

Church History - Session 2 (Growth From Antioch)

by Edgar F. Parkyns

The sermon explores the growth of Christianity from Antioch, highlighting the missionary movement, the role of Paul and Barnabas, and the spread of the gospel through the Jewish dispersion and the Pax Romanum.

Duration: 58:02

Scripture: Acts 20:18-24, Acts 20:31-38, Jude 1:11

Topics: "Church Growth", "False Teachings"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of watching and remembering the teachings of the word of God. The speaker, inspired by the success and power of his ministry, warns the listeners about the potential decline of the gospel and the infiltration of false teachings. The sermon also highlights the mixed response to the gospel, comparing it to a field where both good seed and tares are sown. The speaker concludes by discussing the parable of the mustard seed, which can be interpreted in different ways. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for vigilance, understanding, and fruitfulness in the Christian faith.

Transcript

Last week we looked at the early chapters of Acts, and especially the failure of some of those who were first called to carry out fully the commission that was granted to them. They tended to be held back by old tradition, especially national tradition. This made them slow to respond to the call of the Lord, and we saw how God had to raise up certain obscure men to step in and do the task which had first been allotted to the twelve apostles.

We saw how the centre of activity, as far as the book of Acts is concerned, moved from Jerusalem to Antioch. And the missionary movement, which was designed to have had its birth at Jerusalem, actually began at Antioch. And instead of Peter and his fellow apostles taking the chief place in reaching the ends of the earth, we find that Paul and his companions stepped in and began to fulfil that great task.

There seems almost to arise from these two great cities, Jerusalem and Antioch, two streams which affect the life of the early church and also have characterised Christianity down through the ages. For you will have seen from your study of Acts and of the epistles, that from Jerusalem there came the continual tendency to bind the gospel with legal restrictions. Especially in the epistle of Galatians, do you notice

this? Also in Acts 15 you see it reflected.

In Philippians and Colossians you get it repeated. Always this tendency from Jerusalem to bind the gospel to traditionalism. This was particularly tempered around the rite of circumcision in New Testament days.

But from Antioch, that wicked city and that wonderful church that sprang up there in the mercy of God, there flowed a stream of the Spirit, a stream of gospel outreach. People who looked beyond tradition to the Lordship of Christ. People who looked for their authority, not to the backings of a council, but for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

And you will find right down through church history these two powerful influences are at work, and you will find them around you and among you to this day. The tendency to traditionalism and to legalism, and the urge to follow the leading of the Spirit and launch out into all the fullness of God. From chapter 13 onwards, Acts focuses chiefly on the ninety exploits done through the Apostle Paul.

He and Barnabas were separated by the Holy Ghost. Their call was announced in the prayer meeting at Antioch. Soon they went out without salary, they went out by faith, and turned the world upside down.

We have noticed that when they came back to report, they didn't normally report to Jerusalem, but to Antioch, from where they had been commended to the grace of God by the church there. There was a crisis at Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15, which is not strictly speaking a church council, nor is it a model for a church council. It was an occasion which Paul felt was necessitated by the crippling influences spreading out from Jerusalem.

And so he with Titus went up by revelation to face the church at its centre and meet those in authority, especially James, whose name was well known as a God-fearer and a leader of the Jewish Christians. Paul went there to get the voice of the church at Jerusalem on the issue of circumcision, which had been troubling the fast-growing Gentile churches. So this was not, strictly speaking, a church council.

The only church that was represented fully was the Jerusalem church. The other churches were just represented by Paul and the few who came with him. The matter was cleared, Paul went out on his second missionary journey, this time with Silas, and was led of the Holy Ghost over into Europe, until in a few years the gospel spread throughout the eastern part of the Mediterranean and Christians were found on all those shores.

So rapidly did the gospel grow that there was a strong Christian community growing up at Rome, even before Paul visited there. He longed before he finished to visit Spain also, and I have little doubt that had his ministry not been cut short, he would have visited the fathers of our own race in the British Isles. Notice in Acts that Philip preached the kingdom of God.

Philip the Evangelist. That message, the kingdom of God, is part of evangelical preaching. It has nothing to do with ultra-dispensationalism.

