

Why Baptists Are Not Protestants

By

Chester E. Tulga

Why the Baptists Did Not Cooperate With the Reformation and Refused
Reformation Doctrine

*

Chester E. Tulga, D.D.

*

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
214 E. BROAD STREET TEXARKANA, ARK.-TEX.

COPYRIGHT 1960 BY
EASTERN BAPTIST INSTITUTE
SOMERSET, KENTUCKY

ASSIGNED 1965 TO
BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

In view of the fact that the Ana-Baptist Movement during the Reformation Period is getting a fresh look in our time and many of the principles for which these people stood are now being vindicated, it is our belief that this booklet has a great mission yet to accomplish and we send it to press again with prayer.

One thing that is now being freely acknowledged, that was one time hidden from much public view, is the fact that during the Reformation there was decidedly a strong element that did not identify themselves with the Protestant Leaders such as Luther and Calvin. It is also well documented that these people known more commonly as Ana-Baptists did not originate, as far as their faith is concerned, in the Reformation itself, but their teachings go far back into antiquity.

From this Ana-Baptist Movement and their predecessors, true Baptists of our time claim their heritage. It is therefore necessary that the world understand that Baptists are not and never have been Protestants as the world has known Protestantism.

- I. K. CROSS

"The organization of our denomination (Baptist) began in the last grand transitional age, in the Protestant Reformation. In that transition we were far to the front, on the skirmish line. We were the radicals of radicals. Of the three great reformers - Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli - Zwingli was the most radical, so that Luther and Melancton were anxious to disavow the Anabaptists. The first creed of the Lutheran Church, The Augsburg Confession, point by point makes it clear that the Lutheran party would have nothing to do with Anabaptists. The epoch-making theology of Calvinism, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion was first written to prove to the King of France that the Protestants were good people and had nothing to do with such extremists as the Anabaptists. When the Baptist movement was in its cradle, nobody expected that baby to sit on the brakes of the chariot of progress... We were for a "reformation without tarrying" even if we had to leave the old church and break it in pieces. We were against clericalism and against all hierarchies. We were for the religious emancipation of the laity. We went as far as the most radical Calvinist in purging religion of superstition, and when he stopped we went on. The others reformed the Lord's Supper, and cleared it of the abuses which had grown up about it, but they feared to attempt the reformation of baptism, for they knew that would shake the foundation of church life. The abolition of infant baptism meant not only simply the modification of the church rite, but a revolutionary reconstruction of the very conception of the church. That is the kind of movement which our fathers initiated. They paid for their understanding with their blood, but the God of history has vindicated their daring." Walter Rauschenbush, **The Freedom of Spiritual Religion**, p. 12, 1910.

"From all sides we are coming to recognize in the Radical Reformation a major expression of the religious movement of the sixteenth century. It is one that is as distinctive as

Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, and is perhaps comparably significant in the rise of modern Christianity.” (**Introduction, Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers, Edited by George H. Williams and A. M. Mergal**).

“The name Anabaptist (meaning ‘Rebaptizer’) is commonly used today in a broad sense to designate the entire 'left wing' of the Protestant Reformation, without any derogatory sense, and including both peaceful and revolutionary groups, both evangelicals and spiritualistic elements. In the Reformation and later, it was a term of opprobrium and abuse, not by any party or group for itself, but apparently to all those elements separating themselves from the state churches. Anabaptists were heretics and criminals under the imperial law which, dating back to the code of Justinian (A.D. 529), had made rebaptism one of the two heresies punishable by death. The first imperial mandate of the Reformation times against the Anabaptists (Jan. 4, 1528, at Speier) specifically grounds their required suppression on this ancient legislation.” Harold S. Bender, **The New Schaff - Herzog Religious Encyclopedia**, p. 35.

"Besides the main channel of the Reformation there flowed three other streams: Anabaptism, spiritualism, and anti-Trinitarianism. Although there were transitions and borderline phenomena between these three streams, they can nevertheless be held to be essentially distinct." Fritz Blanke, **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, Edited by Guy Hershberger**, p. 57.

