

## Church History Lecture Notes

### 1. Introduction

#### A. Warrant for the Study of Church History

1. The Bible does not teach us everything about the outworking of God's plan of redemption. Although this may sound like a controversial thing to say in a church that believes (rightly) in the sufficiency, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture, it is because of what Scripture teaches that I draw this conclusion cf. Matt 28:18-20; Rev 21:1-4. We learn from church history how God's plan of redemption has been worked out from the time of the end of the first century until today. "The events of this world's history set the stage upon which the drama of redemption is enacted."<sup>1</sup>
2. The sovereignty of God over all of history cf. Isa 46:8-11. History is *His* story just as much as it is ours. Therefore we have an opportunity through the study of church history to see how God protected and preserved his people to the present day so as to bring about the sure accomplishment of his redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ.
3. The Christian faith is historical in character cf. Luke 2:1-2. Studying church history demonstrates concretely that the Christian faith is historical in character – it deals with real people in real places in real time.

#### B. The Value of Church History

1. In order to understand where we're going, we need to understand where we came from. This is the value of history in general. Knowing your trajectory allows you to understand yourself better, to put your experience in the proper perspective.
2. Without it, Christian theology becomes theoretical rather than practical. Christianity is first and foremost the acts of God in time (and ultimately in Christ) more than it is morality, doctrinal formulations, or a worldview.
3. The study of church history provides perspective on the church's interaction with surrounding culture. Mark Noll gives the example of choice of church music. Almost all the issues we face in the modern era have been addressed at one point or another – politics, art, music, economics, etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> Iain D Campbell, *Heroes and Heretics: Pivotal Moments in Twenty Centuries of the Church* (Christian Focus, 2004), 10.

4. But perhaps the most valuable thing about church history for Christians is that it provides perspective on the study of the Scriptures cf. 2 Tim 3:14-15.

I'll begin with a couple of helpful scholarly quotes and move on to flesh out how church history provides perspective on our study of the Bible.

The discipline of church history cannot by itself establish the rightness or wrongness of what ought to be believed. On the other hand, Evangelicals in particular, precisely because of their high view of Scripture, have often been content to know far too little about the history of the church; and efforts to overcome this common ignorance can only be commended. Thoughtful Christians who sincerely seek to base their beliefs on the Scriptures will be a little nervous if the beliefs they think are biblical form no part of the major streams of tradition throughout the history of the church; and, therefore, historical theology, though it cannot in itself justify a belief system, not only sharpens the categories and informs the debate but serves as a major checkpoint to help us prevent uncontrolled speculation, purely private theological articulation, and overly imaginative exegesis.<sup>2</sup>

If a contemporary believer wants to know the will of God as revealed in Scripture on any of these matters, or on thousands more, it is certainly prudent to study the Bible carefully for oneself. But it is just as prudent to look for help, to realize that the question I am bringing to Scripture has doubtless been asked before and will have been addressed by others who were at least as saintly as I am, at least as patient in pondering the written Word, and at least as knowledgeable about the human heart.<sup>3</sup>

- a. From our historical vantage we can see that interpretations of the past, even those that were thought to be very persuasive, were in fact distortions of Scripture. This will function to make us more tentative about our own interpretative conclusions, conclusions we are drawing for the present time.
- b. It provides perspective on what is important vs. what is more or less ancillary. What is essential and what is non-essential? We will see threads running through the tapestry of church history that reemerge or persist in successive eras – they are not fads, but “classics” of the Christian faith.

---

<sup>2</sup> D A Carson, “Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture,” in D A Carson and John D Woodbridge (eds), *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1986, 1995), 18.

<sup>3</sup> Mark A Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Baker, 1997), 16.

- c. It helps us to realize how dependent we are on Christians who have gone before us for many of the doctrines that for us are forgone conclusions but historically had to be fought for in order to protect the Christian faith from the onslaught of false teaching.

### c. Church History and the History of Dogma

1. Church history is not simply the story of what happened to the church, who the major players were, and when these things happened, but precisely because it is *church* history our study will necessarily involve a study of Christian teaching cf. 1 Tim 3:15.
2. Christian teaching is always in some sense culturally limited and in some sense defined – doctrines are formulated and kinks worked out always against the backdrop of particular places and times by particular persons. Sometimes people get nervous to think about doctrinal development over time as if it somehow threatens the stability of the teaching of Scripture. Some think that if doctrine has changed over time, then we have nothing stable, no foundation on which to build our faith. Two issues are important to recognize here:
  - a. First, since dogma is the human *formulation* of biblical doctrine, we should not expect it to be infallible. Quite the opposite – we should expect it to be flawed at some points. So insofar as dogma is not infallible, we should expect some development over time.
  - b. Second, to the extent that the dogmas comport with Scripture, it is not really fair to say that such a dogma was “discovered” or “new.” It was always there, it just took difficulty to cause it to come to the surface. Different issues threatening the church (especially doctrinal) cause the church to reread Scripture – to read it with greater care and with particular interest to the issues at hand. Such close reading tends to yield new results – “new” not in the sense of finding something that was never there to begin with, but “new” in the sense of discovering something for the first time that was always there, but never noticed. The rub forced us to look at it. And the rub paved new pathways for further doctrinal study (and development), which heretofore had never been blazed. “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”<sup>4</sup>

### d. The Limits of Church History

---

<sup>4</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (University of Chicago, 1971), 9.

1. Not infallible
    - a. No infallible sources
    - b. No infallible interpretation. Although this is true with respect to our interpretation of Scripture, it is further complicated by the fallibility of the sources we use for our study.
  2. Limited information
    - a. In terms of what is available to us (the evidence that survived)
    - b. In terms of whose perspective is preserved (the learned and others in power)
- E. Church History and the Development of Godly Character
1. Humility: as much as anything church history is a record of our frailty and failures. It is not because we are so much that the Christian church has continued to this day, it is because God has been patient with us and faithful to his promises.
  2. Gratitude: Because of what God has done for us, not only will we refuse to congratulate ourselves for our historical accomplishments, but we will be filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness to get us here.

## **Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 2**

### **2. The First Century**

#### **A. The Historical Context of the Early Church**

1. Second Temple Judaism: This phrase describes the society and culture of the Jews after they returned from the Babylonian exile (538 BC) and built the second Temple to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.
  - a. Unifying factors: Although the Judaism of the first century was marked by great diversity, there were, however, several factors that unified the period.
    - 1) Culture. More than doctrine, Jewish culture bound the Jews together. No single interpretation necessary. Deviation on a matter of lifestyle, especially eating, washing, ritual purity would bring about instant ostracism.
    - 2) Identity as God's chosen people. Exile showed the Jews how small they were and how in spite of (because of?) their size God chose them to be the bearers of his truth. It also made them sensitive to idolatry, since they saw the exile as punishment for their spiritual adultery. They retained a deep sense of commitment to fulfill their divine obligations as his chosen ones.
    - 3) The land. God placed them in a particular place and promised that it would be their land forever.
    - 4) The Temple, priesthood, and festivals. To speak against the Temple was to speak against God cf. John 2:19.
    - 5) Synagogue. This was especially so for Diaspora Jews (the some six million Jews who lived outside of Palestine). The synagogues at Jerusalem are said to have numbered 300-500. There was also at least one in every town. It was primarily a school where children learned the Law and traditions of the elders. It was also a place of worship, civil litigation, and socialization.
    - 6) Law and the traditions, especially circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath.
    - 7) Messianic anticipation. Especially in light of Roman occupation in the land God promised, there was widespread belief that He would

choose and send a representative (a Messiah) to defeat Rome and usher in a new era of universal peace and prosperity with Jerusalem at the center of that new era. In this connection, there was a high degree of fervor, a sense that God was about to do something.

- 8) Very closely related to their common messianic expectations was a worldview or outlook that was adopted by many Jews in the first century called "apocalypticism." It had four main characteristics:
  - a) Sovereignty and transcendence of God
  - b) Cosmic struggle between good and evil, God and Satan
  - c) There is a spiritual order determining the course of history; pessimism about man's ability to change it
  - d) Expectation of the cataclysmic intervention of God on behalf of his people against the supernatural powers of evil
  
- b. Diversity: This diversity was seen especially in the different Jewish religious groups and their thought that peppered the social and theological landscape.
  - 1) Pharisees
    - a) High interest in keeping Judaism Jewish. Did not want Judaism influenced by the Greco-Roman world around them that dominated their existence.
    - b) Emphasized practical piety. How does the individual keep the Torah in everyday life? They were the biblical fundamentalists of their day. In a sense, they are the theological good guys, and if Jesus is closer to any group it would be them. They were very concerned with enabling all of the people to keep the Law.
    - c) The most influential group among the people, especially through the synagogues.
    - d) Emphasized the tradition of the elders. Their intention was not to add to Scripture; instead, it was to make the Hebrew Bible practical (see "b" above). Regrettably, however, they used their tradition as a way of relaxing God's standards, to get around their duty to him cf. Mark 7:8.

- e) Theological emphases: They believed in the true and living God, angels and spirits, the sovereignty of God, prayer, the necessity of faith and good works, the last judgment, a coming Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead.
- 2) Sadducees
- a) Not influential among common people. They were not looked on favorably. The Jewish Historian, Josephus (AD 37-100), describes them this way: "The Sadducees...are, even among themselves, rather boorish in their behavior, and in their intercourse with their peers are as rude as to aliens."<sup>5</sup>
  - b) Belonged to priestly aristocracy, had influence in places of power through family ties.
  - c) Held only to Torah – the 5 books of Moses – with the rest of the Hebrew Bible considered valuable but uninspired.
  - d) More likely to cooperate with the Roman secular authorities, as they were more embracing of Greco-Roman culture. In addition, since they rejected the resurrection of the dead, they were very concerned with life in this world, especially money and political power.
  - e) They were theologically at odds with the Pharisees at virtually every point.
- 3) Essenes: We don't know about them from the New Testament, but Josephus and Philo (c. 20 BC-AD 50) mention them. And if, as most scholars suspect, they are the group that kept the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, we can suggest the following characteristics:
- a) Proselytes underwent a rigorous initiation process lasting 2-3 years and including a series of solemn vows.
  - b) Theologically speaking, they believed themselves to be God's faithful remnant spoken of in the Old Testament; spent much time studying and copying the Scriptures.
  - c) Strict predestinarians

---

<sup>5</sup> C K Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Writings from Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire That Illuminate Christian Origins* (Harper Collins, 1956, 1987), 159.

- d) Believed in preexistent souls and immortality
  - e) Looked for a political Messiah(s)
  - f) Lived communally (or sequestered in communities)
  - g) Engaged in asceticism, including celibacy
- 4) Zealots
- a) Used physical violence to overthrow their political oppressors and to bring about the rule of God through the people of Israel.
  - b) Considered themselves patriots; however, they were often little more than hired guns (assassins).
  - c) Theologically on the same page with the Pharisees.
- 5) Samaritans
- a) Multiethnic, multicultural, syncretic Judaism
  - b) Not permitted to participate in the rebuilding the Temple
  - c) Very resentful of the Jews—desecrated the Temple in 6 AD
  - d) Set up their own Temple on Mt. Gerizim
  - e) Theological similarities with the Jews
    - Monotheistic
    - kept the festivals
    - committed to the Law
    - practiced circumcision
    - looked for the Prophet/Messiah
  - f) Theological peculiarities
    - refused to acknowledge Jewish Temple
    - used only Torah (and their own version at that)
    - possibly did not believe in the resurrection

- 6) Peasantry, the *am ha-aretz*, “the people of the land,” a derogatory term to refer to the majority of the people living in Palestine – they were poor and “unlearned” (i.e., they did not study with the best teachers) cf. John 7:49. This group made up most of Jesus’ disciples.
2. Roman Rule (63 BC-AD 70): During the first century, the whole of Mediterranean Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East was controlled by the Roman Empire. Below are four unifying features of the Roman Empire during this time:<sup>6</sup>
- a. Political loyalty
    - 1) One man ruled the empire – the emperor, whose government was based in the capital city of Rome.
    - 2) In 510 BC a political revolution transformed the Empire into a Republic, with aristocratic and democratic elements blended in its government and a deep hostility to monarchy.
    - 3) Civil wars in the first century BC brought fragmentation to the Republic, which made a centralized and strong ruler necessary to restore order.
    - 4) Caesar Augustus reigned from c. 27 BC-AD 14: He was so successful that the Empire never became a Republic again.
  - b. Political and social stability: The *pax Romana* under Augustus provided political and social stability, which made possible the easy movement of ideas and people. The Roman roads were one such example of this peace and easy movement. On the *pax Romana*:
 

It gave peace in place of constant tribal war; it built a great network of roads and bridges that made travel possible all over the then-known world; it cleared the sea of pirates so that trade by sea and travel by ship became common practice; it protected its citizens from robbers and rioting.<sup>7</sup>
  - c. Economy: A great network of trade bound together the costal cities of the Empire into a single shared economy.
  - d. Intellectual and religious culture

---

<sup>6</sup> Letters a, c, d below are adapted from N R Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Part One: The Age of the Early Church Fathers* (Evangelical Press, 1997, 2002), 25-33.

<sup>7</sup> B K Kuiper, *The Church in History* (Eerdmans, 1951, 1964), 4.

- 1) The dominant culture was not actually Roman, but Greek. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the language and values of Greek civilization spread from Greece across the whole Eastern world.
- 2) Even though Rome's armies defeated Greece, Greece's culture overwhelmed Rome's. "By the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC, the Greek language, Greek methods of education, Greek art and literature, and Greek philosophy and science had taken root across the Roman Empire."<sup>8</sup> Greek became the first language spoken by the Eastern Empire and the second language of the Western Empire.
- 3) Philosophy
  - a) The 1st and 2nd centuries AD mark the high-point of Stoic and Cynic influence
  - b) Yet the general movement is towards the collapse of philosophy into religion
- 4) Greco-Roman religion
  - a) Emperor cult was the most dominant and was an expression of patriotic allegiance. Not even the emperors took the divinity business literally.
  - b) Gods of the Pantheon becoming more myths to the people than a representation of their true beliefs.
- 5) Mithraism: Persian warrior god transmuted into the lord of a new mystery cult.
  - a) Especially attractive to soldiers and young men
  - b) Stressed courage and honor
  - c) Big competitor with Christianity until late 2<sup>nd</sup> & early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries
- 6) Other mysteries continued to flourish

---

<sup>8</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 28.

- 7) Gnosticism: During the first century, there is no full-blown gnostic system, but there are many individual elements and conjoining of individual elements which we can call "gnostic" or proto-gnostic.
- a) A tendency in Greek and Persian thought towards forms of fundamental and eternal dualism.
  - b) Greek and late Persian forms stressed the relative worthlessness of matter over against the eternal, changeless world of spirit/reason/etc:
    - Spirit: good, soul, heaven
    - Material: evil, body, earth
  - c) This is really anti-Stoic and more Platonic
  - d) Emphasis on the efficacy of Knowledge (gnosis) in procuring release from the realm of matter
  - e) Value in knowing the right things, not just knowledge
  - f) The right knowledge can even bring salvation (found only in the specific group). The mystery religions as well as some philosophical schools had stressed the role of secret knowledge imparted to the faithful.

### 3. General disposition

- a. Sense of pessimism about really being able to know truth
- b. Turning away from outward, future oriented pursuits
- c. Loss of confidence in being able to find meaning from every day life
- d. Expressed in a pessimism in endeavors of all sorts
- e. This feeds a movement of philosophy into religions
  - 1) A movement toward mystery religions offering new answers
  - 2) A movement toward gnostic trends offering new knowledge
- f. There was a movement towards a kind of monotheism; polytheism is dead

- g. There was despair or at least a realism about man's ability to fathom the deep metaphysical problems on a purely philosophical or intellectual basis.
- h. There was a deep concern for ethics and issue of human meaning and happiness.

#### 4. Judaism and the birth of Christianity

- a. In Diaspora: Torah-centered belief mixed with cautious Hellenization. At the same time there was a large population of what Steve Taylor, Professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary calls "post-Jews." Jews who had become so discontented with Judaism and so influenced by Greco-Roman religion and philosophy that their Judaism became nothing more than an ethnic description.
- b. Herod the Great, Roman rule and the relativizing of the High Priesthood and Temple
  - 1) Herod launched a massive rebuilding and refurbishing of the Temple.
  - 2) Herod makes high priesthood completely political appointment.
    - a) This created a great loss of confidence in the office. Seen as compromised, therefore not relevant to the practice of Judaism.
    - b) Further emphasis on traditional piety.
    - c) Radicalization of apocalyptic outlook and messianic movements arising from a genuine desire for God's promised salvation held in the face of repeated frustrations by foreign powers and corrupt Jewish rule.

- 5. Final reflection on the historical context of the early church: Although the groups we have surveyed in many ways were full of error, especially in the light of Christianity, these religious and philosophical movements addressed deep needs in people. Through people's dissatisfaction and longings, *God was at work preparing the world to receive the gospel.*

#### B. The Separation between Judaism and Christianity

##### 1. Initial connections

- a. Relations between Rome and Judea were from moderate to good from about 161 BC to the first century. For example, during Herod Antipater's reign (37 BC-AD 4), Jews were "exempt from military service, and did not have to take part in any pagan rituals, not even emperor-worship."<sup>9</sup>
  - b. As we move further into the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Rome considered Christianity a sect of Judaism and because of that, the church received the same perks as the Jews. Christianity, like Judaism, was given status as a legal religion (a *religio licita*), which protected the Christian church from state-sanctioned, official persecution.
2. Theological considerations:
- a. Within the pages of the New Testament the foundations for a definitive break between Judaism and Christianity are forming, especially in the book of Acts.
    - 1) Acts 1-5: Hard line Jews – traditional, native Hebrews living in Palestine, especially Jerusalem.
    - 2) Acts 6: dispute between Hellenists and native Hebrews.
    - 3) Acts 7: Stephen (Hellenistic Jew) is more openly negative toward Judaism, per se.
    - 4) Acts 8:1: The apostles (native Hebrews) were not affected by the persecution, Hellenistic section of the church seems mainly affected. "The scattering of Hellenistic believers from Palestine was the event which first took the Jesus movement into the non-Jewish world."<sup>10</sup>
    - 5) Acts 8 Philip (Hellenistic Jew) courageously breaks the divide between Jews and Samaritans.
    - 6) Acts 10: Cornelius, the Macedonian (Greece)
    - 7) Acts 11 (esp. v 26): Church at Antioch, first called Christians (would need a designation because they would have appeared to be

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 47.

something different than a Jewish sect to the predominantly Gentile population.

- 8) Acts 13: Paul's ministry basically takes over. Through his ministry the gospel traveled west into Europe rather than staying put in Palestine. It is here that Gentiles begin to dominate the church's ethnic landscape.<sup>11</sup>
  - b. The theological divide began to see believing Jews gradually separating themselves from Judaism proper.
  - c. There were different opinions among the non-Christian Jews as to what to do with Jewish Christians.
    - a) Sadducees: "Get rid of them."
    - b) Pharisees: "Wait and see."
- 3. Nero's persecution of the church in AD 64: This represents the first state-sanctioned, but *not* Empire-wide persecution of Christians. It took place after a fire that burned six days and nights took down 10 of Rome's 14 districts. Though many people believed that Nero started the fire himself in order to rebuild Rome with even more grandeur, he deflected this rumor by blaming Christians for it. The Roman historian Tacitus (AD 55-117) explains:

To kill the rumors... Nero charged and tortured some people hated for their evil practices – the group popularly known as Christians. The founder of this sect, Christ, had been put to death by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, when Tiberius was emperor. Their deadly superstition had been suppressed temporarily, but was beginning to spring up again – not now just in Judea, but even in Rome itself, where all kinds of sordid and shameful activities are attracted and catch on. First, the authorities arrested those who confessed to being Christians. Then, on information obtained from them, the court convicted hundreds more, not so much for starting the fire as for their anti-social beliefs [they would not worship the emperor or the gods of the Pantheon]. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified, or set on fire – so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> See Romans 9-11 for Paul's theological explanation of this.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 50.

The reason we mention Nero's persecution in connection with the separation between Judaism and Christianity is that it provides evidence that as early as the 60s AD, Christians were considered a distinct group from Jews.

4. The Jewish war and the destruction of the Temple
  - a. The Jewish War (AD 66-73): An uprising against Rome led by the Zealots. Josephus estimates that 1,1 million Jews were killed (with the destruction of the Temple) and some 97,000 taken captive to be sold into slavery or put do death in the Roman arenas. Christians were spared because they heeded the warnings of Jesus in Luke 21:20-24. Palestinian Jewish Christians were viewed as traitors by the Jewish kinsmen because they would not fight Rome.
  - b. The destruction of the Temple in AD 70: This made the dividing line between Judaism more like a fixed chasm. It resulted in Christians and Jews redefining themselves.
    - 1) Jewish redefinition
      - a) The "wait and see" option was eliminated.
      - b) Study of the Law becomes paramount when there is no Temple and no land.
      - c) All Jews should aspire to study the Law.
      - d) The *am ha-aretz* refers by AD 135 to refer to Jews who don't study the Torah as a way of life.
      - e) Process of "fence-building" accelerates; greater emphasis on tradition.
      - f) Exclusion of groups unwilling to get with the new program.
      - g) At this point, Jewish believers are excluded from synagogue worship.
    - 2) Christian redefinition

- a) By this time, Christianity was “moving out on its own.”<sup>13</sup>
- b) Centering of Judaism around Jesus as the new embodiment of Israel (not a new religion, but the true Judaism, what Judaism was always meant to be).
- c) Progressive demographic shift toward Gentile predominance.
- d) Contextualization of the gospel in new frontiers.
- e) No longer bound to address the Jew-Gentile issue, the prominent issue in the writings of the Apostle Paul; instead, the church’s questions and controversies centered on issues of the influence of Hellenistic philosophy or Roman conceptions of political order.

---

<sup>13</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 26.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 3

### 3. The Second Century: The Era of the Apostolic Fathers

#### A. Introduction: Clarifying Terminology

1. Early Church Fathers: Broad category covering leaders in the church for the first six centuries of church history.
2. Apostolic Fathers
  - a. A subset of early church fathers
  - b. c. 95-140 AD
  - c. Traditionally connected directly with the apostles themselves, but most scholars believe that this was only true for a few of them. Received the moniker "apostolic" in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - d. Still a valuable designation because it describes how these church leaders were seeking to define themselves and the church.
  - e. Little information about them survives. A few surviving writings and incidental mention of these men in materials of later generations. Because of this it is inaccurate at best and dangerous at worst to try to appeal to the apostolic fathers to argue for say, apostolic succession or the purity of the church vis-à-vis its councils, etc.

#### B. Orthodoxy and Heresy

1. What is the difference between heresy and error?
2. Notable heresies and heretics
  - a. Ebionites: Pharasaic Judaizers<sup>14</sup>
    - 1) Refused to recognize Paul's apostleship, he was an apostate
    - 2) All Christians should be circumcised
    - 3) Denied deity of Christ and virgin birth

---

<sup>14</sup> The word Ebionite comes from the Hebrew *ebionim*, which means "the poor ones," which probable means that Ebionites took a vow of poverty.

- 4) Jesus was chosen by God as messiah because of his piety
- 5) Reluctant to think of him as subject to sufferings and death.

b. Gnosticism

- 1) The Greek *gnosis* is a special knowledge which transcended the simple faith of the Church.
- 2) Belief that the creation of the world was the result of a pre-cosmic disaster which accounted for the present misery of our lot.
- 3) The elect few have a "divine spark" that has become imprisoned in matter and has lost its memory of its true, heavenly home.
- 4) The Gnostic gospel was an attempt to arouse the soul from its sleep-walking condition and to make it aware of the high destiny to which it is called.
- 5) The world was in the iron control of evil powers whose home was in the seven planets, and after death the elect soul would be faced by a perilous journey throughout the planetary spheres back to its heavenly home.
- 6) They were dualists believing that the spirit is everything, the body nothing (if not actually evil).
- 7) Consistent with dualism they rejected as crude the Hebraic doctrine of the resurrection of the body, preferring the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul; in any event, to those who were already perfect, resurrection could add nothing.
- 8) They fell into moral license justifying their eroticism by appeals to the *Symposium* of Plato as teaching that love is mystical communion with God.
- 9) The Fall of Eve was taken to symbolize a pre-cosmic catastrophe in which a female power, the "Mother" went astray.
- 10) The principle ingredient which Gnosticism derived from Christianity was the central idea of redemption. The divine Christ might have appeared to blinded worldlings as if he were tangible flesh and blood, but those with higher insight perceived that he was

pure spirit and that the physical appearance was an optical illusion and mere semblance.<sup>15</sup> Salvation is knowledge which comes from the Great Spirit. The one who brings the good news is Jesus Christ, who awakens spiritual persons to their nature, and sets them on the way to perfect knowledge.

- 11) They were persuaded to worship intermediate angelic powers, identified with the heavenly bodies, and believed to possess a power to determine human fate unbroken by the gospel.
- 12) A further consequence was the depreciation of the Old Testament. The Gnostics liked to contrast the God of the Old Testament as the God of justice, whose principle was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, with the loving Father proclaimed by Jesus.
- 13) They believed in the existence of an ultimate spiritual being. This being is superior to the physical world and its creator-- The craftsman (*demiurge*, from the Greek, meaning "architect").

#### c. Montanism

- 1) Montanus from Mysia claimed to receive special prophecies and revelations from God that told him that he had been specially chosen as God's mouthpiece. He had a large following – it seems also a large following of women (Montanists were charged with loose living).
- 2) Emphasized charismatic, ecstatic experiences (tongues, prophecy, etc.).
- 3) An attempt to recover the prophetic note in primitive Christianity, and to challenge both the intellectualistic tendencies in Gnosticism and the ecclesiastical trend of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
- 4) Emphasized the nearness of Christ's return.
- 5) One church historian suggests that Montanism flourished for two reasons:
  - a) Christ had not yet returned, people were disappointed and looking for something from God.

---

<sup>15</sup> This belief is referred to as Docetism (from a Greek word which means "to seem"), which one need not have been a Gnostic to embrace.

- b) Consciousness of the work of the Holy Spirit was falling.
  - 6) The church's opposition to Montanism rested upon the conviction that the Christian revelation was complete. Nothing new in principle could be added to the apostolic deposit of faith.
- d. Marcion
- 1) Came from Asia Minor to Rome.
  - 2) Excommunicated in 144 AD.
  - 3) Wrote *Antithesis*. He listed contradictions between the Old and New Testaments to prove that the God of the Jews, "the creator of this miserable world," was quite different from the God and Father of Jesus. It was inconceivable that the divine redeemer could ever have been born of a woman, and Marcion rejected the story of the birth and childhood of Christ as falsification imposed on the authentic story.
  - 4) Did not reject the OT, but accepts it as a divine revelation, and insists that it be taken literally. But he maintained that the God revealed therein could not be the God and Father of Jesus Christ, who is absolutely good.
  - 5) Kept most of Paul, part of Luke (his list is important for understanding canon questions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century). The twelve apostles had not possessed the insight to comprehend the true meaning of Jesus.
  - 6) Contrasted the God of the Old Testament as the God of justice, whose principle was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, with the loving Father proclaimed by Jesus.
  - 7) Docetic as well, Marcion held that Christ had a body only in appearance.
3. The role of heresy: Heresy has a very important role to play, providentially, in the growth of the church. In particular, heresy compels the church towards self-examination, conscious reflection, clearer thinking and formulation of its commitments. The following is an example of the benefits of Gnostic influence for the church:

[The Church] learned to mark off clearly the limits of divine revelation, and to determine the relation of the Old Testament to the New. Moreover, it became keenly alive to the necessity of drawing up short statements of the truth, based on current baptismal formulas, which could serve as standards of interpretation (Rules of Faith). There was also a very evident doctrinal gain. Christianity was now first conceived as a "doctrine" and as a "mystery." The intellectual element in the Christian religion was emphasized, and this marked the real starting-point for doctrinal development. The Christian idea of God was rescued from the mythological speculations of the Gnostics. The Church came into conscious possession of the truth that God is the Supreme Being, the Creator and Upholder of the Universe, the same in the Old and in the New Testament.... [D]ualism... making matter essentially evil, was overcome. Over against the Gnostic tendency to regard Jesus Christ merely as one of the aeons, His unique character as the Son of God was emphasized, and at the same time His true humanity was defended against all kinds of docetic denials. The great facts of His life, His virgin birth, miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection, were all maintained and set in clearer light. Moreover, the doctrine of redemption through the atoning work of Christ was put forward in opposition to the speculative vagaries of the Gnostics; and the universal receptivity of men for the Gospel of Jesus Christ was stressed in answer to Gnostic exclusiveness and pride.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. The "Apologists": defenders of the faith

##### a. Significant works

- 1) *The Letter of Clement* c. 96 by Clement, a Bishop in the church at Rome. Was written to the Corinthian church, to settle a dispute there.
- 2) *The Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Ignatius was executed in Rome in AD 110, and he wrote seven letters to various churches as he traveled to Rome).
- 3) *The Didache*. This is the oldest surviving handbook of church discipline in two parts: Part 1 is about Christian doctrine; Part 2 is about church practice.
- 4) *The Fragments of Papias* c. 110-130. Papias was the bishop of the church in Heirapolis in Phrygia. His letters were intended to preserve some of the saying of Jesus which have not been recorded in the gospels. Not everyone in the church accepted that these sayings originated with Jesus.

