omitted certain things: "There is much that is divine and every thing that is apostolical that is yet denied by them and abolished. Of divine ordinances, there is the laying on of hands, as the apostles received it from Christ."

That the Paulicians held to an apostolic origin is held by many of the foremost Armenian historians. A very old Greek source affirms the same thing (Codex Scorialensis. Edited by J. Fredrich, *Sitzungsberichte der Philos-Philil. Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1896, heft i. See C. de Boor in *Byzantische Zeitschrift*, VII. 40 A. D. 1898).

Archdeacon Karapet (*Die Paulikianer*, 109. Leipzig, 1893), is certainly right when he observes that the Paulicians were not, and did not claim to be, reformers of the Greek Church. They were "old believers;" not innovators, but enemies of the Catholic innovations of infant baptism, of images and pictures, of intercession of saints, of purgatory, of papal pretensions, of nearly everything, later than the time of Tertullian. They did not desire new things but only to keep what they had; and what they had was peculiarly primitive.

It is in this connection to be noticed that the earliest Christianity of Armenia, according to the evidence of the orthodox historian themselves, was centered in Taron, which was also the constant home and focus of Paulicianism. The mother church of Armenia was at Ashtishat, not far from Mush, in the south of Taron. For Vabirshapat, north of Ararat, the Roman Neapolis, which was the center of the Nestorian Church, did not become the religious metropolis before the middle of the fifth century.

There was a church at Edessa, the ancient Ur, as early as A. D. 202, and this church was probably Paulician. In 302 Teradattes, an Armenian king, and many of the Armenian

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noblemen, were baptized by Gregory the Illuminator. Armenia was probably the first nation to accept Christianity. These Christians had a profound reverence for the Word of God, and were orthodox in their views (Armenia and the Armenians, by Rev. T. C. Trowbridge. In *The New Englander*, XXXIII., I. A. D. 1874).

Aristaces of Lastivert, who was an eye-witness of many of the events he describes in his history, A. D. 989-1071, and a careful student of those which went before, says that Gregory the Illuminator was a Paulician and that the Paulician Church recruited from his labors (History of Arigtaees, chapter II: Venice, 1844). The same statement is made by Gregory Magistros: "We are the tribe of Aram (Armenians) and agree with them in faith" (MSS. in München Library), said the Paulicians.

In the years 630 to 640 we get a glimpse of the Paulicians in Albania, through John the Philosopher, who calls them Paulicians. He says that they did not practice "baptism, did not bless the salt, did not conclude marriage with the blessing of the Church, and raised the objection that the priesthood had been lost upon the earth. He ascribes great antiquity to them. The sect, he says, arose in the times of the apostles and appeared among the Romans. Here we have an echo of the claim of the Paulicians themselves that they were the true apostolic church.

The story of the conversion of Constantine, A. D., 660, is interesting. He has sometimes been called the founder of the Paulicians. Those who have followed only the Greek sources of Photius and Sikeliotas have usually arrived at this conclusion. We now know that this is without foundation. This young Armenian sheltered a Christian deacon who was flying from Mohammedan persecutions. In return for 'his kindness he received a copy of the New Testament. "These books became the measure," says Gibbon, "of his studies and the rule of his faith; and the Catholics, who dispute his interpretation, acknowledge that this text was genuine and sincere. But he attached himself with peculiar devotion to the writings and

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character of St. Paul—the name of the Paulicians is derived by their enemies from some unknown and domestic teacher—but I am confident that they gloried in their affinity to the apostle of the Gentiles" (Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", V. 386).

Constantine felt he was called upon to defend and restore primitive Christianity; being greatly impressed by the writings of the Apostle Paul he took the name of one of his followers, Silvanus (C. Schmidt, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia, III. 1777); and the churches founded by him received names from the primitive congregations. The entire people were called Paulicians from the apostle Paul (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, IV. 574). These statements of the apostolic simplicity of these devout Christians tell more of the manners, customs and doctrines than volumes of prejudiced accounts left us by their enemies. With Paul as their guide they could not be far removed from the truth of the New Testament.

Prof. Wellhausen in his life of Mohammed (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XVI. 571; 9th edition) gives a most interesting account of the Baptists of the Syro-Babylonian desert. He says that they were called Sabians, Baptists, and that they practiced the primitive forms of Christianity. They were off the line of Christianity's main advance and were left untouched in their primitive simplicity. From them Mohammed derived many of his externals, though the importance of this must not be undervalued. "It can hardly be wrong to conclude," continues Prof. Wellhausen, "that these nameless witnesses of the Gospel, unmentioned in church history, scattered the seed from which sprung the germ of Islam." These Christians were the Paulicians.

