



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

The Roots of The Reformation

(a review of topical excerpts from a Church History textbook by Earnest Seeker)

“The (early) church endured little persecution as long as it was looked upon by the authorities as part of Judaism, which was a *religio licita*, or legal sect. But as soon as Christianity was distinguished from Judaism as a separate sect and might be classed as a secret society, it came under the ban of the Roman state, *which would brook no rival for the allegiance of its subjects*. It then became an illegal religion, which is considered to be a *mortal* threat to the safety of the Roman state. The state was the highest good in a union of the state and religion. There could be no private religion.

Religion could be tolerated only as it contributed to the stability of the state. Since the rapidly growing Christian religion was exclusive in its claims on the moral and spiritual loyalty of those who accepted Christ, when a choice had to be made between loyalty to Christ, and loyalty to Caesar, Caesar was bound to take second place. This was conceived by the Roman leaders bent on preserving their classical culture within the framework of the Roman imperial state, as disloyalty to the state; and they saw Christians as those who were trying to set up a state within a state. Either the universal state or the universal church, the body of Christ must give way. The exclusive sovereignty of Christ clashed with Caesar's proud claims to exclusive sovereignty.

Many Christian practices seemed to confirm the Roman authorities' suspicions of the basic disloyalty of the Christians to the state. The Christians consistently refused to offer incense on the altars devoted to the genius of the Roman emperor, with whom the welfare of the state was inextricably mingled in the minds of the people during the imperial period from Caesar Augustus to Constantine. If one would sacrifice on these altars, he could then practice a second private religion. The Christians would not make such sacrifices, and consequently, it was thought that they were disloyal. The Christians also held most of their meetings at night and in secret. To the Roman authority this could mean nothing else than the hatching of a conspiracy against the safety of the state.

In addition to the basic political cause for persecution, there was a religious reason. Roman state religion was *mechanical and external*. It had its altars, idols, priests, processions, rites and practices *that the people could see*. The Romans were not averse to adding a new idol to the group in the Pantheon as long as that deity was subordinate to the prior claims of the Roman state religion. The Christians had no idols and little visible paraphernalia of worship. Their worship was spiritual and internal. When they stood and prayed with eyes closed, there was no visible object to which those prayers were addressed. This could mean nothing else but atheism to the Romans who were accustomed to symbolic, material manifestations of their God.

The secrecy of the meetings of the Christians also brought moral charges against them. Public rumor made them guilty of incest, cannibalism, and unnatural practices. Misunderstanding concerning the meaning of “eating and drinking” the elements representing Christ's body and blood easily led to the rumor that Christians killed and ate infants in sacrifice to their God. Word of the “kiss of peace” was easily twisted into charges of incest and other types of moral conduct repugnant to the cultured Roman mind. It made little difference that there was no truth to these rumors....

Also, the purity of their lives was a silent rebuke to the scandalous lives that people in the upper classes

were leading. The Christians nonconformity to existing social patterns led the pagans to believe that they were a danger to society and to characterize them as “haters of mankind” who might incite the masses to revolt.” P. 89 “Christianity Through The Centuries” by E. E. Cairns 1954

Constantine and the State

“The Emperor Constantine (274-337) realized that if the state could not wipe out Christianity by force, it might make use of the church as an ally to save classical culture. The process by which the church and the state came to terms began with Constantine's gaining complete control in the state. When his enemies seemed about to overwhelm him in 312, he had a vision of a cross in the sky with the words, “in this sign, conquer” in Latin. Taking it as a favorable omen, he went on to defeat his enemies at the battle of the Milvian bridge over the Tiber River. Though the vision may have occurred, it is likely that Constantine's favoritism of the church was a matter of expediency. The church might serve as a new centre of unity and save classical culture and the empire. The fact that he delayed his baptism till shortly before his death and kept the position of *Pontifex Maximus*, (chief priest of the pagan state religion) would seem to support this view. Moreover, the execution of the young men who might have had a claim to his throne was not in keeping with the conduct of a sincere Christian. Perhaps there is a mixture of superstition and expediency in his policy.”

So what does the above tell us? It tells us clearly that the early Roman Catholic Church *was formed by and for the needs of the Roman state of the time*. Early Church patterns were given severe protective coloration to fit with Roman pagan state religion patterns, so that both church and state of the time could survive. “Roman state religion was *mechanical and external*. It had its altars, idols, priests, processions, rites and practices *that the people could see*.” Does any of that sound familiar? Paul and the early church knew this as the pagan state religion. It certainly had nothing to do with the reality of their Godliness!!!

Success of the System

Within that original set of state-centred goals the church has enjoyed considerable success through the centuries. It has provided an ongoing round of patriotic festivals and devout duties to placate the masses -and the state.

At times when the populace has been restless effective intervention has been mounted to keep the peace. Such was the case when the Roman state was overrun by barbarians. The church retreated within cloistered walls for its own physical safety. In so doing the former system was preserved until the flood was passed, and the brutish Germanic tribal newcomers became acculturated.

This was also seen at the time of the Crusades. The plan for Crusades was jointly conceived by church and state as a way to divert the attention of the restless populace. It gave them something to do besides make trouble. So successive waves of high-sounding “Crusades” were mounted to the undieing offense of the perennially blood-soaked Middle East.

Later on, competitive cathedral building was undertaken for the same reason. There was a cathedral for the state church in each city, and every Sunday all were required by law to attend it. It became the showcase of culture for the community -and a bottomless pit for all its wealth.

For the best account of how events led up to the Reformation see the History page for “Beacon Lights of the Reformation” by W. H. Withrow. In 80 pages he tells us the stories of the many earlier reform-minded divines before Luther.

Luther and Reformation Freedom

When Luther's 95 Theses inadvertently became public, it gradually set the populace free from the bondage of many centuries. They were set free from iron bondage to unthinking and mechanical forms of a bygone age; the altars, idols, priests, processions, rites and practices *that the people could see*.

