Anabaptism and Monasticism: A Study in the Development of Parallel Historical Patterns

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A number of recent studies have sought to establish connections between Catholicism and Anabaptism. Most recently, Dennis D. Martin has argued for similarities between Catholic spirituality and Anabaptist and Mennonite discipleship.[1] In a slightly earlier study, C. Arnold Snyder posited a possible Benedictine context to the Anabaptist thought of Michael Sattler, shaper of the Schleitheim Confession.[2] And George K. Epp seeks to establish direct links between Menno Simons and the Praemonstratensian monasteries in his region.[3] Though somewhat different in approach, this current concern of Mennonite scholars reflects another, and older, tradition in the historiography of the Radical Reformation: that of an Albrecht Ritschl, who saw similarities between the Anabaptists and the Franciscan Tertiaries,[4] and a Kenneth Davis, who saw them as an extension of the ascetic tradition within Catholicism.[5] Rather than add to the possible influences and contacts, direct or indirect, of Catholic spirituality and Monasticism upon the appearance of Anabaptism in the 16th century, however, this essay will seek to present a larger context within which the more isolated contacts may take on added significance; it intends to argue that Monasticism and Anabaptism constitute parallel appearances in the historical development of the Christian Church.[6] While these appearances may constitute parallel historical patterns, the patterns are by no means entirely identical. And 16th-century Anabaptist observers recognized this. At the same time, those in the 16th century who stressed the parallels did so in response to Catholic attacks, while those who emphasized the differences did so in response to Protestant accusations.

The most dramatic statement concerning the parallels between Monasticism and Anabaptism comes from the pen of Bernard Rothmann, the spokesman for Anabaptism at the Muenster Colloquy of 1533. In his "Con-

fession Concerning the Two Sacraments" written a year earlier in opposition to Catholic critics, Rothmann remarked:

> Monasteries and convents grew out of infant baptism. The baptized infants, knowing nothing about Christ, found it easy to depart from him, whereupon he, Christ, left them. Thus the profession and ordinances of Christ were forgotten and so monks and nuns turned to a different set of professions and regulations. Once they set these up they made it very difficult for others to join them. These people, who deem themselves holy — that is, monks and nuns — themselves label this entrance [into a monastery] *a second or a rebaptism*, by which the first is superceded. By it they are baptized into the service of the patron of their order. Without a doubt it would not have come to such an abomination in what is called Christendom had unknowing children not been baptized. In contrast [to opening the Church to everyone through infant baptism] people are not allowed into the monastery until they have reached the age of discretion and have been instructed in the rules and regulations of the order so that they know what is required of them in it. They are even subjected to a year's probation, a year of testing, before they are allowed to take the vows. And once they have taken them they can no longer be retracted. However, into the holy Church, that is, into the order and obedience of God, are allowed the dumb and untutored children who, as yet, have no conception of good and evil. And they do this without concern. Yet [when someone argues] that we should trust Christ and be accepted into the Church because we wish to be obedient to God's will, they consider this some kind of mockery or hypocrisy.[7]

Monasteries, according to Rothmann, therefore, became necessary with the introduction of infant baptism. By this means a pervasive corruption entered the Church, for Rothmann argued: "The baptized infants, knowing nothing about Christ, found it easy to depart from him, whereupon he, Christ, left them." This became a theme common to virtually all Anabaptists.[8] Even Thomas Muentzer contended that the early Church had admitted "only mature persons; and these, whom they called catechumens, only after lengthy instruction." When children began to be baptized, he continued, Christians themselves became infantile.[9] Yet Rothmann's assertion that monks themselves spoke of their induction into the monastery as "a second or a rebaptism" by means of which the first was superceded, and that monasteries only admitted persons who had reached the age of discretion and been instructed in the rules and regulations of the order, points to a deeper understanding of the parallel development between the two movements. It is these we wish to pursue in this essay.

Most observers of the history of Christianity would probably agree that there are two periods of pivotal importance in its development: the first three or four centuries, and the sixteenth. The first witnessed the birth and establishment of the Church as a universal movement; the second, the attempt to reform and renew the Church. The patterns developed in those early centuries lasted — with some modifications — to the Reformation; those of the Reformation — though also modified — are still very much with us. Monasticism emerged in the fourth century; Anabaptism in the sixteenth. The first, although initially exposed to sporadic episcopal attack,[10] grew to be an

indispensable part of Medieval Christendom;[11] Anabaptism, nearly eradicated at its inception, was never integrated into Magisterial Protestantism.

In his brief sketch of the life of Paul the Hermit, St. Jerome reported that some people saw the origin of the eremitic life in the examples set by holy men like Elijah and John the Baptist. Others, however, he continued, "and their opinion is that commonly received, maintain that Antony was the originator of this mode of life, which is partly true. Partly I say, for the fact is not so much that he preceded the rest as that all derived from him the necessary stimulus."[12] From the above it is apparent that at least some of Jerome's contemporaries saw the hermits, or desert fathers, as the Christian manifestation of a type older than Christianity: the ascetic living alone in the desert.[13] Scholars of Monasticism argue that the Christian version of this life of renunciation was rooted in the Gospel of Mark, whose account begins with John the Baptist in the wilderness, and with Christ beginning his public ministry by being led by the Holy Spirit into the desert.[14]

Whether or not St. Antony, whom Athanasius made famous in his biography, was the first of these hermits, it was indeed from him, as Jerome observes, that others derived the "necessary stimulus," and Antony's story is instructive. He came, as Athanasius was careful to point out, "from a good family and possessed considerable wealth."[15] His parents were Christians and Antony himself had been brought up in the faith. One day — some six months after the death of his parents — he was on his way to church, "as was his custom," preoccupied with thoughts about how the Apostles had left all and followed their Saviour. He recalled the passage in Acts which told of the first Christians selling all their possessions and laying the proceeds "at the Apostles' feet for distribution to the needy," thereby storing up treasure in heaven.[16] In this state of mind he entered the church, there to be confronted with the words of Christ to the rich young ruler: "If thou wouldest be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor; and come follow me and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."[17] Antony immediately left the church, gave the "possessions of his forefathers to the villagers," sold his movable property and gave the proceeds to the poor. He reserved only a small portion for his younger sister. Upon reflection, however, he gave even this way, placed his sister with a group of virgins, and took up the life of a hermit, working with his hands to earn the necessities of life.[18]

The fact that Antony was already a Christian when he was confronted in this fashion is of some consequence. For whatever commitment his Christian profession may have required of him, it was apparently no longer that of the primitive Church as he now began to conceive of it. Otherwise he would not have been so preoccupied with the famous Acts passage which described the early Christians as "having all things common." Perhaps it was for this reason that the story of the rich young ruler struck him with such force. There the young ruler had asked Christ: "What must I do to be saved?" He was told in response: "Keep the commandments and love your neighbor as yourself." When the young man asserted he had done all these things since childhood,

Christ said to him: "*If you would be perfect*, go, sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Antony, therefore, in contrast to the majority of his contemporaries and post-Constantinian Christians, wanted to become perfect. In so doing, he, and the desert fathers after him, were responding to the special call of Christ to follow the "counsels of perfection."