This bit of history will account for a fact that has been hard to understand heretofore. The emperors had determined to drive the Paulician from their dominions. They took refuge in the Mohammedan dominion generally, where they were tolerated and where their own type of belief never ceased to be accounted orthodox. This we learn from John the Philosopher. The Arabs had since the year 650 successfully challenged the

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Roman influence in Armenia. The same protection probably preserved the Paulician churches through many ages. It is certain that the Paulicians were true to the Arabs, and that the Mohammedans did not fail them in the hour of trial.

The number of the Paulicians constantly increased and they soon attracted the attention of their enemies. In the year 690 Constantine, their leader, was stoned to death by the command of the emperor; and the successor of Constantine was burned to death in they year 690. The Empress Theodore instituted a persecution in which one hundred thousand Paulicians in Grecian Armenia are said to have lost their lives.

The Paulicians in the ninth century rebelled against their enemies, drove out Michael III., and established in Armenia the free state of Teprice. This is a well-known site some seventy miles southeast of Sivas on the river Chalta. They gave absolute freedom of opinion to all of its inhabitants (Evans, *Historical View of Bosnia*, 30). From the capital of this free state, itself called Teprice, went forth a host of missionaries to convert the Slavonic tribes of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Serbia to the Paulician faith. This is positively stated by Petros Sikeliotis. Great was their success—so great that a large proportion of the inhabitants of the free state migrated to what were then independent states beyond the emperor's control. The state of Teprice lasted nearly one hundred and fifty years, when it was overcome by the Saracens. All around them were bitter persecutions for conscience' sake—they themselves had lost one hundred thousand members by persecutions under the reign of Theodora; yet here was a shelter offered to every creed and unbeliever alike. This is a striking Baptist peculiarity.

The Baptists have always set up religious liberty when they had an opportunity. Conybeare, speaking of the Paulicians, justly remarks: "And one point in their favor must be noticed, and it is this, their system was, like that of the European Cathars, in its basal idea and conception alien to persecution; for membership in it depended upon baptism, voluntarily sought for, even with tears and supplications, by the faithful and penitent adult. Into such a church there could be no

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dragooning of the unwilling. On the contrary, the whole purpose of the scrutiny, to which the candidate for baptism was subjected, was to ensure that his heart and intelligence were won, and to ward against the merely outward conformity, which is all that a persecutor can hope to impose. It was one of the worst results of infant baptism, that by making membership in 'the Christian church mechanical and outward, it made it cheap; and so paved the way of the persecutor' (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", XII). The church of Christ has never been a persecuting church.

In the year 970 the emperor, John Tzminisces, transferred some of the Paulicians to Thrace and granted them religious liberty; and it is recorded to their credit that they were true to his interests (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia, III, 1777). In the beginning of the eighth century their doctrines were introduced and spread throughout Europe, and their principles soon struck deep in foreign soil.

It was in the country of Albigenses, in the Southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were the most deeply implanted and here they kept up a correspondence with their brethren in Armenia. The faith of the Paulicians "lived on in Languedoc and along the Rhine as the submerged Christianity of the Cathars, and perhaps also among the Waldenses. In the Reformation this Catharism comes once more to the surface particularly among the so-called Anabaptists and Unitarian Christians, between whom and the most primitive church "The Key of Truth" and the Cathar Ritual of Lyon supply us with two great connecting links" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", X).

They were bitterly persecuted by the popes; and all literary and other traces of them, as far as possible, destroyed. But "the visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity; in the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul; who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith,

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and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology" (Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", V. 398).

Many historians beside Gibbon, such as Muratori and Mosheim, regard the Paulicians as the forerunners of the Albigenses, and in fact as the same people. One of the latest of these, already frequently quoted, is Prof. Fred C. Conybeare, of the University of Oxford, one of the highest authorities in the English speaking world on early Christian literature. He affirms that the true line of succession is found among the Baptists. He says: "The church has always adhered to the idea of spiritual regeneration in baptism, although by baptizing babies it has long ago stultified itself and abandoned the essence of baptism. Indeed the significance of the baptism of Jesus, as it presented itself to St. Paul and the evangelists, was soon lost sight of by the orthodox churches." Again: "We hear much discussion nowadays of the validity of orders—English, Latin, and Oriental. The unbiased student of church history cannot but wonder that it has never occurred to any of these controversialists to ask whether they are not, after all, contending for a shadow; whether, in short, they have, any of them, real orders in the primitive sense in which they care to claim possession of them. The various sects of the Middle Ages which, knowing themselves simply as Christians, retained baptism in its primitive form and significance, steadily refused to recognize as valid the infant baptism of

