

The Dissent and Nonconformity Series

Number 1



# The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont

Volume 1 of 2

Samuel Morland



***Non dilexerunt animam suam usque ad mortem.***

The Latin, *Non dilexerunt animam suam usque ad mortem*, translates, "... they loved not their lives unto the death." Revelation 12:11

**On The Cover:** *Massacres at Salzburg* took place in 1528 when Prince-Archbishop Cardinal Matthaus Lang of Salzburg issued mandates sending police in search of Anabaptists. Many were captured and killed. This engraving illustrates the sufferings and sacrifices these Dissenters endured when their government, in conjunction with established religion, attempted to coerce and impose uniformity of religious belief. Hence, this picture is a reminder of the cost of religious liberty and the ever-present need to maintain the separation of church and state. We use this art to represent our Dissent and Nonconformity Series.

H I S T O R Y  
OF  
The Evangelical Churches



**SAMUEL MORLAND**  
1625-1693

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
The Evangelical Churches  
Of the VALLEYS of  
PIEMONTE.

CONTAINING  
A most exact *Geographical* Description of the Place, and  
a faithfull Account of the Doctrine, Life, and Persecutions of  
the Ancient Inhabitants.

TOGETHER,  
With a most naked and punctual Relation of the late  
BLOODY MASSACRE, 1655. And a Narrative of  
all the following Transactions, to the Year of Our LORD, 1658.

All which are justified, partly by divers Ancient *Manuscripts*  
written many hundred Years before CALVIN or LUTHER, and  
partly by other most Authentick Attestations: The true  
*Originals* of the greatest part whereof, are to be seen in their proper Languages  
by all the curious, in the Publick Library of the famous University  
of CAMBRIDGE.

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Collected and compiled with much pains and industry,  
By *SAMUEL MORLAND*, Esq;  
During his abode in *Geneva*, in quality of HIS  
HIGHNESS *Commissioner Extraordinary* for the Affairs  
of the said VALLEYS and particularly for the  
*Distribution* of the *Collected Moneys*, among the remnant of those poor distressed People.

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REVEL. 6.9.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the Altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,  
and for the testimony which they held; And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long O Lord, holy and  
true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

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BOOKS 1 & 2 of 4

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LONDON.

Printed by *Henry Hills*, one of His Highness's Printers, for  
*Adoniram Byfield*, and are to be sold at the three Bibles in *Cornhill*, next to *Popes-head Alley*, 1658.



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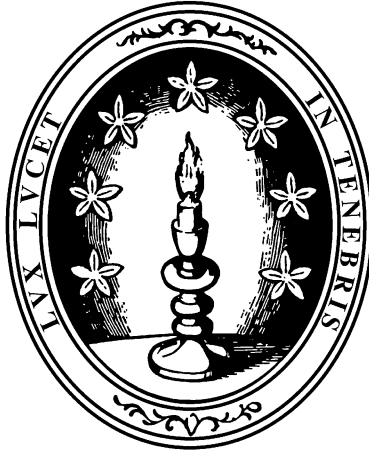
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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth.  
-- *Psalm 60:4*

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by*

**THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.**

No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive  
Paris, Arkansas 72855  
(501) 963-3831



**THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM**

*lux lucet in tenebris*

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN #1-57978-541-7



THE  
Authors Epistle Dedicatory

*To His most Serene Highness,*

**O L I V E R,**

By the Grace of God, *Lord Protector of*  
*England, Scotland, and Ire-*  
*land, &c.*

*May it please YOUR HIGHNESS,*



When I consider the great presumption of the *Age* we live in, and how even the meanest *Writers* think it an undervaluing to their *Works*, if they have not the *Greatest of Princes* for their *Patrons*, I am loth to press in with the crowd to importune *Your Highness* by a *Dedication* of the following *History*; But when I call to minde how exceeding precious in *Your* thoughts the lives and liberties

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berties of those poor distressed *Members of Christ*  
 have been ( who are the onely subject of my  
 Discourse ) and how deeply their bleeding con-  
 dition hath always affected *Your* very heart, I  
 cannot but hope *You* will vouchsafe to own  
 the weak endeavours ( though of the unwor-  
 thiest of *Your* servants ) for preserving the name  
 and memory of those *Ancient and Primitive*  
*Professors* to future Generations : Especially  
 considering that my design herein is very sub-  
 servient to that great end, which *You* have pro-  
 posed to *your Self* ever since *Providence* blest  
 these *Three Nations* with *Your* happy Govern-  
 ment, Namely, the promoting of the general  
 interest of Gods people throughout the *Christian*  
 world. It is an observation of that *Excellent*  
 Prince, the *Duke of Rohan*, that *The Interest of*  
*the chief Magistrate of England is, by all means to*  
*become Head of the Reformed Party throughout*  
*Europe ;* And it is *Your Highness* Glory and  
 Crown, that *You* have formed all *Your* Coun-  
 sels in Order thereunto, and laying aside all o-  
 ther Reasons of *State*, have adhered onely to  
 this, that *Your own Interest may appear one and the*  
*same with the Universal Interest of the Evangeli-*  
*cal Churches in their respective Nations.* The Pie-  
 ty of which Resolution *The Lord* himself hath  
 born