And notice that Paul too, at the end of Acts, has his continued ministry recorded in this way. Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him. So you will see the heart of Paul's teaching, which we have recorded in his epistles, concerns the kingdom of God, and the Lord, the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is why he is able to say in his epistles, The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Thus again, in passing, the parables of the kingdom of heaven, which is a synonym for the kingdom of God, as a careful study of, a parallel study of Matthew and Luke will show, the parables of the kingdom of heaven are also church parables. The soul went forth to sow.

Those great parables, the nets, the dragnets, the pearl of great price, the leaven mingled with the meal, all these are church-aged parables, and they're titled kingdom of heaven parables. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like. And in nearly all his teachings in parable form, when he said the kingdom of heaven is like, he was giving teaching that belongs to the church.

I hope you see that very plainly. I hope you've not been confused by certain notes written in certain Bibles about this, which somehow managed to upset all the plain things that the Lord was on to teach us. For instance, the parable of the pounds, and the parable of the talents, very obviously are church-aged parables, and apply to us to this day.

The parable of the marriage of the king's son also has application here. So now I'm going to read my little piece of a hymn as a redemption hymn. I don't agree with all its theology, but it expresses very well a yearning which comes down through the ages to us.

Father, let thy kingdom come. Let it come with living power. Speak at length the final word.

Usher in the triumph hour. As it came in days of old in the deepest hearts of men, when thy martyrs died for thee, let it come, O God, again. Tyrant thrones and idol shrines, let them from their place be hurled.

Enter on thy better reign. Wear the crown of thine own world. O what long sad years have gone since thy church was taught this prayer.

O what eyes have watched and wept for the dawning everywhere. Break, triumphant day of God, break at last our hearts to cheer. Throbbing souls and holy songs wait to hail thy dawning here.

Empires, temples, scepters, thrones, may they all for God be one. And in every human heart, Father, let thy kingdom come. We may not agree with the whole expression of that hymn, but there is no doubt that down through the ages there has been a longing that there shall be a manifestation of the triumph of the Christ.

And most of us have an idea that one way or another, we are living in those tremendous end times when the whole situation is going to be changed and the King of Kings will be manifested in this earth and the only man who has the answer to this world's problems will appear very, very soon. I don't know whether reading poetry makes me hot or what, but I was warned to wrap up for this meeting. This missionary expansion rapidly reached the ends of the Roman Empire.

You would soon find Christians by the end of the first century in Britain. It is probable that Pudenz and Linus and Claudia, who are mentioned in the Epistle to Romans, were British subjects. It reached right over to Babylon and Persia, all across the great Roman Empire, which really corresponded to the then known world.

The kingdom of God was preached, the good news of Christ crucified, risen, and Lord was made known. One of the influences which helped the gospel to spread was one which was not intended, and that was the spread of the Jewish dispersion. Ever since the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, many of the

Jewish people remained dispersed throughout the Middle East and Europe.

And many of them set up synagogues in the towns where they had their colonies or communities. So that you will find in Acts, that when Paul went to another city, the first place he would aim for would be the Jewish group there, usually a Jewish synagogue. At Philippi it was a small group of praying women down by the river.

Usually, though, it was to the synagogue he went. He carried out that principle to the Jew first. The result was that in almost every newly formed Christian assembly, you had some people, whether they were Jews or whether they were God-fearers, proselytes of the gate, who were converted to the faith of Jesus Christ and were not unacquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures.

So that they were able to stabilize others who turned to the faith. Yes, God, I think providentially, used the Jewish dispersion to be an introduction to Christianity. Another factor that helped the spread of the Gospel was the almost universal use of commercial Greek, the koine Greek.

Alexander the Great's empire had collapsed a couple of centuries before, but like the poor old British empire, it left the stamp of its language on the greater part of the known world. So that you could speak commercial Greek and trade in Egypt or Rome or even in quite distant parts of the empire way up in Gaul. You could still use a certain amount of commercial Greek and make yourself understood way over in Babylonia.

It was a useful trade language. So that there was a universal language already prepared for the spreading of the Gospel. Paul didn't have to go to language school before he became a missionary.

