

первых лидеров и богословов движения. Информация подана емко, глубоко и продумано. К недостаткам можно отнести тот факт, что в данном издании остались непереуведенными большое количество имен, терминов и источников на английском, немецком, французском и др. языках, что может затруднять чтение книги русскоязычному читателю. Несмотря на это История анабаптизма может быть полезна как специалистам в области истории Церкви, так и рядовым членам церкви, которые хотят лучше узнать историю Радикальной реформации и понять, какое место занимает движение крещенцев в разветвленном древе мирового христианства.

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*ISTORIJA ANABAPTIZMA. RADIKAL'NAIA REFORMATSIJA XVI VEKA. [THE ANABAPTIST STORY. AN INTRODUCTION TO SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ANABAPTISM]. WILLIAM R. ESTEP. KYIV: IZDATEL'STVO KNIGONOSHA. 2017. PP. 320. ISBN 978-617-7248-60-5 (TRANS.). 8.85 EUR.**

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This book may, without exaggeration, be called the classic work on the history of the Radical Reformation of the sixteenth century. The well-known Baptist historian, William R. Estep (1920 –2000), a recognized authority in the area of Anabaptist history, describes the chronology of the appearance and spread of this movement in lively language. Who were the sixteenth century Anabaptists? Where did the movement begin? What was their relationship to Magisterial Protestants? Is the baptizer movement a certain kind of branch or variety within the framework of the Reformation? What were the main factors that led to the appearance of the movement? What did the Anabaptists think about God, man, the church, baptism, Christian life? The answers to these and other questions may be found on the pages of this book.

Istoriia anabaptizma is the first work translated into Russian to illuminate the theme under examination in such a comprehensive and many-sided fashion. The book is unique in that the author not only presents the history of the baptizers, but also gives much attention to their theology as well as to the influence that this movement exerted on later religious currents. The author considers that this is the time to relate the history of Anabaptism to the contemporary reader in order to alter the firm prejudices about this sixteenth century movement that were stated in the works of Ulrich Zwingli,

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Justus Menius, Heinrich Bullinger, and Christoph Fisher, not to mention the gentler, but nevertheless false comments of Martin Luther and Philip Melancton. The author sets the goal of showing the importance of the Anabaptist historical legacy, because the idea of the “free church” has influenced not only many contemporary Christian denominations but has also found expression in numerous constitutions and human rights declarations.

The book begins with the story of the birth of Anabaptism in Switzerland (ch. 1). The author gives particular attention to the “Swiss Brethren”—the first group of Anabaptists who came to the conclusion that the church must not be identified with Christian society as a whole. A person becomes a member of society by the fact of birth, but to enter the church one must make a personal decision to become a Christian. The book traces the life stories of Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock and Michael Sattler (chs. 2-3), who called for a return to the experience of the apostolic community and asserted that Luther and Zwingli’s reforming activity preserved non-evangelical practice: the baptism of infants, the close tie between the church and secular power, the participation of Christians in war, and so on.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to Balthasar Hubmaier, doctor of theology, professor, and priest from the city of Ingolstadt, an authority on scholasticism and patristics, who played a major role in thinking through and developing the ideas of the baptizers. He kept up an active correspondence with many scholars of his time (especially with Oecolampadius) concerning child baptism, and finally pronounced it inappropriate. The author shows that Hubmaier was not led by revelation from above, received in a supernatural way, as some mystically inclined Anabaptists claimed, and was not moved by a thirst for power or material reward; instead, like a scholar he slowly and systematically developed his evangelical views. It was Hubmaier who gave a worthy answer to Zwingli’s writings and those of other theologians who wrote against the baptizers; he also worked out an order of worship for new congregations.

In chapters 5-7, the author traces the path of the Anabaptists across Europe as they searched for religious freedom. Besides the groups in Switzerland, the baptizer movement appeared in three other territories. These were South Germany, where from the beginning the leaders of the movement were Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Denck; after their deaths, the movement was led by Pilgram Marpeck. Other centers of the movement’s development were the Hutterite Brethren in Moravia and also the Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands and North Germany. The author demonstrates that the baptizers met with resistance not only on the part of the Catholics, but also the recently founded Protestant churches. Even peaceable Anabaptists, who spoke against violence in any form, were not safe from persecution. Both moderate and militant followers of the new free congregations experienced the same persecution on the part of secular authority and the representatives of state churches. A tolerant approach to opponents was not part of the historical context of the epoch. Lutherans and Catholics alike were wary of Anabaptist preaching since the latter questioned the accepted order of religious life.

The author gives much attention to the Anabaptists’ theology (chs. 8-9): intentional baptism by faith at the age of accountability; their understanding of the nature of the church;

their eschatology; and also shows how seriously Anabaptists took Luther's principle of *Sola Scriptura*. Holy Scripture became for them the dynamic center of biblical and creative theology, free from layers of Catholic tradition and scholastic theology. Anabaptists never mechanically repeated what the Magisterial Reformers said. They approached everything critically and creatively, and tried to remain true to the foundation of the Bible. The author shows that it was their faithfulness to Scripture that led the baptizers farther and in a different direction from Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

Speaking of the Anabaptists' understanding of water baptism, the author asserts that it was a logical result of the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. On the basis of the Bible they concluded that the very nature of conscious baptism by faith excludes the baptism of infants. New Testament baptism requires a prior decision to repent of sins and believe in Christ. The Anabaptists regarded baptism as a symbol of introduction (initiation) into the church and as a sign of the new life that a believer receives in Jesus Christ. The author demonstrates that water baptism was not a sacrament for Anabaptists and was not taken seriously where faith in Christ was absent.

In the final chapter (11), the story of the baptizer movement from the Netherlands to England and the colonies of the New World is told. The author attempts to find the connection between continental Anabaptism and the first English Baptists and evaluate the influence of Anabaptism on English and American free churches. For example, the author believes that the movement of new, independent congregations in England was closely related to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. The English free church lacked only a more favorable climate to become a more fully developed Anabaptist church. Estep concludes that today the Anabaptist legacy consists not in some kind of single denomination, but is rather the possession of any free contemporary society. The concept of religious freedom and the institutional separation of church and state are reflected in an array of constitutions and human rights declarations among various governments and in the United Nations. Today these principles are doubtless universal, and for them we are greatly indebted to the Anabaptists.

Among the strengths of the book are the author's use of an array of primary sources, such as the "Confession" of Klaus Felbinger (1560), or the Hutterite Chronicles. Besides this, the author analyzes a great number of recent monographs and other scholarly works on the Radical Reformation. The author is attentive to the details of a broad panorama of Anabaptist history. For example, the book contains biographical sketches of the first leaders and theologians of the movement. The information is plentiful, deep, and well-considered. Concerning weaknesses, this publication did not translate a great number of names, terms, and sources in English, German, French, and other languages, which may make reading more difficult for the Russian reader. In spite of that *Istoriia anabaptizma* is useful both for specialists in church history and for ordinary church members who wish to better understand the history of the Radical Reformation and understand the place that the baptizers occupy in the many-branched tree of world Christianity.

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