

F. That There Will Be A Resurrection Of The Dead (1 Cor. 15), that Heaven is a place prepared for God's people (John 14:2-3), and that Hell is the eternal estate of the lost (Psalm 9:17; Matt. 13:42; Rev. 20:13-15).

III. WHAT HAVE THE BAPTISTS DONE?

The Baptists have been active in many fields of service, in addition to establishing hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the aged. The Baptists have made an honorable contribution to the world of literature. They have written a number of our greatest hymns.

They have been great leaders in the field of education. Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard University, was a Baptist. Vassar College was founded by Matthew Vassar, a Baptist. Robert Baylor, as a member of the Texas Republic's supreme court, and founder of Baylor University, was a Baptist. Brown University, Colgate and Rochester were founded by Baptists, though they are no longer affiliated with the Baptists. A number of senior and junior colleges, high schools, and elementary schools are maintained today by Baptists. John Clarke, a Baptist, is recognized as the author of the free school system in America.

William Fox, an English Baptist, organized the first Sunday-School society in 1785. The first Sunday-School paper in America, **The Young Reaper**, was a Baptist paper. The well known Uniform Sunday School Lessons were developed by a Chicago Baptist Layman, B. F. Jacobs, and a Methodist preacher, J. H. Vincent.

The first English overseas missionary, William Carey, was a Baptist. The first American overseas missionary, Adoniram Judson, was a Baptist. Sailing for India with Luther Rice as Congregational missionaries, the two of them were converted to the Baptist faith enroute. Judson sailed on to Burma, and Rice returned to organize support for the mission.

There is little doubt that the Baptists have been the champions of religious freedom in this and other lands. **The Collier's Encyclopedia** says, "The ideals of the Republic were their own, and they became the leading protagonists of separation of Church and State which, in the Bill of Rights, became a fundamental principle in the Constitution of the United States." Skeats, the English historian, declared, "It is the singular and distinguished honor of the Baptists to have repudiated from their earliest history all coercive power over the consciences and actions of men with reference to religion. They were the protoevangelists of the voluntary principle."

Thomas Carlyle asserted, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men." And when you study the history of religious freedom you will discover that it is largely a biography of

great Baptists. For this they have paid a great price. They were drowned, beheaded, burned at the stake, their eyes were gouged out, melted lead was poured over their bodies and they were publicly whipped. **Collier's Encyclopedia** says, "They were the victims of determined persecution on all sides, and this persecution was carried on with more violence by Protestants than by Roman Catholics." Though this may be disputable, the fact remains, in Protestant as well as Catholic countries, the Baptists paid the price of freedom with their blood..

Though Luther, Zwingli and Calvin appealed to the Scriptures as the final and supreme authority in matters of religion, not one of them advocated the freedom of the church from secular control. While Calvin believed in punishing dissenters with death and exile, Luther said of the Anabaptists, "Let the sword exercise its rights over them" The champions of liberty in Germany were not the Lutherans, but Baptists such as Balthasar Hubmaier, a learned man with a doctor of theology degree from the University of Ingolstadt. This great Baptist was hounded from city to city, until he was banished to Moravia where he became the leader of thousands who fled from the Zwinglian persecution and thousands of Moravian converts to Anabaptist views. He was burned at the stake by order of the Emperor in 1528, and three days later his wife, with a stone tied to her neck was thrown into the Danube by the Roman Catholic authorities. Throughout his career as an Anabaptist leader, Hubmaier insisted upon the separation of the Church and State, the authority of the Bible and the baptism of believers.

In 1535 Charles V issued an edict ordering all rebaptizers in the Netherlands to be put to death by fire. During the next eleven years 30,000 Baptists were put to death.

Religious freedom in England did not originate with the Episcopalians or Presbyterians but with Baptists, such as, Thomas Helwys, John Murton and their followers who organized the first English Baptist Church in 1612 and began to spread from there the principles of liberty.

Our own country is not exempt from the guilt of persecuting the Baptists. When nine of the thirteen colonies had state-supported churches, hundreds of Baptists were jailed or beaten in the streets.

On June 4, 1768, the sheriff of Spotsylvania County, Virginia, arrested Lewis Craig, John Waller, James Childs, James Reed and William Mash. The prosecutor charged them with being disturbers of the peace, alleging, "they cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat." They were kept in prison in Fredericksburg forty-three days for quoting the Word of God.

In 1773, Jeremiah Moore was arrested for

preaching and was told by the judge, "You shall lie in jail until you rot." Patrick Henry was brought to Alexandria to defend Moore, and in a great impassioned speech said, "Great God, gentlemen, a man in prison for preaching the Gospel of the Son of God." Moore was later released.

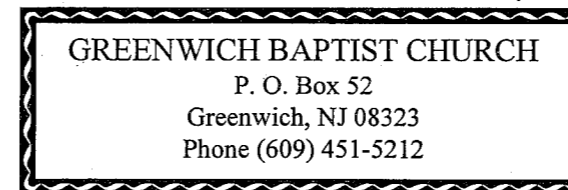
Many others like Obadiah Holmes were stripped to the waist and beaten, it is said, "Until the blood ran down his body and then his legs until his shoes overflowed." For days Holmes could not rest except upon his knees and elbows, not able to let his body touch the bed.