Another theme lies buried in this story as well. It was to emerge more forcefully later on and has to do with the connection, in Antony's mind, between the Acts account of the early Church and the condition, laid down by Christ to the rich young ruler, for perfect life. In both instances the call came to sell all and give to the poor. The difference between the Apostolic Age and Antony's was that in the early Church everyone appeared to have lived by this rule;[19] in Antony's time, very few did so. Therefore, in contrast already to the third century and even more so to the post-Constantinian Church, the Apostolic Church appeared by far the more perfect. Yet the way in which these fourth-century Christian ascetics chose to follow Christ was different from the way in which those of the Apostolic Church followed him. The latter remained within, though separated from, society, while the ascetics followed him by withdrawing from society, removing themselves to the desert where they sought to master their passions. Christ had spent forty days and forty nights in the desert to prepare for his public ministry; these men, however, never returned to society, although society sought them out. For if they did return, they were deemed to have failed in their quest.[20] Their concern was with the individual as opposed to the community. Indeed, as Antony is reported to have said: "With our neighbor is life and death." And as Abbot Alois is recorded as having declared: "Except a man shall say in his heart, I alone and God are in this world, he shall not find peace."[21]

There is a kind of irony in all of this, for in one of his apologetical tracts of the late second century, the Latin Church Father Tertullian, from whom we derive the famous saying: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem" — signifying his total rejection of the pagan world and its philosophy — could nonetheless assert that "Christians naturally participate in all the various aspects of civic life [in the Roman Empire]."[22] And this while the Church was being persecuted. Yet once Christianity became more and more established in the late third century and especially under Constantine, some of the most sincere Christians left an evermore "Christian" society in order to save their souls in the isolation of the desert. And the biblical passage that spurred them on was, in most instances, the one that confronted Antony: the story of the rich young ruler. But that story seemed to miss the poor; it was the rich who were most profoundly affected. Yet precisely these rich young men, bred to conduct the affairs in both Church and State, withdrew from their obligations precisely at the time when the Roman Empire began to decay and be transformed under the extended occupation of the barbarians. Their flight to the desert, and later to the monasteries, have led secular historians like Edward Gibbon to assert that Christians, by abandoning a sinking ship, were

responsible for the fall of the Empire.[23] And Church historians like W. H. C. Frend are in agreement, arguing that many of the very best and most capable Christians came to be alienated from this world.[24] But not only from the world; many also came to be alienated from the increasingly worldly "great" Church.

There is considerable agreement among scholars that, although the Church had been accommodating herself to the world for some years already, the Constantinian revolution did not help the Church. Frend has said: "The church had adapted itself too well to its new conditions. If one looks for fundamental social reforms resulting from its victory one will look in vain."[25] And Peter Brown has said: "The spread of Christianity . . . by indiscriminately filling the churches, had simply washed away the moral landmarks that separated 'church' from 'world'."[26] Jerome himself, a man who pursued the ascetic ideal, said: "The Church after it arrived [at the existence of] Christian princes became greater in power [as measured] by its wealth, but less in virtue."[27]. He described his bishop as "an ailing pilot of a sinking ship," and his fellow Christians as concerned only with their bellies.[28] Such a church could not inspire those who took Christ's counsel to the rich younger ruler seriously. Therefore, while ascetics had been able to feel at home in the early Church,[29] they began to feel the need to separate themselves from the third- and fourth-century Church. Some pursued holiness in isolated desert caves; others quickly recognized that the pursuit of holiness was immeasurably aided in community.[30]

Thus was reborn the community of the committed. It stood in opposition to the "great" Church and increasingly regarded itself as the true successor of the Apostolic Church. The changes in the "great" Church that had made this necessary proliferated under Constantine, but the rationalization came about a century later from the pen of St. Augustine. Under attack from the Donatists, who themselves defined the Church in terms of its purity, Augustine, reinterpreting the Parable of the Tares to suit the new conditions, argued that the "wheat" and the "tares" had to coexist in the Church "until the time of harvest." An extended debate between Augustine and the Donatists over the correct interpretation of this parable took place, culminating in the Council of Carthage of 411. There, continuing an argument he had begun in 397,[31] Augustine and the Catholics asserted that the "field" Christ had spoken of in the parable was the Church;[32] the Donatists, however, countered that Christ, in his own interpretation of the parable to his disciples, had stated that the "field" was the world.[33] Associating themselves with Christ's interpretation of the parable did not help the Donatists to win the day, however, for power was on the side of Augustine and the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, while Augustine's interpretation was accepted by the Church, it nevertheless, did not satisfy everyone. Those taking their Christian purity seriously began to separate themselves from an increasingly lax Christian Church. Even Augustine, the rationalizer of this lax *status quo*, surrounded himself at Hippo with those who took purity in their Christian

lives seriously and created a "rule" for them by which they were to live.[34] In effect, the man who argued that the Church had necessarily to consist of wheat and tares until the end of the age created his own monastic order.

Under these circumstances, Christ's counsel to the rich young ruler appeared more and more applicable. Those who wished only to be saved were to keep the ten commandments. Those who wished to be perfect, however, were required to sell all, give the proceeds to the poor, and follow Christ. It was on this model that the whole ethical system of the Medieval Church came to be built. The ordinary person, ostensibly a Christian who — living in the *seculum* — could not achieve perfection, came under a different set of standards or obligations known as the *praecepta evangelica*. In accordance with Christ's words to the rich young ruler, these consisted of the moral expectations of the Decalogue, also identified with the Natural Law, or the law written on the conscience of mankind of which St. Paul spoke in the first chapter of Romans. Those, however, who sought perfection were called on to sell their property, give the money to the poor, and follow Christ alone. This advice came to be known as the "counsels of perfection," or *consilia evangelica*, the higher morality of the Gospels, especially that of the Sermon on the Mount. In the monastic movement these "counsels of perfection" came to be symbolized in the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Since these could not be fulfilled in the world — even the "Christian" world of the third and fourth centuries — Christ's words, "Come out from among them and be ye separate," came to be the motto of Monasticism.[35] In this context the monastic life came to be regarded as the only truly Christian life.

In a sense, therefore, Monasticism saw itself as a continuation of the pure Apostolic Church. This can be seen in a number of ways. First, as peace came to the Church under Constantine and martyrdom came to an end, monks began to see themselves as martyrs for the faith in a time of peace. As Sulpicius Severus wrote to St. Martin of Tours, protagonist of the monastic movement in fourth-century Gaul: ". . . to fast, to keep unceasing vigil, to lacerate the flesh, this is also a martyrdom."[36] He was echoed in the ninth century by Abbot Smaragdus of Verdun, who said: "Let no one say, brethren, that in our times there are no combats for martyrs. For our peace has its martyrs also."[37]

Now, while Christ had taught that no one could enter the kingdom of heaven "except he be baptized with water and the Holy Spirit," already in the ancient Church some began to look upon martyrdom as a substitute for water baptism. Indeed, martyrdom was often called the "baptism by blood." Men like Melito of Sardis and Justin Martyr argued that anyone martyred for the faith automatically had his sins forgiven and removed. By the late second century, Tertullian could repeatedly refer to martyrdom as a "second baptism."[38] If this was the case, and monks saw themselves as the successors of the martyrs in an age of peace, could entrance into a monastery be conceived as a second baptism as well? Indeed, it both could and was. For as Edward E. Malone has written: "As the successors of the martyr in the *militia Christi* the

monk eventually came to look upon his profession in the religious life as a second baptism. If the ascetical life was a living martyrdom, then the act by which the monk bound himself irretrievably to that life was also a second baptism which forgave all sin."[39] Thus, by the time we arrive at the twelfth century, John of Antioch can write:

> It is (a fact) made clear, that the sacred initiation of monks, by way of reminder, in imitation of holy baptism, is composed of renunciations and resolutions unusually burdensome and fearful; this (initiation) our holy fathers have named a second baptism and a renewal of the first. For here (in baptism) he says. 'I renounce Satan and all his works and all his service, and all his pomps, and I believe in one God,' and so on. Here (in monastic profession) among the things said, 'I renounce my parents, my brothers, relatives, friends, usual pursuits, possessions, properties, empty and idle pleasures and glory, and I repudiate not only these things but also my very soul according to the command of the Lord. And I await every tribulation of the monastic life, and I guard myself in purity and virginity and poverty for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and I remain in the monastery and in practice of asceticism until my last breath,' and so on.[40]

The conviction that entrance into a monastery constituted a second baptism is also reflected in the monastic rite of initiation. Malone asserts that the ancient Church demanded that candidates for baptism be subjected to examinations and have several Christians of good repute testify to their probity.[41] When the Church was opened to everyone — symbolized for the Anabaptists in the practice of infant baptism — this examination came to be transferred to the monasteries. Such early proponents of Monasticism as Sts. Antony, Pachomius and Macarius "would not accept new candidates for such an arduous life without trying them and examining them carefully."[42] Cassian's *Institutes* even speak of a severe trial for the monk.[43] From this it can be seen that both the ancient Church and the fathers of Monasticism wished the initiate to understand what he was commiting himself to and desired to test his sincerity.