the great orthodox or persecuting churches; and they were certainly in the right, so far as the doctrine and tradition count for anything. Needless to say, the great churches having long ago lost genuine baptism, can have no further sacraments, no priesthood, and, strictly speaking, no Christianity. If they would re-enter the pale of Christianity, they must repair, not to Rome or Constantinople, but to some of the obscure circles of Christians, mostly in the East, who have never lost the true continuity of the baptismal sacrament. These are the Paulicians of Armenia, the Bogomil sect round Moscow whose members call themselves Christ's, the adult Baptists (those who practice

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adult baptism) among the Syrians of the upper Trigris valley, and perhaps, though not so certainly, the Bopelikans, the Mennonites, and the great Baptist communities of Europe. This condemnation of the great and so-called orthodox churches may seem harsh and pedantic, but there is no escape from it, if we place ourselves on the same ground on which they profess to stand. Continuity of baptism was more important in the first centuries of the church than continuity of orders; so important, indeed, that even the baptism of heretics was recognized as valid. If store was set by the unbroken succession of bishops, it was only because one function of the bishop was to watch over the integrity of the initiatory rite of the religion. How badly the bishops of the great churches did their duty, how little, indeed; after the third century they even understood it, is seen in the unchecked growth, from about 300 A. D. onward, of the abuse of the baptismal rite, resulting before long in its entire forfeiture (Conybeare, *The History of Christmas* in *The American Journal of Theology*).

One thing is certain that in Italy, in France, and along the Rhine, the Paulicians and Albigenses were found in the game territory, and there was no difference between them in doctrine and practice. Writers go as far as to declare that there was a succession of churches and of interests. It is well attested, that in the early middle of the eleventh century, they were numerous in Lombardy and Isurbia, but especially in Milan, in Italy; and it is no less certain that they traveled through France, Germany and other countries, and by their sanctity they won large numbers of common people. In Italy they were called Paternes and Cathari and in Germany, Gazari. In France they were called Albigenses. They were called Bulgarians, particularly in France, because some of them came from Bulgaria., and they were also known by the name of Boni Homines, Good Men (Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, II., 200-203). Their enemies extolled them for their piety. A succession of these people is found all through the Middle Ages.

With the most unblushing effrontery the Greek writers,

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Photius and Sikeliotas, pronounced the Paulicians as belonging to the sect of the Manichaeans. This heretic asserted that the universe was created by the devil. This charge against the Paulicians has been repeated by a great many writers. They have on this account been denounced as heretics. There was, however, a fresh and vigorous Puritanism about them in an age when Greek Christianity had degenerated into the court superstition of Constantinople. Probably a purer evangelical Christian body never existed.

The Catholic party were singularly hostile to the party of Manes and denounced them as if they had been friends incarnate. Eusebius spoke of Manes as a "barbarian," "a madman",

"diabolical and furious" (Eusebius, "The Church History", 316). It was easy, therefore, to stir up prejudice against the Paulicians by denouncing them as of the Manichaeian party.

"The Key of Truth" positively affirms that they were not of the Manichaeians (p. 48). There is no indication that the Paulicians went beyond the well marked dualism of the New Testament itself, according to which (John 12:31 and 14:30) Satan is the ruler of the world, or even, as Paul expressed it (2 Cor. 4:2), the god of this world. The morbid anxiety of Augustine and of the fathers, both before and after him, to discount the force of these texts in their confutations of Marcion and of the Manichaeians, raised the suspicion that the latter rested their dualism upon St. Paul and the fourth Gospel. In their confutations of heretics the orthodox fathers were not too scrupulous of the truth. They all carried in their bag two weights, a heavier and a lighter, and in their dealings with the so-called heretics used the latter (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", XLIV). It is certain that the Paulicians did not go beyond the Scriptures on this subject.