"The Baptist movement was radical in its nature, but the baptismal question was secondary in importance. The movement involved the entire reconstruction of the social order. It was nothing less than revolutionary. The Reformers aimed to reform the Roman Catholic Church by the Bible; the Baptists went directly to the apostolic age and accepted the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice. The Reformers founded a popular State church, including all citizens and their families; the Baptists insisted on the voluntary system and selected congregations of baptized believers, separated from the world and the State." Phillip Schaff, **History of the Christian Church**, 7:52.

"German Anabaptists suffered the persecution at the hands of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics alike. Luther, from the beginning regarded them as fanatics, schismatics, and a menace to the success of his reform movement." Robert A. Torbert, **A History of the Baptists**, p. 43.

The Reformation was not a great religious revival as some have assumed. It was a political and religious movement, in which genuine Scriptural principles struggled for expression, but the subverting of Scriptural principles in the interests of outward success, prevented it from being a real return to the New Testament faith and New Testament practices.

In our day there is a tendency in evangelical theological circles to idealize and glorify what they vaguely call "Reformation Theology," a theology which Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli would hardly recognize and which the Anabaptists would certainly spurn. "Reformation Theology" was not a return to the doctrines and practices of the New Testament and neither is the neo-Reformation of our day. Baptists might do well to study again the outline of the theology of the Reformers and ponder anew on the reasons which prompted their Anabaptist forefathers to reject these **theologies**, now vaguely and inaccurately called "Reformation Theology."

I. The Contending Groups in the Reformation Movement.

To understand why the Baptists did not cooperate with the Reformation, we must understand the various elements active in the ranks of the reformers and the various groups who were roughly classed as Anabaptists by their foes.

The Reform group. Fritz Blanke, in **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision** says, "In 1523-24 Zwingli himself distinguished three different groups within the population. There were people in Zurich, he said, who were Protestants out of hatred for Catholicism. That was the category (still extant) of "negative Protestants," who are Protestants because they under no condition wish to be Catholic.

The second group is made up of libertinistic Protestants, who see the Gospel as nothing but an opportunity to lead a looser life.

But there is a third circle: those who "work in the Word of God," who seek to live according to the Word of God, and to penetrate ever deeper into the Holy Scriptures. This last group is Zwingli's staff, "the narrow circle of his collaborators."

In these three groups there were many motives, many ideas and many conflicting interests to serve. Many viewed the reformation movement as a political opportunity, and used it for such ends. To unite these groups behind the reform movement many compromises were made, many expedencies were adopted and a return to the faith and practices of the New Testament was found impossible. The Reformers felt that the reformation must survive and succeed by alliances, rather than a determined stand on the pure Word of God as the Anabaptists contended.

Among those who were called by their enemies Anabaptists, there were at least three parties. The Spiritualists (or Pietists) who stressed the inner word of the Spirit and gave it pre-eminence over the outer Word, the Scriptures. (In this respect they have many followers in both modernism and pietistic fundamentalism.) They had little interest in the restoration of the New Testament church.

The radical groups who provided the push for the Munster rebellion were determined to establish the kingdom of God in society by force, if necessary. By their fanaticisms and excesses they brought reproach upon the Anabaptist movement and enabled the enemies of the Anabaptist to condemn all of them.

There was a third, who held to the absolute authority of the Word of God in faith and practice, in a regenerate church, in the separation of church and state, and a disciplined Christian life. They were the salt of the Anabaptist movement and the ancestors of the New Testament Baptists everywhere.

A proper understanding of the groups engaged in this titanic struggle is necessary to understand the political and religious character of the Reformation and the influences which

formed and modified its theology. An understanding of the issues is necessary to understand the bitter enmities and the bloody persecutions which stain the annals of the Reformation.

II. The Various Designations of the Anabaptists by Historians Indicate Their Distinctive Character.

1. The Bible and the Reformation. Walter Kohler, the great Heidleberg church historian, said, "The Anabaptists are the Bible Christians of the Reformation. They wish to restore the Early Church at Jerusalem as a community of saints sharply separated from the world."

This is true, particularly of the third group discussed above. They insisted that the only doctrines found in the Word of God were the true doctrines and only practices taught by the Word of God were permissible; consequently they rejected all doctrines modified by expediency, and all practices sanctified by custom. They refused to alter their position to conform to the political situation.