In his description of baptism in the sixth chapter of Romans St. Paul had said: "Know ye not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."[44] The symbolism expressed here was reflected in the early Church's baptismal ritual. Before a catechumen was led down into the baptistry to be baptized, his clothing was taken from him, not to be returned. After the ceremony, he was dressed in white garments to symbolize his "newness of life." He was encouraged to maintain this "spiritual whiteness" and keep himself unspotted from the world. Similarly, when a monk made his profession, he was dressed in a monastic habit. This dress "was to be taken as a baptismal . . . garment to be worn by the monk every time he came into God's presence."[45]

It is apparent, therefore, that the ceremony of baptism in the early Church and the induction of the initiate into a monastery are strikingly

similar. Both symbolize a dying to the world and the resurrection to a new life. Both require the candidate to renounce Satan and the world and, before being initiated into their respective institutions, to make a public and positive profession of faith. Whereas baptismal candidates were immersed three times in the water and then raised, the monastic candidate was made to lie prostrate on the ground in the midst of his would-be fellow monks. A funeral pall was thrown over him and he remained in this position until the abbot had finished praying over him. Only then was he raised up to make his profession of faith, repeating it three times in obvious imitation of the baptismal ceremony. The two ceremonies are so strikingly similar that there can be little doubt that the initiation ceremony of the monk was modelled after the ancient baptismal ritual of the Church.[46]

Not only was the monastic initiation ceremony modelled after the ancient baptismal ritual of the Church, anyone desiring entrance into a monastery was thought to do so as the result of a "conversion" experience. To a certain extent, this was already true of Antony. Nor was it a conversion from paganism to Christianity; it was a conversion from a merely formal Christianity to a life of Christian discipline and discipleship. Thus the Rule of St. Benedict observes: "To him that newly comes to *conversion*, let not an easy entrance be granted, but, as the Apostle says, 'Try the spirits if they be of God'."[47] As the above indicates, conversion was followed by a lengthy period of testing, during which — from time to time — the entire Rule was read to the candidate "that he may know to what he is entering."[48] And only after "having deliberated with himself, [shall] he promise to keep all things, and to observe everything that is commanded him, then let him be received into the community, knowing that it is decreed by the law of the Rule that from that day forward he may not depart from the monastery nor shake off his neck the yoke of the Rule, which after such prolonged deliberation he was free either to refuse or to accept."[49]

The Rule of St. Benedict, which became foundational to all other monastic rules, contained some seventy-two specific articles to be observed by the monks. Of these, the most relevant for our consideration are the ones that deal with Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. Thus, for example, #27 required monks not to swear; #29 required them not to return evil for evil; #30 required them not to wrong anyone, but to bear patiently the wrongs done to them; #31 required them to love their enemies; and #33 required them to suffer persecution for the sake of justice.[50] In another part the Rule stated: "Moreover, fulfilling the precept of the Lord by practice in adversities and injuries, they who are struck on the one cheek offer the other; and being forced to walk one mile, they go two. With Paul the Apostle, they bear false brethren, and bless those that curse them."[51] The "converted" who had promised obedience were called to Christ's higher morality of the Sermon on the Mount. The fact that monastic institutions sometimes became lax in their observance of these principles, especially in the later Middle Ages, cannot detract from the ideals monastic foundations set for themselves at the outset.

All of this would appear to suggest that monastic orders saw themselves as the heirs to the primitive Church. We have already seen that Antony and others were inspired by the example of the Apostolic Church. Later monks expressed this sentiment much more clearly. Peter the Venerable of Cluny, for example, could write: "We appeal to the life of the primitive Church, for what is the monastic life except what was then called the apostolic life?"[52] And Abbot Rupert of Deutz wrote in 1130: "If you will consult the evidence of Scripture, you will find that all seem to say plainly that the Church had its beginning in the monastic life[!]"[53] They appealed to Acts 2:41–45 as a model for the communal life.[54] Even Augustine wrote: "Now in what sort they [the Apostles] were *converted*, how decidedly, and how perfectly, the Acts of the Apostles show. 'For they sold all they possessed, and laid the price of their things at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need; and no man said aught was his own, but they had all things common'."[55] In all this it was implied that there was only one church, a pure church; the monasteries were the heirs to this true, pure church, this primitive, apostolic church in the post-Constantinian era. Interpret the Church as one might, relegate it to the spiritual realm and the elect as known only to God, the attempt to resurrect, to recreate the pure Church "without spot or wrinkle," the apostolic, the primitive Church, refused to go away. And as Gordon Leff has shown, this kind of thinking spread beyond the monastic orders in the later Middle Ages to the reform movements in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.[56] Dante used a version of this argument in his *De Monarchia*, Marsiglio of Padua used it in his *Defensor Pacis*. John Hus, Lorenzo Valla and others employed it as well.[57]

From this kind of reasoning there gradually emerged the idea that the "counsels of perfection" were not only meant to apply to the monastic orders, but to everyone in the Church. Matthew Spinka writes that the letters of John Hus "manifest his supreme devotion to the ideal of a church as the body of Christ that exists amid the corruption of secular society 'without spot or wrinkle,' a fellowship of the redeemed, 'unspotted from the world'."[58] No wonder his disciple, Peter Chelcicky, could argue that the counsels of perfection applied to all Christians, not only those living by a "rule."[59] Even Erasmus could write in his *Enchiridion* of 1502:

> Yet we are living in a world that has grown alien to the world of Christ both in doctrine and in practice. There are too many who think the expression 'world' refers only to those who have embraced the monastic state. In the Gospels, for the Apostles, and for Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, the expression means the infidel, enemies of the faith and the cross of Christ. It consists of all those who place their care in tomorrow, who strive after riches and pleasures. This world has not known Christ who is the true light of this world. *It was from this world that Christ separated not only His Apostles, but all men who would be worthy of him.* How then can we say that this world, *everywhere condemned in Scripture*, should be associated with Christendom and in its name flatter and maintain our vices?[60]

In July of 1514 he even wrote Servatius Rogerus: "How much more

consonant with Christ's teaching it would be to regard the entire Christian world as a single household, *a single monastery as it were*, and to think of all men as one's fellow canons and brethren."[61] The counsels of perfection, all of the above argued, applied to all Christians. As a consequence, Faber Stapulensis, Erasmus's fellow Christian Humanist in France could write:

> Why may we not aspire to see our age restored to the likeness of the primitive Church, when Christ received a purer veneration, and the splendour of His Name shone forth more widely? . . . As the light of the Gospel returns, may He Who is blessed above all grant also to us this increase in faith, this purity of worship: as the light of the Gospel returns, I say, which at this time begins to shine again. By this divine light many have been so greatly illuminated that, not to speak of other benefits, *from the time of Constantine, when the primitive Church, which had little by little declined, came to an end*, there has not been greater knowledge of languages, more extensive discovery of new lands, or wider diffusion of the name of Christ in the more distant parts of the earth than in these times.[62]