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born witness to, by a continued series of wonderfull Providences and Heavenly benedictions that have alwayes accompanied *You* in *your* most honourable and Heroick Enterprises; Whereas those other *Princes* that went before *You*, who had little regard in the administration of their Government, either to the honest Maximes of *Humane Policy*, or to the wholesome Rules of the *Holy Scriptures* ( which they ought to have bound about their necks, and to have graven upon the *Tables of their hearts* ) but miserably spent the best of their powerfull Interests, and precious talents in persecuting tender consciences in their own Dominions, and most treacherously betraying the *Protestant Cause* in *Germany, France,* and other Countries, did at last to their great astonishment, even in the height of those their oppressions, and in the midst of all their jollities, behold with their eyes a *MENE TEKEL* upon the *Walls* of their *Palaces* and *Banqueting Houses*, and of late years in all the branches of their *Families* have tasted the bitter fruits of their own unrighteous doings. This is a Doom which was long since pronounced against them by the most pious *Pastors* and *Professors* of foreign *Churches*, who oft times heretofore have been heard to say, *That God would one day render*

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*a recompence to that House for all their perfidious dealings towards his poor servants, and now many of those godly men, who have lived to see the execution of those his righteous judgements, considering on the other side the wonderful passages of Divine Providence leading the way to the extirpation of that Family, and to the placing of your Highness in the Princely Dignity, have of late frequently declared (as I my self have been divers times an ear witness) with tears of joy in their eyes, that they looked on You as a man miraculously raised up by God, and endowed with an extraordinary spirit of Wisdome and Courage, to plead the Cause of his afflicted ones against the Mighty, that they may no more oppress.*

Who is there so ignorant in these Our dayes who knows not, that all the Peace, Tranquillity, and Priviledges, which those of the Reformed Religion enjoy at present in any part of the European World, does some way or other own your Patronage and Protection? And who is there likewise that knowes not that when first You were call'd forth in the view of the World, and singled out as a chosen Instrument to go forth to the help of the Lord against the Mighty, and to fight His Battels against

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gainst the great Persecutors, the estate and condition of the *Church Militant* was but at a very low ebb? The mighty floods of *Pope-ry* and *Atheisme* were broken in upon the *Isles* of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, and the poor *Protestants* in all other parts were even sinking down under the *heavie burdens* laid upon their shoulders by those cruel *Task-masters* of the *Church of Rome*; Yea the *Plowers* were almost every where *plowing and making long furrowes upon the backs* of the faithfull ones in all the *Quarters* and *Corners* of their *Habitations*! It was a time when *the Enemies of the Lord* took *crafty counsel* together against His people, and were confederate against His hidden ones (*The Tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites! Amaleck and the Philistims, with them that dwell at Tyre!*) They said one to another, *Come and let us cut them off from being a people, that so their name may be had no more in remembrance.*

And the truth is, they had undoubtedly compassed their hellish designs, had not the *Shepherd of Israel* awoke as a man out of sleep, and found out a man (I mean your *Highness*) to stand in the gap, girding You with strength unto the *Battel*, and putting his own sword into Your hand, to smite those  
his

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*his enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual reproach.*

The *Spaniard*, that old Enemy of *England* and *Religion*, is sufficiently able even already to give the world a very clear account of the blessed fruits and happy success of Your Noble and Princely undertakings; For here indeed You seemed to lay the axe to the root of the tree, when that ancient *Quarrel* revived again, which had lain asleep ever since the days of *Queen Elizabeth* of glorious memory. That *Princess*, looking upon this branch of *The House of Austria* as the main pillar of the *Romish* power and persecution, did set her whole shoulder to the work of overturning it, in hope to have put an end to the great *Mystery of Iniquity* and Tyranny exercised upon the bodies and consciences of mankind; But the measure of their iniquity being not yet filled up, *She* was not permitted by *God* to accomplish her design: And now after the long Reigns of two unhappy Kings, the *Martial* spirit and renown of *Our Nation* being raised again under the auspicious Name and Counsels of *Your Highness*, equal to the best and most victorious of *Our Ancestors*, all things seem to work, as if the final accomplishment of what she intended, were reserved for