---

<sup>16</sup> L Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Banner of Truth, 1937), 49-50.

- 5) *The Letter of Barnabas* c. 120, probably written in Alexandria and is markedly anti-Semitic, portraying the Jews as the murderers of Jesus.
- 6) *The Shepherd of Hermas* (somewhere between 110 and 140), written in Rome. Hermas claimed to have received revelation from two heavenly figures. It emphasizes the need for moral purity in the church.
- 7) *The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* c. 110. Polycarp was a famous 2<sup>nd</sup> century martyr, and his letter is important as an indicator of mainstream church life during the period. Quotes extensively from the NT and warns against heresy.
- 8) *The Letter to Diognetus* (somewhere in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century) written to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity, author unknown.

b. Main characters

- 1) Justin Martyr (100-165 AD)
  - a) Wrote his *Apology* in 151 for the emperor Antonius Pius.
  - b) Christ is for Justin the principle of unity and the criterion by which the truth is judged.
  - c) Justin sees the logos as Light of Light, begotten, but distinct from the father, therefore not diminishing or dividing the being of the Father.
  - d) 160 AD *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*—concerned with the Christian claim to be the universal religion to which the Old Testament prophets had looked forward, and dominated by detailed arguments from particular prophetic texts. He was convinced of the argument from prophecy.
  - e) This led him to renounce Marcion's disparagement of the Old Testament.
  - f) In the Sermon on the Mount, Justin Martyr saw an ethic of universal validity, continuous with the highest aspirations of

Judaism, but freed of the shackles of ceremonial rules peculiar to one race among the hundreds of God's creation.

- g) Early Christian theology and apologetic relied on interpretation of Old Testament prophecy as foreshadowing the gospel. It was also the prime content of the instruction of catechumens. The defense of the hope within them was found in the OT prophecy of Christ cf. Psalm 22; Isaiah 53.
  - h) Furthermore if the resurrection had been a fiction the apostles would not have risked their life for it.
  - i) Interpreted the resurrection in the most literal sense of body and soul.
  - j) Insisted that Christ was not a mere man but was also God. At his birth he had been worshipped by the Magi, and there could be not question of a holy life being rewarded by elevation to divine rank.
- 2) Tertullian (155-230 AD)
- a) Converted as an adult, and quickly joined the Montanist movement.
  - b) Scornfully mocked those who 'advocate a stoic or Platonic or an Aristotelian Christianity.'
    - "What has Athens in common with Jerusalem?"
    - "I believe it [i.e. in Christianity] *because* it is absurd."
  - c) Was a significant exponent for Trinitarianism (3<sup>rd</sup> century).
- 3) Irenaeus of Lyons (b. c. 115 -125 d. c. 130-142 AD)
- a) Wrote *Against Heresies* a.k.a. *On the Detection and Overthrow of the So-called Knowledge*.
    - Gnosticism is a ragbag of heathen speculations with bits taken from different philosophers to dress out a bogus, anti-rational mythology.



- d) Only the Christian philosophy/revelation could satisfy the deepest needs of men; Christianity was “the highest and surest philosophy.”<sup>17</sup>
- e) The spread of Christianity despite resistance.
- f) Changed character and lives of Christians.
- g) The apologists were attempting “to mollify the temper of the authorities and of the people in general towards Christianity; and they sought to do this by setting forth its true character and by refuting the charges proffered against the Christians.”<sup>18</sup>

## 5. The NT Canon

- a. In the light of the other religious (especially Gnostic) works available to 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christians, and to distance themselves from heresy, the fathers sought to delineate what was Scripture from what was not.
- b. Irenaeus and canon formation. Irenaeus realized that it was necessary to have a canon or fixed list of authoritative writers of the New Testament if the Gnostics and their sacred writings were to be overthrown. He gave reasoned statements for accepting the Scriptures we have and not others.
- c. Marcion and canon formation
  - 1) Rejected the entire Old Testament.
  - 2) After some editorial adjustment in keeping with his theological commitments, he accepted the following books:
    - a) Gospel according to Luke
    - b) Galatians
    - c) 1 & 2 Corinthians
    - d) 2 Corinthians
    - e) Ephesians (which Marcion called Laodiceans)
    - f) Colossians
    - g) Philemon
    - h) Philippians

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

- 3) Marcion's argumentation and list accelerated the process of fixing the church's canon, which had already begun in the first half of the 2nd century. It was in opposition to Marcion's criticism that the Church first became fully conscious of its inheritance of apostolic writings.

d. Short history of canon formation

It is undisputed that both the Old and New Testaments had in essence already reached their final form and significance by the year 200. The minor variations which still persist, and are occasionally the object of further discussion, coexist perfectly happily with the over-riding conviction that Christians everywhere possessed one and the same Bible.<sup>19</sup>

- 1) The criteria for canonicity: The recognition of the canon was done so on the basis of the following criteria:
  - a) Apostolicity/Inspiration: This played a prominent role in the decisions of the church. Very frequently, the status of a book is determined by whether or not it came from an apostle. Apostolicity and inspiration go together; for the apostles claimed to be heralding the very word of God 1 Thess 2:13. This is a weighty criterion.
  - b) Widespread acceptance by the people of God. This factor played a conscious, deliberate role in the early church's view of the canon. If a book is accepted widely as inspired, that is good reason to accept it.
  - c) Content/orthodoxy: This was an important factor historically (mid 3<sup>rd</sup> & early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries). Centered on question of agreement with other NT books that were universally accepted.
- 2) Objections to the criteria: "History shows that in fact the church has not been able to establish the criterion or set of criteria...required. Nor...can the church ever do so."<sup>20</sup>
  - a) Objections to apostolicity
    - To say a book was written by an apostle, thus is canonical – we extend this to close associates of the apostles (Luke, etc.).

<sup>19</sup> Von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (German, 1968), 327.

<sup>20</sup> Richard B Gaffin, Jr, "The New Testament as Canon" in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, a Challenge, A Debate*, Harvie M Conn (ed) (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 168.

Yet this can easily become an ad hoc principle to justify what you want.

- Mark was an associate of Peter; Luke of Paul; Clement also of Peter. Based on this criteria, we would have to include him.
  - Paul wrote other letters that have not survived cf. 1 Cor 5:9; Col 4:16. This was an apostolic letter, yet not canonical: hence, there is not an absolute identity between apostolicity and canonicity. All that is canonical is inspired; not all that is inspired is canonical
  - What of the epistle to the Hebrews? Not Pauline, hence suspicions arise as to its canonicity, authorship is uncertain.
- b) Objection to widespread acceptance in the church. While this is an impressive factor supporting the bulk of the NT. But less so for the pickier problems.
- If this is the criterion we must ask, when? Revelation, for instance, had serious doubt in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. What constitutes "widespread acceptance"? Is it public reading? But this applies to *The Shepherd of Hermas*.
- c) Objection to content: This seems to rely too much on private judgment. It is on this basis that Luther rejected James. He claimed that James "'mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture.' For him, it was an 'epistle of straw' to be relegated to the end of the NT."<sup>21</sup> Luther said, "I cannot include him among the chief books, though I would not prevent anyone from including or extolling him as he pleases, for there are otherwise many good sayings in him."<sup>22</sup>
- d) Conclusion: None of the criteria cinch the case for canonicity. Think of the criteria as goldminers' sieves through which dirt falls to reveal the treasure. At the final analysis, there are still problems.
- 3) Possible responses to the history of canon formation<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Douglas J Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> For the following points I am indebted to Prof Stephen Taylor's lecture notes for Introduction to the New Testament taught at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1997.

- a) A positive reaction with a negative conclusion. This is the confirmed skeptic's response and is very common among the religious Studies faculties in the non-Christian universities.<sup>24</sup>
- b) A negative reaction with a negative conclusion. This is very close to "a," but with a note of profound disappointment. It says that the NT is just the blind result of the arbitrary decision of a bunch of dead men, imposed on the church.
- c) A negative reaction with a positive affirmation—fideism: This response says, "The evidence speaks completely against what I believe, but I will make the decision to believe anyway." Though the Christian has the right to react this way in certain limited situations for limited period of time—waiting on the Lord to clear things up—nevertheless, it is important for us to realize that inasmuch as this is a possible response it is really a response based on other evidence (the gospel is true, God is at work in my life and in the Church, etc.) brought in from outside the issue in question. In other words, brute fideism doesn't last long. Either unbelief or a broader understanding of the basis of one's faith follows rather quickly.
- d) A positive reaction with a positive conclusion and affirmation. This response understands the process of canon formation to be part of God's wise providential plan, consistent with his own goals and methods. And here we must admit that there are a lot of gaps in our understanding of it.
  - Not a blind process, rather the church by the illumination provided by the Holy Spirit consistently tried to get back to and preserve the earliest witness and reflection on the great central event of Jesus Christ, this is the criterion of apostolicity at work.
  - Not an arbitrary process: The church maintained (with varying degrees of success) the essential unity of the Old and the New Testaments. The NT that it finally affirmed (against the pressure of Jews and very logically persuasive heresies) is one that affirms the work of the Creator God, the God of Abraham and Moses as one piece with the work

---

<sup>24</sup> Prof Taylor speaks from experience here. He received his doctorate in Religious Studies from the University of Pennsylvania.

of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the criterion of content at work.

- Not a contrived process engineered by a victorious but small group of dead men; not an imposition of a Christian elite: The canon is essentially recognized during a period of time when the church is a far-flung, persecuted minority. The debates were free and open (as far as the church was concerned) and conducted by those who were willing to undergo persecution from Jews and Pagans. There was no one person or church who had the moral authority to decide the issue. There was also no power of the sword. The church councils of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century are simply recognizing what is already essentially an accomplished fact. The councils affirmed what was already the experience and living faith of a persecuted and despised church. The process simply makes explicit and clearly defined what was there implicitly all along. This is the criterion of widespread acceptance at work.

### c. Order and Authority

#### 1. Apostolicity

- a. Irenaeus, among other early fathers, believed that the chief way to achieve victory in the battle against the heresies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century would be to hold fast to the apostolic doctrine; really, to stay as close to the apostles as possible. He believed that originality had no place in Christian teaching. Whatever churches or documents or men could be traced to the apostles could be trusted; everything and everyone else should be held in suspicion.
- b. This led eventually to the notion of apostolic succession, but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century it functioned to keep the church on track.
- c. And it also led to the dominant polity of the century, and one that would continue undisturbed until the time of the Reformation.<sup>25</sup>

#### 2. Episcopacy

- a. Three offices by AD 180: bishop (the head of a local church), presbyters (secondary leaders in the church), and deacons.

---

<sup>25</sup> See Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 18.

- b. This was argued for quite vigorously by Ignatius of Antioch c. 110.
  - c. The early church saw the bishop engaging in some apostolic ministry, but not having the status of the apostles themselves. In fact, the bishops of this era were careful to cite the apostles as the final authority for faith and life.
- d. Persecution
- 1. Accusations against the Christian way of life
    - a. Anti-social
      - 1) Christians did not go to the arena because they believed it glorified violence. Christ is the giver of life, not death.
      - 2) Many Christians did not allow their children to be publicly educated because their education involved the worship of pagan deities.
      - 3) Christians rejected abortion and the exposure of infants (infanticide).
      - 4) Christians opposed easy divorce. The vast majority did not permit a divorced person to remarry and many even disapproved of widows and widowers remarrying.
      - 5) Many Christians would not fight in the army because it not only involved the worship of pagan gods, but also because many Christian leaders objected to killing another human being for any reason.
    - b. "Atheistic": Because Christians would not confess the lordship of the Emperor or other deities, but only Jesus Christ, they were routinely referred to as atheists. It was not uncommon for the cry, "Away with the atheists" to be heard as Christians were brought to the Coliseum.
    - c. Cannibalistic: Christians often met in secret because of their experience of intense persecution. This secrecy created a very active rumor mill and obviously gross misunderstanding about the Christian faith and practice. The church's celebration of the Lord's Supper was thought to be cannibalistic.

- d. Incestuous: Christians were thought to be incestuous because they referred to one another as brother and sister.
  - e. Anti-establishment: Since the Christians would not acknowledge state religions, they were seen to be potential political threats.
  - f. Exclusivism and pluralism/relativism. People could mix mutually exclusive religious claims or follow two at once. Christianity insisted that it was the only true religion, which seemed strange to Gentile non-believers since Christianity was so “new.” Needham says, “So the church’s exclusive, intolerant, missionary attitude to other religions marked Christians out and made them very unpopular. To their pagan neighbors, this evangelistic devotion to Christ as the only Savior seemed highly arrogant and dangerously anti-social.”<sup>26</sup>
2. Roman persecution increased and continued until 313 AD
- a. Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180) and Blandina: Under Marcus Aurelius’ persecution (an emperor with no love for the Christians), Blandina, a Christian and a slave who confessed Christ and refused to swear by pagan idols, was violently martyred:

We were all afraid and Blandina’s earthly mistress was in agony in case she [Blandina] should be unable to make a bold confession of Christ due to her bodily weakness; but Blandina was filled with such power, that those who took it in turns to subject her to every kind of torture from morning to night were exhausted by their efforts, and confessed themselves beaten – they could think of nothing else to do. They were amazed that she was still breathing for her whole body was mangled, and her wounds gaped.<sup>27</sup>

After suffering for many days without dying, Blandina finally fell: “After whipping her, giving her to the beasts, and burning her with hot irons, the authorities finally dropped her into a basket and threw her to a bull. The beast gored her again and again.... Then she too was sacrificed.”<sup>28</sup>

Forty other Christians died in this particular incident.<sup>29</sup>

## E. Worship

---

<sup>26</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ’s Power*, 78.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.preciousseed.org/articles/vol57n1kbintley.htm>

<sup>28</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ’s Power*, 82.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.preciousseed.org/articles/vol57n1kbintley.htm>

1. A general picture of Christian worship from Justin's first apology:

On the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers. And, as said before, when we have finished the prayer, bread is brought, with wine and water, and the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen; the distribution, and reception of the consecrated [elements] by each one, takes place and they are sent to the absent by the deacons. Those who prosper, and who so wish, contribute, each one as much as he chooses to. What is collected is deposited with the president and he takes care of orphans and widows, and those who are in want on account of sickness or any other cause, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourners among [us], and, briefly, he is the protector of all those in need. We all hold this common gathering on Sunday, since it is the first day, on which God transforming darkness and matter made the universe, and Jesus Christ our Saviour [*sic*] rose from the dead on the same day."<sup>30</sup>

2. The Lord's Supper: Another quote from Justin:

Then bread and a cup of wine mixed with water are brought to the president and the brothers. He takes them and offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He gives thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things from His hands. When he has finished the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their joyful agreement by saying Amen. . . . Then those whom we call deacons give to each of those present the bread and the wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and carry away a portion to those who are absent.

We call this food "Eucharist," which no-one is allowed to share unless he believes that the things we teach are true, and has been washed with the washing that is for the forgiveness of sins and a second birth, and is living as Christ has commanded. For we do not receive them as common bread and common drink. But as Jesus Christ our Savior became flesh by the word of God, and clothed Himself in our flesh and blood to save us, so also we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the word of prayer handed down from Christ, by which our blood and flesh are nourished as the food becomes part of ourselves, is the flesh and blood of the same Jesus Who became flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs

---

<sup>30</sup> Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, quoted in Philip Graham Ryken, *The Communion of Saints* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001) 80-81.

composed by themselves called "Gospels," have delivered to us what was commanded to them.<sup>31</sup>

3. A typical order of worship. It came in two parts. The first part was done with a mixed audience, believers and unbelievers. Before the second part, people who had not been baptized were dismissed from the meeting – it was for Christians only.<sup>32</sup>
  - a. Part 1: Service of the Word
    - 1) Opening greeting by bishop and response by congregation: Usually the bishop said, "The Lord be with you," and the congregation responded with, "And with your spirit."
    - 2) OT Scripture reading, by a deacon, chanted in larger congregations.
    - 3) Psalm or hymn: The most common form of singing was responsorial chanting. The singer would sing or chant a passage (usually a psalm) and the congregation would respond with a single word, like "Alleluia" or a chorus. There was also solo singing and full congregational singing, though the latter did not become popular until the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>
    - 4) NT Scripture reading – any book from Acts to Revelation
    - 5) Psalm or hymn
    - 6) Gospel Reading
    - 7) Sermon: Preached by the bishop from a sitting position (the congregation stood during the entire service (the Western church only began to introduce pews in the 14<sup>th</sup> century!).
    - 8) Dismissal of all but baptized believers.
  - b. Part 2: The Eucharist
    - 1) Prayers: The prayer leader (the bishop in the west and a deacon in the east) announced the topic for prayer. The congregation then prayed silently, standing with eyes open and arms reaching to the heavens. Then the leader would close that section of the prayers.

---

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 67-68.

<sup>32</sup> For the order below see *ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

And this would continue, apparently for quite some time (the whole service would have lasted about three hours).

- 2) Communion
  - a) The greeting by the bishop, response of the congregation, and the “kiss of peace” (men kissed men, women kissed women).
  - b) The offertory: Each member brought a small loaf and flask of wine and spread them out on the communion table.
  - c) Dialogue: The church engaged in a back-and-forth like this:
    - Bishop: The Lord be with you.
    - Congregation: And also with you.
    - Bishop: Lift up your hearts.
    - Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.
  - d) Bishop and deacons broke the loaves
  - e) Bishop and deacons distributed the wine (the leftovers were taken home by the congregation to use when they celebrated the Lord’s Table during the week).
  - f) Benediction. A phrase like “Depart in peace” was spoken by a deacon.

## **Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 4**

### **4. The Third Century**

- A. Major Players: African Christianity: As we move into the church's third century, the most influential Christian leaders emerge from North Africa.
  - 1. Carthage
    - a. Tertullian (c. 155-220)
      - 1) Although he embraced Montanism later in life, he was an important theologian and apologist for the faith.
      - 2) Is often called the father of Latin theology because he was one of the first church writers to use Latin.
      - 3) Championed and laid the groundwork for the fourth century orthodox expressions of the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ.
        - a) Terms like "Trinity," "substance," and "person" first used by Tertullian became key terminology for the church.
        - b) Only area of weakness regarding the doctrine of Christ was his belief that the eternal son had not existed as a distinct person from the Father for all eternity (rejected eternal generation of the Son), but had become distinct just before the creation of the universe. He saw the Word as inferior to the Father. Prior to that, the Word had existed as "Reason" in a non-personal way within the Father.
      - 4) Articulated a doctrine of original sin and salvation by grace; nevertheless, believed that after salvation, you can make satisfaction for sin through repentance or confession. And by fasting and other forms of mortification, the sinner can escape eternal punishment. This becomes the foundation for the Roman Catholic doctrine of penance.
      - 5) Argued that the church should have nothing to do with heretics.
      - 6) Argued that tradition was of equal importance to Scripture.

- 7) Emphatic on the importance of the death of Christ, but does not stress the necessity of penal satisfaction.
- 8) Believed essentially that there is no such thing as an invisible church, just a visible one – if you are not part of it, you have no legitimate claim to belong to Christ.
- 9) Anti-Greek philosophy (though himself influenced by Stoicism).
- 10) Hostile toward Greco-Roman culture and life – advocated that Christians would basically withdraw.

b. Cyprian (c. 200-258)

- 1) Bishop of Carthage in 247
- 2) Saw NT presbyters as priests and the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, interpreting the NT along OT lines.
- 3) First early father to set forth a doctrine of Communion in sacrificial terms, a view that became increasingly widespread.
  - a) He did not teach that the Lord's Table was a fresh sacrifice, but that through the Eucharist, Christ presented himself to God the Father as the one who had made the once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of his people on the cross. By eating the bread and drinking the wine, believers were united with that perfect self-offering of Christ, so that he presented both himself and the congregation to the Father.
  - b) He also taught that Communion benefited believers who had died.

2. Alexandria (Egypt)

a. Interesting facts

- 1) Greatest library and best museums in the ancient world.
- 2) The beginnings of Christianity there cf. Acts 18:24-28. We don't know much.
- 3) Home to the most influential Gnostic leaders Basilides (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century) and Valentinus (c. 100-160).

- b. Clement (of Alexandria, not of Rome) (c. 150-215)
  - 1) Believed that the Christian should build a bridge between Christianity and Gentile learning.
  - 2) Wrote *Exhortation to the Greeks* in which he suggested that Christ the source of true philosophy.
  - 3) Not consistent in his representation of Greek philosophy; sometimes he says that it is nearly inspired, and at other times he suggests that it is a rip-off of the Hebrew prophets.
  - 4) Believed that the Law led Jews to Christ and that philosophy would lead Greeks.
  - 5) Baptism represents the beginning of a new life in the church, and includes the forgiveness of sins.
  - 6) Subordinationistic in his understanding of the Trinity. The Logos is the divine reason, subordinate (= inferior) to the Father.
  - 7) Heathen have an opportunity to repent in hell and that their probation does not end until the Day of Judgment.
  - 8) Taught that there were five meanings of Scripture:<sup>34</sup>
    - a) The historical: the OT event was an actual event in space-time.
    - b) The doctrinal: the obvious moral, religious, and theological teachings of Scripture.
    - c) The prophetic: the predictive and typological (repeated patterns in redemptive history that foreshadow Christ and his work).
    - d) The philosophical: following the Stoic understanding that natural objects and historical persons convey a cosmic and psychological meaning.
    - e) The mystical: the deeper moral, spiritual, and religious truth symbolized by people and events.

---

<sup>34</sup> Adapted from Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Eerdmans, 1999), 80-109.

- c. Origen (c. 184-254)
- 1) Father was a martyr, and like his father, Origen was eventually imprisoned, tortured, and executed by the Romans.
  - 2) Very influenced by Platonic thought.
  - 3) Studied under Clement, but was the superior intellect.
  - 4) He wrote the first systematic theology (First Principles), and *Against Celsus*, defending Christianity against a pagan critic.
  - 5) Taught that there was a threefold interpretation of Scripture:
    - a) The bodily meaning, which corresponds closely to Clement's "historical" meaning.
    - b) The moral meaning, which finds ethical teaching through an allegorical approach.
    - c) The spiritual meaning, which finds teaching about Christ and the church through an allegorical approach.
  - 6) His allegorical method held sway until the time of the Reformation; thus he had a great impact on Bible interpretation.
  - 7) Baptism represents the beginning of a new life in the church, and includes the forgiveness of sins.
  - 8) Communion confers participation in immortality because through it the communicant enters into fellowship with Christ and the Holy Spirit.
  - 9) God is absolute, incomprehensible, inestimable, who needs nothing.
  - 10) Argued vigorously against Gnosticism .
  - 11) Strange beliefs (put to rest in the sixth century).
    - a) Preexistence of human souls.
    - b) Resurrection was non-corporeal.

- c) Emphasized free-will, this was God's great gift to humanity – even fallen angels and Satan himself can repent.
  - d) Restoration at the end of history will include reconciling Satan to God.
  - e) Hell is purgatorial – that is, it is not punitive, but cleansing, cathartic.
  - f) He was also a universalist – everyone eventually will be saved.
- B. The Apostles' Creed: Moving out of the second century, a creedal formulation became necessary to protect the average Christian from the influences of Gnosticism and Montanism. In a very real way the Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith that says, "This is true Christian doctrine, distinct from Gnosticism and Montanism."

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

1. The creed gradually took shape throughout the church from about AD 200 to 750.
2. The reason it is called the Apostles' Creed is that it was believed to have been created by the apostles themselves as a baptismal confession. While it is true that the creed is both a good summary of apostolic teaching and was used by the early church as a baptismal confession, the notion that its origin is apostolic is spurious.
3. Excursus on "He Descended into Hell"<sup>35</sup>
  - a. This phrase is the most controversial in the creed.

---

<sup>35</sup> See Wayne Grudem, "He Did Not Descend into Hell: A Plea for Following Scripture instead of the Apostles' Creed," *JETS* 34/1 (March 1991), 103-113.

- b. It was unknown in earlier versions of the Apostle's Creed and did not appear in the Latin creeds until it appeared in one of two of Rufinus' versions in AD 390. Even though he included the phrase, he did not believe that it referred to hell, but understood it to mean "buried." In harmony with the Greek form of the creed, he took it to mean that Christ descended into the grave; for *hadēs* can simply mean "grave."
- c. It was not until AD 650 that the phrase was again included.
- d. Throughout the history of the church there have been three dominant interpretations of the phrase:
  - 1) It is to be identified as the place of the dead, both of the righteous and the wicked (Hebrew, *sheōl*; Greek, *hadēs*). Thus it means simply that Jesus continued in the real state of death until the resurrection.
  - 2) It signifies the intensity of Christ's sufferings on the cross, where he tasted the pain of hell for sinners.
  - 3) It refers to an actual self-manifestation of Christ to the dead between the time of his death and resurrection.
  - 4) RBC believes that the statement ought to be understood in the first sense; for this creed was developed over and against Gnostic teaching that suggested that the eternal son of God did not truly become a man. This statement makes clear the point that Jesus died a real, human death as any ordinary human being.
- c. Apostolic Succession, Church Unity, and Loyalty under Persecution
  - 1. Apostolic succession and the fight to preserve the church's unity
    - a. By the time we hit the third century, the churches had in common the Apostles' Creed, the canon of the New Testament, and the episcopal form of church government.<sup>36</sup>
    - b. Ignatius (2<sup>nd</sup> century) paved the way by arguing that the the bishop was the great bond of church unity and therefore a powerful defense against heresy. For example, his letter to the church in Philadelphia

---

<sup>36</sup> At this point the church became known as catholic (from the Latin *catholicam*, meaning, "universal"). Sometimes in church history writing this form of the church is called the Old Catholic Church, different from the Roman Catholic Church.

says, "Do ye all follow your bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Do nothing without the bishop."<sup>37</sup>

- c. Cyprian was most influential in bringing together two ideas in this connection:
  - 1) The visible church = the bishop.
  - 2) The bishop = the apostles.

There is one God, and Christ is one; and there is one Church and one Chair [i.e. center of authority]...He who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian. He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother. There is no salvation outside the Church. The Church is based on the unity of the bishops. The bishop is in the Church, and the Church is in the bishop. If anyone is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church.<sup>38</sup>

- a) For Cyprian, the difference between apostles and bishops faded almost completely away.
  - The apostles were the first bishops, the bishops were the new apostles.
  - Not infallible, but absolutely authoritative over the congregations. As for infallibility, Cyprian accused Stephen of Rome of "Error, arrogant claims, irrelevant statements and contradictions."<sup>39</sup>
  - Had supernatural power to administer the life-giving sacraments<sup>40</sup> of baptism and Communion.
  - And although he held that the bishop of Rome ought to be given special reverence because Peter was the city's first, he would not say that the bishop of Rome had authority over any of the other bishops.

Let each bishop give his opinion...without judging another, and without separating from the fellowship of those who are not of his opinion. None of us must set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor force his

---

<sup>37</sup> Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 21.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 133.