They were being set free not just from an outmoded church but from a whole comprehensive and watertight system of political and religious oppression that they had endured for endless centuries:

“The peasants became hostile to Luther in 1525 when he opposed The Peasants Revolt. The peasants had heard him denounce the authority of the Church and assert the authority of the Scripture and the right of the individual to come directly to God for salvation, and they applied these arguments to their social and economic problems. Feudalism had caused much oppression of the peasants, and in their “Twelve Articles” of 1525, they demanded the reform of feudal abuses that could be demonstrated as abuses on the authority of Scripture. At first, in his “*Admonition to Peace*” in April of 1525, he urged the peasants to patience and the lords to redress the grievances of the peasants. When Luther realized that this revolutionary social movement might endanger the Reformation and might subvert the foundations of orderly government even in Protestant provinces, he urged the princes in violent language, in his pamphlet “*Against the Plundering Murderous Hordes of Peasants*”, to put down disorder. The authorities needed no urging to use severe measures and slaughtered about one hundred thousand peasants. Southern German peasants remained in the Roman Catholic church partly because of this apparent betrayal of them by Luther.” P. 294 “Christianity Through The Centuries” by E. E. Cairns 1954

For the best account of what happened next see Daniel Steele's “Antinomianism Revived” chapter 2 “Antinomianism -Historical Sketch. *****

Luther was not at all idle. He debated with scholars and princes for years in many councils, and making use of Erasmus's edition of the Greek Testament, he completed his German Translation of the New Testament in less than a year. The whole Bible, including the apocrypha, was translated from the original into German by 1534. When it was published, it not only gave the German people the Bible in their own tongue, but it also set the standard form of the German language. He also wrote “On Monastic Vows”, in which he urged monks and nuns to repudiate their wrongful vows, *to leave the cloister, and to marry!* Can you see how dangerous Luther was to the existing order of things?

Into this giant gap many thinking divines rose up to fill the aching void as much as they had it within themselves:

In 1530 the Diet of Augsburg was held. Melanchthon with Luther's approval had drawn up the Augsburg Confession, which was presented at the Diet. It became the official creed of the Lutheran church. It was the first of several creeds that made the period between 1517 and 1648 as great a period of Protestant creedal development as the period 325 and 451” (Constantine lived from 274-337)

“During the trying year of May 1521 to March 1522, Melanchthon was not idle. His short work on the reformers of Wittenberg, “*Loci Communes*”, came out in 1521. This little work in Latin was the first major theological treatise of the reformation and went through numerous editions during the lifetime of the author. It established Melanchthon as the theologian of the Lutheran Movement.”

Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531) was in the first generation of the Reformers. In him the forces of discontent with Rome crystallized into a Reformation church. Humanistic sympathies caused him to interpret Paul's writings by the philosopher Plato. Declared that tithes paid by the faithful were not of divine authority and that their payment was a voluntary matter. He believed that such Greeks as Socrates and Plato and such Romans as Cato, Seneca, and the Scipios would be in heaven.

He correctly interpreted original sin as a moral disease, but did not think of it as guilt.

Later, the Zwinglian forces merges with the Calvinistic forces in the reformed churches of Switzerland through the Consensus of Zurich in 1549. Though Calvin became the hero of the Reformed faith, the church should not forget the part that the cultured, democratic, and sincere Zwingli played in liberating Switzerland from the chains of the Papacy. He was more liberal than Luther, but not less courageous than he.

The Zwinglian movement in northern Switzerland is closely linked with the Anabaptist movement. It was the spiritual and lineal ancestor of the modern Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterite churches throughout the world.

Conrad Grebel (1498-1526) was the founder of the Swiss Anabaptist movement. He worked closely with Zwingli until he broke with him in 1525. Almost exterminated for their extreme views. The Amish of Pennsylvania came out of this background.

Mechior Hoffman (1495-1543) had arrived in Strasbourg in 1529 to await the coming of the Millennium. He was superseded as leader by the baker Jan Matthys. Matthys proclaimed himself to be Enoch. He decided that Munster was to be the New Jerusalem and moved there with his wife, the beautiful former nun Divara. When Matthys was killed in fighting, John of Leyden succeeded him and married Divara and fifteen additional wives. Polygamy was decreed because of the large surplus of unmarried women in Munster and the practice of some Old Testament patriarchs. Community of goods and a fanatical anticipation of the coming heavenly kingdom (or at least a civil order that was just and beneficial) led to disorder. The leaders were executed by a military force under the Bishop of the area.

Jacob Hutter (d. 1536) first developed a communal pattern based on the early church of Acts in Germany and Moravia. Persecution drove the Hutterites to Hungary and the Ukraine, and after 1874 to South Dakota and Manitoba (where they still thrive in their traditional fashion today).

Balthasar Hubmaier (1481-1528) studied under Luther's opponent John Eck. Adapted radical Anabaptist ideas. Led those who fled from the Zwinglian persecution and the thousands of Moravians converts to Anabaptist views. He was burned at the stake by order of the Emperor in 1528, and his wife was drowned in the Danube by Roman Catholic authorities. The radical fringe of the Anabaptists helped discredit many sound believers in the ranks of the Anabaptists in Germany due to their eschatology. They also had the Anabaptist idea of socialism and proposing to sell land to aid the poor.

Menno Simons (1496-1561) in the Netherlands. Simons had embraced Anabaptist views and had given up his priesthood in the Roman Catholic church in 1536. He assumed the leadership of the "brethren" -the name that the Anabaptists of the Netherlands adopted in order to get rid of the stigma attached to the name "Anabaptist". After his death the "brethren" were known as Mennonites. He was a sane and moderate leader.

Lelio Sozzini (Socinus) (1525-62) of Siena, Italy. Developed the "Socinians", forerunners of the modern Unitarians. He was attracted to anti-Trinitarianism by the death of the anti-Trinitarian Servetus in Geneva. According to Socinianism, Christ is to be worshiped as a man who obtained divinity by his superior life. To Sozzini there was no such thing as original sin, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, or predestination.

Kaspar Schwenkfeld (1489-1561) was a nobleman. More experientially oriented, they were inclined to mysticism, and believed in inner spiritual guidance by the Holy Spirit. A small group still exists in Pennsylvania.

John Calvin

(1509-64) may be considered the leader of the second generation of Reformers. Luther emphasized

preaching, but Calvin was interested in developing a formal system of theology. Both accepted the authority of the Bible, but Luther's main emphasis was on justification by faith, whereas Calvin stressed the sovereignty of God. Luther held to consubstantiation as the proper explanation of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, but Calvin rejected the physical presence in favour of the spiritual presence of Christ through faith in the hearts of the participants. Luther rejected only what the scriptures would not approve, but Calvin rejected everything of the past that could not be proved by Scriptures. Luther believed in predestination of the elect but said little about election of condemnation. Calvin held to a double predestination -to salvation and to condemnation -based on the will of God, and he rejected any idea of merit on the part of the elect or foreknowledge on the part of God in the sense that God elected to salvation those whom He foreknew would believe.

So you see the difference? Luther was trying to make his Catholicism fit with scriptural reality, while Calvin was trying to start fresh, using mostly just his recognized genius to interpret the scripture. Sometimes he was guilty of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.... It was a very difficult time for theology, to say the least. They knew the Bible to be real, but the rest was theirs to figure out.

