

## CHAPTER II.

### *Early Churches*

We come now to consider the history of the early churches upon this question.

Ignatius, one of the “Apostolic Fathers,” and probably a contemporary with John and Paul, and who suffered martyrdom early in the second century, in a letter to the church at Smyrna, has this to say: “It is not lawful without the bishop (pastor) either to baptize or to celebrate a love feast (Lord’s Supper), but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid.” –Ante Nicean Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 90.

We move up now to the year 200 A. D., when we find Tertullian strongly opposing the reception of the baptism (immersion) of heretics (other sects). He uses this language:

“There is to us one, and but one baptism. . . . One God, and one baptism, and one church in the heavens. But it must be admitted that the question, ‘What rules are to be observed with regard to heretics?’ is worthy of being treated. For it is to us that that assertion refers.

Heretics, however, have no fellowship in our discipline whom the mere fact of their excommunication testifies to be outsiders (other denominations). I am not bound to recognize in them a thing which is enjoined on me, . . . And, therefore, their

baptism is not one with ours either; because it is not the same; a baptism which, since they have it not duly doubtless they have not at all; nor is that capable of being counted which is not had.” –Ante Nicean Fathers, Vol. 3, p. 676.

It will be seen here that Tertullian reads their baptism clean out, as being nothing, and clearly makes it a test of fellowship.

In the next place the churches planted by Paul, and his fellow helpers in Asia Minor , Cappadocia , Cilicia , Syria , Arabia , Mesopotamia , Pontus Galatia . Bithynia , with adjoining countries, including Africa and Numidia , stood as a unit in the rejection of alien immersion up to 259 A. d. –Eusebius, Book 7, chapter 5, pp. 257-258.

Speaking of the above, Neander (Vol. 1, p. 318), perhaps the most learned historian of his day, tells us that the only discordant note, the only ones to raise their voice in favor of the reception of alien immersion (for nothing but immersion was practiced then) was the church at Rome, and such as they dominated by their influence. It must be remembered that this was after the split in the church at Rome , and the corrupt party had started on their way to the papacy under the leadership of Cornelius. It was this factional church, at Rome , which afterward became the headquarters of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, that set the pace for the reception of alien immersion. And they carried it so far as to institute the farce of passing the act of exclusion of all churches who refused to receive it. Hear Neander describe it:

“But here again, it was a Roman bishop, Stephanus, who, instigated by the spirit of ecclesiastical arrogance, domination and zeal, without knowledge, attached to this point of dispute a paramount importance. Hence toward the close of the year 253, he issued a sentence of excommunication against the bishops (pastors) of Asia Minor , Cappadocia , Galatia , and Cilicia , stigmatizing them as Ana-baptists (Aiatsitpaban) a name, however, which they could justly affirm they did not deserve by their principles; for it was not their wish to administer a second baptism, to those who had been already baptized, but they contended that the previous baptism, given by heretics (other sects) could not be recognized as a true one. . . . “These induced Cyprian, the bishop (pastor) to propose the point for discussion at two Synods (councils) held at Carthage in the year 255 A. D., the one composed of eighteen, and the other of seventy-one bishops (pastors); and both assemblies declared in favor of Cyprian’s views, that the baptism of heretics ought not to be regarded as valid.” –Neander, Vol. 1, pp. 318, 319. See also Ante Nicean Fathers, vol. 6, p. 102.

In the “Apostolic Constitution” we find this language: “Be ye likewise contented with one baptism alone, that which is into the death of the Lord; not that which is conferred by wicked heretics, but that which is conferred by unblamable priests.” –Ante Nicean Fathers. Vol. 7, p. 456. This statement dates in the early part of the fourth century.

## *ANA-BAPTISTS.*

From this time until the reformation the question must be studied in the light of the Ana-baptists. It has been repeatedly stated by alien immersionists that Ana-baptists only opposed infant baptism, and that they never re-baptized on account of the character of the administrator. This statement seems strange, in view of the fact that the title was born about the time infant baptism was first introduced, and many centuries before sprinkling was in use for baptism. The only question involved was the administrator. This fact can be verified by reference to the Ante Nicean Fathers, Eusebius, and in fact any reputable church history of any denomination. We quote from McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia:

“The term Ana-baptists, or Rebaptizers, is connected with the controversies of the third century. In Asia Minor and in Africa, where the spirit of controversy had raged long and bitterly, baptism was considered to be only valid when administered in the orthodox church....So high were the disputes on this question, that two synods (councils) were convened to investigate it, one at Iconium and the other at Synnada, in Phrygia, which confirmed the opinion of the invalidity of heretical Baptism. From Asia the question passed to Northern Africa ; Tertullian accorded with the decision of the Asiatic councils in opposition to the practice of the Roman church. Agrippinus convened a council at Carthage , which came to a similar decision with those of Asia. Thus the matter rested, till

Stephen, bishop of Rome, prompted by ambition, proceeded to excommunicate the bishops (pastors) of Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Galatia and Cilicia, and applied to them the epithets of Rebaptizers and Ana-baptists, A. D. 253.” –McClintock & Strong. Vol 1. p. 210.

Robinson, the English historian, has this to say, speaking of the Ana-baptists: “The third division comprehends all such as placed the essence of baptism in the virtue or competency of the administrator....It was on this account, that many of the ancient Bohemian Brethren rebaptized, and were denominated by the priests, whose services they disowned, Ana-baptists....Bishop Bossuet properly enough observes this rebaptizing was an open declaration, that in the opinion of the Brethren the Catholick church had lost baptism. This is precisely their meaning. They did not pretend to rebaptize; but supposing what was done in the church (of Rome ) to be no baptism, they baptized, as they thought, properly.” –History of Baptism, p. 414.

Mosheim speaking of the Ana-baptists, says: They “acquired the denomination of Ana-baptists by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion.” “They rebaptized all those who leave other Christian churches to embrace their communion.” –Mosheim’s Church History, Vol. 2 pp. 127, 296.

Gieseler says: “In accordance with this view they declared all other churches to have forfeited the rights of a Christian church;

and baptized anew those who came over to them.” –Gieseler’s  
Church History. Vol. 1. p. 255. We might multiply these authors,  
but these are sufficient.