<sup>40</sup> The term sacrament (Lat. *sacramentum*) meant "oath of allegiance" and was used in the west to describe the Lord's Supper; in the east, the term of choice was "mystery."

brother-bishops to obey him by tyrannical terror. Every bishop has full liberty and complete power in his own church. No other bishop can judge him, and he cannot judge any other bishop. Let us all await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone can judge our conduct.<sup>41</sup>

2 The persecuted church: In order to understand this time period, we must keep in mind that the third century was not 100 years of unrelenting persecution for the church. Times of peace and prosperity ended with severe persecution.

a. Peace and prosperity

- 1) Many rich families became Christians, which helped the spread of the gospel.
- 2) Church buildings began to be constructed.
- 3) Rome was built the first Christian cemetery.
- 4) Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235)
  - a) Employed a Christian, Julius Africanus (160-240) to organize Rome's public library.
  - b) Alexander's private chapel had images of Jesus and Abraham alongside pagan gods.
  - c) His mother arranged a meeting for him with Origen to discuss religion.

b. Persecution: And interspersed in this peace and prosperity was severe persecution.

- 1) Septimius Severus (202-11): Conversion to Christianity was forbidden.
- 2) Maximinus (235-36): Execution of many Christian church leaders.
- 3) Decius (249-51)
  - a) Empire-wide persecution of believers.

---

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 135.

- b) Christians required by the state to return to paganism or face torture and death.
  - c) Believed that a series of invasions by northern Germanic tribes (the Goths) was the result of the Christians' "atheism" – the gods were angry, so to appease them he decided to eliminate them.
  - d) Executed bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Jerusalem.
  - e) Origen was most famous victim.
- 4) Valerian (257-60)
- a) It was illegal for Christians to assemble.
  - b) Property was often confiscated.
  - c) Attempted to murder all the church's leaders (bishops and presbyters).
  - d) Cyprian was his most famous victim.
3. Christian response to the persecution
- a. Many were strengthened by it. Seeing their brothers and sisters dying for the gospel enabled them to stand firm in the faith, refusing to worship pagan gods and renounce the faith.: "But resist [the devil], firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Pet 5:9).
  - b. Many others gave in to persecution and either offered a sacrifice to the gods or by bribing officials purchased fake documents to exonerate themselves.
4. The relationship between loyalty (or disloyalty) and unity.
- a. Because there were so many defectors from the Christian faith, divisions arose within the church over what to do with the disloyal:
    - 1) What do we do with a person who has denied the faith but now wants to be identified with the Christian church?

- 2) Should one be accepted back immediately? After a period of remediation? Under probation? Never?
  - 3) Who has the authority to decide these questions?
- b. The Council of Carthage (251) convened to decide this question. Cyprian played a leading role.
- 1) Cyprian's doctrine of the church made leaving the Catholic church and its bishops a high crime:

Whoever stands apart from the Church and is joined to an adulteress [a non-Catholic church] is cut off from the promises given to Christ's church; and he who leaves the Church of Christ does not attain to the rewards of Christ, but is an alien and an enemy. You cannot have God as your Father unless you have the Church as your mother. If anyone was able to escape the flood outside of Noah's ark, then you can escape judgment if you are outside the doors of the Church.<sup>42</sup>

- 2) They decided that a lapsed Christian could be received back into the church, but only after a period of time during which they would be proving their sincerity by doing "penance." The time period of the penance was to vary according to the seriousness involved in each case of apostasy.
- 3) It should not be surprising that Cyprian argued that the bishops alone had the right to decide this question. Others argued that confessors (Christians imprisoned but not executed had the requisite spiritual maturity and loyalty of Christ necessary to decide such matters).
- 4) The church divides over the Council of Carthage
  - a) Some in Carthage thought that Cyprian was too strict, so under the leadership of a presbyter Novatus, they broke off to form a rival church with more lenient rules for receiving lapsed Christians back into the community.
  - b) The church in Rome adopted Carthage's stand, but some Christians there under a presbyter with a similar name

---

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 133.

(Novatian<sup>43</sup>) broke away from the Roman church to form a new congregation with a stricter set of rules – never readmit any lapsed believer!

d. The Doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ

1. This debate has its roots in this century, but will begin to have its really far-reaching consequences in later years (esp. the fourth century).

2. Monarchianism: Like Gnosticism to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Monarchianism is to the 3<sup>rd</sup> (*monarchia* = a single principle of authority).

a. Two types of Monarchianism

1) Dynamic Monarchianism (also called Samosatianism, for its chief exponent, Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch (200-275).

a) Interested in maintaining the unity of God.

b) The Logos was consubstantial with the Father (of the same substance) but not a distinct person. He could be identified with God, but only in the sense that the Logos exists in God. The Word was an impersonal power, present in every man, but especially present in the man Jesus.

c) The Word, by penetrating Jesus so much, eventually deified the man. And because of this he is worthy of divine honor, but he is not God in the strict sense of the term.

d) The Word and the Spirit are impersonal attributes of the one God.

e) Like present-day Unitarianism.

2) Modalistic Monarchianism

a) Also known as...

➤ Patripassianism in the west, since it held that the Father himself had become incarnate and therefore suffered on the cross.

---

<sup>43</sup> Novatian was a fine scholar and apologist in his own right, having written *Concerning the Trinity* somewhere around ad 250, defending the orthodox view of the Trinity over and against Sabellianism, and argued strongly for the two natures of Christ as God and man in one person.

- Sabellianism in the east after its chief, though obscure exponent, Sabellius (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century – excommunicated in 220).
  - b) More influential than Dynamic Monarchianism.
  - c) An attempt to maintain the full divinity of Jesus.
  - d) Modalistic because the persons in the Godhead were modes in which God manifested himself.
  - e) God manifests himself in a plurality, like the unfolding of a drama: first as Father, then as Son, and now as Holy Spirit.
  - f) A man named Noëtus of Smyrna (c. AD 230) has also been connected with this doctrine. He is reported to have said, “When the Father had not yet been born, He was rightly called the Father; but when it pleased Him to submit to birth, having been born, He became the Son, He of Himself and not of another.”<sup>44</sup>
  - g) Tertullian argued strongly against Modalistic Monarchianism, especially in his work *Against Praxeas*:
  - h) Praxeas was a Roman Christian who was putting forward a Sabellian doctrine of the Trinity.
  - i) “He drove out the Paraclete and crucified the Father.”<sup>45</sup>
3. Value of church history at this point: “This highlights the importance of knowing church history. These errors occur in different forms in modern theology, and can creep in whenever the attempt is made to define orthodox theology. . . . In combating error on one side, it was – and is – all too possible to swing then to the other extreme.”<sup>46</sup>

#### E. Summary of the Third Century

By 300 Christianity was effectively represented in all parts of the empire. Its distribution was very unequal, but it was influential in the central provinces of political importance, in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt,

---

<sup>44</sup> Berkhof, *Christian Doctrines*, 79.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>46</sup> Campbell, *Heroes*, 40.

northern Africa, central Italy, southern Gaul [= France] and Spain. During this period it won many officers of government and imperial servants. Most important of all, it now began to penetrate the army on a considerable scale.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Williston Walker quoted in *ibid.*, 41.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 5

### 5. THE FOURTH CENTURY

#### A. Pagan Religion

1. Neoplatonism (Plotinus [205-270])
  - a. Tenets
    - 1) The One: The source of all things with various emanations.
      - a) Emanation 1: *Nous* (like Christianity's the Word) Mind is the image of the One, beyond human mind or spirit, and even referred to as the Son of God, the Son of the One.
      - b) Emanation 2: *Psyche* (Soul), standing midway between *Nous* and the physical world – human souls and a greater "World-Soul"
      - c) Emanation 3: Nature
      - d) Emanation 4: Matter (the lowest emanation)
    - 2) The further out from the One, the less real things become.
    - 3) Disconnect between the human soul and the one creates longing in our hearts for.
    - 4) But communion with the One is possible through spiritual discipline, training oneself to live for the spiritual rather than earthly things; the soul could climb up the ladder of emanations and be united with the one, which Plotinus claimed he had experienced in all its glory.
  - b. Influence on Christianity
    - 1) The Cappadocian Fathers, Ambrose, and Augustine all believed to one degree or another that the tenets of Neoplatonism comported with Scripture.
    - 2) They would often exploit the language of Neoplatonic thought in order to define the meaning of Christian doctrine more precisely and to give clearer expression to them in a way that made sense to

the educated classes of the day, for whom Neoplatonism was very appealing – it was religion for smart people.

## 2. Manichaeism

- a. Although this philosophy came into being in the third century through a Persian named Mani (216-277), its influence was more significantly felt in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
- b. A new kind of Gnosticism
- c. Deeply influenced by Marcion
- d. Mani believed that he had received a new revelation that brought together all the truths of all previous religions.
- e. Spread rapidly through the Empire, especially in Syria, Africa, and Persia
- f. Tenets
  - 1) The universe explained in terms of a conflict between two equal and eternal forces of Darkness and Light.
  - 2) Humans are a mixture of these two forces.
  - 3) One should devote himself to ridding himself of the Darkness within him.
  - 4) They will be helped by Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani.
  - 5) Purification comes through abstaining from everything that binds us to the physical, material world: work, property, meat-eating, and marriage.
  - 6) Physical matter was an evil force (Darkness in the universe).
  - 7) Rejected the OT
  - 8) Emphasized reason and claimed he could establish his doctrine by rational proof.
  - 9) Followers divided into the “elect” and the “hearers.”

- a) The elect had to obey Mani's ascetic moral and religious code strictly, and were regarded as priests.
- b) The hearers' main duty was to attend to the needs of the elect and allowed to practice a less disciplined lifestyle.

## **B. Church Controversies**

### **1. Donatism**

- a. Schismatics who believed that lapsed Christians should not be permitted reentry to the church.
- b. The Church in Northwest Africa was bitterly divided.
- c. Many Christians refused to acknowledge the new bishop of Carthage, Caecilian (311), because one of the bishops who had ordained him allegedly handed over the Bible to be burnt during Diocletian's persecution.
- d. Two rival churches: one led by Caecilian and the other by Donatus (d. 355).
- e. Finally put down by Constantine in 316

### **2. Arianism: This was the key doctrinal controversy of the century.**

- a. Tenets
  - 1) The Father alone is God, absolutely
  - 2) The Son and the Spirit are created by the Father before the creation of the world
  - 3) The Son is the highest created being
  - 4) They are only called God as an honorific, in much the same way as magistrates and judges were called gods in the Old Testament
- b. The Council of Nicaea (325)
  - 1) Convened by Constantine to settle the Arian Controversy

- 2) 300 bishops discussed the issues and arrived an orthodox statement of belief, the Nicene Creed (325): We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not created, of the same essence as the Father, through whom all things were created both in heaven and on earth; who for us human beings and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming again to judge the living and the dead, and [we believe] in the Holy Spirit.
  - 3) The Council of Nicaea did not settle the matter.
    - a) There were Origenists, Niceans, and Arians.
    - b) The Origenists and Niceans were at odds with one another, and could not settle the matter. This led to the Second Ecumenical Council, the Council of Constantinople.
  - 4) Macedonianism: It is important to mention this heresy in connection with the failure of Nicaea because the doctrine of the divinity of the Holy Spirit was also at issue at the time and because it became part of the discussion at Constantinople.
    - a) Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople declared that the Holy Spirit was a creature subordinate to the Son.
    - b) Also called Pneumatomachians (from *pneuma*, spirit, and *machomai*, to speak evil against).
    - c) Hilary of Poitiers' writing on the Holy Spirit represented the orthodox viewpoint over and against the Macedonians.
- c. The Council of Constantinople (381)
- 1) Convened by Theodosius (a Nicene Emperor)
  - 2) Revised the Nicene Creed, reaffirming and extending the teaching of the Council of Nicaea.

- 3) Athanasius (293-373)<sup>48</sup>
  - a) Patriarch of Alexandria
  - b) Champion of Trinitarian orthodoxy
  - c) Helped bring the East together against the Arians
  - d) The impetus for his argument was from the doctrine of salvation: if salvation is union with Christ, if through Christ we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4), then Christ must be both God and man, because no creature can unite us to God.
  - e) Key works
    - *Apology against the Arians*
    - *Four Orations against the Arians*
    - *History of the Arians*
    - *The Incarnation of the Word of God*
  - f) Five times driven into exile for his orthodox beliefs (spent 17 of his 45 years as patriarch in exile)
- 4) The Cappadocian Fathers (three natives of the province of Cappadocia in Asia Minor)
  - a) Who they were
    - Basil of Caesarea (330-379)
    - Gregory of Nyssa (335-394)
    - Gregory of Nazianzus (330-90)
  - b) What they did
    - Very basically, they were able to clarifying the language used to describe God, language that the Niceans and Origenists could agree upon in unity against the Arians.

---

<sup>48</sup> I highly recommend the lecture by John Piper called “Contending for Our All: The Life and Ministry of Athanasius” available at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org).

- ◆ *Homoousia*: The one nature, being, or essence of God that Father and Son share fully and equally, making them one God.
  - ◆ *Hypostasis*: The particular and distinct form in which the divine nature exists in Father and Son, making them two distinct persons.
- They also settled a dispute surrounding the deity of the Holy Spirit by extending the term *homoousios* to the Holy Spirit.
  - They are responsible for the contemporary expression of the doctrine of the Trinity; namely that God is three persons existing eternally in one single being or nature. Three *hypostases* in one *ousia*.
- c) The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381): We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### c. **Church-State Relations: From Persecution to Power**

1. Under Emperor Galerius (d. 311)
  - a. This represented the last and most terrible persecution of the church by the Roman Empire.

- b. Four anti-Christian edicts:
  - 1) All church buildings were to be destroyed, all Bibles burnt, and all Christian worship forbidden (303)
  - 2) All clergy arrested and imprisoned (303)
  - 3) All clergy must offer sacrifice to the gods or face torture (303)
  - 4) All citizens throughout the Empire were to sacrifice to the gods or face execution (304)
- c. In 311, the Emperor admitted that he could not squash Christianity, so he issued a new decree – one of religious toleration. Sick at the time, he asked Christians to pray for him. He died the same year.

## 2. Constantine (274-337)

- a. 306: Constantine proclaimed emperor of the West, but the West was divided between Constantine (Britain, France, and Spain) and Maxentius (Italy and Northwest Africa). Constantine tolerant; Maxentius anti-Christian.
- b. Battle of the Milivian Bridge (312)
  - 1) “By this sign (the labarum) you will conquer”:

[H]e saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and an inscription, conquer by this attached to it. . . . Then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies.<sup>49</sup>



<sup>49</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea quoted in Noll, *Turning Points*, 50.

- 2) Constantine, with a far smaller army, prayed to the Christian God for victory and triumphed miraculously over Maxentius who died in the battle.
  - 3) Believed that the Christian God had granted him victory, and so become the great champion and protector of Christians.
- c. At age 32 was master of the West
- d. 313: Edict of Milan
- 1) While Constantine was winning the West, Licinius won the East, controlling the eastern half of the Empire. Constantine and Licinius met in Milan and agreed on a policy of religious freedom for all religions, Christian and pagan.
  - 2) This was the first time that a head of state gave Christianity full legal status.
  - 3) Christianity not declared state religion under Constantine, but it did change the relationship between church and state.
- e. 324: the Battle of Chrysopolis (in Bithynia, Asia Minor)
- 1) Constantine invaded the East to fight what he thought was a holy war against Licinius, to rescue the Eastern Church from persecution by an anti-Christian tyrant.
  - 2) Licinius taken prisoner and executed
  - 3) Constantine became the single undisputed ruler of the entire Roman Empire
  - 4) Constantine's conversion the most significant since the Apostle Paul's, because it changed the religious destiny of the Roman Empire.
- f. Council of Nicaea (325)
- 1) Constantine's twofold rationale: "[F]irst, to bring the diverse judgments found by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity. . . and, second, to restore a healthy

tone to the system of the world, [which was] then suffering under the power of grievous disease."<sup>50</sup>

- 2) Constantine also helped formulate the Creed of Nicaea
  - 3) Again we see the government intervening not only in the administrative affairs of the church, but the doctrinal ones.
  - 4) The banishment of Arius was the first time that the state had punished someone for heresy
- g. Addressing the Donatists**
- 1) Constantine ordered the return of Christian property
  - 2) It was returned not to Donatus, but Caecilian.
  - 3) Turmoil and religious violence between the churches ensued.
  - 4) Constantine allowed tribunals of various bishops to investigate and they decided against the Donatists
  - 5) Constantine ordered all Donatists exiled and their property to be turned over to Celina (316). The decree failed to achieve what Constantine hoped – the return of the Donatists to the Catholic Church. He rescinded the decree in 321.
  - 6) This is the first time that an emperor had used the power of the state to try to force dissenting Christians back into fellowship with the Catholic Church.
- 3. Constantius (Constantine's son) (East 337-353; West 353-361)**
- a. Much more aggressive against paganism than his father
  - b. Banned all animal sacrifices
  - c. Ordered all pagan temples to be closed
  - d. Ordered bishop Hosius of Cordova to accept Arians at the Lord's Table

---

<sup>50</sup> Letter of Constantine quoted in Noll, *Turning Points*, 51.

1) Hosius' reply:

Do not intrude yourself into ecclesiastical matters, and do not give commands concerning them, but learn from us. God has put into your hands the kingdom; to us He has entrusted the affairs of His Church. If anyone stole the Empire from you, he would be resisting what God has ordained; in the same way, you should be afraid of becoming guilty of a serious sin if you take upon yourself to govern the Church. "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" ... We are not allowed to exercise earthly rule, and you, your majesty, are not allowed to burn incense.<sup>51</sup>

- e. This view of church and state became widespread in the West, but not in the East

4 Theodosius I (379-395)

- a. In 380, announced his intention to lead all citizens to embrace the Catholic Church.
- b. Authorities closed down or demolished pagan temples
- c. Sacrifices were illegal
- d. Orthodox Christianity was the official religion of the Empire
- e. Passed new laws against the Manichees
- f. Only non-Christian group tolerated was the Jewish people

5 Ambrose of Milan (339-397)

- a. Catholic provincial governor who became bishop of Milan in 374 when the crowd called for him to be the bishop (even though he was only a catechumen) amid rioting and controversy over the Arian heresy. He took this as God's will for his life.
- b. Magnificent preacher
- c. Resolute enemy of Arianism

---

<sup>51</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 170.

- d. Pioneer hymn-writer (new songs for Christian worship, not just Scripture), especially to teach his congregation the orthodox doctrine of Christ:

Brightness of the Father's glory,  
 Spread the splendor of Your light;  
 Radiant Fountain, Dayspring dawning,  
 Banish now the shades of night!

O true Sun, arise within us,  
 Shining with Your steady beam;  
 O plant deep within our senses  
 God the Holy Spirit's flame!

God the Father, too, we worship,  
 Father of all-powerful grace;  
 Glorious Father everlasting,  
 From our hearts all treason chase!

Christ our Lord, be bread for eating;  
 Faith, our wine for drinking be:  
 May we taste the joyous Spirit,  
 Drunk with his sobriety!

Now the dawn with splendor rises;  
 Jesus is our only Dawn:  
 Son unveiled by heavenly Father,  
 Father in the Logos known.<sup>52</sup>

- e. Introduced congregational singing to the West
- f. Outspoken on church-state relations
  - 1) "The Church belongs to God, therefore it cannot be assigned to Caesar. The emperor is *within* the Church, not *above* it."<sup>53</sup>
  - 2) This led to a conflict between bishop and emperor in 390: In anger, the Emperor had sent the army to Thessalonica to massacre everyone. After thinking better of it, he ordered his troops back, only they had already killed 7,000 people. Ambrose excommunicated him, made him go through months of penance, and finally, upon restoring him to the church, ordered him on his

---

<sup>52</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 194.

<sup>53</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 172, italics in original.

knees before the church to express his grief and seek forgiveness, which he did.

6. "The basic question was this: given the fact that the emperors would now, in some fashion or other, support the church, where did the emperors fit in relationship to the church?"<sup>54</sup>
  - a. The answer to this question tended to fall along doctrinal lines:
    - 1) Arians tended to favor direct imperial control of the church, for the church to see the word of the Emperor as the word of God. Just as Jesus was subordinate to the Father, so the church is subordinate to the state.
    - 2) Orthodox Catholics thought it was essential for the church to preserve a degree of autonomy over its own affairs. The kingdom of God was of equal dignity with the kingdom of this world; thus the authority of the bishops was co-equal with that of the emperors.
  7. The birth of Christendom: The idea of the church as a pilgrim community, so prevalent in the first three centuries of church history began to give way. Christianity was well on its way to becoming the dominant vision of life for the state, more or less blurring the lines between church and state.
- d. **Doctrine, Church Order, Worship, and Monasticism:** "Perhaps at no time before the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century...did the theology, organization, worship and life of the Church undergo such important developments as they did in the 4<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>55</sup>
  1. Doctrine
    - a. The centrality of the word of God
      - 1) Cyril of Jerusalem (310-386), bishop from 350
 

[N]o doctrine concerning the divine and saving mysteries of the faith, however trivial, may be taught with the backing of the holy Scriptures. We must not let ourselves be drawn aside by mere persuasion and cleverness of speech. Do not even give absolute belief to me, the one who tells you these things, unless you receive proof from the divine Scriptures of what I teach.

---

<sup>54</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 59.

<sup>55</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 174.

For the faith that brings us salvation acquires its force, not from fallible reasonings [*sic*], but from what can be proved out of the holy Scriptures.<sup>56</sup>

- b. The witness of tradition: Extrabiblical customs (not doctrines) of church order and worship. It wasn't until the 5<sup>th</sup> century that the Church came to believe that the councils were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

## 2. Church Order

- a. Church government becomes more complex
- b. Bishops no longer equal
- c. Graded in order of importance by their location
- d. Major cities had more authority
- e. Council of Nicaea decreed that all the bishops of each province should meet together twice a year in a synod, and the bishop of each provincial capital had a special status as president of the synod.
- f. Bishop of a provincial capital was called a metropolitan bishop, or sometimes archbishop
- g. Many churches came into existence without a bishop at all
- h. In this case, local presbyters would care for those churches in a city under the metropolitan bishop.
- i. A few bishops became even more powerful than the metropolitan bishops; they were called patriarchs (patriarchal bishops).<sup>57</sup>
  - 1) Rome: Only patriarch in the West.
  - 2) Constantinople: Extremely important because it was located in the capital of the Eastern/Byzantine Empire.
  - 3) Antioch
  - 4) Jerusalem

---

<sup>56</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 175.

<sup>57</sup> This became official at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

5) Alexandria

- j. Christians gave their patriarchs the name *papa*, or “pope,” which means “father.”

3. Worship

- a. Until now all church services were in Greek.
- b. West increasingly using Latin until it replaced Greek in 350.
- c. Syrian churches and Egyptian churches conducting worship in their own languages.
- d. Increasing emphasis on liturgy – a fixed, written form of worship, less wiggle-room for bishops.
- e. Holidays celebrated differently
- 1) Easter: Previously only Easter Sunday was celebrated, but now 40 days of Lent and the Easter week, with Good Friday as important as Easter Sunday.
  - 2) Christmas
    - a) Celebrated in the West on Dec 25 (c. 336)
    - b) Date was the pagan festival for the birth of the Sun
    - c) Customs of the old Roman festival of Saturnalia<sup>58</sup>: Dec 17-21 with the lighting of candles, gift exchange, held parties – these things became attached to Christmas.
    - d) Celebrated in the East on Jan 6 till 379 when the East adopted Dec 25.
- f. Greater use of ritual and ceremony: First use of special vestments, incense, and the carrying of lamps, candles, and tapers

---

<sup>58</sup> Saturnalia is the feast at which the Romans commemorated the dedication of the temple of the god Saturn.

- g. Meaning of baptism held by all Christians in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (really from the mid-second century onward)
- 1) Three main tenets
    - a) It washed away the guilt of all sins committed prior to baptism
    - b) It sanctified the baptized person by conferring on him spiritual union with Christ in his death and resurrection, the gift of the Spirit, and adoption as God's child.
    - c) It impressed a seal or permanent mark on the soul by virtue of which the baptized person was set apart as the Holy Spirit's temple.
  - 2) It was not the water of baptism that bestowed the spiritual benefits, but the Holy Spirit, who worked inwardly in the soul at the same time that the water outwardly washed the body.
  - 3) Believers' baptism was the norm.<sup>59</sup> Because many Christians believed that baptism only addressed sins committed prior to baptism, they often put it off until the last minute, usually when they were sick and dying.
  - 4) If a catechumen (a professing Christian who is in process of learning more specifics of the faith) were to die before receiving baptism, he or she would be saved nonetheless. The idea was that a person's desire for baptism would be sufficient.
  - 5) Acceptance of the true faith was necessary for baptism to be effective. The mere physical act of baptism was meaningless apart from faith. Heretical baptisms were viewed as spiritually worthless.
- h. Expansion of honoring saints and relics (objects associated with saints – a piece of his bones, or clothing).
- 1) Christians valued the dead bodies of outstandingly holy people, especially martyrs.
  - 2) Chapels and shrines and sometimes churches were built over the tombs of saints.

---

<sup>59</sup> There is evidence that infant baptism was practiced by Christian parents since the second century; however, in Tertullian's *Concerning Baptism*, he addresses the issue of infant baptism, arguing against the practice, but nevertheless acknowledging its practice.

- 3) Saints could help believers from heaven by the saints' prayers. They would not pray to the saints, but ask the saints to pray for them. This drifted to become praying *to* the saints.
  - 4) Many church leaders encouraged this, but there was some dissention.
- i. Churches adorned with pictures/icons of Christ and the saints (including holy men and women of Scripture).
4. Monasticism
- a. This is the most significant development in church life in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (though it began to develop in the last half of the third century).
  - b. Discontented and disgusted with sinful society, they would go off into unpopulated areas and live simple, ascetic lives.
  - c. Men who would do this were called "monks" (from the Greek *monachos*, meaning, "a person who lives alone").
    - 1) Renounced worldly property and pleasures
    - 2) Were celibate
    - 3) Consecrated themselves to prayer, fasting, and Bible study
  - d. Three types of monks
    - 1) Hermits or anchorites (From the Greek *eremia*, "the desert"; *chorizo*, "to separate").
    - 2) Coenobitic monasticism (From the Greek *koinos bios*, "common life"): A community of monks living in a monastery (the word originally meant "a hermit's cave").
      - a) Shared all things in common
      - b) Were self-supporting through manual labor
      - c) Strict obedience to their leader, the abbot (from the Arabic, "Abba," meaning "Father").

- d) Nuns (from the feminine of the Latin for monk, *nonnus, nonna*).

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 6

### 6. THE FIFTH CENTURY

A. **The Players: Key Fathers of the Fifth Century:** Though the work of these Fathers begins at the end of the fourth century, their most significant work and the preponderance of their influence is keenly felt in the fifth century.

1. John Chrysostom (344-407)

a. Preacher and expositor

- 1) John "Golden Mouth" one of the greatest preachers in the history of the church.
- 2) "Father" of expository preaching – preached verse by verse through books of the Bible.
- 3) Championed grammatico-historical exegesis over and against Origen's allegorism – known as the Antiochene school of interpretation.

b. Monk and ascetic

- 1) Lived with other monks in a cave outside Antioch
- 2) Practiced such a harsh asceticism that he damaged his health
- 3) Denounced ungodliness in the church and state directly and forthrightly.

c. Church leader

- 1) Returned to Antioch in 380, became a deacon in 381, was ordained a presbyter in 386.
- 2) Became the patriarch of Constantinople at the turn of the fifth century.
- 3) Wrote an influential book on pastoral ministry called *On the Priesthood*.

d. Enemies: Though he was popular among common people, even revered by them, he was not without enemies in high places.

- 1) Theophilus of Alexandria (patriarch 385-412) was his enemy, jealous of Chrysostom's popularity and angry with him for showing hospitality to four monks Theophilus had condemned.
  - 2) Died in 407 from heat exhaustion en route to a place of exile (he had insulted the Emperor's wife Eudoxia one too many times).
2. Jerome (347-420)
- a. One of the most accomplished scholars in the early church
  - b. His magnum opus: the Vulgate
    - 1) Responsible for translating the Bible from the original languages into Latin (the Vulgate) – it took 23 years to complete, completed in 405.
    - 2) Since many Christians spoke Greek, and almost none spoke Hebrew the common Christian OT was the Septuagint.
    - 3) From the Hebrew, Jerome knew that the books called Apocrypha (hidden things)<sup>60</sup> were not part of the Bible; therefore, he argued that Christians should only accept as authentic the books that the Jews included in the Hebrew OT and must reject the extra books in the Septuagint.
  - c. Lived as a hermit until ordained as a presbyter in Antioch in 379.
  - d. While in Rome was very unpopular among the Roman clergy and ruling classes. When his patron and defender, pope Damasus died in 384, Jerome had to flee Rome. He went to Jerusalem, where he lived out the rest of his days in a monastery in Bethlehem.
3. Augustine (354-430)
- a. Life
    - 1) Born at Tagaste in North Africa.
    - 2) Influenced by his godly mother, Monica cf. 2 Timothy 1.