“When the Reformation advanced into the French cantons of Switzerland, Guillume Farel (1489-1565), a red-headed, hot tempered, strong-voiced prophetic individual established the Reformation in Geneva. Farel was born into a middle-classed French family and educated in French Universities. Soon after 1521 he accepted Luther's idea of justification by faith. Protected by (the Canton of) Bern, he helped spread Reformed ideas. In 1532 he began work in Geneva. In 1535, he won a dispute with those opposed to the Reformation, and the General Assembly of Citizens formally adopted the ideas of the Reformers in 1536. Farel realized that he needed someone with more organizing ability to help him to establish the Reformation in Geneva. During his travels, Calvin stopped in Geneva one night in 1536. Farel went to him and urged him to help him. When Calvin demurred because he loved the life of a student and writer of theology, Farel told him that the curse of God would be on him if he did not stay. Stricken by fear, as Calvin later confessed, he decided to remain. He and Farel cooperated until they were exiled in 1538.” (in a dispute over the liturgy of the Lord's supper)

Holland

“Lutheranism failed to win the loyalty of the Dutch, although it contributed to religious revolt in Holland. However, after the Peasants Revolt, Luther's insistence on the authority of the prince was distasteful to the Dutch who were to (getting ready to) revolt against their (cruel) Spanish rulers. The more democratic Calvinism appealed to them as a way to escape from the corruption of the Roman system.” “By 1560 the majority of Protestants (in Holland) were Calvinistic; a minority were Anabaptists, led by Menno Simons, and small minority followed Luther's ideas. Neither the passive obedience of Lutheranism nor the revolutionary spirit of Anabaptism had the appeal for the independent Dutch burghers that Calvinism had with its insistence on freedom from tyranny. Protestantism spread in spite of the organization of the Inquisition by 1524 to stamp it (Protestantism) out of these valuable Spanish possessions.”

The Spanish went on to sponsor many bloody massacres and sieges for the sake of God. “Because war on land was so hopeless (against a numerically superior foe) the Dutch became: Beggars of the Sea”. They took to the sea by 1569 and preyed on Spanish commerce.” “In 1584 English aid and England's defeat of the Spanish Armada (built with treasure from the new world) in 1588 left the Dutch relatively free.... until the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.”

The “Belgic Confession” by Guido de Bres and the “Heidelberg Catechism” became the theological standards of the Reformed Church of Holland. Victorious Calvinism, however found its first opposition in Holland in the development of Arminianism. (James (Jacobus) Arminius 1559-1609). His attempt to

modify Calvinism so that according to him, *God might not be considered the author of sin, nor man an automaton in the hands of God.*

The Theology

Both Arminius and Calvin taught that man, who inherited Adam's sin, is under the wrath of God. But Arminius believed that man was able to initiate his salvation after God had granted him the primary grace to enable his will to cooperate with God. Calvin thought that man's will had been so corrupted by the fall that salvation was entirely a matter of divine grace. Arminius accepted election but believed that the decree to save some and damn others had "its foundation in the foreknowledge of God" Thus election was conditional rather than unconditional. Calvin on the other hand accepted an unconditional election by a sovereign God to grace and condemnation. Arminius also believed that Christ's death was sufficient for all but it was effective only for believers. Calvin limited the atonement to those elected to salvation. Arminius also taught that men might resist the saving grace of God, whereas Calvin maintained that grace was also irresistible.

Arminius answered the Calvinistic insistence on the perseverance of saints by stating that by stating that God would give the saints grace so that they need not fall but that the scriptures seemed to teach that it was possible for man to fall away from salvation. Arminius did not want to make man into an automaton (robot). He thought that these modifications of Calvinism would eliminate those dangers to theology."

The persecution of Arminians did not cease until 1625. Arminianism came to have considerable influence on one wing of the Anglican Church in the seventeenth century *and Methodism in the eighteenth.*

In summary, then, this was a time of great theological turmoil because of their sudden release from age-old darkness. There was great need for understanding, and so many gave their best to meet that need.

Like the dawn of the automotive age, each city had its inventive carriage-builder that tried his hand building his own rendition of the "horseless carriage". The idea was in the air, but the details of application were not yet established. So we had the Hupmobile, the Packard, the electric, the Pierce Arrow, the Studebaker and countless other innovative brands.

Out of this difficult time of turmoil emerged the various flavors of Baptist church that we know today.

Even today, it is very difficult to give an organized statement of Reformation views, because there are so many different groups with slightly different variations of belief -variations that grew out of the insistence on each believer's right to interpret the Bible as a literal and final authority for himself P. 307 Democratic but confusing. Can there be any firm ground in this scheme of things? Perhaps. But a thousand different kinds of ground. Some may even be firm -until somebody questions it. But really, it has to be like that -because there are so many levels of faith and bondage....

In the Reformation of the 1500s that is what happened with religion. Two hundred years later, the scholarly Oxford-educated John Wesley studied all their approaches and after much time, turmoil and debate with other scholars came up with a more scriptural and Godly approach that also had room for obtaining not only pardon but purity of heart. Within the theology of Holiness most of the contradictions in the earlier system were finally resolved.

The reformers had no idea that there was another experience yet to be obtained from God that would finish the job of redemption from sin. They thought it was finished, and so they laboriously filled any gaps in their understanding with homemade oakum and tar.

Wesley's new approach left few such gaps. He had many who followed on through the years to

improve and polish (or, naturally, sometimes confuse) the basic understandings established at this time.

The Catholic Response to the Reformation

Pope Paul III and Ignatius Loyola were instrumental in establishing the Jesuits (The Society of Jesus) They were earnest supporters of the Papal system after the Inquisition was showing such success in *exterminating* heretical Jews and Muslims from Spain. The Jesuit order emphasized preaching by well-educated monks as a means to win men back from Protestantism. By 1556 there were over 1000 monks preaching under a requirement for absolute blind obedience to the Pope and living in purity, poverty, and chastity. The main functions of the Jesuit order was education, fighting heresy and going on foreign missions. Through their efforts, large parts of Germany were regained for the Roman Church. The southern provinces of the Netherlands and Poland also had many won back over. But in these struggles the very efficiency of the Jesuits made them seem soulless; their ethical relativism made them justify any means to accomplish what seemed to be good ends; and their enlistment of the rulers of state in the fight against heresy led to an undue interference in politics that later made them unpopular. The Inquisition was used to enforce the words of the Jesuits. Tens of thousands were presumed guilty until they proved their innocence; they were never confronted by their accusers and they could be made to testify against themselves by torture. Punishments such as loss of property, imprisonment or burning at the stake were carried out by the state under the watchful eye of the inquisitors. This was finally abolished in 1854.