Photius himself, who charged them with following Marcion, admits that they declared their abhorrence of Marcion, and of his doctrine (Photius, *contra Manichaeos*, lib. I. 17, 56, 65). Mosheim says: "It is certain that they were not genuine Manichaeians" (Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*,

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II. 103). Gibbon says that Mosheim weighed this testimony "with his usual judgment and candor" (Gibbon, "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," V. 385 note), and adds his own testimony: "The Paulicians sincerely condemned the memory and opinions of the Manichaeian sect, and complained of the injustice which impressed that invidious name on the simple votaries of St. Paul and of Christ" (Ibid, 386).

Armenian scholars do not, at present, hesitate to contradict these prejudiced accounts of the Greeks that the Paulicians were rare Manichaeians. Such is the position of Ter Mktschain Karapet (*Die Paulikianer im Byzantinischen in Armenian*, Leipzig, 1893. See also *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, October, 1895), C. Schmidt says: "The Paulicians were not a branch of the Manichaeians as Photius, Petras Sikeliotes, and many modern authors have held" (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia*, III, 1777).

J. Friedrich justly remarks that the association with Marcion is merely due to the religious schematism, which, in the seventh and succeeding centuries, set down every form of dissent from the dominant orthodoxy to Manichaeian influence. Manichaeianism was in those days the *bete noire* of the orthodox Catholic: just as freemasonry is at the present day (Friedrich, *Der Ursprünghüch bei Georgios Monachos nur theilweise erhaltenen Bericht über die Paulikianer*. In *Sitzungsberichte der Philos. Philol. Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1896. Heft. i).

Mr. Conybeare entered upon his investigations with the full conviction that the Paulicians were Manichaeians, and came out of the investigation fully convinced that they were not. After finding the "Key of Truth" he said: "My first impression on looking into it afresh was one of disappointment. I had expected to find in it a Marcionite, or at least a Manichaeian book; but, beyond the extremely sparse use made in it of the Old Testament, I found nothing that savored of these ancient heresies. Accordingly I laid it aside, in the press of other

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work which I had undertaken. It was not until the summer of 1896 that, at the urgent request of Mr. Darwin Swift, who had come to me for information about the history of Manichaeism in Armenia, I returned to it, and translated it into English in the hope that it might advance his researches.

And now I at last understood who the Paulicians really were. All who had written about them had been misled by the calumnies of Photius, Petros Sikeliotos, and the other Greek writers, who describe them as Manichaeans. I now realized that I had stumbled on the monument of a phase of the Christian Church so old and so outworn, that the very memory of it was yell nigh lost" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", V. vi).

These discovered facts, as recorded by Conybeare, have really modified the scholarship of the world in regard to the Paulicians. It is now quite freely admitted that they were not Manichaeans.

Prof. J. B. Bury, A. M., LL.D., Regius Professor of Greek in Dublin University, says of the Paulician document: "This liturgy considerably modifies our views touching the nature of Paulicianism, which appears to have had nothing to do with Marcionism" (Bury, Ed. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", VI. 543; London, 1898).

The Manichaeans held that the devil created the world; the Paulicians held that God created the world "The Key of Truth" says: "The heavenly Father, the true God, fashioned (or created) the heavens with all that belongs thereto, and the earth with all its kinds; he equipped them" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", 79, 114). The Paulicians are thus cleared of all traces of heresy and it is shown that they held to the New Testament doctrines strictly.

Turning to the doctrine and practices of the Paulicians we find that they made constant use of the Bible, The Old Testament is more rarely cited than the New; but it is not rejected and it is called by them the God-inspired-book. None of the Armenian sources accuse the Paulicians of rejecting the Old Testament in a manner in which they did not reject the New Testament. Gregory Magistros says: "They are ever...

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quoting the Gospel and the Aposotolos" (MSS. in München Library). Their enemies appealed to the canonical New Testament against the Paulicians which they said they believed (Codex Schorialensis, XV.). Photius alleged that they received all of the New Testament. The Word of God was their supreme rule of faith and practice.

They had no orders in the clergy as distinguished from laymen by their mode of living, their dress, or other things; they had no councils or similar institutions. Their teachers were all of equal rank. They held, according to Paul of Taron, "that the bishop had no more honor than the priest." The preachers were not distinguished from the laymen by any rights, prerogatives or insignia (Photius, *contra Manichaeos*, I. 31, 32).

On this point the Paulicians said: "Let us return to the sequence of our direction, already expressed, that it is necessary for that man to be on all sides free from blemish, before we give him authority (rule) of priesthood, of episcopate (or overseership), of doctorate, of

apostleship, of presidency, and of election. For all these are one and the same thing; nor are they one greater or lesser than another. But they are on an entire level, as our intercessor Jesus enjoined on his 'holy elect ones, saying, Luke 26:26, 'But be ye not so, but he that is great among you shall be as the least, and the master' (lit. leader) as the servant,' and the rest" (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", 105). There was not only one order in the ministry but the ministers were elected by the people.