2. The radicals of the Reformation. The Editors of **Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers** (George H. Williams and A.M. Mergal) included the Anabaptists of every persuasion in the "Radical Reformation." Today the word defines the radical in its secondary interpretation, as extreme. The Anabaptists were extremists in the eyes of those who would compromise the Word of God, who would seek alliances with the world and who would not follow the pattern of the Word of God in the Reformation. As New Testament restorationists, they were considered extreme by those who were only interested in limited reforms.

But they were really radicals in the primary sense of the word. They insisted upon going back to the origins of Christianity; they insisted that the roots of the faith as set forth in the New Testament alone determined the nature of the faith. They were opposed to grafting a partially reformed Protestantism on the apostate root of Romanism. They were radicals. They wanted to go back to the New Testament church and recover it in its fidelity to the Word of God and the doctrines of the apostles. Europe has suffered for centuries because of the compromises made by the Reformers to insure the success of their movement.

3. The left wing of the Reformation. In the Introduction to **Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers**, the editors say, It is pre-eminently the opposition of the dissenters to the magisterial Reformation of Protestantism and, in due course, the papal Counter Reformation, which has earned for these often disparate groups the designation 'left wing.' They would not tolerate the trespassing of pope, town-council, prince, or king upon the rights of the loyal subjects of the King of Kings." This classification was inevitable, for Bible Christianity is always at odds with the status quo. It was inevitable that radicals who opposed the easy way of survival by political compromises should find themselves to the left. The Anabaptists who were engaged in the fanaticism of Munster, unfortunately, gave this designation a more objectionable meaning. One historian has referred to them as the "Bolsheviks of the Reformation." It is clear, however, these designations are interpreted that the Anabaptists were not sympathetic with the theology of the Reformers.

4. The "heretics of the Reformation." Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli considered them heretics and consented and sometimes encouraged their punishment and death as heretics. We are told (**Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers**, p. 26), that "The major Protestant Reformers and their associates were the bitterest foes and persecutors of the Anabaptists; and Protestant scholars and polemicists, beginning with Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Philip Melancton. John Calvin, and Henry Bullinger, drew and redrew a composite portrait of them as fanatics and revolutionaries."

The Reformers must share with the Roman Catholics the responsibility for the bloody persecution and death of a great host of Anabaptists. It is true that the history of the Baptists can be traced by their bloody footprints on the sands of time; it is also true that the hands of the Reformers are stained with the blood of many of the saints of God who dared to stand by the Word of God and oppose their sinful compromises.

III. The Anabaptists Stood for the Sole Authority of the Bible in Faith and Practice.

"There are many evidences that the Anabaptists took a higher view of the authority of the Word of God than did the reformers, and that the Word was deeply imbedded in their thoughts and lives. John C. Wenger, writing on **The Biblicism of the Anabaptists**, says 'The Anabaptists were distinguished by a diligent study of the Scriptures from the moment of their conversion.' Harold S. Bender says, 'From the court records of the Anabaptists who were **seized** at the beginning of the Reformation era it is at once evident that they possessed an amazing knowledge of the Bible.' Amazing is not too strong a word, for the fact is that untrained lay brethren often proved more than a match for the Roman Catholic doctors of theology who interrogated them. So overwhelming was this proficiency in the Scriptures that it was sometimes explained as being due to demon possession." **The Recovery of the Anabaptist vision**, p. 167.

"Therefore we beg and admonish thee as a brother by the name, the power, the word, the spirit, and the salvation, which has come to all Christians through Jesus Christ our Master and Saviour, that thou wilt take earnest heed to preach only the divine Word without fear, to set up and guard only divine institutions, to esteem as good and right only what may be found in pure and clear Scripture, to reject, hate, and curse all devices, words, customs, and opinions of men, including thy own." Conrad Grebel Letter to Thomas Muntzer, **Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers** p. 75.

"'St. John's Gospel,' Luther says, 'and his first Epistle, St. Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and St. Peter's First Epistle...these are the books which show to thee Christ, and teach everything that is necessary and blessed for thee to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore, St. James' Epistle is a perfect straw epistle compared with them, for it has in it nothing of an evangelic kind.'" George P. Fisher, **History of Christian Doctrine**, p. 279.