---

<sup>60</sup> Hidden not because the church did not think them on a par with the rest of Scripture, but because they were not read out in public worship.

- b. Scholar
  - 1) Studied philosophy and rhetoric
  - 2) Taught rhetoric in Milan
  - 3) Admired Plato, marked influence in his writings.
- c. Profligate and philosopher turned Christian
  - 1) Lived with a woman and had a son out of wedlock (they never married, and Augustine was celibate until his death).
  - 2) Came under the influence of Ambrose who convinced him of the truthfulness of Christianity, but he could not repent of his sin – the allurements of sinful pleasure were too strong.
  - 3) Then in 386 he read Rom 13:13-14: “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” Of this experience Augustine said, “I did not want or need to read any further. Instantly, as I finished the sentence, the light of faith flooded into my heart, and all the darkness of doubt vanished.”<sup>61</sup>
- d. Became bishop of Hippo in 396.
- e. Theological emphases
  - 1) The importance of the OT for Christians (the whole Bible as a Christian book).
  - 2) The catholicity of the church
  - 3) Original sin and total depravity
  - 4) The sovereignty of God in salvation – grace does and must overpower our will
  - 5) Further nuanced the West’s understanding of the Trinity.

---

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ’s Power*, 243.

f. Key Works

- 1) *Confessions*: A prayer to God of his personal testimony and reflections on the Christian life (a must-read).
- 2) *On the Trinity*: Significantly influenced the West (what would become the Roman Catholic Church over and against Eastern Orthodoxy).
  - a) What unified the members of the Godhead. Augustine suggested that it was divine essence shared by each member. The Eastern Fathers taught that it was the Father's essence shared by the Son and Spirit.
  - b) The "procession" of the Holy Spirit both from Father and Son, not only from the Father (East). This was a logical outcome of the difference between Augustine's view of what unified the members of the Godhead.
- 3) *City of God*: In 410 Rome was captured by the Visigoths (West Germanic tribesmen). Pagans said that it was because the Empire had embraced Christianity. Augustine wrote *City of God* to answer this charge, setting up for the readers a Christian view of history.

g. Major opponent of false teaching

- 1) Donatism (late fourth century)
  - a) A pure church was impossible in this world
  - b) Donatists would not accept Roman Catholic baptism. Augustine's reply was that "the unworthiness of the minister did not affect the validity of the sacrament whose minister was Christ."<sup>62</sup>
  - c) Eventually argued that the State had power to coerce factious groups back into the church for their souls' sake.
- 2) Pelagianism (see below)

h. Used by Protestants and Roman Catholics

---

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Campbell, *Heroes*, 52.

- 1) Calvin and the Reformers were heavily influenced by Augustine
- 2) Augustine's view of the Apocrypha and his ecclesiology influenced RC Church.
  - a) Apocrypha was Scripture because Augustine believed that the Septuagint (LXX) was inspired.
  - b) Outside the church there was no salvation even among those we might think would have good reason to leave it.

## **B. Controversies and Councils**

### **1. The doctrine of salvation**

#### **a. Pelagianism**

- 1) Named for Pelagius, a British monk who came to Rome around 383.
- 2) Tenets
  - a) Men born sinless, just like Adam
  - b) "Sinless" means "morally neutral" not positively righteous or upright.
  - c) Most people sin, but not because they are inherently incapable of doing anything else, but because they follow his example. Their sin is not because of a corrupt nature, but because of free choice.
  - d) Some are able to remain pure, sinless, and perfectly holy in this life.
  - e) Grace for Pelagius meant
    - Not the work of the Holy Spirit, but is equal to man's own abilities and power; instead it meant...
    - God's gift of free-will to all human beings

- God's gift of the Law and the example of Christ, which revealed perfectly how people should live, and supplied strong incentives for doing so: eternal rewards and the threat of eternal punishment.

Pelagius' theology...made the fruits of human goodness grow almost entirely out of human free-will and effort; entry into heaven, in the Pelagian scheme, became a just reward for living a good life on earth, rather than an underserved gift purchased for helpless sinners by the blood of an all-sufficient Savior.<sup>63</sup>

### 3) Augustine vigorously opposed Pelagianism

#### a) Three significant works:

- *On Nature and Grace*
- *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin*
- *On the Spirit and the Letter*

#### b) Influenced especially by the book of Romans and the wider testimony of Scripture Augustine taught...

- That sin is voluntary, but that it comes from a fallen will – we cannot help but sin until it is freed from sin's control by God's grace. That is we always do what we *want* to do (which in our natural condition is only to sin), but we don't have the power to do what we *ought* to do.
- That sin is the absence of the good; if man had remained obedient to God, he would have been confirmed in holiness and would have passed from the condition of *able not to sin* to being *unable to sin*. Instead, man fell and passed into the condition of being *unable not to sin* (this lays the foundation for the first Canon of Dordt, what we call today "total depravity" – the need for God's grace to intervene).
- Grace for Augustine was the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, who created a good will in evil people.
- Taught election and predestination, only he thought that not all Christians were among the elect. God had granted them a temporary, but not an eternal salvation. Election

---

<sup>63</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 248.

bestowed on the believer the extra gift of perseverance, which a person couldn't know they had until they actually persevered to the end. You couldn't be sure that you were one of the elect, but if you were persevering in holiness, you could be hopeful that you were.

**b. Semi-Pelagianism**

- 1) Small group of writers arose in southern France, led by John Cassian, Faustus of Reiz (d. 490), and Vincent of Lerins (d. c. 450).
- 2) Agreed with Augustine that the whole human race had fallen in Adam
- 3) Sinners could not become Christians or do spiritual good without the powerful help of God's grace.
- 4) Even though a sinner could not save himself, he could at least cry out to God for saving grace, just as a sick person might not be able to heal himself, but at least take the medicine – conversion was synergistic – a joint project of divine grace and human will.
- 5) Put down at the Council of Orange in 529.

**2. The doctrine of Christ**

- a. Apollinarianism:** Even though this was a fourth century heresy put down at the Council of Constantinople in 381, I mention it in connection with the fifth century because it centered on the doctrine of Christ.
- 1) Apollinaris (300-390), Bishop of Laodicea c. 361
  - 2) Tenets
    - a) Man is body and soul
    - b) Christ had a human body, but not a human mind or spirit.
    - c) The mind and spirit of Christ were divine; they had their origin in his divine nature
    - d) At the incarnation the divine Word took the place of Jesus' soul.

- e) A measure to safeguard the deity and sinlessness of Christ
  - f) But, of course, if Jesus didn't have a human soul, he wasn't fully human.
  - g) Rejected because redemption of our minds and spirits is necessary; therefore, Christ had to be fully man (mind and spirit, too) in order to redeem us.
- b. Monophysitism (Eutychianism)
- 1) Eutyches (378-454), leader of a monastery at Constantinople
  - 2) Tenets
    - a) Christ had one nature only
    - b) Christ's divine nature took up and absorbed the human nature such that Christ's nature became a *tertium quid*, a "third thing."
    - c) Jesus was thus neither fully human nor fully divine, but some mixture of natures
- c. Nestorianism
- 1) The man: it unfairly bears his name (see below)
    - a) Lived 381-450s
    - b) Studied under Theodore of Mopsuestia (392-428)
    - c) A preacher in Antioch and from 428 was the Bishop of Constantinople
  - 2) Tenets
    - a) Concerned with Mary being referred to as *theotokos*, the mother (bearer) of God.
    - b) Said she should be called *christotokos*, bearer of Christ.
    - c) Christ should be thought of as a man to whom the divine Son of God had united himself.

- d) Nestorius believed that Jesus had two “natures” (*physeis*): human and divine.
  - e) Now although Nestorius believed that Jesus had two natures in one person (what would become the orthodox doctrine of Christ), many in his camp believed that the Christ was two persons.
- 3) Cyril of Alexandria: Key opponent of Nestorianism
- a) Cyril believed that Jesus had one “nature” (*physis*), so he opposed Nestorius’ Christology.
  - b) But the disagreement between the two was owing to the fact that the word *physis* could mean either “person” or “nature.” He understood Nestorius to be saying that Christ was two “persons” – a divine person and a human person. He thought that Nestorius believed Jesus of Nazareth to be a separate person from the eternal Son of God.
  - c) Nestorius’ denial of Mary as the *theotokos* also lent credence to Cyril’s belief that Nestorius taught that Christ was two persons. It was as if Cyril said, “See, that’s why you deny that Mary is the theotokos! If Christ is the God-Man then it’s proper to say that Mary is the birth giver of God, but if Jesus of Nazareth is a separate person from God the Son, then Mary can’t be the bearer of God.”
  - d) Because he was unwilling to use the word “nature” to the Lord’s humanity, and some appealed to him as an authority for the belief that the incarnation produced a hybrid single nature (the Monophysite heresy).
  - e) Managed to get Celestine of Rome (pope from 422-432) and the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II (408-50) on his side and convened the ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431.
- d. Council of Ephesus (431)
- 1) Called by Emperor Theodosius II in June 431
  - 2) Required to ratify decision by Pope Celestine, bishop of Rome, regarding the nature of the Person of Christ

- 3) Deposed Nestorius
  - 4) Nestorianism rejected because...
    - a) No biblical indication that the natures were independent persons
    - b) No disagreement between natures
    - c) No speech or communication between natures
    - d) Jesus always refers to himself in the singular whether he is emphasizing his divine nature or his human nature
    - e) Jesus is always referred to in the singular—either he or him or Jesus, but never “they.”
    - f) Even though we can distinguish actions associated with each nature to understand Jesus better, the Bible never says that Jesus’ divine nature did this or that, or that his human nature did this or that.
  - 5) Condemned Pelagianism as a heresy on the basis of Augustine’s arguments (made before he died)
  - 6) Monophysitism (Eutychianism) rejected since according to this scheme, since Christ is not fully God or fully man, he incapable of saving us (salvation is from the Lord) and he is incapable of representing us (through one man’s obedience the many are made righteous).
  - 7) Began to resolve the debates over the two natures of Christ...but not completely. That wouldn’t happen for another 20 years.
- e. Second Council of Ephesus (449)
- 1) Reinstated Eutyches (who had been put out for his Monophysitism)
  - 2) Outlawed the formula of union of 433 (an important statement between Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch [d. 441] in which John agreed to accept the banishment of Nestorius and the title *theotokos* for Mary; Cyril agreed to accept a statement of faith that spoke of a union of two natures in Christ).

- 3) Deposed Flavian and other leading Antiochene bishops.
  - 4) Refused to read *Leo's Tome*.
- f. The Council of Chalcedon (451)
- 1) Called by new emperor, Marcian (450-457)
  - 2) 400 bishops present
  - 3) It was difficult, but they arrived at what's called the Creed, Formula, or Definition of Chalcedon.

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul [i.e., human soul] and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness.

We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten — in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality [hypostasis]. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word [Logos] of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers [the Nicene Creed] has handed down to us.

- a) Considered the standard, orthodox definition of the biblical teaching by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox.
- b) Christ's divine and human natures retain their own properties and remain distinct, yet they are eternally and inseparably united together in one person.
- c) "Remaining what he was, he became what he was not."

- d) “[T]he Incarnation was an act of addition rather than subtraction.”

### c. **Church Life and Doctrine**

By the end of the fifth century the following unscriptural doctrines and practices had become deeply rooted in the Church: prayers for the dead; a belief in purgatory (place in which souls are purified after death before they can enter heaven)...the view that the Lord’s Supper is a sacrifice, and that its administrators are priests; a sharp division of the members of the church into clergy (officers of the church) and laity (ordinary church members); the veneration (adoration) of martyrs and saints, and above all the adoration of Mary; the burning of tapers or candles in their honor;; veneration of the relics of the martyrs and saints; the ascription of magical powers to these relics; pictures, images, and altars in the churches; gorgeous vestments for the clergy; more and more elaborate and splendid ritual (form of worship); less and less preaching; pilgrimages to holy places; monasticism; worldliness; persecution of heathen and heretics.<sup>64</sup>

1. Infant baptism: One of Augustine’s arguments for original sin was that if original sin were not true, then why would the church baptize babies? This demonstrates that by the fifth century, infant baptism had become the normal practice for the Church.
2. Marian theology: Increasing devotion to Mary as *theotokos*. Within another few centuries, Mary had become as important to Christ in the religion of many Christians.
3. The papacy and Leo I, patriarch of Rome from 440-461
  - a. Most outstanding theologian to occupy the episcopal throne in Rome.
  - b. Sent an important Christological statement to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople from 447-449 which we call *Leo’s Tome*.
  - c. In many ways, the founder of the papacy; for he believed that Christ had appointed the Apostle Peter as the senior bishop and final court of appeal for all Christians and that the whole church should accept all doctrinal statements by Peter’s successors (the popes of Rome).
  - d. Council of Chalcedon was a victory and a defeat for Leo I and the beginnings of the Roman Papacy.

---

<sup>64</sup> Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 44.

- a) Victory because he was able to give clearer expression to Cyril of Alexandria's Christology in a way that riles out the extreme views of others.
- b) Defeat because the council decided in what's called "canon 28" that the patriarch of Constantinople had equal status with the Patriarch of Rome (since it was the newer capital of the Empire).

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 7

### 7. THE SIXTH CENTURY

#### A. Background: A Brief History of the Fall of Rome (376-c. 550)

1. German tribes invade the Empire: East of the Rhine and north of the Danube were German tribes... Visigoths and Ostrogoths (West and East Goths).
  - a. Visigoths
    - 1) 376 entered the Empire
    - 2) 378 Roman army under Valens annihilated
    - 3) Theodosius was his successor – a great statesman and general who subdued the Goths. From then on the Goths left the Eastern Empire alone (it continued to exist as the Byzantine Empire throughout the entire Middle Ages).
    - 4) Failing in the east the Goths set their sights on the west.
      - a) Took 100 years (376-476) to conquer the western part of the Empire.
      - b) The last 100 years in the west were a great time of suffering and disaster for the peoples of the Empire.
2. The Fall of the (Western) Empire (410)
  - a. Rome sacked by the Goths under Alaric.
  - b. Shocked pagans and Christians alike. Jerome said,
 

The world is rushing to ruin. The glorious city, the capital of the Roman Empire, has been swallowed up in one conflagration. Churches once hallowed have sunk into ashes. Virgins of God have been seized, maltreated, and murdered... Who could have believed it that Rome, founded on triumphs over the whole world, could fall to ruin; and that she, the mother of nations, should also be their grave?<sup>65</sup>
  - c. Remaining pagans blamed Christians for Rome's downfall.

---

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 50.

- d. The Vandals: After occupying Spain and North Africa, they crossed the Mediterranean Sea and took Rome in 455.
  - e. The Huns: Were defeated at the battle of Chalons. Attila the Hun turned toward Rome, but Leo I saved the city.
  - f. Eventually the barbarians conquered every province of the western Empire: Italy, North Africa, Spain, Gaul, the Netherlands, and Britain.
  - g. Empire fell, but the church remained strong – many of the barbarian tribes had accepted Christianity or forms of Christianity (Arianism).
3. The distribution of peoples (**see maps on p. 88**)
- a. In the east
    - 1) This part of the Empire was not conquered by the barbarians
    - 2) Mainly Christian (at least nominally)
    - 3) Advanced in art and philosophy
  - b. In the west
    - 1) Italy
      - a) Originally inhabited by many tribes
      - b) Most of the Goths had converted to Christianity before they invaded the Empire through the preaching and teaching of Ulfilas (c. 310-383), a half-Gothic bishop who translated a large part of the bible into Gothic.
      - c) Occupied by Ostrogoths (East Goths; Arian)
    - 2) Southern Gaul and Spain: Occupied by Visigoths (Arian)
    - 3) Eastern Gaul: Burgundians (Christians)
    - 4) Southern Spain and North Africa: Vandals (Arian)
    - 5) Northern Gaul, Belgium, southern Netherlands: Franks (Pagan)

- 6) Northwestern Netherlands; Frisians (Pagan)
  - 7) Eastern Netherlands: Saxons (Pagan)
  - 8) Britain: Anglo-Saxons (Pagan)
  - c. Outside the Empire
    - 1) Ireland: Celts
    - 2) Denmark, Norway, Sweden: Scandinavians
    - 3) East of the Rhine: German tribes
    - 4) Russian tribes
  - d. In light of this new landscape, the task of the church in the sixth century becomes Christianizing and educating the new peoples of the Empire. The church was largely successful.
- B. Doctrinal Developments:** In the late fifth and early sixth centuries, following the Council of Chalcedon, there were several distinct schools of thought that did not accept the definition.
1. The definition:

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul [i.e., human soul] and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness.

We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten — in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality [hypostasis]. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word [Logos] of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the

prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers [the Nicene Creed] has handed down to us.

## 2. The opposing schools

- a. Monophysitism: There were a variety of types. But the one embraced by the Eastern Church at the Second Council of Constantinople (553) was that divinity and humanity were mixed in the one nature of Jesus Christ. It did not condemn the Chalcedon Definition, but it condemned those who held views other than the one espoused at the Second Council of Constantinople.
- b. Diophysitism: Accepted Chalcedon and championed orthodoxy, but there was still a great deal of confusion over the two natures of the one person of Christ, so that there was what Campbell calls "a tendency to drift into a form of Nestorianism."<sup>66</sup>

## c. **Key Players**

### 1. Gregory of Tours (538-594)

#### a. Writings

- 1) *History of the Franks*, which tells the story of the Frankish people to 591.
- 2) *Commentary on the Psalms*
- 3) *Life of the Fathers*, a valuable book on the lives of France's pioneer monks.
- 4) A collection of testimonies to contemporary miracles.

- b. Elected bishop in 573 by unanimous voice of clergy and laypeople.
- c. Adored by the people for his godly life and his relentless defense of the poor and oppressed. Had such a strong reputation for holiness that when an enemy brought a damaging accusation against him at a Frankish Church council in 580, Gregory's solemn protestation that he had not committed the offense was enough to convince everyone of his innocence.

---

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, *Heroes*, 64.

## 2. Boethius (480-524)

### a. *The Consolation of Philosophy*

- 1) While awaiting his execution by bludgeoning (he had fallen from Theodoric's grace), he wrote this work in which he argued that the Emperor had merely deprived him of material goods, earthly pleasures, fame and power, which cannot bring real peace to the human soul anyway; but no one can rob Boethius of goodness, the soul's true and eternal treasure, which comes from participating in God himself, who is the supreme good.
- 2) He reflected with profundity on God's justice, providence, and his foreknowledge of the future in relation to human decisions and actions. On the latter, he argued that God does not experience time as we do, as past, present, and future. Instead, according to Boethius, God does not dwell in time (he created it). And because he doesn't dwell in time, he views the whole of time in single glance, as if it were all present in an eternal "now." So God sees future things happening as we would see something happening in the present. And just as we do not cause someone to perform a free act merely by seeing him or her perform it, so God's foreknowledge of our future actions does not mean that he forces us to carry them out, or causes them by some kind of necessity which takes away our freedom. In his own eternal present, God simply sees us performing actions which, to us, are in the future.
- 3) This book was admired for a thousand years in the Western world.
- 4) However there is no explicit mention of Christ (probably because he was more a Neoplatonist than a Christian).

### b. Singularly influenced education

- 1) Derived from pagan Rome
- 2) The *trivium* and *quadrivium*
  - a) Trivium was a course in the three subjects of grammar, rhetoric, and logic;
  - b) Quadrivium involves the study of the four subjects of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

- c. The new West's knowledge of the old Greek philosophy came from Boethius. He translated the treatises of Aristotle on logic and the writing of the great Neoplatonist, Porphyry, into Latin.
3. Benedict of Nursia (480-547): Father of Western monasticism.
- a. Was a hermit; lived in a cave in Subiaco, Italy (east of Rome)
  - b. Battled with demons
  - c. Battled with sexual desires, which he fought by rolling around naked on thorns and nettles.
  - d. Upon mastering his passions he seemed to emerge from his solitude like a person able to control the forces of nature.
  - e. The monastery of Monte Cassino
    - 1) Founded in 539 founded between Rome and Naples
    - 2) From here he preached, fed the poor, healed the sick (miraculously, it was believed), and attracted a growing army of disciples.
    - 3) Wrote his own code of conduct for the monastery (the "Benedictine Rule") based on previous rules, such as those of Basil of Caesarea and John Cassian.
      - a) Day divided into three periods
        - Collective worship, lasting four and a half hours;
        - Manual labor, lasting six or seven hours;
        - The study of the Bible and the early Church fathers, lasting from 3-5 hours.
      - b) Eight hours of sleep.
      - c) Other monks elected the abbot, who held the position for life; no monk could challenge his decisions, although the rule required the abbot to convene a general meeting of all the monks for important matters.
      - d) Each Benedictine monastery was to be financially self-sufficient

- e) No leader in charge of the various monastic communities apart from the pope.
  - f) This rule became the most popular and widely used of all monastic rules throughout the Western world. Until this point there was no universal rule for monasteries.
- 4) Because of their attention to Scripture, the Benedictine monks were instrumental in preserving the manuscripts of the NT, copying, storing, studying, and using them in their worship.
4. Pope Gregory I (Gregory the Great) (540-604; pope 590-604)
- a. Political Leadership
    - 1) Under him, the papacy began to emerge as the great political as well as spiritual power to dominate Western Europe for a thousand years. He almost single-handedly made the papacy into a powerful social and political institution, governing the western-central region of Italy as an independent state.
    - 2) Made treaties with Lombard invaders without consulting the Byzantine Emperor Maurice who had a governor in Ravenna (northern Italy). No previous pope had dared behave with such political independence.
    - 3) Urged Byzantine Empire to make peace with the Lombards and Franks.
    - 4) Established an important relationship between the papacy and the Frankish monarchy.
    - 5) Used papal lands to give food and shelter to many who had been made destitute by the Lombards.
  - b. Church leadership
    - 1) Used his power to promote church life and to strengthen the position of the papacy.
    - 2) Oversaw Spain's conversion from Arianism to Catholicism.
    - 3) Tried to stop the Frankish monarchy from taking control of bishoprics and selling them for money.

- 4) Fought hard against Manichaeism in Italy and Donatism in North-West Africa, persuading the civil authorities to punish all non-Catholics (except the Jews, whom he protected).
- 5) Famous and fierce controversy with patriarch John the Faster of Constantinople (582-95)
  - a) Byzantine Emperor Maurice had bestowed on the bishop of Constantinople the title "ecumenical" or "universal" patriarch – the spiritual leader of all Christians. Gregory protested that none of the five patriarchs could claim such an arrogant title, although Rome held a paramount place of honor among them as "first among equals," by virtue of its spiritual descent from Peter, prince of the apostles. Gregory declared, "Whoever calls himself universal priest, or desires that title, is by his pride the forerunner of Antichrist."<sup>67</sup>
- 6) Deeply committed to the evangelization of the Germanic tribes who were still pagan.
  - a) Greatest concern was for the tribes that had conquered Britain – the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.
  - b) 596 sent a team of Benedictine monks to King Ethelbert and the Jutes in Kent. They were reluctant missionaries under the leadership of Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604).
  - c) Welcomed by King Ethelbert and given permission to preach throughout the kingdom.
  - d) Augustine reported that 10,000 people, including the king had been baptized (all voluntarily, as Augustine taught Ethelbert that it was wrong to coerce baptism).
  - e) Gregory appointed Augustine archbishop of the Catholic Church in England and Ethelbert gave Augustine his own palace at Canterbury to be his official residence, so Augustine became the first archbishop of Canterbury.

### c. Theology

---

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, 300.

- 1) Devout disciple of Augustine, but blended Augustinian theology with other elements drawn from the popular religious beliefs and practices of his own day.
- 2) Taught that all human beings are born sinful, and that Christ alone by his sovereign grace can rescue sinners from their bondage to sin.
- 3) Salvation comes through baptism in which the Holy Spirit causes the sinner (even newborn baby) to be spiritually reborn.
- 4) Christian must make up for sins committed after baptism through works of love.
- 5) Taught that communion had the power to wash away post-baptismal sin.
- 6) If at death a Christian had any sins left that had not been dealt with, he or she must pay for them by suffering in purgatory, a place of purifying fire midway between heaven and hell. (In the fifth century, theologians had thought that purgatory was an opinion rather than a definite Christian doctrine in the West).
- 7) Introduced the practice of celebrating special communion services for the dead, which he thought were effective for remitting the sins of departed souls and thus hastening their passage from purgatory to heaven.

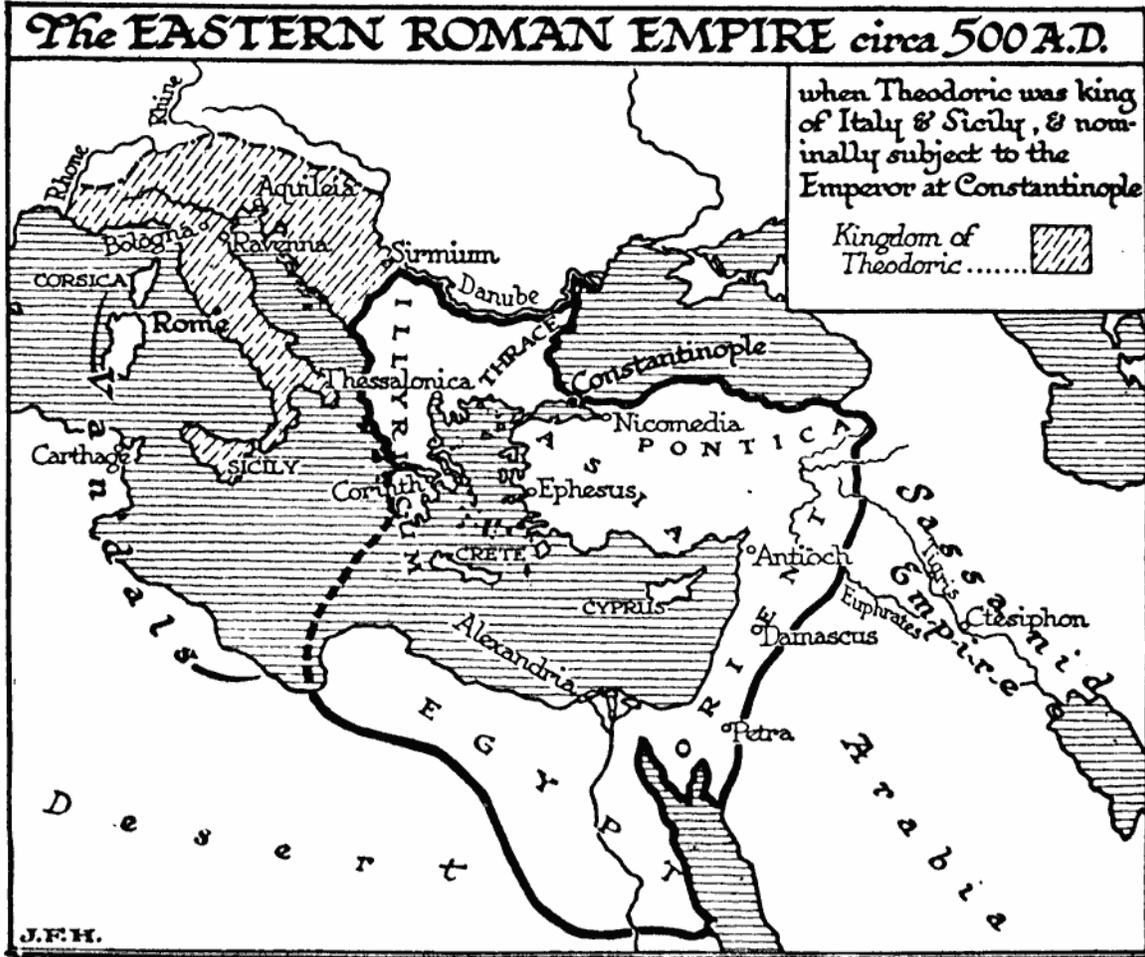
d. Church worship

- 1) By this time people were calling the celebration of holy communion "the mass" from the closing words of the Latin communion liturgy, "*ite missa est*" ("Go, the congregation is dismissed"). The term "mass" was first used in the fifth century, but became standardized in the West in the sixth century.
- 2) Opposed veneration of images or icons of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints, but approved of using them to adorn church buildings as teaching aids for those who could not read (think of it as sixth century flannel graph).
- 3) Introduced changes in the liturgy for holy Communion, including a new collection of hymns to be sung alternately by presbyter and congregation or choir – "Gregorian chant."

e. Writings

- 1) *Letters*: 838 have survived, all addressed to bishops, missionaries, and political leaders.
- 2) *Dialogues*: Contain the lives of various saints, such as Benedict of Nursia.
- 3) Commentary on *Job* using Origen's threefold method of interpretation.
- 4) *The Pastoral Care*
  - a) Set forth ideals of Christian ministry.
    - A pastor must set forth a personal example by the way he lives.
    - Be a servant not a ruler
    - Meditate daily on the word of God
    - Love truth more than popularity
    - Give a high place to preaching
  - b) Became standard textbook in the Middle Ages in the West, and is generally considered a classic on the subject.