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for Your Triumph and Trophees. You have with Your *Naval Forces*, in a manner held him shackled, and shut him up within his own Dominions for several years, In a word his treasures are almost exhausted, and the *Veins* which should supply him, are intercepted, besides in credit he is almost become bankrupt; so that if it please the *Almighty* to crown Your endeavours with a few more successes, a fair stroke will be given in a short time for excluding him from any considerable interest or influence in these *North* parts of the World. The fear of this, is that which made him of late betake himself to the same ignoble practises and attempts by *Assassinations*, and plotted *Insurrections* against the person and Government of Your *Highness*, as He practised of old against the person and Government of *That Renowned Queen*; But as God was graciously pleased to make *Her* fortunate in the discovering and apprehending such *Assassinats* and *Traitors* from time to time, and to continue her in a long and prosperous Reign, so Your *HIGHNESS* having hitherto been no less remarkably happy in having always Your eyes as it were miraculously enlightned, by the *God of Light and Truth*, to foresee the mischief, and pass by, while the intended *A-*

*ctors*

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*ctors* thereof have happily perished upon the points of their own swords, and *fallen headlong into that very pit of destruction which they had digged for others*, We are encouraged to hope, that the same *God* will vouchsafe to us this great blessing, that *You* likewise may long sway the Scepter of these Nations, and go in and out before us, for the perfecting of those blessed purposes, which he has put into *Your* heart for the good of his people, both here and in foreign parts; that so *You* may ( as *You* have done upon all occasions ) *deliver the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him; that You* may continue to be *eyes to the blinde, and feet to the lame; to break the jawes of the wicked, and to pluck the prey out of his teeth; to loose the heavie burden, and to let the oppressed go free.* Though *Your Highness* delights more to do these things than to hear of them, yet give me leave to tell *You*, that these *Your actions of Mercy and Righteousness* are the true *Walls and Bulmarks* of these *Your Islands*! these are the very *Weapons* wherewith you have so oft *run through a Troop, and broken the gates of brass, and cut the barrs of iron in sunder!* Yea I am bold to add, that *the blessing of the poor Waldenses* which were ready to perish, together with *that of the Polonian*

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*lonian and Bohemian Exiles, is already visibly come upon You, and had no small influence in all Your late successes. May the God and Father of Mercies still go on to open the Treasures of his Grace, and rain down his blessings upon Your Princely Person and pious undertakings, for the honour of his great Name, and the good of his poor afflicted Church and People: for which end and purpose all honest and true hearted English souls ought to bow their knees daily to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that so (if it be his good pleasure that Our eyes shall see those happy days) the glory of his Gospel may by Your means be more highly advanced, and that the Top stone of that Heavenly building being at last laid, all the people may cry Grace, Grace unto it. This is the unfeigned prayer of,*

Your Highness most humble and  
most faithfull Subject and  
Servant,

S A M U E L M O R L A N D .

The coalition of church and state (corpus Christianum) has continually had outspoken opponents since its inception in the 4th century under Constantine. All through the long medieval night of papal terror and up to the present day of accommodation and compromise, there has never been a time when the voice of dissent and nonconformity was not heard, protesting against established religion and coerced uniformity. The most prominent target of that protest has been the arrogant usurpation of Christ's Kingly Authority and Headship over His churches and the souls of men, whether that usurpation was Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or any other. As it has been, so shall it ever be. This enduring testimony of dissent, this genuine Christian nonconformity arises as the inevitable response of the Christian soul to the internal witness of the Spirit toward the truth and supreme authority of God's Word. Consequently, the origin, nature and history of Christ's churches can never be adequately discerned or explained apart from some grasp of the Biblical Truths advocated and defended throughout the history of genuine Christian Dissent and Nonconformity. As Dr. J. S. Whale, former Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Mansfield College, Oxford University and President of Cheshunt College, Cambridge University, said, *"Dissent, not only from the centralized absolutism of Rome, but also from the State establishments of Protestantism in the Old World is an historic fact of enduring influence. To account for the tradition of liberty in the 'free world' of today without reference to dissent would be to read modern history with one eye shut."*

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It is not affiliated with, or financially supported by any association, convention or particular denomination. It is financed by individual donations, foundation grants, bequeathed inheritances, annual society membership dues, but primarily by the sale of its own publications.

ISBN 1-57978-541-7



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