The development of printing helped Protestants disseminate their ideas. This was countered by “the Index” of books that were forbidden to Catholics. It was in force until 1966.

Pope Paul III called the Council of Trent in 1544 which ran until 1563 to find ways to reform the church. The finally declared that not the Bible alone, but the cononical Scriptures and the apocrypha in the Vulgate edition of Jerome and the tradition of the church constituted the final authority for the faithful. Justification was not by faith alone but by faith and subsequent works. The seven sacraments were reaffirmed by the council, and decrees concerning reform of ecclesiastical abuses were formulated. The doctrine of transubstantiation was confirmed.

From “Christianity Through the Centuries” P. 349-350

Of course, giving Scripture equal billing with their ancient tradition made any chance of reconciliation with the Protestant church impossible. And all this was decided in distant Rome with hardly a quorum in the council chamber. Those who could attend were, of course almost exclusively Italian, so it seems to me that the process was a hypocritical balance between cosmetic reform and the all-important preservation of privilege and power. Church politics.

Apparently in this time, the Eastern Church almost became Protestant!!! Cyril Lucar (1572-1638) who studied at Geneva was elected patriarch at Constantinople. He published his Confession of Faith in 1629 which was strongly tinged with Calvinistic views of doctrine. But the Jesuits were active there too, and before long the Sultan was persuaded to put him to death for supposedly instigating rebellion among the Cossacks. The synod of Bethlehem 1672 repudiated all the aspects of Reformation doctrine in his Confession and even claimed that he did not write it!

“The Peace of Westphalia ended the long bloody struggle in 1648. Holland and Switzerland were recognized as independent Protestant states. France, Sweden and the tiny state that was to become Prussia made important gains in territory; and France became the dominant power in Europe. Both Lutheranism and Calvinism became recognized religions, and Protestants were given the right to hold offices in the state. Lands that were Protestant in 1624 were permitted to remain Protestant. This brought about the end of religious persecution. The Holy Roman Empire became a mere geographical

term and lost its former political significance after the Peace of Westphalia *because its only unity had been religious and the Reformation and the war had shattered that*. This treaty stabilized the political and religious map of Europe.

The cost of the settlement was high. *The population of Germany was cut by about one third with the loss of several million lives. Property had been destroyed in the numerous battles and sacking of towns and villages. It took decades before Germany recovered from the devastation of property, the loss of life, and the breakdown of morals incurred in the thirty Years War.*”

Note: the long delayed return of Germany to political and demographic prominence was one of the root causes of the first World War. France did not want to lose this preeminent position in Europe, which it had come to view as its birthright.”

Why The Struggle?

Now the Catholics and the Protestants have always shared the main creeds of the Church universal. Why has there been such a titanic struggle between them? You may well ask.

Read the following excerpt from the church history textbook carefully. I have added comments since the author so blithely breezes by breathtaking issues that they can be easily missed....

“The assertion that justification was by faith alone marked the resurgence of religious individualism which had been lost during the Middle Ages because of the view that man best developed as part of the corporate organization of the Church. Man now could have direct personal access to God. Such an assertion of the individual did not mean that the reformation neglected the group aspect of life, for all of them, except the Anabaptists, laid great emphasis upon the church, which was to be recognized by the preaching of the Word and the sacraments. But so far as salvation was concerned, man need not come to God by the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

The doctrine of the priesthood struck at the importance of the hierarchical system system of mediators between God and man just as the doctrine of justification by faith *made the sacramental system unnecessary*. No mediator was needed since each believer was a spiritual priest who offered spiritual sacrifices to God.

The Roman Catholic Church is first and foremost Roman. The “Catholic” is merely self-proclaimed. And the Rome it refers to is obviously not modern Rome, but the ancient Rome ruled by a succession of tyrants and their pantheon of idols. As we reviewed above, the church was brought in to replace the idols since the church had become more popular. The job of the idols, -and then the church was to function as the foundation and public relations branch to vindicate each tyrant. This changed over time, but that was how it started.

To be part of the Roman system of idolatry, no heart-change was necessary or expected. You merely bowed the knee to the idols (including the Emperor). Your credibility as a Roman was imparted to you within an endless annual round of rites, ceremonies, festivals and superstitions, each god giving its own duties and blessings.

Go to [Major Roman god list](#)

The assertion of the final authority of the Scriptures *marked a repudiation of the authority of the church*. The Bible, rather than decrees of councils, the writings of the Fathers, and the bulls of the Popes was the final rule of faith and practice. Because individuals were thought to be able to interpret it for themselves by paying attention to the grammatical and historical background, the right of private interpretation was emphasized. Almost all of the Reformers themselves or their colleagues translated the Bible into the vernacular.

The Reformation helped to create a demand for universal elementary education, for if every one was to interpret the Bible for himself, he must have some knowledge of reading. All the Reformers gave

considerable attention to the founding of schools on the three levels of elementary, secondary, and university education. The Reformation also stimulated the rise of empirical science.

Insistence upon the spiritual equality of men led to an insistence upon their political equality. In this way the Reformation, particularly where Calvinistic doctrines were accepted, promoted the use of democracy. In both the Church and the State. Laymen were given a greater share in the government of the church and the state.

The Reformation also stimulated capitalism because the medieval opposition to usury was dropped by most of the Reformers. The insistence upon thrift, industry, and separation from costly worldly amusements resulted in the creation of savings that could be used as capital for new economic ventures. It is not fair, however to say that any of the Reformers were responsible for the rise of capitalism because it was in existence long before the Reformation. The modern welfare state, which assumes responsibility for the economic welfare for its citizens, also had its beginnings in the need of the state to provide for those who were dispossessed and impoverished by the confiscation of church property during the Reformation.

The Reformation also brought a much-needed revival of preaching. Men such as Luther excelled as preachers of the Word. Calvin spent much of his time in preaching as well as teaching the Word.

The Reformation also had an impact upon Roman Catholic church through the reformation of in morals and the clear statement of dogma of the Counter Reformation at Trent. The Jesuit order became the leader in Roman Catholic missionary work in Asia and the Western Hemisphere.