Map 7.1<sup>68</sup>



Map 7.2<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> <http://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/3600/3624/3624.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 53.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 8

### 8. THE SEVENTH CENTURY: The Beginning of the Middle Ages

#### A. The Rise of Islam<sup>70</sup>

1. Muhammad
  - a. Born in Mecca (south-western coast of central Arabia) in 570 or 571.
  - b. Successful merchant; journeys brought him into contact with Jews and Christians.
  - c. Monotheistic ("one true god") religions sprang up at this time in Arabia under the influence of Judaism and Christianity. Previously there were pagan tribal religions in the region.
  - d. In 610 received what he believed was his first of many revelations from God.
  
2. Suffering in Mecca, flight to Medina
  - a. Increasingly persecuted in Mecca from the majority of the city's inhabitants.
  - b. Ridiculed, beaten, tortured, and killed followers of Islam.
  - c. Muslims eventually forced to flee from Mecca to Medina (the more northern coastal city) in 622, called the year of the *hejira*, the "emigration."
  - d. Reversal of fortunes in Medina
    - 1) Preaching met with almost universal success.
    - 2) Became the religious and political leader of the city.
    - 3) Medina the first independent Muslim community.
    - 4) Attracted converts from the surrounding region.

---

<sup>70</sup> The term "Islam" means "submission."

- e. In 630 Muhammad returned to Mecca marshalling 10,000 warriors after several bloody battles with the pagan forces from Mecca.
    - 1) Won over the pagan population by granting a general amnesty to the conquered peoples.
    - 2) Destroyed the images of Mecca's pagan gods.
    - 3) Made the ancient Meccan shrine, the *ka'ba* into the most holy place of Islamic worship.
  - f. Political unity in Arabia by the time of Muhammad's death in 632 through conversions and military conquests.
    - 1) From the outset Islam spread with the sword.
    - 2) Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, his successors had created a huge Islamic Empire, stretching from India to Spain.
    - 3) Armies like this rarely known: brave, tough, sober (no drinking allowed), and burning with zeal for the faith that made them unafraid of death.
  - g. The Christian world offered little to no resistance to this effort.
3. Tenets of the religion of Muhammad
- a. God was a single individual person, separated from his creation by his unique possession of divine attributes, emphasizing most God's power – ruled out any concept of the Trinity, which Muhammad felt was no better than pagan idolatrous polytheism.
  - b. Jesus was Muhammad's forerunner, sinless and virgin-born, a miracle-worker, the greatest of God's prophets apart from Muhammad himself, but not the divine, eternal son of God who became man (denied deity of Jesus).
  - c. Did not believe that Jesus had been crucified; God would not allow his prophets to be treated with such shame.
  - d. God alone was the cause of all things, both good and evil.

- e. Idolatry was the supreme sin.
  - f. The "Five Pillars" of Islam
    - 1) *Shahadah*, or the confession of faith: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."
    - 2) *Salah*, or prayer five times a day, facing Mecca.
    - 3) *Zakah*, or giving charitable gift of money as welfare contribution for the poor.
    - 4) *Sawm*, or fasting in the holy month of Ramadan.
    - 5) *Hajj*, or the pilgrimage to Mecca, which a Muslim must try to make at least one time.
  - g. "Jihad," often translated "holy war" means "struggle. Muslims understand jihad as referring both to the personal struggle for obedience to Allah's will, and to the struggle to spread Islam around the world by preaching, writing, diplomacy, and warfare.
4. Sources of authority and revelation: The Quran, *hadith*, and *ijma* make up the threefold authority that Muslims must follow.
- a. The Quran
    - 1) A series of 114 messages dictated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel.
    - 2) Othman (644-56), Islam's third successor (caliph) collected these into a single authoritative addition.
    - 3) The beauty of the Arabic is a "proof" of the book's authenticity as a revelation from God and the only miracle ever performed by Muhammad.
    - 4) Translations of the Quran are considered not inspired, but interpretations of the original.
  - b. *Hadith*, or traditions about what Muhammad had said and done, were also important because Muhammad is the perfect example

of how a man should live. The *hadith* collectively form the *sunna* (or “path”).

- c. The *ijma*, or the consensus of the Muslim community, or according to some, of Islamic legal scholars.
5. Life for the church under Islamic rule
- a. Toward Arab peoples – the general policy was to force non-Muslims into Islam.
  - b. Policy toward non-Arab peoples was generally one of tolerance
    - 1) Christians and Jews considered by Muhammad to be worshippers of the one true God, but according to Islam had corrupted the true religion. In fact, in Damascus, Christians and Muslims shared the Church of St John for worship until 750.
    - 2) Zoroastrians and other ancestral faiths were not caused to be destroyed.
  - c. Serious disadvantages for Christians
    - 1) Became segregated communities and second-class citizens.
    - 2) Muslim masters required them to organize as a *melet* (nation) under a bishop who was charged with political responsibility over them.
    - 3) Paid a heavy poll tax.
    - 4) Had to wear distinctive clothing.
    - 5) Forbidden to own or use swords or ride horses.
    - 6) No public processions carrying icons or crosses were allowed.
    - 7) No ringing of bells or beating of drums to announce services of worship.
    - 8) Marriage between Christians and Muslims was forbidden.

- 9) Christians were forbidden by law from preaching the gospel to Muslims.
  - 10) Conversion from Islam to Christianity was punishable by death.
  - 11) Churches under Islam declined steadily in number.
  - 12) Majority of professing Christians converted to Islam for the benefits of citizenship.
  - 13) In local areas, despite official tolerance, Christians were persecuted hotly in local areas.
- d. Some flourishing of Christianity under Islamic rule
- 1) Christians of education and higher learning employed to translate the great works of Greek philosophy into Arabic.
  - 2) John of Damascus (675-749) – the last of the Greek early church fathers.
    - a) Wrote *The Fountain of Knowledge*
      - Part 1: Philosophy
      - Part 2: Heresies
      - Part 3
        - ◆ Is one of the most profound and influential defenses of Eastern Chalcedonian Christianity ever written.
        - ◆ This third part was translated into Latin in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and had a large impact on the growth of western systematic theology.
6. Christian responses to Islam
- a. The pen and the sword...but mainly the sword. Christians felt they had little alternative in light of the Muslims' militancy.

- b. Notable attempts to evangelize Muslims in the Middle Ages, but much later (12<sup>th</sup> century).

## **B. Doctrinal Controversy**

1. Spilling over from the sixth century into the seventh were questions surrounding the person of Christ
2. One of the questions was the question of whether Christ had one will or two
  - a. Some Monotheletes believed that Christ had one will, merged into the divine and that that one will was the one that acted.
  - b. Others believed that Christ's one will was a fusion of divine and human.
3. This was all rejected at the Council of Constantinople in 680-81.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 9

### 9. THE EIGHTH CENTURY

#### A. Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire

1. Before Charlemagne
  - a. Charles Martel (c. 690-741)
    - 1) Charlemagne's grandfather, mayor of the palace of the Merovingian kings, and the effective ruler of the Franks.
    - 2) Successful military and political career.
      - a) Led the Franks in victory against Muslims in 732 at the Battle of Tours (in northwest France). Although it would take more than 700 years to drive the Muslims out of Europe, many historians see this as a decisive battle because it permanently halted the western progress of the Islamic Empire. The Franks forced the Muslims back into Spain where they remained for 700 years.
      - b) Early in his life he initiated friendly contacts with the Roman popes.
      - c) Directly assisted Boniface and other Anglo-Saxon missionaries who were busy among the Germanic tribes of the north. Since Boniface was working under the direction of the pope, Charles' support was taken as support of the pope himself.
    - 3) Charlemagne succeeded to the alliances made by his grandfather (and father, Pepin [see below]).
  - b. Pepin the Short (714-768)
    - 1) Crowned king of the Franks by the great missionary Boniface (He did this in the name of the pope).
    - 2) This was the first time a pope had claimed that his apostolic authority involved the right to sanction the dethroning of one king and his replacement by another.
    - 3) It meant that the new royal family in France owed its legal authority to the papacy (Pope Zachary [741-52]).

- 4) Frankish monarchy was now the central diplomatic and spiritual center of the world, sealing the bond between the Franks and the papacy.
2. Charlemagne, a.k.a. Charles the Great (742-814) became emperor in 768.
    - a. From the beginning of his rule, he acted in concert to expand his own power and to strengthen his connections with the pope.
      - 1) Saved the pope from Lombard invaders.
      - 2) Delivered the pope again in 799 from the anger of Rome, which had accused the pope of many faults.
    - b. Imposed his rule on the whole of the civilized West: "no sovereign since Constantine had assembled so many territories beneath his scepter; like Constantine he appeared to mankind as the witness, as the herald, of Christ."<sup>71</sup>
    - c. Military campaigns
      - 1) Forced Islam back beyond the Alps.
      - 2) Only suffered one loss in his long and illustrious career (he spent most of his 43-year reign fighting wars).
    - d. Devoutly and fiercely Christian
      - 1) Called the "Moses of the Middle Ages" because he led the Germans out of their barbarism and gave them a new code of civil and ecclesiastical laws.
      - 2) Typically required conquered peoples to become Christians or be killed. But in response to his chief theological adviser's repeated protestations (Alcuin of York), Charlemagne eventually repealed the death penalty for paganism in 797: "Faith is a free act of the will, not a forced act. We must appeal to the conscience, not compel it by violence. You can force people to be baptized, but you cannot force them to believe."<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> H Daniel-Rops, *Dark Ages*, quoted in Campbell, *Heroes*, 80.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in N R Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Part Two: The Middle Ages* (Evangelical Press, 2000), 52.

- 3) Extremely motivated by the Christian religion in his reign and brought about a variety of reforms and initiatives in the church.
  - a) Appointed bishops to significant roles in government.
  - b) Made Sunday a mandatory rest day.
  - c) Made tithe to parish church mandatory and punishable by excommunication.
  - d) Regularized the worship and liturgy of the West.
  
- 4) Believed his authority came to him from God: "It is my duty, with the help of the divine Mercy, to defend the Holy Church of God with my arms, everywhere."<sup>73</sup> "The king's task is the effective strengthening, consolidating, propagating and preserving of the faith; the pope's task is to support the king in this duty, by praying for him like Moses with outstretched arms."<sup>74</sup>
  - a) Political authority ought to go hand in hand with ecclesiastical power.
  - b) Clergy as a means by which he could train and reform society for the service of God.
  - c) More on this below under "Sacred Kingship"
  
3. The "Carolingian Renaissance": Charlemagne sought to use his power to regulate the lives of the priests and to set up schools throughout the land, leading to what is commonly called the "Carolingian Renaissance," a period during which learning flourished, and during which the foundation was laid for the great humanistic scholarship of the Middle Ages.
  - a. Gathered together in his court the most distinguished scholars in Western Europe. The greatest of which was Alcuin of York, who entered Charlemagne's service in 782. He was "a Bible commentator, textual scholar, liturgical reviser, defender of orthodoxy against the Adoptionists, reformer of monasteries, builder of libraries, and learned astronomer."<sup>75</sup> He was responsible for the following advances:

---

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Campbell, *Heroes*, 83.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Needham, *Part Two*, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 54.

- 1) Language: Created "Carolingian miniscule," which marked a reform in handwriting on which our modern printed letters are based; revised Latin and taught it to all educated people and it became the international language of Western civilization.
  - 2) Literature: Most of our surviving texts from ancient Greece and Rome have come down to us from Carolingian copies. Alcuin used an army of monk-scholars to accomplish this great work. He also oversaw the establishment of monastic libraries throughout the empire where the books were copied and stored.
  - 3) Bible: Alcuin revised the text of the Latin Bible and established a standard edition of the Vulgate.
  - 4) Education: Ordered bishops and abbots to establish schools for training monks and priests, decreed that every parish should have school to educate all the male children of the neighborhood, and founded a royal academy for the study of logic, philosophy, and literature.
4. "Sacred Kingship": This refers to the notion that the king is the vicar of God while the bishop is only the Vicar of Christ (the mediator); therefore, the monarchy has authority over the church. The king, in this sense, is *et rex et sacerdos* ("both king and priest").<sup>76</sup> Charlemagne held to this ideal, seeing himself in the place of God in the world.
- a. In 790, without consulting Pope Adrian I, he issued the Western Church's response to the iconoclastic controversy (see below). His response came in what are called the "Caroline books." The Caroline books took a middle ground between the opposing parties in the conflict in the East by rejecting bowing down or kneeling before icons, kissing them, or burning incense or candles in front of them, by rejecting the stories of miracles worked by the icons, by accepting that religious honor should be paid to the sign of the cross and the relics of the saints.
  - b. Despite the veto of Pope Leo III, Charlemagne supported the inclusion of the *filioque* clause into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381). From the sixth century onwards, Western Christians had added "and from the Son" to the line which says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Council of Toledo (Spain, 589) added

---

<sup>76</sup> This has antecedence in the Council of Chalcedon (451) at which the Byzantine emperor Marcian was referred to as king and priest.

the *filioque* clause to the creed. The East protested that the West had no right to alter an ecumenical creed, as ecumenism by definition involves the entire church. Pope Leo III agreed with the notion that the Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son, but objected to the phrase being added to the creed.

5. The coronation of a new Roman king: Christmas Day, 800
  - a. "By the time he came to Rome in 800, Charlemagne's success against the Saxons to his north and east, the Spanish in the west, and the Lombards to his south had made him lord over more of Europe than anyone since Theodosius at the end of the fourth century."<sup>77</sup>
  - b. The pope crowned Charlemagne as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the West. Obviously, this was a massively significant and symbolic event – conjoining church and state, the emperor and the Western Pope working together. This is what gives us the concept of Christendom – the idea of a world that is a church – of political and religious power governing the lives and the worship of people. This act solidified a connection that had been developed for more than fifty years between the Frankish government and the Roman papacy.

[B]y 800 an elaborate mixing of elements had created a situation in which the Roman bishop was regarded unquestionably as the prime ecclesiastical figure in the West and as the personal representative of Western Christianity to the East...What made the coronation of 800 so important was not that it represented the height of papal power. Rather, it represented a strategic alliance between the papacy's gradually expanding influence and a political power that, like the pope, was also expanding in influence.<sup>78</sup>

For the next 800 years and more, the politics, learning, social organization, art, music, economics, and law of Europe would be 'Christian' – not necessarily in the sense of fully incorporating norms of the gospel, but because the fate of the Western church centered in Rome had been so decisively linked with the new 'Roman' emperor over the Alps.<sup>79</sup>

## B. The Strengthening of the Papacy

1. Papacy advanced its claim of temporal sovereignty.
2. Important developments in France: It was in Rome's interests to secure such an alliance, as the threats against Rome at this time were coming from

---

<sup>77</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 121.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

different places. Kings of France interested in having the moral support of Rome in their various endeavors.

3. Sponsorship of Boniface's missionary journeys drew the papacy more and more into the concerns of northern Europe.
4. Pepin the Short's papal coronation
  - a. In exchange, Pepin extracted Rome from its last lingering tie to Constantinople and in 756 gave the pope a "donation" that gave the pope control of Italian territories won by Pepin from the Lombards and also committed his successors to act as protectors of the papacy.
  - b. Pepin's gift to pope Stephen furthered the rift between Eastern and Western churches by giving Ravenna (northern Italy) to him, which until that point had been under Byzantine control, but even though Constantine V protested, Pepin argued that he was under no obligation to Byzantium since he was serving the glory of God, the apostle Peter, and the pope.
  - c. Gave the papacy a huge independent state (the "papal states" across west-central and northeastern Italy). From now on popes would be heads of state as much as they would be leaders in the church.
5. The *Donation of Constantine*: This was a document that surfaced in the eighth century which claimed to be a letter from Constantine the Great to pope Sylvester I in which Constantine said that the pope was superior to the emperor and granted the papacy the right to govern the city of Rome and all imperial territory in Italy and the West. The document was a forgery (exposed as such in 1440 by the Italian scholar Lorenzo Valla), but for 700 years the popes used it to back up their claims.

### c. **Theological Controversies and Setbacks**

1. Adoptionism
  - a. Two Spanish bishops put forth the idea that although Christ in his divine nature was the eternal Son of God, in his human nature he as an adopted son of God, just as believers are.
  - b. At the root of the issue was whether sonship belonged properly to person or to nature. The Adoptionists said that it belonged to nature, and since Christ had two natures, it followed that there were two

“sons” in Christ – an eternal, divine sonship and a human adopted sonship.

- c. Spread within the Frankish empire and caused a major controversy.
  - d. The orthodox argued that sonship belongs to his person – it is as a person that Jesus is the eternal son of God; therefore Christ cannot have an additional human sonship unless he has a separate human personality, which, of course, is the Nestorian heresy.
  - e. Opponents argued that this was the Nestorian heresy all over again because to say that there were two sons in Christ, a divine son and a human adopted son was to say that there were two persons of Christ.
  - f. Condemned at the Council of Frankfurt in 794.
2. Iconoclast Controversy
- a. Icons
    - 1) Renderings of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints and angels in heaven) were almost always pictures – drawings, paintings, mosaics, wood or stone carvings in low relief. To this day Orthodoxy opposes statues of Christ, Mary, saints and angels.
    - 2) The icon reveals the presence of Christ – even an icon of a saint because it was Christ in the saint who made him or her into a saint. Therefore the bowing, kissing, and lamp-lighting were acts of homage to Christ himself, present with the worshipper.
    - 3) John of Damascus argued that the incarnation shows that God made it possible to paint the portrait of a man. Many in the East embraced this view, even considering that a church was not a truly holy place *unless* it was adorned with images and icons to aid worship and faith.
    - 4) Development of art saw art entering the churches – the idea behind the use of images was that “seeing leads to faith.”
    - 5) Appeared not only in places of worship, but homes, shops, on clothes, and in jewelry.
    - 6) There were some who claimed that God created them miraculously.

- 7) Became objects of admiration, but adoration – they began to become objects of worship.
- b. Affected West and East, but mainly the East – the center of the controversy was in Constantinople/Byzantium.
- c. Leo II (emperor in the East from 717-40)
  - 1) Declared war on all icons.
    - a) Believed that he was called by God to cleanse the Eastern Empire of idolatry or else have his dominion suffer under the wrath of God.
    - b) Began a campaign against images in 726 – seeking to destroy them all. In Constantinople there was a giant golden image of Christ, the most prominent image in the city that was pulled down by a squad of Leo’s soldiers. A mob of enraged women seized the officer in charge and beat him to death with mops and kitchen tools. Leo ordered their execution.
  - 2) Issued his famous edict against icons
    - a) Required images to be destroyed, calling them idolatrous. His theological argument was that depicting Christ as a man prevented one from showing that he was also God. A picture, a human representation of Jesus was considered a form of Nestorianism (that Jesus had two natures).
    - b) Monasteries housed his main victims
- d. The Roman popes backed the *iconophiles* (or *iconodules*<sup>80</sup>) because...
  - 1) They believed that the *iconophile* position was essentially theologically accurate.
  - 2) They believed that the iconoclast emperors were overstepping their bounds in subjecting the Eastern Church to the state.
  - 3) Pope Gregory II condemned the iconoclasm.

---

<sup>80</sup> Icon-venerators

- e. This controversy also became an argument over issues of church and state.
  - 1) When the religious leaders and the people revolted against Leo II's ban on images, he used arms to enforce it. His son, Constantine V continued the harsh measures of his father. At a council called by Constantine in 754, loaded with 338 iconoclast bishops, icons were condemned.
  - 2) Constantine's son, Leo IV (775-80) things relaxed for the *iconophiles* under the influence of Leo's wife, Irene, who loved icons.
  - 3) Irene ruled the empire in the name of her young son, Constantine VI (780-97) during which time the Second Council of Nicaea (787) proclaimed that it was unlawful to worship images; it was necessary to venerate them, to give them respect and attention. This did not heal the rift between church and state; nor did it prevent iconoclasm in the ninth century.
- 3. The loss of preaching in public worship
  - a. The fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century brought grave problems to the church, not least that there was a widespread decline in the level of education among the clergy. This was not completely remedied by the Carolingian Renaissance.
  - b. Most clergy limited themselves to carrying out liturgical and sacramental functions (communion, baptism, confession, burying the dead, etc.), but no longer preached their own sermons.
  - c. Instead, they used homilies – a homily was a sermon written by someone else and read out to the congregation by the priest.
  - d. This began in the fifth century, but became normative in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 10

### 10. THE NINTH CENTURY

#### A. Theological Controversies

1. Over the Lord's Supper
  - a. We mentioned in the last lecture (the eighth century) about Charlemagne's church reforms. One of which was his desire to standardize the liturgy of the western church. To this point there were two liturgical standards in the west, Latin and Gallican (French). He ordered Alcuin to standardize the liturgy into Latin for use throughout the Holy Roman Empire.
  - b. Communion had been central to the liturgy from the time of the apostolic fathers, but by the time we enter the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries, we find a significant difference between the celebration of the Lord's Supper by the early church and ninth century Christians; namely that from the 5<sup>th</sup> century forward "lay" participation in communion had become less and less frequent in the West so that only clergy and monks took part on a regular basis. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Western Church required the congregation to receive communion only three times a year at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. That slowly turned into once a year at Easter. By this time, the clergy took part in communion while the congregation watched. Needham suggests two reasons for this shift:<sup>81</sup>
    - 1) Tremendous feelings of reverence, dread and fear attached to Holy Communion. People felt unworthy to approach the awesome mystery of Christ's sacrifice, as it was once again made present and effective in the Eucharist for the remission of sins of the living and the dead. These feelings were increased further still by the increasing strength in the belief that the bread and wine were miraculously converted into the actual body and blood of Jesus.
    - 2) Clergy discouraged the majority of laypeople from participating. Because of the massive amount of nominal Christians (remember Charlemagne forced people to be baptized upon pain of death) – the clergy therefore stressed that only true Christians with genuinely penitent hearts and love for God could meaningfully take part in Communion.

---

<sup>81</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 63.

- c. Radbertus (785-860) and Ratramnus (d. 868): We'll call them "Rad" and "Rat."
  - 1) Anticipating a full-blown doctrine of transubstantiation
    - a) Rad is bad: He argued that the bread and wine of communion were actually converted, changed completely into the flesh and blood of Christ, so that the bread and wine no longer existed – they only appeared to be wine and bread, but in reality they were now entirely the flesh and blood of Christ. When communion was celebrated Christ's actual sacrifice became miraculously present and effective for the washing away of sins.
    - b) But Rad isn't all that bad: He also argued that the believer ate Christ's flesh and blood in a spiritual sense, and that unbelievers who took part in Communion did not receive the Lord's body and blood.
  - 2) Hints of Lutheran and Reformed doctrines of Holy Communion
    - a) Rat is good. He wrote a book called Concerning Christ's Body and Blood that argued that the bread and wine remained bread and wine in their own physical nature, but that for the believer alone, mysteriously and spiritually, they became the body and blood of Christ. Through the bread and wine the Holy Spirit worked secretly to nourish and strengthen the souls of Christians with the risen life of Christ.
    - 3) Neither view triumphed at this time – the Western church saw both as valid views. Rad's, however, became increasingly popular and would eventually evolve into the doctrine of transubstantiation.
- 2. Over predestination
  - a. The opponents
    - 1) Gottschalk of Orbais (805-69)
    - 2) Rabanus Maurus (776-856)
    - 3) Gottschalk was a(n) (over-) zealous Augustinian; he accused his abbot, Rabanus, of Semi-Pelagianism.
  - b. The substance of the argument

- 1) Christ died only for the elect, and that...
  - 2) The precise number of the non-elect is specified by an eternal decree of God, a predestination to death that runs parallel to the decree of election to life, also known as reprobation.
- c. And the winner is...
- 1) Gottschalk lost the argument and was condemned by a local council at Mainz in 848 at which point he was delivered over to Hincmar of Rheims (806-82) – a man who “combined a Semi-Pelagian tendency with a personal tendency to behave like a thug.”<sup>82</sup> Gottschalk was beaten to within an inch of his life, his books were burnt, and he was imprisoned in a monastery close to Hincmar, where he spent the rest of his natural life.
  - d. Continued controversy over the issue between eminent scholars of the period, which ultimately were never resolved. Approval for Hincmar’s Semi-Pelagian views came only from local Frankish church councils while a robust Augustinianism continued to flourish in the West.
3. Over the *filioque* clause
- a. From the sixth century onwards, Western Christians had added “and from the Son” to the line which says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Council of Toledo (Spain, 589) added the *filioque* clause to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.
  - b. Photius the Great (820-95)
    - 1) Called the wisest man of the Middle Ages (a brilliant scholar and theologian)
    - 2) Patriarch of Constantinople (858-69 and again 877-86).
    - 3) The West had attacked the East for rejected the addition of the phrase, and Photius responded by writing an encyclical (a circular letter) to the other Eastern patriarchs in which he denounced the *filioque* clause as heretical. The letter also condemned the Western church for all the practices in which it varied from the east (e.g. the West’s insistence on clerical celibacy).

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 65.

- 4) Also wrote a highly influential book called, *Treatise on the Mystagogia of the Holy Spirit*.<sup>83</sup> In this book, he accused the West of destroying the unity of the Trinity because the Father is the unique source or fountain of the divine nature; the Son and the Spirit are God because they possess all the fullness of God the Father's essence and attributes (except his fatherhood) – the Son by eternal generation and the Spirit by eternal procession. By saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father is essentially to say that the Son is another source of the divine nature. And if there were two sources of the divine nature, then the unity of God would be destroyed – Father and Son would be separate gods.<sup>84</sup>
- 5) He also objected to the clause on the grounds that the West had no right to insert it into the Creed in the first place, as it was ecumenical property of East and West alike. To alter it without the East's consent defies the nature of an ecumenical creed.
- 6) He assembled a Council in Constantinople in 867 that excommunicated Pope Nicholas I. This event is known (by the West) as the "Photian schism." The excommunication didn't stick. Instead, at the instigation of a new emperor in the East, Basil I (867-86), Photius was deposed and imprisoned in a monastery. Basil then assembled another council in Constantinople in 869, known as the anti-Photian council, which reversed all the decisions from the earlier council, including the excommunication of Pope Nicholas. Through an interesting series of events, Photius would again hold the patriarchate of Constantinople, only to be deposed again until his death in 895.

## **B. The Tenacity of the Carolingian Renaissance and the Popes of Rome**

1. John Scotus Erigena (810-77)
  - a. Irishman and one of the greatest thinkers of the Carolingian Renaissance.
  - b. Sided with Gottschalk in the predestination controversy.

---

<sup>83</sup> The term "mystagogia" means "interpretation of a mystery."

<sup>84</sup> Some have suggested the difference between East and West is that the West conceived of the unity of the Trinity in the fact that each member, Father, Son, and Spirit share one common nature; the East sees the unity of the Trinity in the person of God the Father. Therefore one side starts with person and the other starts with nature. The East tended to speak of three persons in one essence, while the West tended to speak of one essence in three persons.