The Paulicians were diligently striving for the simplicity of the apostolic life. They were opposed to all image worship which was practiced by the Catholic Church. "The objects which had been transformed by the magic of superstition, appeared to the eyes of the Paulicians in their genuine and naked colors. An image made without bands was the common workmanship of a mortal artist, to whose skill alone the wood and canvass must be indebted for their merit of value. The miraculous relies were a heap of bones and ashes, destitute of life or virtue, or of any relation, perhaps, with the person to

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whom they were ascribed. The true and vivifying cross was a piece of sound or rotten timber; the body and blood of Christ a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, the gifts of nature and the symbols of grace. The mother of God was degraded from her celestial honors and immaculate virginity; and the saints and angels were no longer solicited to exercise the laborious office of meditation in heaven, and the ministry upon earth" (Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", V. 387).

We cannot be surprised, that they should have found in the Gospel the orthodox mystery of the Trinity. "Instead of confessing the human nature and substantial sufferings of Christ," says Gibbon, "they amused their fancy with a celestial body that passed through the virgin like water through a pipe; with a fantastic crucifixion, that eluded the vain and impotent malice of the Jews" (Ibid, 388). If this was in reality their opinion it was not different from the faith of many of the latter Baptists both of Germany and England. Yet later researches have proved that among the Anabaptists, who are reported to have held this singular view, that they fully believed in the human nature of Jesus. Doubtless the same thing is true of the Paulicians. But this testimony rests on no, very good basis. It served the purpose of a useful Catholic slander. Their historians always have at hand a charge of heresy against all Christians who do not adopt their form of worship.

In regard to the baptism and the Lord's Supper, Gibbon says: "In the practice, or at least in the theory, of the sacraments, the Paulicians were inclined to abolish all visible objects of worship, and the words of the Gospel were, in their judgment, the baptism and communion of the faithful" (Ibid, 388). This meant that they rejected the mystical and saving power of baptism; for they received baptism itself. Harmenopoulos, a Byzantine monk of the tenth century, affirms that the Bogomils practiced the rite of baptism which they received from the Paulicians, but did not attribute to it any perfecting virtue (Arthur J. Evans, *Historical Views of Bosnia*, A. D. 1876). He further says that they practiced single immersion upon adults alone, without unction.

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We now know positively from "The Key of Truth" that the Paulicians practiced baptism and the Lord's Supper; but they rejected the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. And here

we have the explanation of such statements as that of Aristaces, that the Paulicians utterly rejected church and church ordinances, the baptism, the mass, the cross and fasts. They necessarily rejected the ordinances of churches which, having willfully corrupted the institution of baptism in its evangelical, primitive, and only genuine form, as they regarded it, had also lost their orders and sacraments and apostolic tradition. But they themselves in repudiating the innovation of infant baptism, had kept all of these things, and so formed the only true church, and were the only real Christians left in the world. This is the significance of such utterances as this of Aristaces. Failure to comprehend it was natural enough in the absence of the fuller knowledge of Paulician tenets which "The Key of Truth" affords us. Such utterances, however, have led enquirers, e.g. the Archdeacon Karapet Ter Mkrvschian, to suppose that the Paulicians really discarded baptism, sacraments, and sacerdotal system (Conybeare, "The Key of Truth", XLVII). The Paulicians denied the dogma of sacramental grace.

Baptist views prevailed among the Paulicians. These churches held to such rigid simplicity in their rites that they provoked the ridicule of the Armenian church officials. There was the same Pauline conception of the Lord's Supper by the stress laid upon the single loaf, the same absence of a hierarchy; the same description of a minister as an apostle, the same implied Christhood of the elect who teach the word, the same claim to possess the Apostolic succession. They held that men must repent and believe, and then at a mature age ask for baptism, which alone admits them into the church. "It is evident," observes Mosheim, "they rejected the baptism of infants." "The Paulicians or Bogomils," Robinson observes, "baptized and rebaptized by immersion". Venema says that the Paulicians taught "that infants are not to be baptized, till they are 9 years of understanding." And Dr. Peter Allix,

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who was made a Doctor of Divinity by both Oxford and Cambridge, says: "Thus would they have taken the Anabaptists for downright Manichaeans, because they condemned the baptism of infants" (Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, Oxford 1821).