In 1648 the main churches of the Christian religion were in existence. The period from then to the present is concerned with the fortunes of these various forms of Christianity as they faced the secularism that first began to make a marked impression on Western Europe during the seventeenth century.” P. 355 Modern Church History (Counter Reformation and Evaluation)

A Perplexed Boy and a New Religion

An amusing real life example of how radically the application of these Antinomian doctrines influenced actual spiritual success -in pioneer Texas. From Page 6-12 “The Sanctification of F. A. Powell” (from the Testimonies page)

There was a period when my father left off going to church. Possibly our extreme poverty and his broken health was the chief cause for this failure. But whatever the cause, we did not attend church for some time. In time a Primitive Baptist elder from Texas, by the name of J. P. Pilkington, came into our community. What a preacher was he! I shall never forget how he swept the community with his preaching. Our nearest neighbor, Mr. Ben Watkins, came to see my father and insisted that he should attend the meetings, saying, “You must hear Pilkington preach”. Finally my father agreed to attend the meeting just once. Although I was just a little lad, I caught every word of the discussion.

The next day I saw father go with Mr. Watkins to church.

When once my father heard Mr. Pilkington preach, he was swept away and had to continue attending the meetings.

There was quite a stir in the community. Many of those who had been Methodists and Missionary Baptists changed their membership to the Primitive Baptist Church.

Among them was my father. I shall never forget it. We children were allowed to attend and father would not miss a service. When the meetings closed, all those joining the church had to be baptized for

no one could enter the Primitive Baptist Church without first being immersed by a Primitive Baptist preacher. Among this group was my father. At once he was made an elder in the Primitive Baptist church and soon he began preaching.

This was all very frustrating to my boyish mind. I could not forget how my father had once exhorted in the Missionary Baptist Church and had stirred the entire congregation, and how for awhile he had left off attending church. Now he had changed to another church, had to be baptized over again and then ordained as a preacher. I could not get away from this confused thinking for it kept going over and over in my mind as I grew older. Finally one day, while my father and I were picking cotton, I decided to put the question straight to him, asking him what it was all about. When I had made up my mind to speak to him, I picked fast to catch up with him, for as a small lad I could pick much more cotton than my father. As I caught up to him, I said, "Paw, I want to ask you a question." "All right, Son. What is it?" "You know, paw, a long time ago you went to the meetin' and the meetin' didn't seem to go well. You got up and cried and talked and everybody cried. Then, for awhile, you didn't go to church. When Mr. Pilkington came and preached you went to his meetin', was baptized over and joined his church. Now, what about that, paw?" My father seemed to know the mind of a child and was quite apt in dealing with his problems. Just before our coming to the cotton field, he had seen me lying on the floor looking at the clowns and animals on a circus handbill. So, he said, "Suppose that the Ringling Brothers circus was going to be in Pittsboro, our county seat, tomorrow. I would tell you this evening that if you would rise very early in the morning, we would go to the circus. So we get up before day light and get ready to go..When we get half way to Pittsboro, I would look at you and see that in the darkness you had put your breeches on wrong side out. Now, what would you do?" "Oh," I said, "I'd ask you to stop the oxen and I'd run down in the gully by the side of the road, pull off my breeches, turn them around, and put them on right side to. " "That's the way it has been with me religiously," said father. "I started to go to heaven a good many years ago. I had gotten thus far along the road when Mr. Pilkington came along, and through him I found out that I was in the shape I have just described you to be in. So, I stopped and turned my clothes. Now, I am still on the way."

This was a momentous period in my life. My father had not only changed his church membership, he had changed all of his fundamental Christian beliefs – changed from Methodist doctrine to the strong Calvinistic teachings of the Hardshell Baptists. Their doctrine was the fore-ordination and predestination of all things from the foundation of the world. Or, as we children used to say, "What is to be, will be, if it never comes to pass." It also meant that his preaching was changed. *They did not preach to sinners*. They preached that one was born either to be saved or to be a reprobate and that one could do nothing about it. I heard so much of that teaching that I almost came to believe it myself. What a tragedy!

Oh, if only someone, in those days, had preached to me from John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life". How I do thank God for the "Whosoever " gospel.

Early Efforts To Get Saved

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6,7 In the summer, when I was twelve, the Missionary Baptists had a protracted meeting – we call them revival meetings now. It was in these meetings that God first spoke strongly to my heart. I was awakened to the fact that I was accountable for my sins unto God. I would sit in the pew and weep for long periods while the preacher brought the message, for I wanted to be a Christian. However, being taught by my father that only

grown-ups, not children, could be saved, I thought I could not become a Christian.

Later they had another revival in the Missionary Baptist Church and in this meeting God came so upon my heart that I could hardly remain in my seat. There were large windows in those old-fashioned churches, but there was no glass in them. The window where I was sitting was wide open. I was so convicted and broken up that I leaped out of the window, ran down the hill, and fell under some bushes to weep my heart out. Another young man, seeing me go, followed me. He was a Christian and he did his best to help me to get saved, but I didn't make it. At the close of that meeting, they begged me to go be baptized into the church and then I would be saved. But I couldn't get the consent of my mind to do that for I did not feel that I had been forgiven of my sins.

At about this time, I become very ill with malaria and lapsed into a state of unconsciousness for a long time. I had been working and living with a relative. I remember some of the neighbors coming in and remarking that they didn't think I could ever get well. No doubt I was somewhat delirious.

After the chills would leave me and the burning fever would come, I would look up from my bed and it looked as if the old loft overhead – which was just a few boards on which stuff was stored – was full of watermelons that were about to roll off on me. I have never forgotten those experiences.

The doctor, thinking that I could never be well there in Mississippi, advised that if and when I got a little better I should go to Texas where they did not have malaria. The next September I, in company with a young friend, left the swamps of Mississippi bound for the state of Texas. My friend had some relatives named Scott, folk who had previously lived in our Mississippi community, who were now farming in the black land of Ellis County, Texas. I walked on to the Shaw farm with only fifteen cents in money, a few clothes, an old-fashioned valise pulled across my shoulders, and my shoes tied together with the strings hanging over a stick. They welcomed us and at once gave us a job picking cotton. We were being paid fifty cents per hundred pounds and our board. I could pick two hundred pounds of cotton a day. My! My! My! Making a dollar in one day! I thought I would be rich in just a little while. What a change for a fifteen year old boy! I could not help but contrast this to my experience in Mississippi.

There my first wages were three dollars a month and board.

Sometimes I think the man that boarded me came out at the worst end. I remember that when Christmas time came I asked my employer for twenty-five cents for Christmas. I had worked for him for almost five months and was due the sum of fifteen dollars, but he said, "Son, I just can't spare the quarter." So I had not a penny for that Christmas.

When the first of the year came I thought I would get the fifteen dollars, but he said, "your father ran an account here at the store when he was so sick, and I am applying the fifteen dollars on that old account." You may well imagine my disappointment. I was then a thirteen year old boy, but had never had a store-bought suit and had always attended church barefooted. I had planned to buy some clothing with my wages. I cried and told my brother Lowry, who was named for the old Methodist preacher, Robert Lowry. He was seventeen and was drawing ten dollars a month for his work. "Never mind," he said, "I'll takes you to Pittsboro on Saturday and will get you a suit of clothes." My, how that healed my wounds.