There was, then, in the Europe of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a widespread discontent with the Church, but also with the monasteries which claimed to embody Christian ideals in a unique way. Some of the blame for this can be laid at the door of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which put a halt to the formation of new religious orders, for new monastic foundations had traditionally been the agents of renewal within the Church and the older orders. Without such periodic renewal institutions tend, within a few generations of their founding, to become moribund and corrupt. How nearly universally the monks had become the objects of scorn in the sixteenth century can be seen from Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* in which the monk is portrayed as the supreme embodiment of everything that is foolish.[63]

The Reformers shared this discontent with Church and Monasticism. In their own initial opposition, both Luther and Zwingli also appear to have argued for a "pure" church, a "free" or "believers" church.[64] But in their defence against the Radicals, and as the political authorities became more favorably disposed toward them, they retreated to the definition of the Church Augustine had developed in opposition to the Donatists. The attack of Muentzer on Luther and Melanchthon, and the opposition of the Swiss Brethren to Zwingli — both demanding a church of "wheat" only — may well have been an important factor in their rejection of a "pure" church. While Luther, as late as 1526, still spoke of an "ecclesiola in ecclesia" — though he counselled Philip of Hesse against implementing it[65] — the concept was never put to the test. Zwingli, on the other hand, after initially defining the Church in terms of "all right Christians," eventually told his erstwhile followers that the "pious could ever live amongst the impious."[66]

Some years ago Adolf von Harnack, no doubt from his Protestant perspective, argued that the Reformers had to abolish Monasticism because "to take a vow of lifelong asceticism was a piece of presumption; and it rightly considered that any worldly vocation, conscientiously followed in the sight of God, was equal to, nay, was better than, being a monk."[67] He did

concede, however, that there was a kind of Monasticism that was "necessary in the evangelical sense of the word" which had disappeared altogether with the Protestant Reformation. "Every community," he asserted, "stands in need of personalities living exclusively for its ends. The Church, for instance, needs volunteers who will abandon every other pursuit, renounce 'the world,' and devote themselves entirely to the service of their neighbor; not because such a vocation is 'a higher one,' but because it is a necessary one, and because no Church can live without also giving rise to this desire."[68] Such a desire, Harnack concluded, had been checked in Protestantism.

Harnack's observation should help us understand the criticism of this Protestant attitude arising from within its own ranks. Two examples within the Lutheran Church shall have to suffice. In 1609 Johann Arndt wrote:

> Dear Christian reader, that the holy Gospel is subjected, in our time, to a great and shameful abuse is fully proved by the impenitent life of the ungodly who praise Christ and His Word with their mouths and yet lead an unchristian life that is like that of persons who dwell in heathendom, not in the Christian world. Such ungodly conduct gave me cause to write this book to show simple readers wherein true Christianity consists, namely, in the exhibition of a true, living faith, active in genuine godliness and the fruits of righteousness.[69]

And in 1670 Philipp Jakob Spener wrote:

> If we limit ourselves to our Evangelical church, which according to its outward confession embraces the precious and pure gospel, brought clearly to light again during the previous century through that blessed instrument of God, Dr. Luther, and in which alone we must therefore recognize that the true church is visible, we cannot turn our eyes upon it without having quickly to cast them down again in shame and distress.[70]

One can therefore argue that just as Monasticism was a reaction to the growing laxity within the Church in the third and fourth centuries, Anabaptism was a reaction to the failure on the part of the Magisterial Reformers to cleanse the Church of the Reformation. While the Augustinian concept of the Church as containing both wheat and tares suited the territorial reformations of the Magisterial Reformers, the Donatists, the monks, and the Anabaptists could — as Peter Brown has said of the Donatists — "appeal to the obvious. If the church was defined as 'pure,' if it was the only body in the world in which the Holy Spirit resided, how could its members fail to be pure?"[71] There was, therefore, a case to be made for this "pure," this "Apostolic Church" in the age of the Reformation. And the Anabaptists sought to make it. No wonder they were accused by the Reformers of attempting to create a "new Monasticism."

The first to level this charge against them appears to have been Ulrich Zwingli. In his account of the rebaptisms of January 23, 1525, he wrote that it was now apparent what these people were really after: "They had attempted a division and partition of the church, and this was just as hypocritical as the superstition of the monks."[72] He accused them of asserting — like the monks and nuns before them — that they were without sin.[73] It was ironic, he said,

that just when they — the Reformers — "had disclosed [the devil's] strategems and revealed the hypocrisy of the monks," the devil returned under the guise of the Anabaptists. Zwingli rejected the Anabaptist argument that their community "restrains us when we have the impulse to sin." This, too, he regarded as "nothing other than monkery, separatism, sectarianism, [and] a new legalism."[74] Zwingli's attack leaves the distinct impression that he, like Augustine before him, was more concerned with schism than with the purity of the Church. Yet in his own attack on the Catholic Church the reverse had been the case. Support of his reform movement from the civic authorities allowed him to reverse the argument, however. He came back to this issue once more in a letter of 10 April to Michael Wuest. There he asked what examples in history could have produced the idea "that when they have made a separation from the church of the Christian masses, they might be a little better than the ordinary population?" The only group he could think of was the monks. But had the latter been "any better because they thought so highly of themselves?"[75] The answer was so obvious that Zwingli could leave the question dangling in mid air. Monasticism and Anabaptism, therefore, were both movements which sought, in their pride and arrogance, to separate themselves from the Christian masses and create purer — if not completely pure — communities.

In his attempt to discredit the Anabaptist movement in his "On Baptism" of May 1525, Zwingli returned once more to the Anabaptist claim to lead purer lives. His primary aim, however, was to discuss the matter of baptism. It was in this connection that he came also to speak of the monastic cowl. There he wrote:

> Clearly, then, baptism cannot bind us in such a way that we must not accept it unless we know that we can live without sin: for if that be the case, baptism was instituted in vain, for not one of us can claim to do that before God. Therefore we will turn to the Word of God and learn there both what baptism is and when it was instituted. As regards the first question, baptism is a covenant sign which indicates that all those who receive it are willing to amend their lives and to follow Christ. In short, it is an initiation to a new life. Baptism is therefore an initiatory sign, *ceremonii* [sic], or in Greek *teleta. It is like the cowl which is cut out for initiates into an order. They do not know the rules and statutes when the cowls are made, but they learn them in their cowls.*[76]

Here Zwingli was clearly wrong with respect to the monastic rules and statutes, as we have already seen and as Zwingli himself probably knew. Indeed, the cowl — like the new clothes given to the newly baptized catechumen — symbolized the new life he was to lead. Zwingli's argument appears tailored to the point he was about to make when he asserted: "And we have the clear words: 'Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you.' *And that follows baptism.*"[77] One is left with the impression that Zwingli consciously twisted his argument in order to answer the charges of the Anabaptists.

Similar accusations were brought against the Anabaptists by Wolfgang Capito in a letter of 31 May 1527 to the mayor and town council of Horb.