- c. Sided with Rat in the communion controversy; famous for the line that in the Lord's Supper we fellowship with Christ "mentally not dentally."
  - d. Translated certain Greek works into Latin that would have a profound effect on later Western theologians and thinkers, not least Thomas Aquinas.<sup>85</sup>
2. Agobard of Lyons (779-840): This character is important because his writings give us the clearest picture of pop culture during the Carolingian Renaissance. In particular, they reveal how widespread paganism was in the nominal Christian West.
3. The decline and disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire
- a. Upon Charlemagne's death, the Empire significantly weakened.
  - b. Louis the Pious (814-40), Charlemagne's son and successor continued to govern according to his father's ideals, but was a poor leader.
  - c. At the end of Pious' reign, the Empire was divided among his three sons that splintered the kingdom, making it more susceptible to attack.
  - d. Were it not for the Carolingian Renaissance, the church might have been lost. Charlemagne had brought to Western Europe a unified culture so strong that it survived the political chaos and formed the basis for the more stable Europe that would emerge in the eleventh century.
  - e. The popes used this disintegration to reassert their own supreme authority over church affairs; Pope Nicholas I (858-67) was one of the most extreme advocates of the papacy's exalted claims who had to this point occupied the papal throne.
  - f. Nevertheless, the disappearance of a powerful emperor meant the loss of their greatest ally. Without an effective emperor to protect them, they fell increasingly under the control of the Roman nobility, and simply became political pawns in the conflicts of different aristocratic factions. But the beginning of the tenth century, the papacy would be almost hopelessly corrupt and therefore incapable of offering any independent moral, spiritual, or theological leadership for the people.

---

<sup>85</sup> Among the works he translated were those of Pseudo-Dionysius and a commentary on those works by Maximus the Confessor.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 11

### 11. THE TENTH CENTURY

#### **In this lecture:**

1. The flourishing and renewal of monasticism in East and West.
2. The expansion of the church in Northern and Eastern Europe and Russia.
3. Continued blurring of church and state: Germany as a test case.

#### **A. The Flourishing and Renewal of Monasticism in East and West:**

Monasteries had lost their edge, both morally and in terms of keeping the various monastic "rules." Reform movements emerged during the tenth century both in the East and the West to counteract this downward trend.

1. In the Byzantine Empire
  - a. Two great monastic centers
    - 1) The "Studium" in Constantinople – housed 1,000 monks, founded in the mid-fifth century.
    - 2) Mount Athos in northern Greece, often called "the holy mountain."
      - a) According to tradition the Virgin Mary had once stopped here on a journey from Palestine to Cyprus, and every pagan shrine and statue had fallen instantly to the ground.
      - b) Therefore Athos was specially consecrated to Mary – no other woman was allowed to set foot on the peninsula (even to this day).

- c) In 963, Athos's first great coenobitic monastery, the Great Lavra, was founded by Athanasius of Trebizond (920-1003).
- b. Two great monks
- 1) Nilus of Calabria (d. 1005)
    - a) Personal life: After his wife died, he committed himself to a lifestyle of a hermit in 940.
    - b) Ministry accomplishments
      - Founded several monastic communities
      - Became abbot of monastery in his native Rossano (Eastern held Italian city).
      - Won a vast reputation for holiness, the bold rebuke of popes and Holy Roman Emperors for their sins.
    - c) Relationship with the West
      - In the 990s, Muslim invaders ravaged Calabria, forcing Nilus and his 60 monks to flee. Although he had two options, Nilus chose the more difficult path in order to avoid a potential fall into pride, and sought refuge in the celebrated Western monastery of Monte Cassino.
      - Invited to worship in the church when the Western monks weren't using it.
      - Left Monte Cassino, having received the blessing of Pope Gregory V in Rome, and founded the monastery of Grottaferrata just outside the papal city, where he died in 1005.
  - 2) Simeon the New Theologian (949-1022): The greatest of the Byzantine mystics.
    - a) Personal life
      - While young joined the Studium, but alarmed many of the other monks for his spiritual intensity – they would criticize and mock him for this reason.

- Was transferred to Constantinople's Saint Mamas monastery where he was soon elected abbot in 980.
- b) Spiritual life and ministry
- Produced a steady stream of sermons, hymns, and treatises on the ascetic life.
  - His fellow monks said that when he led in worship his face shone like an angel.
  - He often made prophecies about individuals, which apparently came true.
  - Had a ministry of healing through prayer.
  - Had the "gift of tears," which was highly prized in Eastern Mysticism.
  - Spoke freely and openly about his personal experience of God (which was unlike other Byzantine mystics).
  - Fierce critic of nominal Christianity; thought that baptism and church attendance were worthless unless they bore fruit in a changed life.
  - Spent his life trying to turn people away from religion that was all ritual and ceremony to an inward spirituality of the heart.
  - Insisted that a true knowledge of God could not come through doctrine alone, but through committed spiritual practice, especially prayer, in which the believer came to know God personally in feeling and experience.
- c) Controversial figure – asked by patriarch Sergius II of Constantinople to leave the city in 1009 for the sake of the church's peace. Founded another monastery, where he enjoyed peace.

## 2. In the West

### a. The Cluniac reforms

- 1) One monastery led the way in re-establishing Christian virtue in Western society – the monastery of Cluny in southeastern France.
  - a) Founded in 909 by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine.
  - b) Led by a series of great abbots, most notably Abbot Odo.
    - Established daughter monasteries from Cluny.
    - In 931, Pope John XI gave Cluny the right to control the other monasteries it had founded, which meant that these monasteries didn't have abbots of their own; they only had priors, normally second-in-command to an abbot.
    - Cluniac priors appointed by Odo himself, and took a vow of obedience to the abbot of Cluny.
    - By the year 1100 there were 1,000 Cluniac monasteries, all organized into what had become known as the Cluniac order. This was the first time in church history that monasteries functioned this way. Cluny (and Odo) introduced the new concept of a special organization of monasteries bound together by particular ideals, with a single leader at the top.
- 2) The main thrust of the Cluniac reforms was to revive and purify existing monasteries, and establish new and better ones.
  - a) Central to this goal was Cluniac liturgy, geared toward making worship awesomely beautiful and magnificent, to make worship as glorious an experience as possible.
  - b) Another key feature was following the Benedictine monastic rule.
  - c) The abbots of Cluny were the central figures in the Christian life of Western Europe until the mid-eleventh century.
- 3) Cluniac independence
  - a) Enjoyed freedom from all secular and political control

- b) In 999 received from Pope Gregory V freedom from episcopal authority – it was answerable to the Pope alone.
- c) Free to pursue own agenda without interference from popes or kings.
- d) Despite the freedom from political control, there was a close alliance between the Cluniac Monks and the secular rulers; for the revival helped to spread Christian ideals to the ruling classes because the Cluniac policy was to take sons of the aristocracy into Cluniac monasteries and give them a solid Christian education. The abbots of Cluny believed that the best hope of making Europe into a truly Christian society was to be found in strong Christian monarchies being established, which could then govern society according to Christian principles.

## **B. The Expansion of the Church in Northern and Eastern Europe and in Russia**

1. Northern and Eastern Europe
  - a. The Danes
    - 1) When they came to rout England in the late ninth century, they were conquered by the Christian king Alfred the Great. He forced the Danes to accept a peaceful division of the land – one of Alfred's terms of peace was for the Danish king (and his court) to accept Christian baptism, which they did, thus becoming part of a politically and spiritually united Christian England.
    - 2) In Denmark itself in 972 the king of Denmark and his entire army accepted Christian baptism.
  - b. In Norway, King Olaf made Christianity into Norway's national faith.
  - c. Sweden became officially Christian under its own King Olaf, but the faith only prospered in the southwest; most people continued to practice paganism. It wasn't until the 12<sup>th</sup> century that Christianity was firmly rooted in all of Sweden.
  - d. Iceland received the Christian faith through missionaries sent from Norway.

- e. The Magyars, an Asiatic people who migrated into and invaded central Europe at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. After being decisively defeated by the German emperor Otto the Great in 955, the Magyars settled down to create the kingdom of Hungary. Their leader, Geza, accepted Christian baptism and used the power of his office to advance the Christian faith.
- f. For the Bohemians (Czechs) the Christian faith became a powerful force under King Wenceslas.
- g. The Poles converted to Christianity through their king Mieszko I.
- h. The Croats, neighbors of the Serbs, embraced Western Christianity while the Serbs embraced its Eastern form.
- i. The Moravians began to embrace the Christian faith (its Eastern form) from the late ninth century.
- j. Bulgarians accepted baptism into the Eastern faith through their tsar Boris in 865. Under Simeon (893-927), the greatest of the Bulgarian tsars, a great Slavonic Christian literature was born.

## 2. Russia

- a. Through trade with the Byzantine Empire, the Russians were exposed to the Christian faith.
- b. By 945 a church had been established in the city of Kiev.
- c. Wholehearted acceptance of the Christian faith came under Prince Vladimir (980-1015). Russian tradition says that he invited representatives of the four great religions of the world – Judaism, Islam, and Eastern and Western Christianity and found himself persuaded by the East. So in 988, Vladimir embraced the Christian faith.
- d. Russian Orthodoxy is the largest branch of Eastern Christianity in the world.

## c. **The Continued Blurring of Church and State: Germany as a Test Case**

### 1. Feudalism and Christianity

- a. What was feudalism?

- 1) Following the invasion of the barbarians near the beginning of the middle Ages, there were no large cities. Most people lived in the country and wealth was determined by land ownership. Feudalism was a system based upon a specific way of holding land.
- 2) From the Latin, *feudum*, meaning "grant."
- 3) Kings would divide their kingdoms among their leading warriors, on the condition that they would give their royals military aid when called upon. These princes then divided their lands to people under them upon the same condition, and so on and so on.
- 4) Those who received land in exchange for military aid were called vassals.
- 5) The lands which were held upon these conditions were called fiefs.

b. Land grants to the church

- 1) It was not uncommon for committed and wealthy Christians to donate some of their fief to churches or monasteries. Bishops, archbishops, and abbots soon found themselves landowners, which obviously brought them into the feudal system.
- 2) When once land was received by the church, those who granted the land looked upon church officers, including the popes, as their vassals.
- 3) The lords who gave the land to the church saw it as their right to appoint who would occupy the local church and its land as priest or bishop.
- 4) The feudal system therefore swept away the traditional election of bishops by clergy and congregation.
- 5) This weakened the church's power in terms of its subservience to its lords (emperors and other lesser lords).

2. Feudalism and Germany

a. Otto the Great (936-73)

- 1) Made Germany into a great national power, uniting Saxony, Thuringia, Franconia, Lorraine, Swabia, and Bavaria against the invading Magyar peoples.
- 2) Revived the ideal of the Holy Roman Empire from the Carolingian period.
- 3) Invaded Italy to rescue the lands of the papacy from Lombard aggression.
- 4) Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 962.
- 5) Made great use of bishops in his government, setting them in positions of power as secular lords (counts, dukes, princes) in order to accomplish two things:
  - a) Bishops were well-educated and therefore could serve the king intelligently.
  - b) Bishops were celibate, which meant that they would have no sons to inherit their lands; therefore Otto could appoint a man of his own choice as the new count, duke, or prince of a particular land. This practice was closely related to Otto choosing who would be the bishop of the church, leading to greater control of the clergy by secular authorities.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 12

### 12. THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

#### In this lecture:

1. The “cleansing” and reform of the papacy
2. The Crusades
3. The Great Schism of 1054
4. Significant theological developments

#### A. The “Cleansing” and Reform of the Papacy

1. The state of the church and papacy
  - a. Immorality: The condition of the papacy as the eleventh century began was that it was “in a state of almost hopeless moral and spiritual degradation.”<sup>86</sup>
  - b. Investiture: We mentioned this briefly in our discussion of the tenth century in connection with feudalism. Lords often deeded their lands to officers in the church. As a result, these wealthy landowners felt that it was their place to insert the bishops/priests they desired.
  - c. Simony<sup>87</sup>: As the eleventh century began, the papacy had become a political pawn of the Roman aristocracy, who fought over who should own the papacy. Popes would sell their seat to the highest bidder when they were tired of occupying it.
2. The arrival of Henry III (1032-45) in 1046 and the “cleansing of the papacy”
  - a. When Henry III arrived to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor, he found three rival popes: Sylvester III, Gregory VI, and Benedict IX.

<sup>86</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 153.

<sup>87</sup> The name comes from Simon the sorcerer who in Acts 8:20 is described by Peter as someone who thought he could buy the gift of the Holy Spirit with money.

- b. Henry was the ideal Cluniac king – pursued holiness, ruled wisely, and loyally sought to reform the church and society.
  - c. He called a synod and deposed all three popes, installing a good German bishop in their place – Clement III.
  - d. Along with other reformers and staunch supporters of Henry III the reform movement began slowly...
    - 1) Took over crucial positions of power in the papal court
    - 2) Secured a great victory at the Lateran council in 1059
      - a) The election of the pope was placed back into the hands of the church alone – the cardinals would present their candidate for a vote before the y bishops, 28 priests, and 18 deacons of Rome.
      - b) Celibacy became the strict standard of the clergy.
  - e. From this point forward, the papacy would be different, especially under Gregory VII (1073-1085), a church reformer and former papal chaplain, Hildebrand.
3. The reforms of Gregory VII
- a. Of the papacy
    - 1) The *dictatus papae* (“papal decree”): In 1075, Leo IX issued a decree that outlined his view of the papacy.
      - a) Some highlights
        - The Roman Church was founded by God alone.
        - Only the Roman pope is rightly called universal.
        - The pope alone can depose and reinstate bishops.
        - The pope is the only one whose feet all princes must kiss
        - The pope may depose emperors
        - No council may be called ecumenical without the pope’s authority.
        - The pope may be judged by no one.
        - The Roman Church has never erred, and (as Scripture testifies) shall never err, to all eternity.
        - The Roman pope, if properly ordained according to church law, is sanctified by the merits of Saint Peter.

- He who is not in conformity with the Roman Church should not be considered a Catholic.
  - b) Not all of this originated with Hildebrand, but what was different was its grand, sweeping, authoritative tone and Hildebrand's passion to put it into practice.
- 2) Ending investiture
  - a) In 1075, Hildebrand insisted that Henry IV, the Holy Roman Emperor (1065-1105) cease from the practice of lay investiture.
  - b) Because of Henry's powerful Christian monarchy (not in terms of his character, but the office itself), the bishops in Germany supported the emperor. So Henry defied Hildebrand by installing a new archbishop of Milan.
  - c) This conflict between Hildebrand and the emperor would persist even after Hildebrand's death in 1085, but would finally be put to rest in 1122.

## B. The Crusades

1. The beginning of the crusades
  - a. The crusades began in 1095 when Pope Urban II (1088-99) gave a moving sermon on the need to rescue the Holy Land from Islam.
  - b. This was in response to the Eastern emperor Alexius I Comnenus' appeal to the pope for help in holding back the spread of Muslim Turks.
  - c. At the same time, the church was concerned about widespread violence in the Western kingdom that was built into the feudal system of competing lords and aggressive knights.
2. The appeal of the crusades: From Urban's perspective, a crusade would make it possible "to drain violence from Europe by enlisting nobles, with their warring knights, squires, and peasant foot soldiers, to rescue for Christianity the sacred sites taken by Muslims in the Holy Land while at the same time providing assistance to the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church."<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, "Urban's pious hopes and the truly

---

<sup>88</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 139.

noble ideals that at least some of the crusaders brought to the task led to mostly ironic and tragic results.”<sup>89</sup>

3. The First Crusade (1096-99): There were four significant campaigns, but the crusading did not rest between them.
  - a. The crusading armies numbered 300,000 soldiers.
  - b. Captured Jerusalem in 1099
  - c. Slaughtered Jews and Arab Christians along with Muslims, including women and children.
  - d. Armed soldiers from the West who stopped off at Constantinople on the way created so much trouble there that the Eastern emperor did all in his power to get rid of them.
  - e. The military results of the First Crusade included
    - 1) The restoration of western Asia Minor to Byzantine rule
    - 2) The establishment of “Latin kingdoms” in Syria and Palestine, including Jerusalem (they were called “Latin” because their rulers belonged to the Latin-speaking Catholic Church). Wherever the crusaders conquered, they took over the churches of the East, set up their own Latin bishops, and expected the Eastern believers to comply. In fact, sometimes the crusaders were so aggressive and cruel, that Eastern Christians would find themselves fighting alongside more tolerant Muslims to throw out the more oppressive crusaders.<sup>90</sup> This further solidified the rift between East and West that had been formalized in 1054.

### c. **The Great Schism of 1054**

1. Seeds of schism<sup>91</sup>
  - a. The first century: By the end of the first century it was possible to detect pointed differences between the major representatives of each eventual “branch” of Christianity. Clement’s letter to Rome (c. 96) displays the beginnings of a Roman Christianity with, in the words of one scholar, “no ecstasies, no miraculous ‘gifts of the Spirit,’ no

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 192.

<sup>91</sup> The discussion of the seeds of schism relies especially on Noll, *Turning Points*, 134-39.

demonology, no preoccupation with an imminent 'Second Coming,'"<sup>92</sup> which would characterize the theology of the West.

- b. The second century: Tertullian (West) vs. Clement (East). The traits that set these men apart from one another pointed to what would later become distinct religious cultures.
  - 1) Language: Tertullian spoke Latin; Clement, Greek.
  - 2) Expertise: Tertullian was a lawyer; Clement a philosopher.
  - 3) Approach to the world: Tertullian challenged the thinkers of his day reasoning antithetically about the Christian faith; Clement sought to borrow from the best that paganism offered.
  - 4) Approach to theology
    - a) Tertullian coined new terms and created doctrinal statements that he thought would end debate; Clement meditated at length on the truths of the faith and used formulas to stimulate discussion about the ultimate realities of Christianity.
    - b) Tertullian reasoned toward action; Clement reasoned toward truth.
- c. The fourth century: Constantine's decision to move the seat of imperial power to Constantinople meant that the new Roman power would evolve under the influence of Greek thought and culture.
- d. The sixth century: From this time forward the West began to insert "and the Son" in the section of the Nicene Creed that spoke about the procession of the Holy Spirit. This was a violation of both the letter and the spirit of the proceedings at Nicaea. One of the canons of the council was that no one should change the creed, and the spirit of the proceedings were such that such a maneuver would by definition undermine what an "ecumenical" creed is all about.
- e. The seventh century:
  - 1) When the forces of Islam took control of communications on the Mediterranean Sea, the east-west division meant even more. Even

---

<sup>92</sup> Henry Bettenson, introduction to *The Early Christian Fathers* (Oxford University Press, 1956), 2-3 quoted in *ibid.*, 134.

basic contact between both sides required nothing less than heroic efforts.

- 2) The “monothelete” controversy – when an Eastern patriarch and a pope agreed that Christ had only one will, the theologians freaked, people were called names, and it took thirty years to repair the damage.
- f. The ninth century:
- 1) Under Charlemagne, the papacy looked northward for support to the barbarian tribes that were seeking to revive the Roman Empire on their own terms.
  - 2) The “Photian Schism” – Photius of the East excommunicated the pope in the West for the heresy of adding the filioque clause.
- g. The tenth-eleventh centuries
- 1) From the year 1009, the patriarchs of Constantinople no longer included the names of the Roman bishops on their formal lists of the other patriarchs, living and dead, whom Constantinople recognized as doctrinally sound.<sup>93</sup>
  - 2) When this new Islamic power began to encroach upon the Byzantine Empire, the Western response was often indifference, except for the beginning of the Crusades, which, as we’ve seen, did more to cement the differences than work toward any sense of rapprochement between the two sides.
2. The circumstances of the divide
- a. The invasion of Norman knights
- 1) Norman knights were invading southern Italy and threatening property belonging to Henry III, Pope Leo IX and the Eastern emperor, Constantine IX. So they agreed to band together to fight them.
  - 2) Two significant parts of the agreement were...

---

<sup>93</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 131.

- a) That the pope would regain authority over the few Greek churches in Italy and...
  - b) That Constantine IX would persuade the Eastern patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043-59) send the customary "synodical" letter to Leo IX sort of congratulating the new pope, which the Cerularius had never done.
- 3) Rather than meet these terms, Cerularius responded by demanding that Latin churches in Constantinople adopt Eastern rites. They rebelled and the patriarch shut them down.
- b. The mighty pen
- 1) In 1053, Cerularius enlisted Leo of Ochrida, the metropolitan bishop of Bulgaria to send a letter to the West complaining about the heavy-handed incursion of Western practices into Bulgaria.
  - 2) Pope Leo responded by persuading Cardinal Humbert, one of his most trusted advisers to reply – it was a stinging reassertion of Roman claims to primacy in the church.
- c. The last straw
- 1) Pope Leo was captured by Norman's later in 1053, which meant that Eastern properties in Italy were now significantly in peril.
  - 2) Constantine persuaded Cerularius to join him in being more conciliatory toward the West.
  - 3) Leo then sent a three-man delegation, including Humbert to Constantinople to negotiate a more suitable relationship with the East – it failed.
  - 4) As soon as the delegation arrived, so did word that the pope had died.
  - 5) Humbert gave Cerularius a "papal" letter that reminded the patriarchy that Rome was to be judged by no one.
  - 6) Rejecting the letter, Cerularius questioned Humbert's authority to deliver the letter, now that the pope was dead.

- 7) Humbert, offended, resolved to leave Constantinople at once, but not before he entered the great church of Hagia Sophia and placed on the altar a document excommunicating Cerularius.
- 8) Soon after, Cerularius excommunicated the Roman legation.

#### **D. Significant Theological Developments**

- 1. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)
  - a. The "ontological" argument for the existence of God.
    - 1) The argument: The fool says in his heart there is no God. He therefore understands the claim that God exists, but does not believe that he exists. Anselm set out to prove that this is absurd and that understanding the claim that God exists is tantamount to saying that God exists in reality.
      - a) God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived."
      - b) Now suppose (with the fool) that God (as defined above) exists in the understanding alone.
      - c) Given the definition of "a)", this means that a being than which nothing greater can be conceived exists in the understanding alone.
      - d) But this being can be conceived to exist in reality. That is, we can conceive of a circumstance in which theism is true, even if we do not believe that it actually obtains.
      - e) It is greater for a thing to exist in reality than for it to exist in the understanding alone.
      - f) Hence we seem forced to conclude that a being than which nothing greater can be conceived can be conceived to be greater than it is.
      - g) But that is absurd.
      - h) So "b)" must be false. God must exist in reality as well as in the understanding.
      - i) God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.

- j) This exists in our understanding.
  - k) If God is the greatest conceivable thing, he is greater than our understanding.
  - l) Therefore, he exists outside of our understanding (therefore he exists).
- 2) A simple summation: "By definition, God is the most perfect of all possible beings. But if God does not exist, He would not be the most perfect of all possible beings; for a God Who *does* exist would be more perfect than a God Who does not exist. Therefore, if God is by definition the most perfect of all possible beings, He *must* exist."<sup>94</sup>
- b. The doctrine of the atonement<sup>95</sup>: He argued for the absolute necessity of the atonement for the redemption of humanity.
- 1) Background of the argument: His argument was framed in answer to several pressing theological questions of the day respecting the atonement: Couldn't God have saved the world through an act of his omnipotence, like when he created the world? Couldn't God have saved mankind by simply pardoning man's sin without demanding satisfaction? Couldn't God have chosen some other rational being as a mediator, rather than sending his only-begotten son? These questions Anselm answers with a resounding, "No." The atonement (and therefore the incarnation) is absolutely necessary for the salvation of human beings. And for Anselm, the necessity of the atonement must be found in a necessary attribute of the divine nature, finding the ultimate ground for it in the honor of God.
  - 2) The argument itself
    - a) As a creature, man was under obligation to submit himself completely to God's authority.
    - b) Man refused and rebelled against God and thus contracted a debt.

---

<sup>94</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 253.

<sup>95</sup> The description of Anselm's doctrine of the atonement relies on Berkhof, *History of Christian Doctrines*, 171-74.

- c) Therefore God was robbed of his honor, which must be restored in some way.
- d) God's mercy couldn't simply overlook sin because to do so would contravene God's justice.
- e) God had two options at his disposal for the restoration of his honor:
  - By punishment or
  - By satisfaction
- f) God chose the way of satisfaction because the only just punishment would have been to scrap the human project altogether; therefore God chose the way of satisfaction, which included two things:
  - That man should now return to God the obedience that he owed him; and
  - That man should make amends for the insult to God's honor by paying him something over and above the actual debt.
- g) But since even the smallest sin, as committed against an infinite God, outweighs the whole world, and the amends must be proportionate to the offense, the way of satisfaction decided by the Lord was outside the scope of man's power to perform.
- h) Only God could make true reparation, and his mercy prompted him to make it through God the Son.
- i) Not only that, but the one rendering satisfaction couldn't only be God, but he had to be man as well since it was one of the human race who had contracted the debt of sin. And he had to be a perfect man since he couldn't be weighed down with his own sin-debt.
- j) Therefore only the God-Man could satisfy the requirements of "f)" and thus restore the honor of God.
- k) The God-Man had to render the obedience that man owed God.

- l) But this was not sufficient to maintain the honor of God because doing this was only doing man's duty – he had to do something more.
  - m) As a sinless being, he was not under obligation to suffer and die, so by submitting to his suffering and death in an entirely voluntary way.
  - n) This brought infinite glory to God and therefore a work by which others could benefit, a work that could accrue to the benefit of mankind and which more than counterbalanced the demerits of sin.
  - o) Such a work deserves a reward, but since there is nothing that the Father can give the Son (they need nothing), the reward accrues to the benefit of mankind and assumes the form of the forgiveness of sin and the future blessedness of all those who live according to the commandments of the gospel.
- 3) The benefit and drawbacks of Anselm's doctrine of the atonement
- a) Benefit: It establishes the objective character and necessity of the atonement in the character (and glory) of God.
  - b) Drawbacks
    - It makes punishment and satisfaction options from which God chose.
    - It omits the suffering and death of Christ as enduring the penalty of sin and sees Jesus' work as a work of supererogation to compensate for the sins of others.
    - It bases redemption exclusively in the death of Christ, omitting the atoning significance of the *life* of Christ.
    - It represents the application of the merits of Christ as a purely external transaction, with no reference to union with Christ.
- 2 The Lord's Supper: Berengar of Tours (1000-1088) vs. Lanfranc of Canterbury (1005-89)
- a. Berengar rejected the teaching of Radbertus (9<sup>th</sup> century) that Christ's flesh and blood are so totally present in the Eucharist that the bread and wine cease to exist. He preferred Ratramnus' (9<sup>th</sup> century) view that the bread and wine physically remained so, but that Christ's body

and blood are truly present in them spiritually as the communicant partakes of them by faith.

- b. Lanfranc held the “party line,” the position that had become widely accepted by the mid-eleventh century; namely, Radbertus’ view. Lanfranc advanced the position further by also insisting that even unbelievers who took part in Communion eat Christ’s flesh and drink his blood.
- c. Ultimately, Lanfranc’s position won the day, but only after Berengar had been successfully tried for heresy (twice – after recanting once). By the mid-eleventh century the Western church was committed to the belief that the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper ceased to exist after the words of consecration and were miraculously replaced by the actual body and blood of Jesus.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 13

### 13. THE TWELFTH CENTURY

#### In this lecture:

1. The second and third crusades
2. The martyrdom of Thomas Becket
3. Church resistance movements
4. The universities and the rise of scholasticism

#### A. The Second and Third Crusades

1. The second crusade (1147-49)
  - a. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153): It is next to impossible to speak about the second crusade without reference to Bernard because he was instrumental in initiating it.
    - 1) A monk and one of the greatest preachers of the Middle Ages
    - 2) Appreciated even by the Reformers. Martin Luther said, "In his sermons Bernard is superior to all the teachers, even to Augustine himself, because he preaches Christ so excellently."<sup>96</sup>
    - 3) Wrote significant doctrinal and devotional works
    - 4) Venerated Mary: "If you are terrified by the thunders of the Father...go to Jesus. If you are afraid to go to Jesus, then run to Mary."<sup>97</sup> He did not go so far as to embrace what was popular among theologians of the time; namely, that Mary was immaculately conceived.<sup>98</sup> This did not become official dogma of the church until 1854.
    - 5) Profoundly influential over the papacy

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Needham, *Part Two*, 194.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>98</sup> Anselm of Canterbury also rejected the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary.