Sure enough! On Saturday Lowry took me to Tom Gaines store. Mr. Gaines threw back the spreads which covered the old-fashioned counter where the clothes were stacked, pulled out a coat and slipped it on me. It came down over my hands, so he said, "That won't do." I hated for him to take it off me for I thought I would not get a suit. Finally they found one that fit and I had my first suit of clothes at thirteen years of age. You should have seen me strut when I went to church on Sunday.

My brother who has since entered the ministry as a Baptist preacher, became my ideal young man that

day. He had given me my first suit of clothes. So now making one dollar a day and my board seemed like a fortune to me.

Before the first week had passed by, I became so homesick that I would have gone back to Mississippi if I had had enough money to make the trip. What a tragedy that would have been. Especially was I homesick to see my brother Lowry. Soon, however, the homesickness wore off and I began to plan how by making a dollar a day I would be able to buy a farm and become a farmer back in Mississippi. I planned to become the leading farmer in my home community.

Well! Well! How a boy changes! Soon I became adjusted to the ways of the Texas people and took on the characteristics of the men around me.

Further Efforts To Be Saved

“A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26 Summer came and I visited an old-fashioned Methodist revival. Again the Spirit of God came in great convicting power upon my boyish heart. I had read Ezekiel 36:26. I was really sick of sin and wanted a new heart. I knew I needed a new spirit; something to cause me to walk in the ways of God.

But how to find it I did not understand. I believe that I can say now that I sought God with all of my heart. But I didn't know how to take the step of faith, how to believe God. I am sure I repented of every sin, but since I did not take the step of faith I did not feel that I was saved.

Before long I began to associate with the other young people of that community and was having a good time with them. My plans also began to change. I purchased a horse and buggy and was able to keep company with the better people of the community. I thought that this would make me happy, but this did not satisfy. Again I attended a revival being held in our vicinity. Again deep conviction seized my heart. I went to church with the young people, with them I sat on the back seat, chewed gum and giggled. The others seemed to have a big time. But when the Spirit of God would come upon the minister, there was no good time for me any more. Conviction would come upon me and I would weep right there in the presence of the other young people.

This worried me. I could not have a good time like the other young folk were having. I finally made up my mind that if a young man could be saved, I was going to be saved. I would no longer take my girl friend to church in my buggy, rather I would saddle my horse and go alone. The meeting was held under an old-fashioned brush arbor and I would go right down to the front seats and listen to every word that the minister spoke, desiring to do whatever he might suggest.

One morning I was the first to rush to the altar when the invitation was given. I shall never forget that morning. I had said, “This is my day. Today I am going to settle it to go with God. “ When I went to the altar a number of young people, possibly twelve or fifteen of them, followed me. Young people prayed through all about me, but I could not get victory. I stayed until around three o'clock in the afternoon. Finally almost everybody had gone and I was still not saved. I arose from the altar so exhausted that I staggered when I endeavored to walk. What a condition for a strong young man to be in! I was so near the kingdom, yet so far away.

That day I rode home alone. No, I was not alone, for the devil was with me. He said, “You have done everything that any young man could do to be saved and still you are not saved. Therefore, no one can be saved. If I were you, I would never go to church another time. You can't go to church and have a good time as the other young folk do.

You should quit and never go again.” I agreed with the devil to quit. But as the hour of service drew

near in the evening, I wanted so badly to go to church. Instead of going to church, I went to bed; but not to rest. I rolled and tossed until about two o'clock in the morning. Then I seemed to be in a trance. Whether I was awake or asleep I cannot say. It seemed to me that Jesus came and touched me and said: "You have repented of every known sin.

"Yes ", I replied, "I have." Then He said: "I forgive your every sin. But when you sin again, you will again be a sinner."

I awoke with a start. "My God, is this real?" was all I could think. I felt my flesh to see if I were alive. Could this happen to me – an ignorant, homeless boy? Then and there I resolved to take Jesus as my Savior. I was then living with Mr. Brooks who was an infidel. I promised myself that when I arose in the morning I would tell Mr. Brooks that I had become a Christian. Then I dropped off to sleep.

Usually I awoke very early in the morning, but this morning the sun was shining when I jumped out of bed. The experience of the night was very vivid to me. The devil said, "If you tell this infidel that you got saved, he will say you are the biggest fool who ever lived. If I were you, I'd never mention it. " While I was dressing the devil continued to argue with me and finally I decided not to mention the experience of the preceding night to a soul.

Following this experience I went along for some time without any conviction or condemnation.

I seemed to be right at the border of the Fountain of Salvation, but not in. Finally I joined with the other young people in their parties and was back into sin again. I tried to dismiss the whole matter and to believe that nobody could be saved. How the devil argues! But it cannot be settled that easily.

Later a revival was held in the little town of Alvarado and my girl friend was anxious for me to take her to the revival, which I did. Now I had no conviction whatsoever. In fact, I could dismiss myself at the edge of the tabernacle and turn aside with the other boys. She was a Christian and became very much concerned about my condition and talked religion to me a great deal. I would turn her aside with the statement that I had no conviction whatsoever any more. "Don't you have any conviction at all?" she asked. "Do you mean that you want to be lost?" "No, I'm already lost. The Holy Spirit never comes to me any more " I replied. With these words, we parted.

On our way to church the next evening, she begged me to go into the service with her. I said, "No, I'll go with the other boys." But she began to weep, saying, "I never thought you would treat me like this." Of course, I was too much of a man to stand that. So I said, "Sure, I'll go into the tabernacle with you tonight. " When we entered the tabernacle, I thought she would go just under the edge and find a seat. But, bless my life, she made for the front. I thought she would never stop! Finally, we slipped into a seat.

Have you ever gone to a church and have the preacher preach to you alone? It seemed he preached right at me. I never shall forget it. When he finished the message, he leaped from the platform and made for me. He took my hand and asked, "Are you a Christian?" I told him that I was not. "My Lord, young man, you should come right up to the altar now." He urged, "Give that voice to God.