There Capito took issue with some twenty propositions Michael Sattler had confronted the Strasbourg reformers with in late 1526 or early 1527. In them Sattler had emphasized the separation of Christians from the world and the necessity of their being conformed to Christ.[78] Saying that the Strasbourg reformers had "never been of one mind with him [Sattler]," Capito proceeded to charge Sattler with trying to make "pious Christians" by means of external constraints. This, he said, "we regard as the beginning of a new monasticism."[79] Not that the Strasbourg reformers were opposed to Sattler's goals; they simply hoped to achieve them by preaching God's goodness, emphasizing his gracious paternal correction, and encouraging the people to good works.[80]

A few months later the Strasbourg preachers reiterated the charge in a warning against the errors of Jakob Kautz and Hans Denck.[81] Like the ancient monks, they said, the Anabaptists, too, saw that there were many false Christians living extravagant lives. They hoped to change this by means of rules and restrictions. How successful they were was already apparent, however, for they were even worse than the original monks.[82] In a letter to Leonhard von Lichtenstein of 21 December 1531, Capito charged the Anabaptists with emphasizing good works. This led inevitably to pride, as it had with the monks, he said.[83] Nor was any good purpose served by making people swear an oath, promising to observe all these things.[84] And Bucer, in his book against Melchior Hoffmann a little later, charged that this emphasis on purity would inevitably lead to the greatest libertinism and disorder. For, said he, just as in Monasticism, people would begin to think of themselves as having died to sin. To the pure, then, all things would become pure. Once that happened, one could expect the worst from them.[85]

To this point there had only been a few casual allusions to the community of goods amongst the Anabaptists. One of these came from Zwingli in his "Refutation of Baptist Tricks" of 1527. He did not bring the charge into connection with Monasticism, however. Rather, it was brought in conjunction with the accusation of an attempted adultery by men who had been living off the generosity of a certain Figella. Whether or not the account was true and whether these were in fact Anabaptists is not made clear. Nevertheless, Zwingli generalized from this reported incident in the following manner:

> . . . Here you see how public they would have things. The lost fellows would have the goods of ordinary men common, but their own, if they have any, in no wise. If they have none they make all common in this way: they distribute the labor to others; they enjoy leisure so as to do nothing, then they eat in common. So with wives, not to do away with the *Republic* of Plato, they make common not their own, but others.[86]

But when the Hutterites appeared with their extended communitarian organization, the various aspects of Anabaptist monasticism were complete. It was this last aspect that elicited from Luther the charge that the Anabaptists constituted a "new monachism."[87]

The charge that Anabaptism constituted a new monasticism was reiter-

ated by others. Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, employed it,[88] as did the opponents of Menno Simons. Aside from Balthasar Hubmaier,[89] however, only Menno appears to have responded to the Protestant charge at some length, for Rothmann's statement, as we have observed, is clearly directed against the Catholics. In his "Reply to False Accusations" Menno wrote:

> As to being new monks: We list those as new monks who formerly established churches, cloisters, human statutes, and the easy Epicurean life under the cloak of a zeal which they have abandoned and have together fallen into a still more sensuous, pompous, and carnal life without change of heart, continuing in their sins and having placed the basis of their faith, hope and salvation upon human choice and opinion and flattery and glosses from the beginning. It is the manner and custom of monks to follow human statutes, commands, and institutions and not the Word of God. They have their abbots, priors, and pursers or procurators and are called Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Bernardines, and Jacobins for their founders and masters.
>
> Not so with us. We trust by the grace and mercy of the Lord that we are children of God and disciples of Christ. We know no other Abbot than Him on whom all true Christians call in spirit and truth and say, Abba, Father. Our head or prior is Christ Jesus. Our procurator or purser is the Holy Spirit. Our profession is the sincere, frank, and fearless confession of faith. Our statutes and laws are the express commandments of the Lord. Our cap and cloak are the garments of righteousness with which we would gladly clothe ourselves. Our cloisters are the assembly of the saints, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Our soft and easy monks' life and pleasures are the daily expectation of prison and fetters, fire and water, or exile with our wives and children, to suffer hunger, care, discomfort, anguish, sorrow, pain, and tears on our cheeks.
>
> Behold, kind reader, this is the monkhood which we confess to and practice, and none other. By the grace and power of the Lord, we also hope to abide therein unchangeably all our lives.[90]

Unlike Rothmann, whom we quoted at the outset, Menno Simons focuses on the differences between Anabaptism and Monasticism. He did so because he was defending himself and the Anabaptists against Protestant charges. Therefore, unlike Rothmann, who attempted to demonstrate the parallels against his Catholic critics, Menno sought to focus on the difference. Like two sides of the same coin, however, the two positions form a greater whole and should help us to refine the thesis we posited at the outset of this study.

We begin with Rothmann and the parallels. We shall take the matter of conversion, an issue not addressed directly by Rothmann, as our point of departure, for it was central to both monks and Anabaptists. In this regard the Rule of St. Benedict had said: "To him that newly comes to conversion, let not an easy entrance be granted, but, as the Apostle says, 'Try the spirits if they be of God'." St. Antony had undergone a kind of conversion before he decided to sell all and live the life of a hermit. Indeed, most of the founders of new religious orders, or those who desired entrance into them, often underwent profound religious experiences as adults — conversions, if you will — as Francis of Assisi, Waldes of Lyon (who just missed founding a religious

order and ended as a heretic), Ignatius Loyola — to name but a few. Mystics such as John Tauler — a member of the Order of Preachers — described such a conversion "through the Holy Spirit," saying on one occasion: "Ah, dear children, this passage of the Gospel shows us the noblest, most profitable, surest and deepest conversion to God that a man can experience. And be assured, besides, that any conversion that is not, in some way or other, effected after this manner, will be of little or no benefit, no matter what we may do or leave undone."[91] Instruction followed conversion, whereupon the vows were administered. Then followed a life of separation from the "world."

This emphasis on conversion was also central to Anabaptist thought. From the very beginning, the Anabaptists argued for a "responsible" as opposed to what they believed to be an "irresponsible" Christianity, focusing their attention on the act of conversion. The message of Christ and His Apostles, they said, had been a call to repentance and conversion. "Those who are thus converted," they argued in a debate with the Reformed theologians of Switzerland, "have been buried with Adam and baptized in Christ, raised to newness of life, and have a good conscience."[92] Felix Mantz had enunciated this position earlier,[93] as had Sattler in the Schleitheim Confession.[94] It was to be repeatedly emphasized in the various confessional statements of the Anabaptists and was central to the thought of Menno Simons.[95] Such a conversion demanded a radical break with the ways of the world; indeed, for both monks and Anabaptists, a break with what was generally conceived to be a Christian world.

Before baptism was administered, however, Anabaptists tried to make sure that candidates understood all that was implied. The Schleitheim Confession said: "Baptism shall be given to all those who have been *taught* repentance and amendment of life and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ."[96] In the debate with the Reformed theologians the Swiss Anabaptists said: "We recognize as binding the commission and message of those who have changed their ways, have become better, who believe, have had their sins forgiven, and who witness to these things in their baptism. They have put on Christ, no longer living for themselves, but for Christ. Those who sign such a commitment with their own hand are invited to become members of the church."[97] The same was true of the early monastic orders, as we have seen; and it was clearly enunciated in the Rule of St. Benedict.