As early as 1530 Sebastian Franck wrote: "There arose from the letter of Scripture, independent of the state churches, a new sect which was called Anabaptists... By the good appearance of their sect and their appeal to the letter of Scripture to which they have strictly

adhered, they drew to themselves many thousand God-fearing hearts who had zeal for God," quoted in **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision. p. 175.**

The Anabaptists held a view of the Scriptures which differed from that of the Reformers in several vital ways.

1. The Anabaptists, unlike the Reformers, held that the Bible is our sole authority of faith and practice, and is to be obeyed by the real Christian disciple. The Reformers glorified the Word of God, by the Anabaptists insisted that the Word of God is to be obeyed. The Reformers insisted that the Reformation was a back-to-the-Bible movement, but the Anabaptists believed they should go back to the Bible entirely, not simply in those things which were expedient. The Reformers, like many today, glorified the Word of God as authority in faith, but the Anabaptists insisted that, in consequence of its authority in faith, it was also the final authority in practice.

2. The Anabaptists, unlike the Spiritualists (or Pietists), refused to place the inner word of the Spirit above the outer word, the Scriptures thus avoiding many of the dangers of pietism, subjectivism and mysticism. They refused to consider the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit, insisting that it is to be interpreted by Spirit-enlightened men, and obeyed by regenerate believers, thus avoiding some of the perils of a dead orthodoxy, so widely seen in Lutheranism and Calvinism. They avoided that intellectual scholasticism which the Reformation inherited from its past. It was said that Anabaptists trusted Spirit-filled farmers more than theologians. History bears a sad witness to *the wisdom* of this insight.

3. The Anabaptists refused to accept the covenant theology of the Reformers. They regarded all the Scriptures as the Word of God, but they placed a strong emphasis upon the preparatory role of the Old Testament and the final authority of the New Testament. They believed that God's final word for the faith and practice of the churches was in the New Testament, not in the preparatory dispensation of the Old. They, therefore, insisted that all doctrine and practice must have New Testament support.

In opposition to the Anabaptist contrast between the two covenants, stood the state church theologians with more or less emphasis on the unity of the two covenants, and this led them to espouse and defend many ideas and practices which had no basis in the New Testament. John C. Wenger says that "this point of view furnished logical grounds for the defense of warfare, the swearing oaths, the suppression of dissenters by armed force, and even in dire necessity for the justification of the bigamy of Philip of Hesse!" **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, pp. 178, 179.** The Anabaptists were the Bible Christians of the Reformation, and this brought them into sharp conflict with the Reformers and their followers.

IV. The Anabaptists Held to the New Testament Doctrine of the Church and Refused the Reformation Concept of the State Church.

"In the main stream of Anabaptist life and thought there was agreement that a reconstitution of the church according to the pattern of the New Testament must be effected without compromise at any point. Luther, for example, allowed many existing practices having no basis in the New Testament, provided they did not contradict the essentials of the faith. Not so

the Anabaptists. This only proved that Luther, as well as Zwingli had not gone far enough. They were 'half-way' men who had made an excellent beginning but had not drawn the logical conclusion their position demanded." John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, **Protestant Christianity**, p. 62.

"The Reformers also, of course, had rediscovered the New Testament. But they differed from the Anabaptists in the use to which their discovery was put. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Cranmer had no idea of restoring the New Testament church in disregard of the existing church. They took over large geographical sections of the Roman church and proceeded to reorganize their people in conformity with what they regarded (with whatever differences among themselves) as New Testament principles. In all the original Reformation countries - Germany, Switzerland, England, Holland, and the Scandanavian countries - the actual event could be described as the casting off of the trappings of the Roman system and the re-clothing of the existing church in garments believed to be consistent with New Testament Christianity. But the re-clothed church was the same church of Christ's people that had long worn the habiliments of its Roman captivity. The idea of creating a new church, or of recreating the primitive church, was alien to their intention." Charles Clayton Morrison, **The Unfinished Reformation**, pp. 131, 132.