I heard you sing in the opening part of the service and I covet you for God and His cause." I was stunned but didn't move. The young lady with me urged me to go, but I didn't. I said within myself, "There's no need to go. I have tried every way and I've failed. Now I am overboard, there is no hope for me." I could not get away from the words of the minister, nor from the interest of other Christian workers, for the young lady had told them of my condition and had requested that they unite with her in prayer for me. I was again much awakened. I felt if there was a hell, I was bound for it. I said, "What if there is a heaven, and I miss it? But the Spirit does not strive with me as He did once. I'm not broken up." But the next day, as I hoed in the cotton field, I made a resolve that one more time I would seek God if the Spirit would come and break me up and convict me. All that day I pleaded for

the Holy Spirit to come back and give me one more opportunity to be saved. Finally my heart was once more tendered, the Spirit was convicting, and I resolved to go to the altar at every invitation.

Yet, I did not get it settled definitely. What an awful condition for a young man to be in! I can see now as I reflect upon these disappointing experiences that very unconsciously *I had been influenced greatly by the Hardshell Baptist teachings of my childhood. Especially did their teachings that only the elect could be saved, that some were predestined from birth to be saved while others were predestined to be lost seem to have some influence upon me.*

The devil had attacked me effectively at this point time and time again. This had contributed to my fruitless search for salvation.

How damaging false doctrines can be!

I Find God

The first Sunday we were in the community, the folk wanted to have a little “get together”. Word had gotten around about the two new young men who had settled a claim, particularly that one of them was a singer. So we were invited to a home which was a half-dugout. I have told of my love for music. I had now been studying voice for two years under some of the best voice teachers in the state of Texas, and had also taken some teacher training. At the close of this first day’s singing, the people requested me to order some song books for them. We had a number of books but no two books were of the same kind, since we had all moved to this vicinity from different communities, bringing with us what song books we had. So at once, I found myself tied in with what worship we had in the new country.

There were very few religious people in our community. However, there was one cowman who had been studying for the ministry at Peniel College, but having become the victim of tuberculosis, he had to stop his studies and was ordered by his doctor to come to the dry atmosphere of New Mexico. We had one service with this invalid ministerial student bringing a short message.

Before long school houses were built on the plains. When the first one was built in our little community, the people wanted me to teach them to sing. So we opened a singing school for these people. Immediately upon the close of this school, a community some distance away requested me to conduct a singing school for them. About this time a holiness man by the name of T. E. Fisher moved from Fisher County, Texas, into New Mexico, just across the state line from Bronco, Texas.

Murphy’s schoolhouse had been erected and there Mr. Fisher started a Sunday School. I was invited by Mr. Fisher to conduct a singing school in the school house. The youngsters of that community did not often go to church but they surely did like to go to singing school. We opened the school. I, a young man just twenty-one and not a settled Christian, and Mr. Fisher a holiness man running a Sunday School. There were about sixty young people in attendance at the school.

At this time there came into the community from central Texas a Baptist preacher, the Reverend J. T. Lightfoot. He had had some difficulty with his denomination for his teachings were not in accord with the prevailing doctrines of the Baptists. He was a well educated man and a fine Bible scholar. He requested the privilege of preaching in the morning of each day during the singing school. So we planned for a preaching service at eleven o’clock each morning. This put me in a strange predicament. Here I was teaching sacred music but had never settled it in my heart to go through with God.

About the third day of school and the preaching of Reverend Lightfoot, after I had given the morning lesson, I said to the students and parents – for the parents had come for the special service that day - “I have gone as far as I can go. I am here in a Sunday School community teaching sacred music, reading the Psalms of the joy of Israel to these students, but without a knowledge of God myself. It is more of a

load than I can carry. I must find help or close the school.” Immediately Brother Fisher jumped to his feet and said “That’s what I’ve been wanting you to say, Brother Powell. Let us go to prayer right now and settle it. “ My heart was breaking. As Brother Fisher spoke I threw up my hands and fell to my knees. I had expected to stay there for hours seeking God, as I had done so many times and never gotten settled as a Christian. As I dropped to my knees, I said, “Lord, the case is Yours. If I am ever saved, You will have to do it. I have done all I can do and have failed.” As I threw up my hands and said these words my knees had no more than pressed the floor when God came putting His everlasting arms beneath me, lifting the heavy load from my soul. The burden which had crushed my heart for years was all taken away. God was so near to me that it seemed that I could reach out my hands and touch Him.

What a day that was in my life! From that service the singing school was turned into a revival meeting and many of the pupils were saved.

My first burden for another soul came the afternoon that I was saved. My younger brother Oscar, who was batching with me in our shack, had never been saved and his need rested heavily upon my heart. So I began to pray for him. I was expecting him to come over for the weekend to visit with us at the school. I spent the night with an old friend who lived in the direction of our claims. Early the next morning as we were preparing to go to school – for we then had seven hours each day for singing schools just as they had in a literary school -one of the boys called my attention to a horseback rider coming from the south. I looked and recognized at once that it was my brother Oscar.

I had began praying for him the day before expecting him to come up on Saturday, but this was only Wednesday morning. We drove over to the school house. Instead of requesting one of the students to bring a bucket of fresh water from the windmill, which was some distance away, I picked up the bucket, dashed out the water and suggested to Oscar that he walk with me to the well. My desire was to speak to him about my being saved the day before.

“How did you happen to come up today, Oscar?” I asked. “I was not looking for you to come until Saturday.” “I don’t know” he replied. “I awoke in the night and became very restless and felt that I should come this morning. So I got up hurriedly, went to the pasture, got my horse, saddled it, and I am here.” “I got saved yesterday” I told him, “and the Lord immediately put a burden on my heart for you. We want to see you get saved today.” I had been expecting my brother to come Saturday, but I seemed to hear the Lord whisper, “I am answering your prayer earlier than you expected.” Thank God for His wonderful grace. As I spoke to him about his soul he turned pale. I thought, “Maybe I have said the wrong thing and have made him mad. I seem to have made a mess of my first personal work to win a soul to Christ.” After I had given the morning lesson, I turned the service over to Reverend Lightfoot who preached at the eleven o’clock hour. Oscar sat on the back seat. I prayed all through the service that God might reach him. I thought the preacher did the poorest preaching that morning I had ever heard him do. But as the invitation was given, we had not sung half through the first verse of the invitation song, when Oscar jumped from the back seat and made a run to the altar. He literally fell on the altar and began to scream and pray. I think he was not there more than two minutes when he jumped to his feet and began to shout. He ran down the aisle, knocked over a bench, ran out the door, ran around the building three times, all the while yelling like a Comanche Indian. Then coming back to the building he began to exhort. He had literally taken over the meeting. The young people began to run to the altar. There were seventeen young people saved in that morning service.

What a day that was for me! I felt that I had won my first soul to the Lord. My brother was asked to testify. He said that he had always wanted to be a Christian but didn’t want to make a big fuss about it. How different our experiences are when God is in the service. I had always wanted to get saved and had required of the Lord that if He saved me he was to make me shout. But when I prayed through I made very little demonstration. I made all of my demonstration in seeking for seven long years. But my

brother made all of his demonstration when he was saved. It is always best when God has His way.