If he had, poor fellow, he wouldn't have got half the amount of work done that he did. In fact, there is an occasion recorded in the book of Acts where he did not understand the language of the people he was preaching to. That was at Lycaonia, where at Lystra he had preached in commercial Greek.

But the people of Lycaonia, although they could understand him as he addressed them, talked among themselves in their own Lycaonian language and said the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter because he was such a magnificent figure and Paul they called Mercury because he was the great talker. He must be the messenger of the gods.

And so it wasn't until the high priest from the local temple brought out oxen and garlands that Paul and Barnabas realized just what was taking place. And that's why it was at that late stage that they rushed in. They didn't understand the language of the people.

And I would suggest to you that in these urgent days there is not much need today to be bogged down by language school. There are many people who could be doing a fine job of spreading the Gospel but they're scared because they're not good at languages. You can usually make yourself known these days somewhere or another.

All over the world you'll find people who can interpret your English into a local dialect and there's a big job to be done. So don't let the language barrier scare you too much. People talk with great solemnity about getting to know the people.

That's not your job. Your job is to get them to know the Lord Jesus. Your job is to introduce them to the Saviour and leave the Holy Ghost to make the rest of the connections.

Another feature of course was the Pax Romanum. The Roman Empire had reached its zenith. Julius Caesar and then Augustus Caesar had spread the glory and the power of the Empire from the borders of the Rhine and the Danube right round the Mediterranean and as far as the Persian Gulf.

So all the way through Europe and the Middle East there was a peace governed by military Rome. Rome would take soldiers from Gaul and send them to Palestine or Persia. He would take Persians and Iranians and others and send them away to Gaul.

He kept his army on the move to prevent insurrection and so there was this continual interchange of language. Not only that, he realised that communications were essential to the holding of such a vast empire so his army a lot of the time was employed in making great roads across the country. We still have some of those in Britain today.

You can trace them across the tops of the hill ridges and still the Roman blocks are there not far beneath the surface. In my own town in little places you can dig up pieces of Roman paving dating from those days. So the whole stage was set.

It was the fullness of time for the Gospel. Another feature that lent wings to the Gospel was that the pagan world was getting sick of its own corruptions. How does that snatch of poetry go? Upon that old and pagan world a secret loathing fell.

Brutality and sated lust made human life a hell and everywhere men were longing for something better. It was the day when mankind should awaken to the Gospel and so the Gospel was spread from the one border of the Roman Kingdom to another within a century and a half of the Pentecostal day. Here is a quote from a heathen in the middle of the second century as he describes Christians.

About the middle of the second century an anonymous writer wrote to an inquirer called Diognetus giving a description of the life of the Christian community. His words aptly sum up the judgment which the whole Roman world ultimately had to accept. Christians, he said, displayed to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They live in their own countries but simply as sojourners yet endure all hardships as though they were foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as home yet their every homeland is foreign. They pass their days on earth but they are citizens of heaven.

They obey the laws of the land and at the same time surpass the law by their lives. They love all and are reviled by all. Good to God, something of the sort might be said of us in this our day.

The writer adds, the writer of this book adds the blood of the martyrs had watered the seed of the gospel and the fruit of the spirit was the testimony of the church. There was, however, another element already beginning to manifest itself.

When you turn to Paul's last recorded address to the church Acts chapter 20 he gathers the elders of the churches in the Ephesus area when he himself has stopped at Miletus the port and this is what he says to them You know, verse 18, from the first day that I came into Asia after what manner I have been with you at all seasons serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews and how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you but have showed you and taught you publicly and from house to house testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ Please note that verse which summarizes

the major themes of Paul's preaching and which should characterize

our preaching also repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ Magnificent summary And now behold I go bound in spirit to Jerusalem not knowing the things that befall me there save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me but none of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God Notice another characteristic of Pauline ministry the gospel of the grace of God And now behold I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God Notice again that preaching the kingdom of God Please if you still have any dispensational difficulties left let that one wipe them