The essence of the conflict between the Anabaptist conception of the church and Reform's conception, is summed up by Philip Schaff, "The Reformers aimed to reform the old church by the Bible; the radicals attempted to build a new church from the Bible." Walter Kohler, the great Heidelberg church historian said, "The crystallization of the Reformation in territorial churches are in parishes led by city political authorities gave the impulse for the building up of Anabaptist circles... The Anabaptists are the Bible Christians of the Reformation. They wished to restore the Early church at Jerusalem as a community of saints sharply separated from the world."

The Anabaptists had no doctrine of the "invisible church" which they contended became a substitute for the doctrine of the New Testament local church. Franklin H. Liddell, writing on the **Anabaptist Concept of Force**, p. 47, says, "I agree wholeheartedly with Robert Friedmann's denunciation of the doctrine of the 'invisible church' as alien to Anabaptism. This teaching, which is spiritualizing in effect and perhaps in origin, has been from the 16th century to the present day the major underground tunnel by which leaders of established Protestant churches have been able to escape from the position to which their Biblical insurgency at first had led them." **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision**, p. 22.

The Anabaptist conception of the church was not just negative and theological. It penetrated to the depths of the Christian life. Harold S. Bender says, "A new concept of the church was created by the central principle of newness of life and applied Christianity. Voluntary church membership based upon true conversion and involving a commitment to holy living and discipleship was the absolute essential heart of this concept. The vision stands in sharp contrast to the church concept of the Reformers who retained the medieval ideal of a mass church with membership of the entire population from birth to the grave compulsory by law and force. **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, the Church.**

The Anabaptist believed in a regenerate church, separated from the world, separated from the state, and separated from all human hierarchies. It was composed of genuine disciples of Christ living for Christ and willing to suffer and die for Him if necessary. Many of them died.

V. The Anabaptists Were Known by Their Genuine Christian Discipleship.

"Hans Denck, being appointed to the charge of one of the most important schools in Nuremberg, moved to that city (1523), where the Lutheran movement had already prevailed for a year, led by a young gifted Osiander. Denck hoped and expected to find that the new religion had brought morality and uprightness and godliness of life among the people. He was disappointed to find that this was not so, and inquiring into the cause, was forced to the conclusion that it was due to a defect in the Lutheran teaching which, while insisting on the doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works, and on the abolition of many abuses that had prevailed in the Catholic Church, neglected to press the necessity of obedience; self-denial, and the following of Christ, as being an essential part of true faith. Perceiving these things by degrees, Osiander showed (1551) how experience only proved that the Wittenberg teaching made men 'safe and careless.'" E.H. Broadbent, **The Pilgrim Church**, p. 158.

Predestination and the bondage of the will in the realm of saving faith constituted the theological center of Lutheranism. It stressed progressive sanctification in imitation of Christ over against the forensic justification through faith in the redemptive word of the historic Christ." **Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers**, Edited by G. H. Williams and A. M. Mergal, p. 86.

"For the Anabaptists, the new life in Christ through the Spirit rather than justification by faith is the center of the New Testament faith and therefore of the church. The life of the redeemed, the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers, is foremost. Not the Word of God found in the Bible, but the experience of Christ's presence is the foundation of the church. The Spirit of Christ spread abroad in the human heart is more important than any endeavor to understand the contents of God's disclosure, whether found in the Bible or expressed in theological statements. The New Testament is a book of the Christian life, and authoritative in that sense." John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, **Protestant Christianity**, p. 63.

1. The Anabaptists were committed to the "theology of discipleship." They and their interpreters have contended that the main line of the theology of the Reformers presented a one-sided interpretation of the doctrine of justification by faith, with too little emphasis upon that discipleship which produces works that evidence genuine justification. It is significant that the Epistle of James which emphasizes Christian works as the fruit of faith was held in low esteem by Luther who called it a "straw epistle, for it has in it nothing of an evangelic kind." **George P. Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine**, p. 279. The Reformers showed more interest in forensic justification than the theology of discipleship. The difference in emphasis produced two differing types of character, even as it does today. Many who embraced the Reformation showed no change in their lives. This was not true of the Anabaptists who were known for their deep consecration and holy living.