The divergence between the two movements comes with respect to baptism for the Anabaptists and the induction of novices for the monks. Perhaps because of the biblical story about the rich young ruler, the early hermits and monks were able to rationalize a two-tiered Christianity: one that lived by the standards of the Natural Law and another that lived by the ethical standards of the Sermon on the Mount. Thus the monastic orders did not have to reject the baptismal ceremony of the Church; they sought rather to recover or renew it, perhaps on a higher level of meaning as Rothmann argued, giving to

their induction ceremony the meaning and significance baptism had had in the primitive Church. Their induction ceremony, as we have seen, was clearly modelled on the ancient rite of baptism and was generally called a "second baptism." The fact that they saw themselves as the heirs to the Apostolic Church only reinforces the argument. Like Erasmus and an increasing number of other critics of the Church in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, however, the Anabaptists rejected this two-tiered division of Christianity. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, they asserted, applied to everyone. There could only be one true church and it had to be grounded on the teachings of Christ and modelled on the Apostolic Church. Hence, they came to reject the "great" Church, or the church of the great mass of Christians, as the Reformers clearly noted. Therefore, rather than having to attempt to recapture the original meaning and intent of baptism in their induction ritual as the monks did, the Anabaptists rejected the term "rebaptism" — used by the monks to designate the meaning of their induction ceremony and applied to the Radicals by the Magisterial reformers — and went back to what they considered the original ceremony itself. And so while the monastic induction ceremony reflected the meaning of the original baptismal ceremony, the Anabaptists invariably spoke of baptism in terms of St. Paul cited above, as a reflection of Christ's death and resurrection. Thus the Schleitheim Confession says: "Baptism shall be given to all . . . those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him."[98] And in the debates with the Reformed theologians they said: "Those who are thus converted have been buried with Adam and baptized in Christ, raised to newness of life, and have a good conscience . . . [They] witness to these things in their baptism."[99] Similarly Menno Simons wrote: "Beloved reader, take heed to the Word of the Lord. Paul who did not receive his Gospel from men, but from the Lord Himself, teaches that even as Christ died and was buried, so also ought we to die unto our sins, and be buried with Christ in baptism. Not that we are to do this for the first time after baptism, but we must have begun all this beforehand . . ."[100] Anabaptists, therefore, were not interested in renewing a previous ceremony, nor, like the Donatists, in rebaptizing because the sacrament might have been performed by unworthy clerics — an accusation brought against them by Calvin;[101] they intended to do precisely what St. Paul had spoken of in the sixth chapter of Romans. And this excluded all those who had been baptized as infants, as Sattler observed in the Schleitheim Confession.[102]

As Hubmaier's statement, and the others quoted above, make clear, Anabaptists — like monks — took entry into their church very seriously. Both Benedict and Cassian had demanded extended trial periods for novices. Entry should be undertaken only by persons who were themselves capable and willing to take the vows. But whereas the monks superceded infant baptism, the Anabaptists rejected it, arguing that it was responsible for the corruption of the Church. Sattler even called it "the greatest and first

abomination of the Pope."[103] By means of infant baptism, wheat and tares had come to be indiscriminately mixed in the Church. Monasticism had been the result. Whereas, as Menno Simons' statement makes apparent, the Anabaptists rejected much of the content of Monasticism, they recognized the causes that had given rise to it.

Once both monks and Anabaptists had been inducted into their respective institutions, they were expected to live the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. They were to be different from the world, indeed, they were deemed to have died to it. This meant that their life had to be changed. The Swiss Anabaptists stated that they recognized as "binding . . . the message of those who have changed their ways, have become better . . ." It was the "newness of life" that was important, that same newness that had been symbolized, in the primitive Church, by the new set of clothing, and in Monasticism by the cowl. All three, the catechumen, the monk and the Anabaptist made a commitment to live this life. As Robert Friedmann observed, one of the terms used for baptism by the Anabaptists was *Versiegelung*, "understood as a vow to discipleship, somewhat comparable to monastic vows."[104] This emphasis had become necessary because the lines of demarcation between "church" and "world" had become blurred, if not completely obliterated.

Because this was regarded to be the case, a new separation from the world had to take place. This was one of Zwingli's principal accusations against his rebellious followers, as we have noted. Like the monks they sought to separate themselves from the church of the mass of the Christians. And they did so because, in dependence upon the early reformed Zwingli, they defined the Church in terms of its purity. To ensure this purity as much as possible, the Anabaptists, like the monks, wanted only those who chose to do so to enter. The Rule of St. Benedict had said that the initiate had been "free either to refuse or to accept" the rule. Once taken, however, there was to be no looking back. And the Anabaptists argued that only in a church where those who had signed a commitment "with their own hand" and were invited to become members of the church could discipline be legitimately exercised.[105] Zwingli and the other reformed preachers regarded this search for purity to be a new legalism, as false pride and a new monasticism.

Nevertheless, in pursuit of this pure church the Anabaptists sought to recover the Apostolic vision of the Church. Thomas Muentzer called his vision the "new apostolic church."[106] Like the monastic orders, they saw themselves as restoring the Apostolic Church, though they defined that church differently from the monastic founders. As Franklin H. Littell has written: "The Anabaptists proper were those in the radical Reformation who gathered and disciplined a 'true church' (rechte Kirche) upon the apostolic pattern as they understood it."[107] They regarded this church normative for all time. Historical change was not to force accommodation on it.

Like the monastic orders, the Anabaptists argued that the Church was to be separated from the world. Article IV of the Schleitheim Confession addressed this issue in the strongest of terms, saying: "Now there is nothing

else in the world and all creation than good or evil, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who have [come] out of the world, God's temple and idols, Christ and Belial, and none will have part with the other."[108] The same attitude had been reflected in Grebel and Mantz's early quarrel with Zwingli. For, as the latter observed:

> They addressed us therefore after the following manner. It does not escape us that there will always be those who will oppose the Gospel, even among those who boast in the name of Christ. We therefore can never hope that all minds will so unite as Christians should find it possible to live. For in the Acts of the Apostles those who believed seceded from the others, and then it happened that they who came to believe went over to those who were now a new church. So then must we do . . .[109]

They rejected Zwingli's retort that "the example of the apostles was not applicable here, for those from whom they withdrew did not confess Christ, but now ours did."[110] Instead, in their debate with the Reformed theologians they asserted: "Is the church separated from the world and acts according to the precepts of Christ, she is a true church. Is she still in the world [i.e., are the wheat and the tares still coexisting in her], we cannot recognize her as such . . . The Scriptures state that he who is at peace with the world cannot be acceptable before Christ. For in the primitive church only those were joined to and planted in the church who had repented and changed their ways."[111] The call: "Come out from among them and be ye separate," which Monasticism had applied uniquely to itself,[112] the Anabaptists — like Erasmus — regarded as the call coming to all true Christians.

Such a church of voluntary members — like the monasteries — could legitimately exercise discipline. We have seen Zwingli reject this "brotherly" admonitory approach. Nonetheless, Anabaptists and monks placed a considerable emphasis on the community of the committed believers. Discipline was to be done in community — the community of the believers. Sins were to be confessed "one to another," as Luther himself wrote in his 1521 "Von der Beicht."[113] It was to be a community bonded together by their baptismal vows to a common Lord and the fellow members of the "order."

The ethic by which both were to live was the higher ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. They were to possess things as though they possessed them not. Some groups even created communal organizations. And they based these on the same biblical passages used by the monks.[114] They were to share with others what they had; to walk the second mile; turn the other cheek; love instead of hate. They were to constitute God's visible kingdom here on earth. The same emphasis was central to the Rule of St. Benedict.

By the sixteenth century, however, Monasticism was in rather severe decline. And therefore to be accused of being a "new monasticism" implied association with what were conceived as corrupt practices. This was what Menno Simons probably objected to, for he defines Monasticism in terms of its corrupted state, not in terms of its pristine origin. It would have been natural for him to do so, especially if George K. Epp is correct in his

assumption that Menno belonged to a Praemonstratensian monastery. As such, he must have participated in precisely those vices he now condemned in the monks.

To a certain extent at least, the issue of conversion stands at the heart of Menno's rejection of Monasticism. He speaks of the "easy Epicurian life" which monks lived "under the cloak of a zeal which they have abandoned." Theirs was a zeal that may once have been present but was now gone and as a consequence they had "fallen into a still more sensuous, pompous, and carnal life *without change of heart*, continuing in their sins." Whether or not Menno knew of the original monastic emphasis on conversion, or the fact that acceptance of the monastic vocation was generally termed "conversion," in his day monks entered upon the monastic life, he charged, "without change of heart." Perhaps Menno believed that a real change of heart was not even possible for the monks since he contended that "the basis of their faith, hope, and salvation [rested] upon human choice and opinion and flattery and glosses from the beginning." It was their manner and custom "to follow human statutes, commands, and institutions and not the Word of God." They had their various superiors and had organized themselves as Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and the like. The Church, however, was based on the Word of God.

