

Montanus had a wide influence nevertheless and probably served to offer a course corrective. Tertullian was influenced by Montanism and for part of his life is identified with the movement. The degree of biblicicity that marked the earlier stages of the group drew a loyal following but this was dissipated with the excesses of "revelations" that would come in later times. This growth factor cost the montanist movement its more balanced wings and the group eventually disappeared.

Now a word of caution: Those who use church history in an apologetic sense like to defend their views on the basis of the fact that they were found in earlier periods of church life. Remember that credence for one's theological position must come from the Bible and not from historical continuity. The very worst of stuff is also found in early church life. The history of the church serves a great illustrative capacity but does not become the norm of truth.

III.2.d.  
(continued)

#### Novatianism

Here is something of a beginning of the endless number of struggles with regard to the authority, strength, and purity of the local church. It grew from the problem of handling the "lapsed", those who had fallen away in times of persecution, and how the church could now rescue or condemn those so victimized. Please review the Trajan and Diocletian persecutions at this time and note in detail the methods used to subjugate the Christians and compromise them in the false worship systems. The question that arose after these persecutions is noted above and became of note as persons wanted to return to the fellowship of the Christian community. Some of the lapsed would have tender consciences and be willing to submit to any discipline; others would be as hard as nails and demand free acceptance just because they asked for it. And in the church there would be those who felt the lapsed should be put through a second persecution before being allowed to return and others who would say... "take 'em back as quick as possible." The question then was, how shall the lapsed be restored and what stress may be placed on their repentance, etc. How can the church receive them and still remain pure.

In Rome the issue surfaced when Cornelius was bishop of Rome (251-253) and continued into the bishopric of