2. The emphasis upon the theology of discipleship led to the holy living. Sebastian Franck (not an Anabaptist) wrote, "The Anabaptists soon gained a large following drawing many

sincere souls who had a zeal for God, for they taught nothing but love, faith and the cross. They showed themselves humble, patient under much suffering; they broke bread with one another as an evidence of unity and love. They helped each other faithfully, and called each other brothers. They died as martyrs, patiently and humbly enduring all persecution." **The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision**, p. 46. What a tribute from one who did not identify himself with them!

Their manner of life was such that in many places those who lived a consistent Christian life were in danger of falling under the suspicion of being guilty of Anabaptist heresy. Caspar Schwenckfeld declared, "I am being maligned, by both preachers and others, with the charge of being an Anabaptist, even as all others who lead a true, pious Christian life are now almost everywhere given this name." Bullinger himself complained that "there are those who in reality are no Anabaptists but have pronounced averseness to the sensuality and frivolity of the world and therefore reprove sin and vice and are consequently called or misnamed Anabaptists by petulant persons." What a tribute to the holy character of those whom the Reformers persecuted and hilled as heretics!

Just as the burning of Servetus will always stain the name of John Calvin, so the dying prayers of martyred Anabaptists will always haunt and question Reformation Theology. The Reformers had accepted the principle of compromise, but the Anabaptists had embraced the theology of martyrdom.

3. The Anabaptists suffered and died for their faith. "The Baptists of Zurich were subjected to shameful persecution. They were dispossessed, driven into exile, drowned as a fate particularly suited to Baptists: and their leaders burned at the stake. Baptists were virtually wiped out in the Canton of Zurich, though they were to survive elsewhere to spread, to become the Baptist churches of the world." William A. Gifford, **The Story of the Faith**, p. 362.

"Meanwhile at Zurich the government held another public discussion in January, 1525, to determine the true doctrine of baptism. At its close, further meetings of Baptists were forbidden. Zurichers with unbaptized infants were commanded to have them baptized within a week, and banishment was decreed for any who would refuse. At Zurich, as elsewhere, it had not been expected that an appeal to the Scriptures would eventuate, not in one Reformed Church but in several. The government would not tolerate schism: and those who breached the Reformed Church might expect the penalty the Mother Church has exacted from similar offenders." William A Gifford, **The Story of the Faith**, p. 362.

VI. The Anabaptists and Scriptural Separation.

"For truly all creatures are in but two classes, good and bad, 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 can have part with the other." **The Schleithem Confession of Faith, Anabaptist Swiss Brethren, 1527.**

1. The Anabaptists stood for separation from apostasy. They considered the Roman Catholic Church apostate and beyond remedy. They believed that the only course open to a Bible Christian was to separate entirely from it and to divorce himself from its apostate ideas and

apostate practices. Infant baptism, they contended, was not only contrary to the Word of God but a part of the Roman apostasy which was to be rejected. No arguments based upon misinterpretation or ecclesiastical expediency moved them from this position.

2. The Anabaptists stood for separation from everything they considered to be contrary to the Word of God. They fell under the disfavor of the Reformers, because they insisted upon the Word of God as the sole authority for faith and practice: they insisted upon the New Testament church in its original faith and purity, rather than the patched up churches of the Reformation, whose pattern was often determined by both political and religious expediency; they insisted not only upon the doctrine of legal justification by faith, but its fruit in real sanctification of life and devoted discipleship; they refused to accept the Reformation idea of religious survival by alliance with the state and the world, but contended that believers gathered together in a New Testament church should walk in faith before God, accepting the consequences even unto death.

3. The Anabaptists stood for a sharp and clear distinction between "the two kingdoms": the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness; the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. They insisted upon a sharp distinction and no traffic between these hostile kingdoms and no compromises with the kingdom of darkness. They practiced a separation from the world, which was not the shallow separation from sinful amusements so common today, but a deep radical separation that went to the very roots of their lives, their activities and their worldly fortunes. The Anabaptists saw no need for compromise: they could die.

The Anabaptists were the non-conformists of the Reformation; they were the Bible Christians of the Reformation. They insisted that the theology of the Reformers was contrary to the Scriptures and not fully evangelical. They refused to accept "Reformation Theology" and died at the hands of their enemies who pointed to their holy lives as proof of their "heresy."