out for you Paul preached the kingdom of God among the Gentiles when he preached repentance and faith You shall see my face no more Wherefore I take to you record this day I am pure from the blood of all men for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood For I know this, listen that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them Notice there are people who draw away disciples after themselves Some men point disciples to Christ Others draw away disciples after

themselves Notice the difference Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn every one night and day with tears And then he goes on to tell how he commends them to God to the word of his grace which is able to build them up Reminds them how he coveted no man's silver or gold How his own hands ministered to his necessities How they should support the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus It is more blessed to give than to receive He kneeled down and prayed with them They wept sore Sorry most of all that they should see his face no more Paul then, inspired by the success the purity and the power of his ministry was able to foretell with deep sorrow that declension would soon overtake the gospel Men from outside would join the church and teach

perverse things Men from among the eldership of the church would themselves for the sake of their own glory lead away disciples after themselves He saw in other words that apostasy of falling away was very near 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and to doctrines of devils speaking lies in hypocrisy having their conscience seared with a hot iron forbidding to marry commanding to abstain from meat which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth and then he tells Timothy to remind them of these things and to refuse profane and old wives' fables and to see that the gospel is kept pure meditate on these things give thyself

wholly to them so already Paul was saying to Timothy to follow along in these latter times some shall depart from the faith look again at 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 15 This thou knowest that all they which are in Asia that is the province which surrounds the town of Ephesus all they which are in Asia be turned away from me what already is Paul in prison reaching the end of his life knowing that soon he will depart this life soon his martyrdom will arrive but he has to write sadly to Timothy that this thou knowest that all they which are in Asia that is the very best area of his ministry be turned away from me of whom are figelis and hermogenes and he speaks of other better brethren chapter 3 of the same epistle verse 1 This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come he

describes the sort of people that would arrive in those later days and now then verse 12 and 13 yea all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall slough a persecution but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived that is in the church chapter 4 verse 3 for the time will come when they will not endure a sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they be to themselves teachers having itching ears they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fable culture seeing clearly that the testimony which appeared at first sight to be so vigorous was already beginning to decay corruption already moving in on the scene notice what John says in his epistle first epistle of John an old man writing some 30 years after Paul's epistle 1

John 2 18 little children it is the last time as ye have heard that antichrist shall come even now there are many antichrists whereby we know that it is the last time they went out from us but they were not of us if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us notice then where these antichrists appear they appear in the church the word anti the Greek prefix anti does not mean usually against it means instead of is that shocking? if you check up on a Greek lexicon the word, the prefix anti more often means instead of these people who put themselves in the place of Christ they claim to have better teaching than others they claim to have secret revelations they draw away people after themselves

in a few minutes we shall be looking at the Gnostic heresies where people claim special kind of esoteric knowledge which they added to the scriptures to lead away people after themselves in the purity of the church in John's time these people could not endure for long the purity of the gospel and testimony which John and his associates preached and demonstrated but before long these corrupt persons would be able to stay inside a corrupter fold 2 Peter 2 verses 1-3 but there were false prophets also among people even as there shall be false teachers among you here it is again who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction and many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be

evil spoken of and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not and he goes on to speak of the great judgments that will fall upon these people he describes them further on they shall receive verse 13 they shall receive the reward of unrighteousness as they that counted pleasure to riot in the daytime spots they are and blemishes sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin beguiling unstable souls and heart they have exercised with covetous practices cursed children which have forsaken the right way and are gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Balaam who loved the wages of

unrighteousness that is he wanted to prophesy for the money that he would get but was rebuked for his iniquity these are wells without water imagine a well in a desert to which the traveler comes looking for something to quench his thirst the well is dry clouds carried with a tempest to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever for when they speak great swelling words of vanity they are going to be boastful and proud they allure through the lust of the flesh through much wantonness those that were a clean escape from them who live in error while they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption for of whom a man is overcome of the same he is brought in bondage Peter is describing something which is beginning to take place in his own time and is destined to

increase see that Jews Jews is an epistle I won't read it all or else you'll get so depressed you'll never come again just verse 11 verse 11 if you will woe unto them they have gone in the way of Cain a

blasphemous sacrifice and ran greedily after the heir of Balaam for reward they are after the money in the ministry and perished in the gainsaying of Korah they are ambitious to take the place of God's chosen readers well now that's a fairly sad picture but Jesus said something about it too in his parables of the kingdom he described over and over again mixed conditions in the kingdom his disciples couldn't understand what he was getting at the crowds to whom the stories were told only thought they were nice stories and never bothered to ask about the meaning but the disciples did and