- a) In the 1130's the cardinals had elected two rival popes: Innocent II and Anacletus II. Bernard hit the streets with his support for Innocent, which swung the Catholic nations decisively in Innocent's direction.
  - b) Eugenius II, who became pope in 1145, was trained by Bernard at the monastery of Clairvaux before assuming the papacy. Eugenius consulted Bernard frequently.
- 6) Spokesman for the crusade: The fall of the Latin kingdom of Edessa to a Turkish army in 1144 gave rise to the second crusade. Pope Eugenius asked Bernard to be the chief publicity agent for the crusade – Bernard agreed and preached all over Europe, exhorting people to fight for God. His appeals proved successful.
- b. The failure of the second crusade
    - 1) Led by King Louis VII of France and the Holy Roman Emperor, Conrad III, the crusaders met disaster in the east.
    - 2) The Byzantine Christians, who saw them as uninvited guests, received them badly.
    - 3) Most crusaders died in Asia Minor from starvation, fever, and Turkish attacks.
    - 4) Their one significant military campaign, the siege of Damascus was an abysmal defeat.
- 2 The third crusade (1189-92)
- a. The catalyst for the crusade
    - 1) Fighting against unified Muslims, under their leader Saladin, captured Jerusalem in 1187 after the west had controlled the city for nearly 100 years. Saladin allowed conquered Christians to live peacefully in the city.
    - 2) Shocked by the fall of Jerusalem, Pope Gregory VIII, shortly before his death, pronounced the third crusade.
  - b. The leaders of the crusade and the obstacles to victory

- 1) The three greatest kings of Europe were involved: Philip Augustus of France, the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, and Richard I ("Richard the Lionheart") of England.
  - 2) Frederick drowned in a river-crossing near Tarsus in 1190 – his German army was ineffective without his leadership.
  - 3) The crusaders were able to capture Acre, which was the most important Latin city in the Middle East because it was the center of international trade and commerce. This victory led Philip Augustus back to France.
  - 4) Richard stayed on for another year to try to capture Jerusalem; however, his military exploits became so legendary that Muslim parents would coerce their children into obedience by saying that if they did not do what they were told, Richard the Lionheart would get them.
- c. The outcome of the crusade: A treaty between Richard and Saladin was reached in 1192, at which time the crusaders were given a strip of coastland southwest of Jerusalem and unhindered access to the city.

## **B. The Martyrdom of Thomas Becket**

1. Thomas Becket was the archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70)
2. He was murdered over a church-state dispute concerning who had the right to impose penalties for civil crimes committed by clergymen. Thomas Becket argued (against the prevailing opinion of clergy) that only the church had the right to punish clergy. The problem with this is that even in cases of murder, the church would not impose the death penalty. The church could imprison someone, but imprisonment was rare because it was cost-prohibitive. The worst that could happen was that the cleric was stripped of his priesthood.
3. King Henry II was determined to change this and make the English clergy subject to civil courts in criminal cases. Now even though Henry had many English clergy on his side, he sabotaged his chances of making progress, when in 1170 he told some of his knights in an outburst of rage that he wished someone would get ride of Becket for him. Four of the knights took the king at his word and bludgeoned Becket to death on the altar.

4. This, of course, sent shockwaves throughout Catholic Europe and Becket was hailed as a martyr and a saint. Pope Alexander forced Henry to do public penance and give up his campaign against the church courts, which put an end to any hope of the state to judge clergy even for civil and capital crimes.

### c. **Church Resistance Movements**<sup>99</sup>

1. Cathars
  - a. Objecting to the wealth that the church had gathered as well as the oppression represented by the church, the Cathars ("pure ones") formed a church of their own with its own ministers and sacraments, criticizing the excessive claims of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - b. Most widespread dissenting movement in medieval Western Europe.
  - c. Divided into many sects
  - d. Beliefs were basically Gnostic
    - 1) Physical world created by Satan
    - 2) Dualists (Satan eternal like God)
    - 3) Soul was an angelic spirit captured by Satan and bound in human form.
    - 4) Ultimate sin was sexual reproduction because it increased the number of bodies the devil could use to imprison spirits.
    - 5) Christ did not have a physical body, and so didn't really die or experience a bodily resurrection.
    - 6) Salvation through spiritual enlightenment, not through the cross.
    - 7) Rejected water baptism and Communion.
    - 8) Claimed that the Catholic Church was the great prostitute of Revelation 17 and that the papacy was the Antichrist.
2. Waldensians

---

<sup>99</sup> I am borrowing this language from Campbell, *Heroes*, 108.

### a. History

- 1) In 1175, a French merchant of Lyons named Valdes (or Waldes) became a Christian and decided to follow Christ's example by living in poverty and preaching.<sup>100</sup> He saw this in stark contrast to the wealth of the established church.
- 2) He had the New Testament translated into vernacular and made it the basis of his evangelism.
- 3) Although undaunted by prohibitions against preaching, the Waldensians were undaunted; instead, they engaged in greater and more zealous witness.
- 4) But within a decade this group was branded heretical and excommunicated first by the archbishop of Lyons in 1182 and then in 1184 by Pope Lucius III.
- 5) From here the movement spread throughout Western medieval Europe to become the second most widespread and influential non-Catholic group in the western world.

### b. Beliefs

- 1) The New Testament should be the sole rule of Christian faith and practice; thus rejected the infallible teaching authority of the papacy.
- 2) Rejected transubstantiation, purgatory, and prayers for the dead
- 3) Venerated the Virgin Mary
- 4) Rejected oaths and military service, though some practiced armed self-defense if attacked.
- 5) Precursors of the protestant reformers; would eventually link up with the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Petrobrusians

---

<sup>100</sup> "In later accounts he is given the first name Peter, and his surname is spelt 'Waldo,' but there is no solid evidence for the truth of these traditions." From Needham, *Part Two*, 309.

a. History

- 1) Named after Peter de Bruys, Catholic priest from southern France, who in 1105 started a reform movement which was eventually condemned as heretical.
- 2) Burnt at the stake in 1126.
- 3) Movement taken over by Henry of Lausanne, a Benedictine monk and eloquent preacher – he was eventually imprisoned for heresy.
- 4) Did not survive as a distinct group after Peter's death and Henry's imprisonment; instead, dispersed among other dissenting groups.

b. Beliefs

- 1) Denied infant baptism, baptizing only those who made a profession of faith.
- 2) Denied the holiness of church buildings and altars
- 3) Would not venerate the sign of the cross (Peter took this to the point of regularly burning crosses).
- 4) Denied the doctrine of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass
- 5) Denied that prayers or any good works done on earth could help those who already died.
- 6) Opposed celibacy for the clergy
- 7) Rejected singing as a true act of worship

**D. The Universities and the Rise of Scholasticism**

1. The first universities

- a. Under the influence of the Muslim world (e.g. today we use Arabic numbers)
- b. Developed out of schools attached to cathedral churches and abbeys, most of which were originally founded to train boys for the church and

also to provide free general education to boys living in the neighborhood.

- c. First universities were Bologna (in northern Italy) and Paris.
  - d. Called universities because a “whole body” (either the students or the professors) governed the institution.
  - e. Method of education
    - 1) The *lecture*, consisting of the teacher reading standard texts and commenting on them, with the expectation that students would take very detailed notes (they would not have had their own copies of the textbook).
    - 2) The *disputation*, which was probably a public event in which the teacher would set out a problem for the student to solve, usually an apparent contradiction. The student would then have to give all the arguments for and against each statement by quoting passages from the Bible and great theologians, offering his own comments as well. The teacher would then give remarks on what the student said, offering the solution to the problem.
  - f. Produced a theological revolution in Western Christendom. The pursuit of theology previously was approached from the setting of monastic life and worship, now the study of theology was an intellectual subject in its own right, which would be studied outside the constraints of monastic discipline. This created a division between spiritual life on the one hand and intellectual and theological pursuits on the other.
2. The rise of scholasticism
- a. A distinctive approach to theology
    - 1) Faith and reason: Scholastics wanted to see how far “pure” reason could prove the doctrines of Christianity. And if reason alone could not prove an element of the Christian faith, then at least the faith could be shown to be in harmony with reason.
    - 2) Systematic theology: The schoolmen wanted to offer a complete, and logically coherent, systematic account of the entirety of Christian doctrine. They called such a system a *summa*.

- 3) Philosophy: Theology was not all that interested the scholastics; they wanted to account for all truth. Therefore they did not limit themselves to theological questions alone, but addressed all the deep questions of philosophy as well: What is real? What is matter? What is the mind? What is time?

b. The early schoolmen

- 1) Anselm of Canterbury (covered in the lecture on the eleventh century)
- 2) Peter Abelard (1079-1142)
  - a) Was a brilliant man; perhaps the most brilliant Catholic thinker of the twelfth century.
  - b) Most important work was called *Sic et Non* (yes and no) in which he addressed 158 theological questions, setting side-by-side statements from Scripture and church tradition that were apparently contradictory in order to provoke people to use reason to reconcile apparently contradictory statements. Abelard was the first person to take this approach to theology.
  - c) Had a prolonged and famous controversy with Bernard of Clairvaux, who considered Abelard a dangerously unsound and arrogant thinker. "The only thing Abelard does not know...are the words, 'I do not know!'"<sup>101</sup> He accused Abelard of being Arian, Nestorian, and Pelagian.
- 3) Peter Lombard (1100-1160)
  - a) Known as the father of systematic theology
  - b) His great work was called, *The Four Books of Sentences*, which was a collection of quotes from Scripture, the early fathers, the ecumenical councils, and other authorities to address the whole range of theological topics. His four books were divided as follows:
    - Book 1: The Trinity and providence
    - Book 2: Creation, sin, and grace
    - Book 3: The incarnation, salvation, and moral virtues

---

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Needham, *Part Two*, 196.

- Book 4: The sacraments and eschatology
- c) The first Catholic theologian to define the number of sacraments to seven.
- d) His *Sentences* became the standard textbook for theology until the Protestant Reformation.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 14

### 14. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

**In this lecture:**

1. The birth of the mendicant monastic orders
2. The pinnacle of Catholic power
3. The end of the crusades
4. High Scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas and the synthesis of faith and reason

A. **The Birth of the Mendicant Monastic Orders:** The mendicant<sup>102</sup> monastic orders came to existence against a backdrop of affluence in the church and an increase in the disparity between the rich and poor as we move into the later Middle Ages. Like the Cathars and the Waldensians who preceded them, these more "orthodox" orders embraced poverty and preaching as Christ-like ideals.

1. The Franciscan order

a. Founder: Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

- 1) Born to an Italian father and French mother, Francis of Assisi was born Giovanni Bernardone around 1181-82. His father loved all things French (including Giovanni's mother), so he called his son "Francesco" (Francis, "Frenchman").
- 2) Did a stint in the military, including a year as a prisoner of war.
- 3) Originally longed to be a knight (was from a wealthy family) and establish himself with some great military victory; had a change of heart, seeing the vanity of the pursuit.
- 4) Thought that Jesus on the painted crucifix above his church altar told him, "Francis, go and repair my house, which you see is falling

---

<sup>102</sup> The term "mendicant" is from the Latin, *mendicare*, meaning "to beg."

down."<sup>103</sup> He took this literally and sold cloth from his father's warehouse to buy stones to fix the church building in the church of St Damian just outside Assisi.

- 5) The most significant experience in his life came when he heard Matt 10:7-14 read during a worship service:

And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.

From here, Francis began a life of begging and preaching for the good of others.

**b.** The development of the order

- 1) The appeal of Francis of Assisi among the populous cannot be overestimated. He immediately accrued to himself eleven companions who were committed to living according to a simple rule.
- 2) In 1209 he drafted his rule and appealed to Pope Innocent III to officially recognize his new order. After some hesitation, the pope agreed, having had a dream in which a poor man was holding up the basilica of St John Lateran at Rome as it was about to fall to the ground. Taking this poor man to be Francis, the pope gave him permission.
- 3) This initial grouping flourished so much that similar groups, with and without, Francis were springing up all over Western Europe.
- 4) Francis was no administrator, so Pope Gregory IX assigned a cardinal named (H)ugolino to bring greater structure to the association, transforming it into a full-blown monastic order.

---

<sup>103</sup> Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, Fourth Edition (Scribner, 1985), 313.

- 5) This reorganization resulted in a significant movement away from Francis' ideals, especially the ideal of absolute poverty. Under this new organization, Franciscans could use property that belonged to "spiritual friends," such as its cardinal or the pope himself.
- 6) Eventually Francis would become less and less involved in the order, choosing to live out his ideals on his own, which he did until his death in poverty and blindness in 1226. As one writer has said, "In Francis of Assisi is to be seen not merely the greatest of medieval saints but one who, through his absolute sincerity of desire to imitate Christ in all things humanly possible, belongs to all ages and to the church universal."<sup>104</sup>

c. A schism within the order

- 1) Because of the substantial move away from Francis' ideals (even those expressed in his will upon his death in 1226), Franciscans split into two rival groups, one lax and the other strict: "conventuals" and "observants." The conventuals were more faithful to the papacy's approach to their order, while the observants were loyal to Francis.
- 2) Some of the observants came to be known as "Spirituals." They embraced the heretical teaching of Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202), who taught that history was divided into three periods based on the three members of the Godhead: the age of the Father (from Adam to the time of Christ); the age of the Son (the period of the church); and the age of the Spirit, which Joachim believed would begin in 1260. This new order would be thoroughly monastic – through the Spirit, Christ would purify the church from all corruption, the new monastic order would evangelize the whole world (including Jews and Muslims), and a golden age, when the "everlasting gospel" would be fully revealed, would ensue. The world would become "one vast and holy monastery."<sup>105</sup> Their views were eventually snuffed out by the Inquisition.

2. The Dominican order

- a. Founder: Dominic Guzman of Castile (1171-1221)
- b. Impetus for the creation of the order

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 314.

- 1) Dominic was concerned over the heresies that had been plaguing the church for the second half of the twelfth century and believed that the church was right to use force in bringing justice to bear on the heretics (namely, the Cathars); nevertheless, he also noted that such force wasn't quite that effective.
  - 2) Under the tutelage of his friend and his local bishop, Diego of Acevedo, Dominic was the instrument of a change in method – be as physically impoverished and as fine a preacher as any Waldensian or Cathar. If these movements were caused by a reaction to church avarice and prosperity, then demonstrate by your life that your interest is not monetary.
- c. The development of the order
- 1) Thus the work of Dominic began – but progress was slow.
  - 2) Dominic therefore sought official recognition from Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) and permission to establish his approach as an order in its own right. Although permission was not granted, the pope commended Dominic for his work and called him to adopt an already existing order. Dominic chose the Augustinian rule.
  - 3) Their initial mission was to preach to the religious dissenters in southern France, but under Dominic's leadership they became an international organization devoted to evangelism and discipleship. Campaigns were begun simultaneously in Paris, Spain, Toulouse (southwestern France), and Rome. Their mission was to infiltrate the great cities of learning (the universities) and become the highly educated apologists for the Christian faith.
  - 4) As they continued to gain a foothold in the universities, their begging became less and less important to their overall work. Thus, over time, they abolished the rule of manual labor in order to devote all their time to study.
3. Other mendicant orders
- a. Carmelites: The Order of Friars of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt Carmel: This group had first been established in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem in 1154 on Mount Carmel. The Latin patriarch of Jerusalem gave the Carmelites a rule of strict asceticism, including perpetual abstinence from meat, regular fasts, and long periods of silence. The

fall of the state to the Turks brought them into Western Europe where they reorganized themselves as a mendicant order in 1247. In 1229, Pope Gregory IX prescribed corporate poverty and the mendicant life.

- b. Augustinians: The Order of Friars Hermits of St Augustine: These were originally hermits who abandoned their eremitic lifestyle to become an active mendicant order, basing their organization on the Dominicans. They were devoted above all to the study of the Bible and the writings of St Augustine. Martin Luther would become an Augustinian monk in 1505.
  - c. Beguines and Beghards: During the thirteenth century, there was also a rapid growth of lay monastic movements. The Beguines and the Beghards are significant examples of both the female and male versions of these orders. They were pious laypeople living in communities by gender, who would support themselves by manual labor and practicing poverty, chastity, and charity.
4. The new monasticism: The mendicant orders introduced a new monasticism to the world. Rather than living apart from society, withdrawn in hermitage or cell, these new monks (brothers and sisters) purposed to penetrate society with the gospel. Other differences include:<sup>106</sup>
- a. Begging for food rather than growing it in monasteries.
  - b. Not being bound to a specific monastery by an oath of “stability,” giving the new orders more flexibility.
  - c. Exemption from the authority of the local bishop – these movements answered only to the pope.
- B. **The Pinnacle of Catholic Power: Pope Innocent III (1198-1216):** What Hildebrand (Gregory VII [1073-1085]) was unable to realize in his lifetime, Pope Innocent III achieved. Innocent has been called “the most powerful pope in the history of Christianity.”<sup>107</sup>
- 1. From vicar of Peter to Vicar of Christ
    - a. Perhaps the most significant advance in power for the papacy was Innocent’s insistence that the pope was not the vicar<sup>108</sup> of Peter (as all

<sup>106</sup> These points rely on *ibid.*, 323.

<sup>107</sup> Justo L Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*, Vol 1 (Prince, 2007), 308.

<sup>108</sup> A “vicar” is someone who stands in another person’s place.

previous popes had claimed), but that the pope was the Vicar of Christ. He said, "We are the successor of Peter the prince of the apostles, but we are not his vicar, nor are we the vicar of any man or any apostle; we are the vicar of Jesus Christ Himself."<sup>109</sup>

- b. Moreover, the pope took to himself the title of "vicar of God," a title only reserved for the emperor. By this deliberate use of language, the pope suggested that the papacy had authority over all things (church and state) because Christ has all authority over everything: "The Lord Jesus Christ... has established one sovereign... over all as His universal vicar, whom all things in heaven, earth and hell should obey, even as they bow the knee to Christ."<sup>110</sup> Shrewd political leader that he was, Innocent III would not allow these declarations to mere words – all of life would come under the authority of the papacy.
2. The papacy and the state: Innocent intervened (interfered?) in the affairs of Germany, France, Italy, England, Portugal, Bohemia, Hungary, Denmark, Iceland, and even Bulgaria and Armenia.<sup>111</sup> Below we highlight only three.
    - a. Italy
      - 1) After the death of Henry VI (1190-97), the Holy Roman Empire found itself amidst a war between two rivals to the throne: Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick. Innocent used this confusion to bolster the power of the papacy and to enlarge its lands in Italy, essentially taking over Rome by winning over the city prefect to swear an oath of allegiance to the papacy. Because the city's economy depended largely on the papacy through the business of the papal court, Innocent exploited this fact to secure control of the city from the aristocracy.
      - 2) He also persuaded Otto to make concessions to the papacy in Italy in exchange for his support in Otto's battle with Philip of Swabia.
      - 3) But after Otto was recognized as the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto betrayed his promised to Innocent, and moved to regain control of Italy. Innocent responded by excommunicating Otto and putting into power instead, Henry VI's son, Frederick, who as a young boy was entrusted to Innocent's care by his mother.

---

<sup>109</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 302.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 310.

- 4) The end result of all this intrigue is that Innocent established the Papal States in Italy as an independent political dominion.
- b. France
    - 1) The king of France, Philip Augustus (1180-1223) had married the eighteen year-old sister of the king of Denmark, Ingeborg. Bored with her as a wife, he persuaded his bishop to annul the marriage and lock the girl away in a nunnery. From there he moved on to another woman: Agnes of Meran.
    - 2) Innocent III responded to his immorality by placing France under an "interdict" (which was to forbid all clergymen from celebrating any sacramental or spiritual functions except funerals and baptisms for the dying) in order to force Philip to be reconciled to his wife.
    - 3) Eventually, Philip relented and was reunited to Ingeborg. "The restored queen spent the rest of her life complaining that her supposed restoration was in truth constant torture."<sup>112</sup>
  - c. England: In a dispute with King John (1199-1216) over the archbishopric of Canterbury, Innocent set aside John's candidate and appointed one of his own. When John refused, Innocent threatened to place England under an interdict. John then swore to expel all clergy from England. Innocent responded by placing England under an interdict in 1208 (which would last six years), and four years later excommunicated John himself, released all English nobles from their allegiances to John, and threatened with the help of the other kings of Europe to bring a crusade against him. John finally relented. He surrendered his entire kingdom to Innocent, agreed to pay a special annual tax to the papacy, and, of course, accepted Innocent's candidate for archbishop of Canterbury.
3. The papacy and the church: Innocent carried out a series of ecclesiastical reforms, all of which continued to federalize and therefore centralize and locate church power in the papacy.
    - a. The apex of these reforms was the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which accomplished the following:
      - 1) Established the doctrine of transubstantiation

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 309.

- 2) Condemned the Waldensians and the Cathars along with the doctrines of Joachim of Fiore.
  - 3) Forbade the founding of new monastic orders with new rules.
  - 4) Ordered every cathedral to have a school, and that each school should serve the poor.
  - 5) Forbade the clergy from engaging in pastimes like the theater, games, and hunting.
  - 6) Decreed that all the faithful must confess their sins at least once a year.
  - 7) Forbade introducing new relics without papal approval.
  - 8) Required all Jews and Muslims to wear distinctive clothing to set them apart from Christians.
  - 9) Made it unlawful for priests to charge money for the administration of the sacraments.
- b. Eliminating heretics and other dissenters
- 1) The crusade against the Cathars in southern France. Determined to crush the Cathari resistance, Innocent proclaimed a crusade against them. The northern French, who for a long time wanted to get their hands on the south, which at the time was a separate country, saw this as an opportunity take what they wanted – the northern French entered raping and pillaging. As one writer has said, “It isn’t often that good Christian men can save their souls *and at the same time* enlarge their kingdom by butchering unbelievers.”<sup>113</sup>
  - 2) The Inquisition
    - a) One very significant outworking of the Fourth Lateran Council was the institution of inquisition, which Innocent used to centralize further church power within the papacy. It “provided for the state’s punishment of heretics, the confiscation of their property, excommunication for those unwilling to move against

---

<sup>113</sup> Bruce L Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Updated Second Edition (Nelson, 1995), 211, italics added.

the heretic, and complete forgiveness of sins for those cooperating.”<sup>114</sup>

- b) After failed attempts by local bishops to force scattered heretics out of hiding, the pope established what we might call a heresy task force – with all the power the papacy could muster – to put to an end with some finality the dissenting groups in Western Christendom. His actions laid the groundwork for what would be an official “department” for dealing with heresy called the Inquisition or Holy Office.
  - c) Inquisitors, often Dominicans (because of their theological expertise) were given *carte blanche* to ferret out heretics from the church. And by *carte blanche* I mean that nearly *everything* was at their disposal to elicit admissions of guilt from alleged (accused) dissenters, including torture.
  - d) The worst offenders afterward were handed over to the secular authorities to be burned at the stake.
4. The papacy and Eastern Orthodoxy: A result of the Fourth Crusade (see below) was the capture of Constantinople by the West in 1204. Though condemned by Innocent, he also saw the circumstances as an opportunity to reunite East and West. He set up a Catholic patriarch in Constantinople and through the French leadership of the region, attempted to force the Orthodox Christians to submit to Western worship. The reunion failed. In 1261, Constantinople was recaptured by a Byzantine army and the rift between East and West was deepened.

### c. **The End of the Crusades**

- 1. The fourth crusade: Initiated by Innocent III to retake Jerusalem, the crusaders fell short of their goal. Under pressure from the Venetians, who were providing passage for the knights, the crusaders were persuaded to attack the Christian town of Zara on the Adriatic (the town had been troublesome for the Venetians for years). Because of this Innocent himself condemned the whole affair, but the crusade did not stop. Again, under duress from the Venetians who had the crusaders nearly enslaved by outrageous shipping charges, the crusaders attacked Constantinople itself, ravaged the city, and set up the Latin Empire of Constantinople in 1204.

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

2. Other crusades followed, but none were as important as the first four. Finally, the era of the crusades ended in 1291 when Acre fell to the Nestorians.
3. A reason for the crusades: "Love of adventure, hopes for plunder, desire for territorial acquisitions, and religious hatred undoubtedly moved the crusaders with very earthly impulses. We would wrong them, however, if we did not recognize with equal clarity that they thought they were doing something of the highest importance for their souls and for Christ."<sup>115</sup>

**D. High Scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and the Synthesis of Faith and Reason:** The influence and really the introduction of Aristotle into the West through contact with Muslims radically altered the theological landscape of the Western church. Prior to this time, Platonism and neo-Platonism of the Augustinianism held the day. Now theologians (like Thomas Aquinas) would attempt to reconcile Aristotelian philosophical categories with the Christian faith.

1. Background: "Thomas was a Dominican monk of noble birth, brilliant mind, tireless industry, and gentle disposition."<sup>116</sup> Because he was a large, quiet, and initially not very articulate man, he was called, "the dumb ox." Nevertheless, Thomas Aquinas would eventually be "recognized as one of the greatest theologians of all time."<sup>117</sup>
2. Key theological works
  - a. *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Scholarly book, written to help missionaries to Islam.
  - b. *Summa Theologica*: Aquinas' "systematic theology" in the scholastic, "disputation" style. He never finished this massive tome, finding it to be, in his words, "a piece of straw."<sup>118</sup>
3. Key theological contributions
  - a. The nature/grace distinction and the redefinition of original sin
    - 1) The nature of man as he was created. "Nature" refers to human nature as God created it in Adam. Though his nature was complete in itself, it was weak. Therefore God gave Adam a supernatural gift

---

<sup>115</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 284.

<sup>116</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 200.

<sup>117</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 319.

<sup>118</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 263.

of righteousness (“original righteousness”) that would enable him to overcome his weaknesses. Man’s righteousness was supernatural. That is, that his righteousness was a gift of God lost at the fall.

- 2) The effect of sin upon the nature of man. As a result, man now exists in the same state as Adam was before the fall. He only lost this original, added, supernatural righteousness.
- 3) The natural man, therefore, does not need Christianity in order to understand himself and the world correctly. Thus Christianity needs to be presented as additional information to what is already possessed.

It was necessary for man’s salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: *The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee* (Isa. 64:4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with admixture of many errors. Whereas man’s whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that, besides philosophical science built up by reason there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.<sup>119</sup>

- b. The cosmological argument for the existence of God. Aquinas actually argues for “five ways” for proving the existence of God from reason. But unlike Anselm who argues a priori, Thomas argues a posteriori – that is, Anselm reasons independently of experience (in the realm of ideas) and Thomas argues from experience (in the realm of the senses). The cosmological argument is the first of five ways he offers to prove the existence of God: “the unmoved mover.”

---

<sup>119</sup> From Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, excerpted in Walter Kaufmann and Forrest E Baird (editors), *From Plato to Nietzsche* (Prentice Hall, 1994), 338.

It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is **in motion is put in motion by another**, for nothing can be moved except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is moved; whereas a thing moves **inasmuch** as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by **something in a state of actuality**. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and in potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the **same respect and in the same way** a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e., **that it should move itself**. Therefore, whatever is **in motion must be put in motion by another**. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, moved by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.<sup>120</sup>

- c. The substance/accidents distinction for the doctrine of transubstantiation:<sup>121</sup> Aquinas followed Aristotle heavily here, applying this distinction to the doctrine of transubstantiation, actually quoting from the *Metaphysics* throughout his discussion in *Summa Theologica*.
  - 1) Definitions
    - a) The substance of a thing is the inner reality that stands behind the object we can perceive with our senses. Substance as such cannot be perceived with the senses.
    - b) The accidents of a substance are the physical properties of the object before us that make the object appear the way it does to our physical senses.
  - 2) Applying this distinction to the Lord's Supper: The substance of the Supper is the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 352.

<sup>121</sup> "In the 12th Century, Hildebert of Tours...invented the word "transubstantiation" ...to describe this view, and the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 officially sanctioned both the word and the view it signified" (Needham, *Part Two*, 268).

accidents of the Supper are the bread and the wine. What happens, therefore, in Communion is that the substance of bread and the substance of wine are changed to the substance of the body and substance of the blood of the Lord, while the accidents (bread and wine) remain the same.

- a) Therefore, "The presence of Christ's true body and blood in this sacrament cannot be detected by sense, nor understanding, but by faith alone, which rests upon Divine authority.... And since faith is of things unseen, as Christ shows us His Godhead invisibly, so also in this sacrament He shows us His flesh in an invisible manner."<sup>122</sup>
  
- b) And...