Although there was little demonstration when I threw up my hands and surrendered to God, I did promise God that if He would save me I would make restitution. That afternoon I went home with Brother Fisher, and going into my room alone I began to write my first letter of confession and restitution. That paper was really soiled with my tears and before the letter was completed, I was putting on such a demonstration that the family and visitors had to join me. What a demonstration that I put on as I began to write confessions! I had plenty of feeling and for months I “topped the tall timber”, religiously speaking. I can still see the spot in old Murphy school house where I fell to my knees, threw up my hands and abandoned my case to God and He brought the peace to my soul for which I had sought so long.

Entire Sanctification

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Thessalonians 5:23 For about three months after my wonderful conversion, I really rejoiced in the Lord. The Lord used me to win many souls to Him. In fact, the first young man to be called to preach under my ministry was reached during the singing school at Murphy’s school house. He was not a very promising prospect, in fact, he looked quite hopeless to me. There were about sixty young people in the school and numbers of them had good talents. If, I had been the one calling a preacher, he would have been the last one of that group I would have called. He was fourteen years of age; his hair looked as if it had never been combed; his knuckles were rusty and all but ran back on his wrists; his sleeves were too short for his long arms; his voice was changing; and he could scarcely keep his pitch when singing the scale. But, then, man looketh on the outward appearance, but God on the heart. Isn’t it wonderful that such is the case?! This lad said to me one day, “Brother Powell, I want to talk to you privately.” We invited him in to the house but he refused, saying that he wanted to walk and talk with me. We walked down the road a ways and he began to cry. He said, “Brother Powell, I’ve something to tell you that I’ve never told another soul.” He looked into my face. Then said, “God is calling me to preach.” I tried to encourage him all I could and told him that if he would be true to God that God would bless and use him. Well, as hopeless as he looked; he was true to God and I saw him develop into a good preacher. He has preached now for many years. If we furnish the man, God will furnish the grace. It is wonderful what God can do.

Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ! More and more settlers were coming into the country and different communities were being established. I was kept busy, for singers were scarce in that cow country and I was called to assist in revival meetings over all that part of the country.

When I was converted I thought that all my trials and disappointments would be over forever. I had been taught in the Calvinistic doctrine of the Hardshell Baptists that if a person was ever once saved, he could not be lost. For months I did not realize that the carnal mind was in my breast for God was blessing me and giving me souls in my ministry.

One day a young man claimed I had insulted him in my school. When we were outside of the building he made a lunge at me. Quicker than I can tell it, I went to pieces, for carnality raged in my breast. I was running to attack him, for he had already slapped me, when God checked me. He seemed to say to me, “Are you not a pretty Christian?”. Immediately I fell to my knees and began to beg my assailant to forgive me. I was fortunate to have a friend near by who came to my rescue, otherwise, I would have taken a good beating. He saved me from further attacks from my angry assailant. But, indeed, I did take a beating, an inward beating from a smitten conscience. I prayed and asked my attacker to forgive me. He did not, but God did. Back at the service that night I made a statement to the people about the awful happening asking them to forgive me. God came upon the scene and we had a great service.

Within one year after my conversion, I broke with God three times over carnal rages. Finally, I reached the place where I decided that if this was all God could do for me, I was really ruined. About one year after my conversion, I was singing in a camp meeting at Murphy's school house. A large tent had been pitched and the Reverend Solomon Irick and Virgil Couchran with old Brother Lovelady, a Methodist preacher from Texas, were my co-laborers.

The strong preaching on holiness done by these brethren caused me to want to be sanctified more than I wanted anything else in the world. I began to seek to be entirely sanctified. But as I began to seek, the devil told me that I must not go to the public altar for it would just ruin the meeting if one of the workers in the camp went to the altar. I agreed to go out into the corn field that afternoon and settle it. But the devil went right along with me. Then, I began to pray. But the heavens were like brass, and it seemed that my prayers went no higher than my head. I wallowed around in the corn field until it was almost time for the evening service. I looked around me and that corn field looked as if a horse had wallowed in the rows. I went back to the service without victory. I prepared myself for the service. Although I made myself clean on the outside, I did not feel clean on the inside. I did my best that evening but it seemed that all my singing was very flat. I had already decided that my case must be settled and the victory must be gained. Still, the devil insisted that I could not go to the public altar.

The next day I went back to the corn field. Still I found no victory. It seemed darker than ever to me. I went to the corn field for the third time. There I made up my mind that if it ruined the campmeeting, if it ruined my reputation, if I lost all popularity, I would go to the public altar. I must have the victory. In the morning service as we began to sing for the altar call, I turned the singing to one of the pupils and literally ran for the altar. I expected it would take hours for me to "die out," but as I threw up my hands and fell at the altar, I found that I had already died to everything but the public altar. I was not at the altar more than three minutes before the Holy Ghost Fire fell upon me in purging and purifying power. God had sanctified me wholly. Oh, what a morning service! Why did I have to go to the public altar? I think I know now, for seventeen other young people followed me and they said it was one of the most glorious services of all of that camp meeting. What a change God's work of holiness made in my life and in my Christian work! That camp meeting was held in 1909 and I have been a constant worker in the Church of the Nazarene from that date to this, which is 1957. I have seen many hundreds of souls sanctified up and down the land from that good day to this. O how it pays to go with God!

History is Long!

As we can see earlier Baptist teaching was often loaded with deterministic dogma that allowed no place for human understandings. Any theological difference was worth fighting over!

It was all deadly serious stuff.

But you may have noticed that the pressure has been dialed way down today. Most denominations basically agree on the fundamentals while allowing one another differences in the peripherals. It is all quite peaceful. This lack of conflict in the church is certainly not a good thing. It means we are all being cooked in the same Antinomian pot...

The Baptist theologies that are most read in Pentecostal Bible Colleges today are the following, according to a local Pentecostal pastor. They expertly spell out the foundational details of the gospel.

Lectures in Systemic Theology by Thiessen Eerdmans

Systemic Theology by Berkhof Zondervan

A Theology of the New Testament by Ladd

Protestant Biblical Interpretation by Ramm Baker

Christian Theology by Bancroft Zondervan

Note: these are all copyrighted hardcover textbooks that are available for purchase on *Amazon.com*

So, if you want to study the actual theology behind Pentecost, the best place to go is your local Baptist seminary library.... A Pentecostal Bible school will have far less. They specialize in the experiential rather than the theological by leaving the details to the Baptists to spell out!!!

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