And now Menno begins to illustrate this difference by contrasting monastic leaders with those of the Anabaptists. The latter, Menno asserted, knew no other abbot than God; no other prior than Christ; no other procurator than the Holy Spirit. Their profession was the sincere, frank and fearless confession of faith; their statutes and laws the express commandments of the Lord. They did not need a new set of clothing like the ancient catechumen or a cowl like the monk to represent their purity, for their "cap and cloak are the garments of righteousness with which we would gladly clothe ourselves." They did not need external symbols; their actions demonstrated their righteousness. The monks, on the other hand, followers of men, had substituted symbols for the reality of things.

That the Anabaptists were intent, as Littell has argued, to gather "a 'true church' upon the apostolic pattern as they understood it," is made apparent by Menno's next statement. Their cloisters, he said, were "the assembly of the saints, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Unable to break completely from the corrupt "great" Church of the third and fourth centuries, Monasticism had created a kind of *Doppelgaenger* of the ancient Church, a pure church based on symbols and human decrees. They had not really reestablished what had been lost. For that reason their argument, that they were the Christian martyrs in a time when the Church had been granted peace, was also spurious and their martyrdom a symbolic one at best. Perhaps the latter is implied by Menno's next statement, for in it he speaks of Anabaptist martyrdom. For like the original Christians who separated themselves from the world — and in contrast to the "soft and easy life of the monks" in Menno's day — the "daily expectation [of the Anabaptists was]

prison and fetters, fire and water, or exile with our wives and children, to suffer hunger, care, discomfort, anguish, sorrow, pain, and tears on our cheeks. This was the inevitable consequence of being obedient to the "express commandments of our Lord." True Christians were hated by the world.[115] And so Menno claimed for himself and his followers the reality of the Christian life and church. Monasticism, on the other hand, was a mere symbol of this reality, and that based upon the artifices of man. It was the true kind of monkdom Menno confessed and sought to practice; and it was this he hoped to abide in until his death.

There are, therefore, by common consensus of both sixteenth-century insiders as well as outsiders, parallels and differences between Anabaptism and Monasticism. The parallels are strongest if we consider both movements at their respective points of origin: their attempt to create a "pure" church based upon conversion and commitment to the highest Christian ethic; their consequent separation from the world; their attempt to renew and emulate the apostolic model of the Church; their commitment to volitional membership in their organizations and all that it entailed. Yet Menno has a point, especially as seen from the sixteenth century. The Anabaptists sought to resurrect the Apostolic Church, not something that symbolized it; they sought to revive the original form and meaning of baptism, not reflect that meaning in a "second baptism," as did the monks in their induction ceremonies, no matter how much it may have appeared in this light from the point of view of the Magisterial reformers. They sought to dispense with man-made rules and hold themselves only, as Luther had demanded, to the Word of God. And so Menno could argue with some justification that theirs was the real monkdom, not a new monasticism that merely symbolized the true Church. That theirs was the real thing, he contended, was proven by the fact that they suffered a very real martyrdom, not one inflicted by the monks upon themselves in the "peace of the Church."

Notes

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[1]Dennis D. Martin, "Catholic Spirituality and Anabaptist and Mennonite Discipleship," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. LXII, No. 1 (Jan. 1988), 5-25.

[2]C. Arnold Snyder, *The Life and Teaching of Michael Sattler* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1984).

[3]George K. Epp, "The Spiritual Roots of Menno Simons," in Harry Loewen, ed., *Mennonite Images* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980), 51-60. A sequel to this study will be published shortly in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

[4]Albrecht Ritschl, "Wiedertaeufer und Franziskaner," *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. VI (October 1883), 499-502. See also his *Geschichte des Pietismus*, I (Bonn, 1880).

[5]Kenneth R. Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1974).

[6]On patterns in history, see: Edward H. Carr, *What is History* (New York: Random House, 1961), and Karl Loewith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[7]Robert Stupperich, hrsg., *Die Schriften B. Rothmanns* (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), p. 163. Pilgrim Marpeck, in his "Vermahnung" of 1542 says

virtually the same thing and that in obvious dependence upon Rothmann. See *The Writings of Pilgrim Marpeck*, translated and edited by Wm. Klassen and Walter Klaassen (Kitchener, Ontario and Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978), pp. 215–216, and Frank J. Wray, "The 'Vermahnung' of 1542 and Rothmann's 'Bekentnisse'," *Archiv fuer Reformationsgeschichte* (1956), 243–251.

[8]Walter Klaassen, "The Anabaptist Critique of Constantinian Christendom," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 55 (July 1981), 218–230.

[9]Guenther Franz, hrsg., *Thomas Muentzer: Schriften und Briefe* (Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn Verlag, 1968), p. 227.

[10]W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 716.

[11]Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World* (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), p. 62.

[12]St. Jerome, "The Life of Paul the First Hermit," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns Reprint, 1979), p. 299.

[13]See especially Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981).

[14]See, for example, C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), p. 2.

[15]Athanasius, "Life of Antony," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 195.

[16]Ibid., p. 196.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]To a certain extent, monastic communism was not only based on the famous passage in the Acts of the Apostles, but also on the Fifth Letter of Clement of Rome, which spoke of having "all things common" in Rome as well as in Jerusalem. That gave the impression that this practice had been considerably more widespread than was actually the case. See Robert Friedmann, "Eine dogmatische Hauptschrift der hutterischen Taeufergemeinschaften in Maehren," *Archiv fuer Reformationsgeschichte* (1931), 235.

[20]Waddell, *Desert Fathers*, p. 100.

[21]Ibid., p. 13.

[22]Quoted by Hans von Campenhausen, "Tertullian," in Martin Greschat, hrsg., *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1984), p. 104.

[23]Frend, *Christianity*, pp. 720–721. See also Waddell, *Desert Fathers*, p. 13.

[24]Frend, *Christianity*, pp. 710–717.

[25]Ibid., p. 569.

[26]Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 212–213.

[27]Frend, *Christianity*, p. 716.

[28]Ibid. Herbert Workman in his *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (London: The Epworth Press, 1913), pp. 82–83, has written: "Those who claim for Monasticism an early origin in Christianity, in reality pay her no homage. For Monasticism was not the flight of cowards to the wilderness from the persecution of Marcus Aurelius or Decius. When the penalty for confessing Christ was the cross or the stake, there was no need to find an *artificial* cross [my italics]. The ideal of self-surrender was then to be found in the martyr, the highest celibacy in those immortal virgins who, like Blandina or Felicitas, submitted themselves to all the tortures which paganism could devise rather than surrender the proud title of 'slave of Christ.' It was not persecution but rather its cessation that made the hermits; they were the later growth of a primitive idea due to the triumph of the Church, or rather of the world, in the peace of Constantine. All that persecution had done had been to familiarize some who had fled from the Decian tyranny with the solitary life among the deserts and the mountains."

[29]See Joseph Cullen Ayer, editor, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), pp. 105–109.

[30]Ibid., pp. 406–410.

[31]See Augustine's letter to the Donatists of 397: *Works, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, 255–256.

[32]W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 166–167.

[33]See Serge Lancel, *Actes de la Conference de Carthage en 411* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1972), pp. 253–273.

[34]See George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1987).

[35]Heer, *The Medieval World*, p. 62.

[36]Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 3.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Edward E. Malone, "Martyrdom and Monastic Profession as a Second Baptism," in: *Vom christlichen Mysterium: Gesammelte Arbeiten zum Gedaechtnis von Odo Casel, O.S.B.*, edited by Anton Mayer, Johannes Quasten und Burkhard Neunheuser (Duesseldorf, 1951), pp. 115–134.