Rogers Williams, under the Baptist banner, was banished from Plymouth Colony in 1638. He fled into the wilderness where he purchased land from the Indians together with a band of sympathizers from Massachusetts, they established the first government on earth where there was absolute political and religious freedom. They called the place Providence.

Baptist John Leland became a friend of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, enlisting their support in his fight to religious freedom, and strengthened their own convictions. Leland determined to become a member of the Virginia convention called to ratify the United States Constitution, to force Baptist views of freedom into the document. He was opposed in the Orange County election by James Madison. He knew he had the election won, but recognized in Madison a more persuasive political voice. So the two met at a place that is now known as the Leland-Madison State Park. There, Madison agreed to introduce an Amendment to the Constitution assuring separation of Church and State, if Leland would withdraw. Leland withdrew. Today, the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights guarantees the citizens of the United States freedom of religion.

Now you know why I am proud to be a Baptist. You should be proud to be a Baptist, and we must earnestly guard our principles which have been purchased by the blood of martyrs. Evil efforts are being made to violate some of the principles today. You should have firm convictions concerning the things that have made Baptists great, and stand for those things, whatever the cost may be.

- CURTIS WHALEY, 1960



WHO ARE THE BAPTISTS

by Curtis Whaley

INTRODUCTION

It is with great joy that I introduce to you this little booklet by Brother Curtis Whaley.

The Baptist heritage is a glorious one! We can be proud and thankful for our forefathers. Their history from the time Jesus built their first church until now is the most interesting history in the world.

Many Baptists today are not aware of 'who the Baptist are.' This booklet has many of the answers to that question. It is hoped that the reading of this booklet will create a sincere desire to study in depth the Baptist ancestry.

We need loyalty to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today. As one begins to trace the ancestry of the Baptist back, back, back to that First Baptist Church in Jerusalem, shivers will run up the spine. Gratitude to God for the perpetuity of the people called Baptists will produce a love and loyalty for His church.

May God, in His sovereign mercy, use this booklet to stir up interest, study and preaching concerning the church Jesus built. The local church is God's plan for today. May we realize that "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21).

Berlin Hisel - Harrison, Ohio - 1974

The Bible says "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith..." (1 Tim. 4:1). As we are fast approaching the ecumenical one world church of the anti-christ and tribulation times we see a deemphasis and even a disdain for doctrine. We must believe, defend, proclaim, and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3). May we be like Paul who said, "I have fought a good fight I have finished by course, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim. 4:1).

Jim Meyers - Woodcross Press - 1996

WHO ARE THE BAPTISTS?

I have been impressed more than ever during these changing, and somewhat unpredictable days, with the importance of knowing what you are, and having firm convictions for being what you are. The words of Peter are ringing a fresh tone of urgency in my soul as I observe the appalling indifference that underlies the reasoning and thinking trend of our day. He said, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Can the slightest trace of conviction be found in the answers with which many respond, when they are asked, "Why Are You A Baptist?" When I ask a man that question, I am hardly impressed with such answers as, "My parents were Baptists," or, "I believe once in grace, always in grace." or worse yet, "The Baptist Church is the nearest to our home."

If you are a Baptist, you should know why you are a Baptist, and to know why you are a Baptist, you should know who the Baptists are. To know who the Baptists are, you should know where the Baptists began, what the Baptists believe and what the Baptists have done.

I. WHERE DID THE BAPTISTS BEGIN?

While modern denominations trace their origin to modern founders, the Baptists have existed through all the centuries of Christian history. The Lutherans began with Martin Luther, the Presbyterians began with John Calvin, the Methodists began with John Wesley and the Disciples began with Alexander Campbell. All the modern cults began with modern founders. The Jehovah's Witnesses began with Charles Taze Russell; the Mormons began with Joseph Smith, Jr.; the Christian Scientists began with Mary Baker Eddy; the Seventh-Day Adventists began with William Miller; Swedenborgianism began with Emanuel Swedenborg, etc.

Though many Baptist groups sprang up during the Protestant Reformation, according to Collier's Encyclopedia, the Baptists have "descended from some of the evangelical 'sects' of the preceding age during which the Roman and Orthodox Churches dominated all of Europe and suppressed all dissent." A Catholic, Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent, (1545-1563), wrote during the early years of the Reformation period, "Were it not that the Baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater numbers than all the reformers." This should convince anyone, that the Baptists are not a by-product of the Reformation, and are not even Protestants in the popular sense of the term.