Something of the opinions of the Paulicians is gathered from a Synod held in Arras, in the year of our Lord 1025, by Gerard, Bishop of Cambrai and Arras. One Gundulphus, a Paulician, was condemned: He had taught his doctrines in Italy, which had been carried by his disciples into the diocese of Liege and Cambrai in the Low Countries (*Jean Eue d'Archery, Veterum aliquot Seripturam Spicilegium, XIII*). Their doctrine was scattered from Italy to Holland, and they were known to have had a great number of disciples. They made great show of piety so their enemies declared. The people believed in their sanctity, and hence they had a vast number of followers. They won converts by the farce of goodness and by the purity of their faith.

The Paulicians being examined they claimed: "The law and discipline we have received from our Master will not appear contrary either to the Gospel decrees or apostolic institutions, if carefully looked into. This discipline consists in leaving the world, in bridling carnal concupiscence, in providing a livelihood by the labor of our hands, in hunting nobody, and affording our charity to all who are zealous in the prosecution of this, our design." This was no mean defence.

Concerning baptism they made reply: "But if any shall say, that some sacrament lies hid in baptism, the force of that is taken off from three causes: The first is, because the reprobate life of ministers can afford no saving remedy to the persons to be baptized. The second, because whatsoever sins are renounced at the font, are afterwards taken up again in life and practice. The third, because a strange will, a strange faith and a strange confession do not seem to belong to, or to be of any advantage to a little child, who neither wills nor runs, who knows nothing of faith, and is altogether ignorant of 'his own good and salvation, in which there can be no desire

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of regeneration, and from whom no confession of faith can be expected" (Allix, *The Ecclesiastical Churches of Piedmont*, 104). A better answer could not this day be given.

There is also a Confession of Faith which is attributed to the Paulicians, A. D. 1024, which declares: "In the beginning of Christianity there was no baptizing of children; and their forefathers practiced no such thing;" and "we do from our hearts acknowledge that baptism is a washing which is performed in water, and doth hold out the washing of the souls from sins" (Mehring, *Der heiligen Tauff Historie*, A. D. 1647, II. 738).

"The "Key of Truth" requires that the person baptized shall be an adult. The following was set down as the divine order: Thus then St. John, firstly, preached unto them; secondly, taught; thirdly, induced them to repent; fourthly, brought them to the faith; and after that cleansed there from stains" (Conybeare, the "Key of 'Truth", 72). And the Catechism for Christians attached to the "Key of Truth" gives the following order: "Behold, my revered one, first did he enjoin faith, repentance, and then gave the command of holy baptism" (Ibid, 118).

The Armenian historians likewise affirm that the Paulicians rejected infant baptism. Gregory of Narek, A. D. 987, says that they "taught others that it consisted of mere bath water;" and that "the font is denied by them" (Sarkisean, *Manichaeism and Paulician Heresy*).

Gregory Magistros, A. D. 1058, says that certain bishops recommended that "they should erect in their midst a font," and that in consequence the bishops 'baptized more than it thousand of the Paulicians. Magistros likewise declares that they were Anabaptists and practiced re-baptism.

These testimonies prove that the Paulicians were not in the practice of infant baptism but that they did baptize adults by immersion. The form of baptism was to dip the subject into the water once, while the Greeks dipped three times. There is much evidence on the form of baptism in Armenia by immersion. Macarus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, A. D. 331 to 335,

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writing to the Armenians, says concerning baptism that it was administered with "triple immersion burying in the water of the holy font" (Library of the Mechitarist Fathers of Vienna. Mss. Cod. Arm. No. 100). There is an oration preserved out of the twelfth century ascribed to Isaac Catholics of Armenia which gives the practice of the Paulicians. John Otzun, A. D. 718, speaks of the Paulicians ascending into the baptistery (Otzun, *Opera*, 25. Venice, 1834). And he further tells how the Mohammedans tried to prevent them from baptizing in the running rivers for fear that they would bewitch the waters and make them unwholesome.

The constant practice of the Oriental Church was immersion. The Rev. Nicholas Bjerring says of its baptism: "Baptism is celebrated sometimes in the church and sometimes in private houses, as needs may be. It is always administered by dipping the infant, or adult, three times" (Bjerring, *The Officers of the Oriental Church*, XII. New York, 1884). And further on in the liturgy he gives the ceremony of the immersion. Thus did the Paulicians practice single immersion as the Scriptures indicate.

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