[39]Ibid., p. 118.

[40]Quoted in ibid., pp. 119–120.

[41]Ibid., p. 122.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 123.

[44]Romans VI:3–4.

[45]Malone, "Martyrdom," pp. 123–124.

[46]Ibid., pp. 118–124.

[47]Paul Delatte, *A Commentary on The Rule of St. Benedict* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1921), p. 367. Translated by Justin McCann.

[48]Ibid., p. 383.

[49]Ibid., p. 393.

[50]Ibid., pp. 70–71.

[51]Ibid., pp. 117–118.

[52]Quoted in Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 125. The chapter is entitled: "The Quest for the Primitive."

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., pp. 126–127.

[55]Augustine, *Works*, VI, 343.

[56]Gordon Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 18 (April 1967), pp. 61ff; and Leff, "The Making of the Myth of a True Church in the Later Middle Ages," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 1 (Spring 1971), pp. 1–15.

[57]Abraham Friesen, "The Radical Reformation Revisited," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Vol. 2 (1984), pp. 124–134.

[58]Matthew Spinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 86.

[59]Murray L. Wagner, *Petr Chelcicky: A Radical Separatist in Hussite Bohemia* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), pp. 85–147.

[60]John P. Dolan, editor and translator, *The Essential Erasmus* (New York: Mentor Omega Books, 1964), pp. 74–75.

[61]*The Correspondence of Erasmus* (Toronto & Buffalo: Toronto University Press, 1975), Vol. II, p. 297. Translated by R.A.B. Mynors & D. F. S. Thomson.

[62]In James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, editors, *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), pp. 85–86.

[63]*The Essential Erasmus*, pp. 98–173.

[64]The argument was made in the first of the three lectures delivered at the University of Winnipeg in November of 1987. It is a thesis I intend to develop more fully in the near future.

[65]Leif Grance, "Thomas Muentzer und Martin Luther," in: Abraham Friesen und Hans-Juergen Goertz, hrsg., *Thomas Muentzer*, Wege der Forschung, Vol. CDXCI (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), pp. 88–90.

[66]See Friesen, "The Radical Reformation Revisited," p. 146.

[67]Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity*? (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), p. 288.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Johann Arndt, *True Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA, 1886), p. 6. Translated by A. W. Boehm and Charles F. Schaeffer.

[70]Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 40. Edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert.

[71]Brown, *Augustine*, p. 221.

[72]Leland Harder, editor, *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism: The Grebel Letters and Related Documents* (Scottdale, PA & Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1985), p. 340.

[73]Ibid., p. 354.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid., pp. 453–454.

[76]G. W. Bromily, editor, *Zwingli & Bullinger*, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 141. A little later he argued that "baptism must not be used to constrain, as though it were a monastic profession," p. 152.

[77]Ibid., p. 141.

[78]*Quellen zur Geschichte der Taeufer*, Vol. VII: Elsass I. Teil, Stadt Strassburg 1522–1532, hrsg. von Manfred Krebs u. Hans Georg Rott (Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn Verlag, 1959), pp. 68–70.

[79]Ibid., p. 82.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., p. 109.

[82]Ibid., p. 112.

[83]Ibid., p. 383.

[84]Ibid., p. 408.

[85]Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 112.

[86]"Refutation of Baptist Tricks," in: *Ulrich Zwingli, 1484–1531, Selected Works*, editor, Samuel Macauley Jackson, reprint (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 168–169.

[87]See G. H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal, editors, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 273.

[88]See Heinold Fast, *Heinrich Bullinger und die Taeufer* (Weierhof, Pfalz: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1959), p. 148.

[89]In his response to Zwingli's *Taufbuechlein* of May 1525, entitled: "Ein Gespraech auf Zwingli's Taufbuechlein," Hubmaier wrote: "That is the correct baptismal vow, above which there may be no other, and had the Church observed it to this point, then, truly, all other oaths and obligations of the monks and nuns would have been unnecessary." Gunnar Westin & Torsten Bergsten, hrsg., *Balthasar Hubmaier Schriften, Quellen zur Geschichte der Taeufer*, IX (Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn Verlag, 1962), p. 188.

[90]*The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, translated by Leonard Verduin and edited by J. C. Wenger (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), pp. 567–568.

[91]*The Sermons and Conferences of John Tauler*, translated by Walter Elliott (Washington, D. C.: Apostolic Mission House, 1910), p. 194.

[92]*Quellen zur Geschichte der Taeufer in der Schweiz*, IV, Drei Taufgespraeche in Bern und im Argau, hrsg. von Martin Haas (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1974), p. 97.

[93]William R. Estep, editor, *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523–1533): A Source Book* (Nieuwkoop: B. DeGraaf, 1976), p. 35.

[94]John H. Yoder, editor and translator, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), p. 36.

[95]*Complete Works*, pp. 53–62. Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), p. 29 observes: "The status of rebirth was not really familiar to the Reformers; it was at best but dimly guessed: hence the basic estrangement between the two camps and their dissimilarity." For Luther's understanding of the term, however, see Marilyn J. Harran, *Luther on Conversion* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1934).

[96]Yoder, *Legacy*, p. 36.

[97]*Quellen: Schweiz* IV, p. 97.

[98]Yoder, *Legacy*, p. 36.

[99]*Quellen: Schweiz* IV, p. 97.

[100]*Complete Works*, p. 122.

[101]Willem Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 55. Translated from the Dutch by William J. Heynen.

[102]". . . to all those who with such an understanding of themselves desire and request it [baptism] from us; hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the Pope. For this you have the reasons and testimony of the writings and the practice of the apostles. We wish simply yet resolutely and with assurance to hold to the same." Yoder, *Legacy*, p. 36. All of this becomes somewhat ironic in the light of the renewal of the death penalty for rebaptism by the Second Diet of Speyer in 1529. The original decree had been directed against groups like the Donatists. But the greatest rebaptizers — by their own argumentation — were the monks. Yet they got off scott free! The Anabaptists, who rejected infant baptism and began to

practice believer's baptism — upon which the monastic ritual was itself modelled — were the ones who suffered the martyrdom the monks themselves sought!

[103]Yoder, *Legacy*, p. 37.

[104]Friedmann, *Theology*, p. 135. Franklin H. Littell, *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 47, has written: "The ethic, the attitude to the world on the part of the Anabaptists, has often been called a new monasticism. A major aspect of its formulation has been nonconformity to dominant social practices. Frequently we are confronted in Anabaptism with a radical attempt to realize in the concrete the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. But the Anabaptists went further than this, they repudiated not only accepted social standards, but a whole history of accommodation by established Christianity. The whole membership of the 'True Church' was pledged to relive in studied fashion the life of the New Testament community (Urgemeinde) in all its phases."

[105]*Quellen: Schweiz* IV, pp. 97–98.

[106]Muentzer, *Schriften*, p. 504.

[107]Littell, *Origins*, p. xvii.

[108]Yoder, *Legacy*, p. 38.

[109]Zwingli, *Selected Works*, p. 132.

[110]Ibid., p. 133.

[111]*Quellen: Schweiz* IV, p. 95.

[112]Heer, *Medieval World*, p. 62.

[113]See my forthcoming essay, "Thomas Muentzer and Martin Luther," in the 1988 issue of the *Archiv fuer Reformationsgeschichte*.

[114]See especially Robert Friedmann, "Eine dogmatische Hauptschrift," pp. 235ff, and Williams & Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, pp. 272–273.

[115]See especially Ethelbert Stauffer, "Maetyrertheologie und Taeuferbewegung," *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. 52 (1933), 545–598.