Jesus gave them gave them explanations and he said to his disciples who were inquiring in the house afterwards hear ye therefore the parable of the sower when one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart failure number one he that receiveth the seed into stony places the same as he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it yet hath he not root in himself that deareth for a while when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word soon he is offended failure number two he also that receiveth seed among thorns as he that heareth the word and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becometh unfruitful failure number three but he that receiveth

seed into the good ground as he that heareth the word understandeth it which also beareth fruit bringeth forth some an hundred some sixty some thirtyfold so in his first parable he described a mixed response to the gospel matter of a second another parable put he forth unto them saying the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way but when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit then appeared the tares also so the servant of the householder came and said to him sir did thou not sow good seed in my field from whence then hath it tares he said unto them an enemy hath done this the servant said wilt thou then that we go and gather them up nay he said lest while ye gather

up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them let both grow together until the harvest I will say to the reapers gather ye together first the tares bind them into bundles to burn them that gather the wheat into my barn so the second parable shows that wherever the gospel goes and the sower spreads his good seed close behind him while men sleep the enemy will sow tares the kingdom during this church age is a mixed field of good and evil the next parable is the story of the mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field which is indeed the least of all seeds but when it is grown it is a great cyst among herbs and they come as a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof that parable has been interpreted in two entirely opposite ways Jesus himself did

not give any explanation he had already explained the first two as being parables indicating mixture of good and evil and I think it is likely that the same theme applies to the parable of the mustard tree I have seen a mustard tree grow ten feet high but no bird would lodge in the branches of it for a mustard tree to grow a mustard seed to grow into a great tree where birds lodge is just about an impossibility in nature this looks like unnatural growth when Jesus was talking about the first parable he said to them don't you understand this parable how then will you understand all the parables in the first parable who were the birds of the air the parable of the sower who were the birds of the air the children of the wicked one if the wicked one comes and takes away the seed that's like

the wicked one that's actually to read it when he sowed some seeds fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up when anyone heareth the word of the kingdom and understands it not then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart so is it not likely that in this third and unexplained parable he is describing again a mixed condition in which the growth will be

unnaturally great and will provide shelter for the wicked one is that not in harmony with the earlier parables and with what we have already seen in prophetic fore view in the epistle another parable spake he unto them the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leaven once again he doesn't explain it we good people of a

western civilization well acquainted with the use of leaven jump to the conclusion that by leaven he means goodness but to a Hebrew to a Jew that conclusion would never arise because right through the old testament leaven is used as a symbol of evil, it had to be kept out of the sacrifices the only sacrifice in which leaven was permitted was the Pentecostal sacrifice which typified the church and was only accepted by reason of the blood sacrifice offered with it Paul says purge out therefore the leaven of hypocrisy Jesus says beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Herodians right the way through the scripture leaven is used as a symbol of evil secretly spreading this parable is much more likely to have implied evil coming into the pure meal of the word and intermingling with it

and spoiling it than to indicate the goodness of God let me come to the last parable again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind which when it was full they drew to shore and sat down the one net and gathered the good into vessels that cast the bad away in the kingdom net of the preaching of the name of Jesus Christ are found both good and bad gathered in at the end and not separated until then see then how our Lord teaches this kind of thing look again at Mark 13 verse 21 he's saying to his disciples then if any man shall say to you lo here is Christ or lo he is there, to read him not for false Christs and false prophets shall arise and show signs and wonders to seduce if it were possible even the elect that is they will arise

among the elect not some odd turning up in India necessarily although there are some like that I met followers of one man who claims to be Christ who has a million followers today but the association here is with the disciples and the elect verse 12 now brother shall betray the brother to death the father the son, children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death once again evil within the fellowship well well well and the truth is it has all taken place as we look into the first century of the Christian era we find that one of the first things that begins to be lost sight of is the reality of the gospel of the grace of God those lovely things which you read and delight in, in Paul's epistles soon ceased to be understood grace became some kind of magical thing