If the Baptists did not begin with the Reformation, when did they begin? We will let a

great American and World historian answer that question for you. John Clark Ridpath, (1840-1900), a Methodist by denominational conviction, wrote, "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as 100 A.D., although without doubt there were Baptist Churches then, as all Christians were then Baptists." Yes, all Christians were then Baptists, because the doctrines that Baptists believe and teach today, are the same as those taught by the Lord Jesus Himself, by Peter, John, Paul and all the Apostles. We have not always been called "Baptists." The name is not a self-chosen one. Following what we believe to be apostolic precept and example, the Baptists rejected infant baptism for lack of Scriptural warrant, insisted on a "regenerate membership," and baptism sought intelligently by the candidate as a condition for church membership. For these reasons they were stigmatized as "Anabaptists," "Catabaptists," and sometimes as simply "Baptists," this was to say, they were "rebaptizers, perverters of baptism," or, as unduly emphasizing baptism and making it a reason for schism, simply "baptizers." We are proud of the name, because it distinguishes our doctrinal position which is set forth in the New Testament, and identifies us with a host of saints who believe the same precious truths and were identified by the same denominator.

The premise that first century Christians were Baptists, runs counter to the Roman Catholic claim that the first Church was Roman Catholic. To this we need only point out that the first Church was organized by Christ and His apostles, and those apostles became the nucleus of the Church at Jerusalem, not Rome, and James was its leader, not Peter. We also contend that the bishop of Rome did not win primacy over other bishops until the fourth century, and that it wasn't until Gregory ascended the episcopal throne in 590 A.D. that the Roman bishop began to claim his supremacy over other bishops. Thus, we see that Roman Catholicism dates back to the fourth century at the earliest.

While we do not contend that only Baptists are going to Heaven, we do contend that the first Church was organized according to principles historically maintained by Baptists, and that Baptists have existed since that day. First called Christians, then by other names down through the centuries until they received the name that has distinguished them from Protestant and Catholic groups alike.

II. WHAT DO THE BAPTISTS BELIEVE?

When questioned as to his belief, Charles H. Spurgeon used to say, "First of all I am a Christian. But as that word has become somewhat inclusive in the minds of many, I further define my position by stating, I am a Christian who holds the doctrines

historically held by the people called Baptists."

The Baptists believe the great Bible Doctrines that have characterized historic Christianity from its inception. They believe:

A. That The Bible Is The Inerrant, Divinely Inspired Word Of God. Though the pen used was the pen of man, the words written were the words of God, in the original manuscripts (2 Peter 1:21). Baptists recognize no divine authority in the traditions of men, their creeds, or ecclesiastic decrees. For them, the Bible is the final and only sufficient authority in doctrine, church government and life. They believe that the Bible, being a revelation of the will of God, sets forth the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of true believers. They believe that its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

B. That There Is One Eternal, Living And True God. The Baptists believe that God is sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. That He is a personal Being, who created, preserves and rules the universe. They believe that God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections, and that to Him is due the highest love, reverence and obedience.

The Baptists are trinitarians in that they believe that the one great God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each having distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

While we read in Deuteronomy 6:4 "The Lord our God is one Lord." we read in Matthew 3:16-17 that at the baptism of Jesus Christ, the three distinct personalities were manifested at one and the same time. While Baptists recognize a seeming paradox, they accept it, and humbly wait for its solution. Baptists do not measure what they are to believe in the Bible by what accords with finite reasoning. It is not possible for that which is finite to fully comprehend that which is infinite.

C. That Man Was Created By The Special Act Of God, as recorded in Genesis 1:27, 2:7.

Though created in a state of holiness, through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original holiness and righteousness. Through his fall the entire human race inherited a corrupt and fallen nature (Romans 5:12), and are so utterly out of contact with God in their fallen condition that they have neither the desire nor the will to be in subjection to

the will of God. Though man in his unfallen state had freedom and power to will to do good or evil, man by his fall, lost his ability to will any spiritual good accompanying salvation and has no strength to convert himself or make any movement toward God (Romans 3:10-11).

D. That In The Matter Of Salvation God Has Taken The Initiative (John 6:44), and grace marks His program from beginning to end (Eph. 2:8-9). He bestows salvation upon all, who by faith, receive His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour and Lord (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10). This made possible through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who by the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary and took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the law of God by His personal obedience and made atonement for our sins by His death on the cross. As the assurance of God's approval and satisfied justice, He was raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and is now enthroned in Heaven as our Advocate. He awaits the day when He shall visibly and personally return to earth to receive His people, assert His Kingly rule over all the earth and judge the wicked (Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 20:1-15).

Baptists believe in sanctification as the divine act of God in setting us apart for Himself, and also as a process of spiritual growth in the believer that shall culminate in our complete likeness to Christ when "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

They believe in the eternal security of the believer in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:38-39).

E. That A Gospel Church Is A Congregation Of Baptized Believers. Acknowledging Christ as their Head, united in their faith in His Word, observing the ordinances He instituted, and covenanting to do what He commanded.

Baptists believe there are two church ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are not sacraments but symbols of spiritual truths. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. It is also a symbol of the candidate's death to sin and resurrection to a new life in Christ. The Lord's Supper points back to the coming of Christ to die for sinners, and forward to the coming of Christ to receive His Bride (1 Cor. 11:26).

In addition to two Church ordinances, Baptists recognize only two Church officers as being scriptural; pastors and deacons. Pastors are also called bishops and elders. They exercise no authority save that of leadership. Deacons are servants of the church, chosen by reason of their fitness to perform certain duties, and by virtue of their position, are recognized as leaders in the church. In the average church other officers and committees are chosen in the nature of helpers.