usually associated with baptism and instead of the plain preaching of the gospel you'll find in almost only records that have come down to us an exhortation to obey the bishop and join the church to them that was salvation obey the bishop join the church even in the writings of dear Ignatius, he was certainly a believer and a follower of Christ you get him telling you that there is no salvation for you unless the bishop baptizes you so quickly had corruption come into the church he was martyred Ignatius was martyred in A.D. 115 about 20 years after the book of Revelation was written so soon has corruption come in dear old Polycarp a bishop of Smyrna a lovely man, who loved the Lord and was glad to die for Him I think I had his testimony somewhere I won't stop for a bit he was delighted to

die for the Lord Jesus but even he said some similar things emphasizing the importance of the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and saying without these things properly administered by the church there was no salvation these things were assumed by the second century after that no one argued about them from then on everybody who we know about didn't raise any dissent to this general idea of baptism and associated with baptism was the thought that it had to be done by an officially ordained clergyman may you know that Paul was baptized by an ordinary man named Ananias but now

the church has developed the doctrine may be of the Nicolaitans which is against the laity I conquer the laity is spreading and there is becoming an increasing difference between the clerical

class set aside and the laity soon baptism became a very important affair in which you wore special white robes and you had special periods of fastings and evolutions and it became an elaborate ceremony instead of a simple initiation Tertullian, another of the church fathers writing in the second century protests that in many churches they are now beginning to practice infant baptism and he says that's wrong you must first believe before you can be baptized but all around him the idea of infant baptism was spreading as more and more converts were being added to the church especially rich and important people they would come and say but what about my children can't they be saved and the clergy already coming into prominence decided that children should be baptized too or else they would be

lost remember Jesus said suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven see now how quickly that doctrine became perverted into a parody for now they began to baptize children on the basis of that very scripture and you know that if you attend an infant baptism service today you will find that very same scripture quoted suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven now then why are they baptized so that they shall be saved oh and what happens to children who are not baptized even children infants who haven't committed sin and yet are not baptized the poor church later on had to thrash that one out and you know what they did they invented the hideous doctrine of limbo it was tragic

but they said that there was a place which was not heaven but was not hell where those unfortunate infants undaptized would have to exist forever and ever Jesus said suffer them to come to me his followers so called now consign them to a place which is half way between heaven and hell so the parody see how salvation has been parodied into this baptismal regeneration thing into submission to the bishop and the clergy see how now this wonderful attitude of Christ to children has with a few simple shifts been changed to a parody of what Christ thought corruption entering into the church the gift of the spirit was soon lost to view prophecy managed to stay on for a little while, we'll talk more about that later Paul's teaching was certainly lost, no one understood a bit about that and instead

of it, legal submission was brought in that is obey don't ask questions, obey us we are your conscience and this of course saved people from lots of trouble and questioning and made all things easy for everybody just get baptized, and then of course it became a little while later more convenient to sprinkle instead of douse and then you could get converts very fast indeed the operations of the Holy Ghost were lost the cross breathed out of the area and in place came lying miracles lying miracles the bones of saints began to have a special importance if you made a pilgrimage and prayed to the bones of a saint, you'd probably get healed lying miracles from the pure healing message of the Gospels down to heathen corruption through all this ambitious men as the church grew and became more

powerful, were seeking and obtaining office men who had no true calling of God but who were eager in their lust for power were seeking office in the early church there was a simple little reaction to all this some men withdrew and so you have the phenomenon in the second century of the beginning of hermitages holy men who felt that they could not be corrupted with this watering down of New Testament truth and Christ's holy standards instead of standing and facing it and preaching the truth pulled away into obscurity spent their days fasting, praying beating themselves, often in great ignorance still in darkness as to their own salvation but at least protesting against the evils of a corrupt and fast corrupting church I think we'll give it a break there because I'm going to talk later on

about the purifying agencies

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1359.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/edgar-f-parkyns/church-history-session-2-growth-from-antioch/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net