It is evident to sense that all the accidents of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. And this is reasonably done by Divine providence. First of all, because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood. And therefore Christ's flesh and blood are set before us to be partaken of under the species of those things which are the more commonly used by men, namely, bread and wine. Secondly, lest this sacrament might be derided by unbelievers, if we were to eat our Lord under His own species.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4075.htm#5>).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 15

### 15. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

**In this lecture:**

1. The decline of the papacy
2. From high to late scholasticism
3. A reemphasis on the individual's communion with God
4. Forerunner to the Reformation: John Wycliffe

#### A. The Decline of the Papacy

1. The Avignon captivity (1309-77)
  - a. Political situation
    - 1) French monarchy growing in strength in contrast to Germany under King Philip the Fair (1285-1314)
    - 2) Philip believed he had absolute authority (greater than the church) over all French affairs
  - b. Conflict broke out between Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) and King Philip
    - 1) First, over taxation
      - a) Philip levied a tax on French clergy to finance a war with England
      - b) The pope decreed the excommunication of all who imposed or paid the tax without permission of the pope
      - c) Philip responded by forbidding the export of gold and silver, crippling the economy of Rome
      - d) Boniface was forced to compromise and allow the French clergy to make "voluntary" contributions to Philip

- 2) Second, over a variety of Philip's initiatives, like his seizure of church property
  - a) A papal legate, Bernard of Saisset was sent in 1301 to complain
  - b) The king had the legate arrested and charged with high treason
  - c) Boniface ordered his release and summoned Philip to Rome
  - d) Philip called a national assembly of French nobles, clergy, and commoners, who supported him in his defiance of the papacy
  - e) Boniface responded with his famous papal bull (= edict) in 1302, the *Unam sanctam*.

We are forced by the faith to believe and hold, and we do indeed firmly believe and sincerely confess, that there is one holy Catholic and apostolic Church, and that outside this Church there is no salvation or forgiveness of sins. . . . There is one body and one head of the one and only Church – not two heads, like a monster – and that is Christ, and Christ's vicar is Peter and the successor of Peter. . . . Both the spiritual and the civil sword are in the power of the Church. The civil sword is to be used for the Church, the spiritual sword by the Church: the spiritual sword is to be used by the priest, the civil sword by kings and captains, but only at the will of the priest and by priestly permission. . . . We declare, state, define and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman pope.<sup>124</sup>

- f) Philip responded by declaring Boniface's incompetence to occupy the papal throne, and he summoned the pope to appear before a council of the entire Western church
  - g) Boniface would have excommunicated Philip, only Philip had the people kidnapped and imprisoned and demanded his resignation. He refused, was eventually rescued by his allies, but died one month later while the battle still raged.
- c. The election of a French pope
    - 1) Pope Benedict, Boniface's successor died after a reign of only eight months (1303-04)

---

<sup>124</sup> Quoted in Needham, *Part Two*, 374.

- 2) Clement V (a Frenchman) was elected (1305-14)
  - a) A puppet of the French monarchy
  - b) In 1309 established Papal court in Avignon
  - c) Never set foot in Rome throughout his entire reign
  - d) The papacy remained in Avignon for nearly 70 years, which led opponents of the French period of the papacy to refer to it as the "Avignon Captivity."
  
2. The Great Schism (1378-1417) – not to be confused with the Great East-West Schism of 1054.
  - a. This was a schism within the Roman church between Avignon and Rome over who was the rightful pope.
  - b. Pope Gregory XI (an Italian) returned to Rome (1370-78), but died a year later
  - c. The French cardinals wanted to return to Avignon, but there was a popular uprising in Rome which forced the cardinals to elect another Italian pope – Urban VI (1378-89)
  - d. A few months after Urban's election, the cardinals reconsidered and voted 12-4 to declare the election null and void because they were forced into the decision under threat of violence.
  - e. They chose another Frenchman as pope (Clement VII [1378-94]), who stayed in Avignon.
  - f. Urban did not step down, but instead stayed in Rome
  - g. Thus there were two rival popes (this, you will remember happened back in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – the "cleansing of the papacy"). The only difference here (and a significant one) was that the church had elected *both* of them (before it was church v. state).
  - h. They excommunicated each other, and as a result Catholic Europe was divided: northern and central Italy, England, the Scandinavian countries, and most of Germany sided with Rome, while France, Spain, southern Italy, Scotland, and some parts of Germany sided with Avignon.

3. Results of the decline of the papacy
  - a. The church lost its identity as having its origin in Jesus' instatement of Peter as the church's first pope in Rome
  - b. It lost its spiritual authority because of the internal bickering and conflicts on display for everyone to see
  - c. The visible unity of the Catholic church was broken
  - d. Attacks on the papacy abounded, especially from Marsilius of Padua (1280-1343)
    - 1) Great anti-papal treatise called, *Defensor Pacis* ("Defender of Peace") (1324).
    - 2) Argued that authority lay with the people – the whole body of citizens in the state, and the whole body of believers in the church. Thus political and spiritual leaders were appointed by the people and accountable to them.
    - 3) The supreme legislative power in the church was not the pope, but an ecumenical council representing the entire body of believers.
    - 4) Scripture alone was the source of Christian teaching – any dispute over the meaning of Scripture had to be settled by such an ecumenical council
    - 5) Made a distinction between the Catholic Church and the Apostolic Church
      - a) Catholic Church included the Western church, the Eastern Orthodox, and everyone who believed in Christ.
      - b) The Apostolic Church was the Church of Rome, which was seen as a manifestation of the Catholic Church, but was not infallible – Rome could err.
    - 6) Roman pope was not the leader of the church by divine right.
      - a) His leadership flowed simply from the fact that he was bishop of the Roman Empire's capital city.

- b) He had no right to depose emperors or kings
- 7) The clergy in secular matters was subject to the state. The only power priests had was to teach, warn, persuade and rebuke.

## B. From High to Late Scholasticism

1. General characteristics of the late schoolmen<sup>125</sup>
  - a. No longer produced great systems of speculative divinity, but wrote elaborate commentaries on the Sentences or critical expositions of a single topic.
  - b. Logical analysis of propositions replaces the metaphysical analysis of essences
  - c. Limits were increasingly imposed on the range of natural reason; instead, the scope of divine revelation was widened.
  - d. Theologians no longer attempted to integrate the natural and supernatural orders to the notion of God as a Pure Act and Unmoved Mover; instead, they emphasized both the unknowability of God to natural reason and the absolute freedom of God above the created order.
2. Two great late schoolmen
  - a. John Duns Scotus (1265-1308)
    - 1) Critical of Thomistic doctrines
    - 2) Also rejected the Augustinian doctrine of the illumination of the intellect, opting instead for Aristotle's theory of knowledge
    - 3) Began a revolutionary trend in scholasticism by separating theology from philosophy
    - 4) Reason could not establish the existence of the Christian God, only that there was a being that was infinite. The only way a human being could know that God was through special divine revelation.

---

<sup>125</sup> These points rely on Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 350.

- 5) Denied the immortality of the soul could be proved by human reason
  - 6) Taught that God's will not his understanding was his chief attribute; therefore, the world was what it was not because reason demanded it, but because God's will had freely and sovereignly chosen to make things the way they are. In other words, reason couldn't get you to God because there is no "reason" why God did what he did – he brought things to being according to his sheer good pleasure. Applied this rubric to the atonement, teaching that Christ's death only had saving power because God willed his death to have saving power, not because there was any inherent worth or value in Christ or by his sacrifice.
  - 7) Argued for the immaculate conception of Mary (*contra* Aquinas, who thought it would mean that Mary did not need salvation).<sup>126</sup>
- b. William of Ockham (1285-1349)
- 1) Took further the divorce between philosophy and theology introduced by Scotus.
  - 2) Argued that all reason could do was demonstrate the probability of the existence of God.
  - 3) Taught that all human knowledge was strictly limited to our experience of individual things and held that all our experience of realities other than the mind comes through our bodily senses. So the only things the mind can know directly are the individual things that it experiences through the senses of sight, hearing, touch, etc.; therefore, unaided reason could have absolutely no knowledge of God.
  - 4) The only way to demonstrate the truth of Christianity was to appeal to the revelation of Scripture.
  - 5) His doctrine of salvation, also known as the *via moderna*<sup>127</sup>
    - a) God, according to his ordained will intends to save people who "do their very best" by acquiring grace as semi-merit within

---

<sup>126</sup> This teaching seems to have first been introduced by Radbertus in the ninth century; nevertheless, it had been rejected by Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bonaventura. But see Needham, *Part Two*, 275 to temper Scotus' persuasion regarding this doctrine.

<sup>127</sup> This section relies on Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 354.

their natural condition and then by earning salvation as a full merit within a state of grace.

- b) Contra Scotus, God does not elect individuals unconditionally, without any regard to their foreseen merits; instead, God's election is based upon God's prior knowledge of their merits.
- c) This doctrine appears to be nearly identical to the current Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation. This is from the most recent edition of the Catholic Catechism:

2008: The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that *God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace*. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, and then follows man's free acting through his collaboration, so that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the predispositions and assistance given by the Holy Spirit.

2009: Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow true merit on us as a result of God's gratuitous justice. This is our right by grace, the full right of love, making us "co-heirs" with Christ and worthy of obtaining "the promised inheritance of eternal life."<sup>60</sup> The merits of our good works are gifts of the divine goodness.<sup>61</sup> "Grace has gone before us; now we are given what is due. . . . Our merits are God's gifts."<sup>62</sup>

2010: Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God's wisdom. These graces and goods are the object of Christian prayer. Prayer attends to the grace we need for meritorious actions.<sup>128</sup>

- 6) "Ockham's Razor": "Whatever can be done with fewer assumptions is done in vain with more." The theory that introduces the least additional or extraneous propositions, especially if those propositions cannot be demonstrated completely from the individual thing itself. This has come to take the form of a philosophical rule of thumb: "The simplest explanation is the best."

### c. A Reemphasis on the Individual's Communion with God

---

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p3s1c3a2.htm>, italics in original.

1. Catholic mysticism
  - a. Used the native language of their country and aimed their ministries at ordinary lay people as well as scholars and clergy.
  - b. They emphasized the centrality of preaching and teaching in the Church, the high value of studying and knowing the New Testament Scriptures, and the importance of practical holiness in daily life.
  - c. Their whole approach to Christianity was Christ-centered – they stressed that Christ was always available to the believing soul; he was not locked away inside the priesthood or the sacraments.
  
2. The *Devotio moderna* (“the modern way of serving God”)
  - a. Began in the Netherlands with Gerard Groote (1340-84)
  - b. Meditative, not mystical; rarely embraced the full-fledged mysticism of some of their contemporaries.
  - c. Ideal was to live in non-monastic communities of men and women who would live, pray, and follow Christ together.
  - d. They would work for a living “in the world” rather than live on their own labors of subsistence farming within the community.
  - e. Based on the consciousness of a deep personal relationship to God.
  - f. Emphasized constant meditation on Christ’s life and passion.
  - g. Nourished by the traditional spiritual practices and rites of the church.
  - h. The most well-known and influential work to come from this movement was Thomas a Kempis’ (1380-1471) *The Imitation of Christ*.
    - 1) Set your heart on eternal realities
    - 2) Walk with Jesus in every aspect of life
    - 3) Found wide acceptance among Catholics and later Protestants.

**d. Forerunner to the Reformation: John Wycliffe (1330-84)**

1. Called "the morning star of the Reformation."<sup>129</sup>
2. Famous lecturer at Oxford in philosophy and theology
3. Religious advisor to the court of Edward III (1327-77) it appears because his religious views were useful weapons for England in their battle with the papacy.
4. A summary of his views
  - a. The doctrine of "dominion/lordship"; namely, that God alone is the source of authority and has delegated a portion of that authority to the church and another portion to the state. Nevertheless, those who exercised this borrowed authority were only permitted to exercise it provided that they served God faithfully.
  - b. *The Truth of Holy Scripture:*
    - 1) The Bible was the only source of Christian doctrine, by which believers must test all the teachings of the Church, including the early fathers, the papacy, and all ecumenical councils.
    - 2) All Christians should be able to read the Bible in their native tongue – so he translated (or spawned the translation) of the Latin Vulgate into English, the first work of English translation of its kind, copied entirely by hand (1384). His disciple and secretary, John Purvey (1353-1428) produced a second version (a better one) that became much more popular than the earlier version. This was very radical insofar as the Council of Toulouse (1229) had forbidden the laity to read the Bible.
  - c. *On the Church*
    - 1) The church is not an outward organization controlled by the papacy and the priesthood, but the whole of the elect, those eternally predestined to salvation by the pure grace of God.
    - 2) The head of the church is not the pope, but Christ alone. The pope could be the head only of the outward and visible church that existed in the city of Rome, made up of elect and non-elect persons.

---

<sup>129</sup> Needham, *Part Two*, 388.

d. *The Power of the Pope*

- 1) Argued that the papacy was of human, not divine origin
- 2) Denied that the pope had any authority over secular government.
- 3) Only popes who walked humbly with the Lord could say they were Peter's successors; otherwise, they were antichrist.<sup>130</sup>

e. *On the Eucharist*

- 1) Rejected transubstantiation arguing for the views of Ratramnus and Augustine.
  - 2) The bread and wine of communion remained bread and wine in substance and accident.
  - 3) The body and blood were truly present in the elements in a spiritual manner.
  - 4) Argued that the true view of the Eucharist was preserved in the Eastern Orthodox Church.
5. Wycliffe's death: Died naturally in 1384, but 34 years later church authorities dug up his bones, burned them for heresy, and threw his ashes into the Swift River.
6. Wycliffe's legacy: the "Lollards" (a pejorative term that probably means "mumblers").
- a. Grew in number throughout the closing years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century
  - b. *The Twelve Conclusions* (1395)
    - 1) Denounced the English church's bondage to the papacy
    - 2) Advocated the marriage of the clergy
    - 3) Condemned transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, and the holding of political office by bishops, among other things.

---

<sup>130</sup> Later Wycliffe would declare all popes, regardless of their behavior, to be antichrist.

## Church History Lecture Notes: Packet 16

### 16. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### In this lecture:

1. Humanism and the Renaissance
2. The Conciliar movement and the rebirth of papal power
3. The beginning of the colonialization of Christianity
4. From heresy to witch hunting

A. **Humanism and the Renaissance:** The close of the Middle Ages saw the fomenting of criticism from the educated class about the limitations of the project of Scholasticism, in particular the idea that Aristotelian philosophical categories could be synthesized with Christianity. This led the way to what we might call a revolution in worldview in the fifteenth century that would mark the beginning of what would later be called the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

1. Defining terms: Scholars agree that the terms “humanism” and “Renaissance” are notoriously difficult to define – “Renaissance” because “it involves the ordering...of something that may not have had such a self-conscious identity or unity at the time...a movement with no obvious beginning or ending points, no single geographical center, no broadly unified intellectual program, and no self-conscious identity”<sup>131</sup> – and “humanism” “because it embraced a wide variety of figures, from relativizing skeptics...to conservative Catholics...to Lutheran Reformers.”<sup>132</sup>

Of course, when it comes to scholars, this doesn't mean that they give up trying. And it seems to me that it is possible at least for us to say some very basic claims about what the ideas of humanism and the renaissance are all about without failing to note that the questions and issues are more complex than I am able to address in a lecture series like this one.

<sup>131</sup> Carl Trueman, “The Renaissance,” in W Andrew Hofferger (editor), *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought* (P & R, 2007), 178.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

- a. What is humanism? Humanism is a cultural movement based on the reappropriation of classical literature<sup>133</sup> and the “humanities”: mathematics (including music theory), dialectics, grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. They were referred to as humane studies in an effort to contrast them with the study of divinity. The singular call of the humanists was “*ad fontes*,” meaning “to the sources.” And by that the humanists meant all sources – Greek and Latin classics, the New Testament, and the early Fathers. Not to be confused with what some evangelicals call “secular humanism,” humanism of the fifteenth century represented an impulse to return to the Greek classical ideals of the centuries prior to the Middle Ages. In fact, the term “Middle” or “Dark Ages” was a term of derision applied to the period that began around 476 AD to indicate that the world had been in an intellectual and cultural holding pattern for a thousand years, stuck between a glorious antiquity and the Renaissance.
- b. What is the Renaissance? The term is French for “rebirth,” and was likely coined by the Italian poet, Petrarch (1304-1374) at the end of the fourteenth century as a way of indicating that the period in which he lived represented a rebirth of Classical values, including Antiquity’s emphasis on the humanities. “[N]ature gives us birth, but the human studies then recreate us and make us authentically human. In all this, a special emphasis was placed on human beings as communicators; the effective expression of thoughts and values in writing, speech, music, and visual art lay close to the heart of the Renaissance vision.”<sup>134</sup> Thus the Renaissance is a movement based on a critique of medieval patterns of thought. From a Christian perspective, the Renaissance perspective shifted Christians’ spiritual concern to the present life, “not usually in the sense of denying the life to come, but insisting strongly that life on earth had a value, a dignity, and a beauty of its own.”<sup>135</sup> Scholars typically date the period of the Renaissance from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.
- c. A lesson from the visual arts
- 1) During the Middle Ages, the visual arts were considered more or less crafts, or “mechanical arts.” The humanist return to Platonic ideals of liberal arts originally excluded the visual arts on the basis of their being “handiwork,” without a theoretical basis. But

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> N R Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, Volume 3 (Grace Publications, 2004), 16.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 17.

through the writings of Filippo Villani<sup>136</sup> and others the visual arts soon began to hold a place among the liberal arts. Artists were now “acknowledged as people of ideas, rather than mere manipulators of materials, and works of art came to be viewed more and more as the visible records of their creative minds.”<sup>137</sup>

- 2) Differences between Medieval and Renaissance art
  - a) Medieval art: Mostly religious; very focused on creating symbols of Christian concepts/values; not concerned with realism. Served a religious pedagogical purpose: “Before a worshipper has even entered the church, he would find images of saints and sinners, of angelic beings and the punishment of the damned. All stood as a reminder of the importance of holding one’s thoughts to God.”<sup>138</sup> Statues were shallow and flat. Bodies might be out of proportion.
  - b) Renaissance art: Very focused on realism – on portraying things as they look. Used linear perspective in painting. Not as focused on religion. Often used to show the beauty in nature (including human beings). Often depicted everyday life. Used light and shadow.
- 3) PowerPoint slide show.

## 2. Renaissance men – Christian humanists

- a. Francesco Petrarch (1304-74): In Petrarch, a former Catholic priest who was dramatically converted in 1350, we see some of the defining characteristics of Christian Renaissance humanism:<sup>139</sup>
  - 1) Contempt for the Middle Ages as the “Dark Ages” – Petrarch was the first man to refer to this period of history in this way.
  - 2) Belief in a golden age of civilization in classical Greece and Rome, and a spiritual golden age in the days of the apostles and early Fathers.

---

<sup>136</sup> His dates are uncertain; however, we do know that he lived from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century into the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>137</sup> H W Janson, *History of Art*, Fifth Edition, Volume 2, revised and expanded by Anthony F Janson (Prentice Hall, 1991, 1995), 435.

<sup>138</sup> <http://www.eyeconart.net/history/medieval.htm>

<sup>139</sup> This section relies on *ibid.*, 21.

- 3) New fervor for Plato (over and against the Middle Ages' and especially the scholastic synthesis of Aristotle and Christianity).
  - 4) Preference of Augustine over Aquinas
  - 5) Admiration of ancient Latin authors as masters of literary style
  - 6) Conviction that all philosophy and theology should revolve around humanity and human life, especially the relationship between human beings and God.
- b. Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536)<sup>140</sup>
- 1) Criticism of the religious life of Catholic Europe
    - a) Scholasticism: He believed that the schoolmen had corrupted the Christian message by their attempts to synthesize Aristotle with Christianity. He famously asked, "What has Christ to do with Aristotle?" Theology for him was not a matter of philosophy, but was rooted in the New Testament and following Christ's example.
    - b) Outward forms: He bitingly criticized Catholics for their near obsession with external forms of religion and superstition – images, relics, ceremonies, and indulgences. True religion was inward, coming from the heart.
    - c) Church leadership: He was equally as critical of the clergy, monks, and the papacy, pointing out their ignorance and immorality. He accomplished this through a famous book he wrote, but which he never admitted (or denied) his authorship, called, *Praise of Folly* (1509):

Among...[the monks] are some who make a great thing out of their squalor and beggary, who stand at the door bawling out their demands for bread...depriving other beggars of no small share of their income. And in this manner, the most agreeable fellows, with their filth, ignorance, coarseness, impudence, recreate for us, as they say, an image of the apostles.<sup>141</sup>

## 2) Erasmus' solution

---

<sup>140</sup> This section relies on *ibid.*, 35-38.

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Trueman, "The Renaissance," 183.

- a) Moral reform in the shape of the imitation of Christ – living a Christlike life, moving the soul away from visible material things (and materialism) to unseen spiritual realities.
- b) Cultural reform through education, which he believed was the solution to the problems of mankind. Like the Cluniac reforms of the tenth century, Erasmus believed that if children could be given a solid, humanist education in Greek, Latin, the Classics, and the New Testament, the whole of society would be renewed and Christianized under their influence.
- c) Scriptural reform through the deep study of the Scripture first in the original Greek. In 1516, he published his own critical edition of the New Testament, which would form the basis of the *Textus Receptus*. He also believed in translating the Greek into the various native tongues of the world so that ordinary people (not simply scholars) could read it.

**B. The Conciliar Movement and the Rebirth of Papal Power:** Remember that at the end of the fourteenth century, there were two rival popes – one in Rome and the other in Avignon. IN order to remedy this, a movement developed at the beginning of the fifteenth century to bring order and unity back to the church (and papacy) called “the Conciliar Movement,” which is from the word “council” – leaders in the church sought to bring order and unity back to the church through convening councils that would have some kind of authority over the papacy for situations like the Avignon Captivity. Of course, when you have rival popes, the question naturally arises as to who will call the council – your caught between an ecclesiastical rock and hard place. If the Roman pope calls the council, cries of bias will be leveled by Avignon, and vice versa. This leads to the first council of the movement...

1. The Council of Pisa (1404)
  - a. Cardinals from both parties were weary of the popes’ refusals to negotiate, so they issued a joint call to both popes to attend. The popes responded by calling councils of their own, which failed, so they both fled to their own fortified strongholds.
  - b. Council declared both popes unworthy and illegitimate claimants to the papacy and elected Alexander V to take the place of the deposed popes.
  - c. The deposed popes refused with the result that there were now *three* popes, each with supporters throughout Catholic Europe.

- d. Less than a year after Alexander was elected, he died, and the council was forced to elect another pope – Pope John XXIII.<sup>142</sup> Neither of the Pisan popes were able to end the schism, and John was forced to flee to Germany, where Emperor Sigismund of Germany called another council to put an end to the schism.
2. The Council of Constance (1414)
- a. The end of the schism
    - 1) John expected the assembly would support him, but his ambitions and lifestyle were not in agreement with the reformist goals of the council; therefore, it demanded John's resignation. He refused and for months was a fugitive. In the end all his supporters failed him, he was arrested, returned to Constance, and forced to resign.
    - 2) Not too long after John's resignation, Pope Gregory XII resigned as per his promise if the other pope would do likewise.
    - 3) The council then elected Martin V.
    - 4) Benedict XIII, the last of the Avignon popes, refused to resign and finished his life hold up in a fortress where he continued to insist that he was the true pope. He was ignored and died in 1423. No successor was named.
  - b. Ferreting out heresy: John Huss (1372-1415): Aside from ending the papal schism, another aim of the council was to rid the church of heresy and corruption. John Huss, another "forerunner of the Reformation,"<sup>143</sup> became the object of the council's muscle for stamping out heresy.
    - 1) Rector of the University of Prague in 1402, preacher in the nearby chapel of Bethlehem.

---

<sup>142</sup> "At this point the reader may be asking, how is it that there was a Pope John XXIII in the fifteenth century, and another Pope John XXIII in the twentieth? The answer is that the Roman Catholic Church accepts as legitimate the line of popes who resided in Rome, that is, Urban VI and his successors. The rival popes in Avignon, as well as the two 'Pisan popes' Alexander V and John XXIII, are considered antipopes," Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, Vol 1, 344.

<sup>143</sup> See from "Church History, Packet Fifteen," "D. Forerunner of the Reformation: John Wycliffe."

- 2) Came under the influence of Wycliffe's writings through the marriage of English King Richard II to Anne of Bohemia (1366-1394), a Bohemian princess.
- 3) His teaching
  - a) Launched an attack on indulgences, suggesting that no one could purchase forgiveness for money, since only God could forgive, and did so freely to all who truly confessed their sins.
  - b) Argued that the church was made up of the elect of all ages, known to God alone, who had been predestined them to belong to himself by his free grace.
  - c) Christ alone was head of the church, not the popes – popes could and did err.
  - d) Christians should not obey immoral and unworthy clergy.
  - e) The state should step in and reform the church if the church was not willing to reform itself.
  - f) Preaching, not celebrating the sacraments was the true heart of ordained ministry.
  - g) Celebrants of communion should be served the bread and the wine, not just the bread.
- 4) Excommunicated twice (by the Pisan pope John XXIII). The first excommunication didn't "stick" because Huss had the support of the king and the people of Bohemia. The second one "stuck" because John Huss lost the support of the king, who needed the pope's support for reasons of national security. Huss fled Prague and withdrew to the country, where he continued his writing ministry. It was there he received news of the Council of Constance. He was invited to the council to defend himself and granted safe passage to attend the meeting by Emperor Sigismund.
- 5) When he arrived in Constance, it was clear that he would not appear before the council, but instead would be tried directly by Pope John XXIII.
- 6) Almost immediately upon his arrival he was imprisoned, and stayed there for six months where he suffered in horrific conditions that

ended up destroying his health – headaches, fever, bleeding, and vomiting.

- 7) Before the pope's council of cardinals and the pope himself, Huss was ordered to recant his heresy, to which he said that he would gladly do if someone could show him his error.
  - 8) On June 5, 1415, Huss was taken before the council, where he insisted that he never held some of the doctrines of which he was being accused of heresy, and denied that others were heresy.
  - 9) Convinced that he would not get a fair hearing, he said, "I appeal to Jesus Christ, the only judge who is almighty and completely just. In his hands I place my cause, since he will judge each, not on the basis of false witnesses and erring councils, but of truth and justice."<sup>144</sup>
  - 10) Finally, on July 6, 1415, Huss was stripped of his priestly garments, his tonsure was erased by shaving his head, which was covered by a paper crown covered in pictures of red demons, and solemnly committed to the devil.
  - 11) Just before he was burned at the stake, he was given a final chance to recant, to which he replied, "I shall die with joy today in the faith of the Gospel which I have preached."<sup>145</sup>
  - 12) His executioners gathered the ashes and threw them into a lake.
3. The Council of Pavia (1423): Called by Martin V, as agreed upon at Constance. Attendance was scarce, and the council passed a number of minor decrees.
  4. The Council of Basel (1430)
    - a. Again called by Martin V (he died shortly after the council gathered).
    - b. His successor, Eugene VI, disbanded it, but the council refused and there was talk of removing Eugene.
    - c. Emperor Sigismund intervened and Eugene withdrew the decree of dissolution.

---

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, Vol 1, 350.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Needham, *Volume Two*, 393.

- d. In 1437 the pope transferred the council from Basel to Ferrara in Italy, and then in 1439 to Florence. At Ferrara and Florence, the Council welcomed a delegation from the Orthodox who were looking for help from the West in their struggle against the Turks in Constantinople. The Byzantine emperor, John VIII and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II attended. They and the papacy opened negotiations to heal the East-West rift.
  - e. After nine months of negotiation, mostly over the filioque clause the Union of Florence was signed on July 6, 1439 at which time the Orthodox agreed to three points of Western Catholic doctrine:
    - 1) The theology of the filioque clause, although Eastern Christians were not required to recite it in worship.
    - 2) Purgatory
    - 3) The supremacy of the pope
  - f. Despite the union, no effective military help came, and Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453.
  - g. In 1472, after much turmoil in the East over the Union, the agreement was authoritatively rejected by a synod of bishops meeting in Constantinople.
  - h. Meanwhile the Council of Basel (Ferrara, Florence) became more and more radical, and many of its most distinguished leaders left it for the pope's council.
  - i. What was left of the original council deposed pope Eugene and named Felix V in his place, which resulted in the existence of two popes and two councils! "Thus...the conciliar movement, which had ended the papal schism, had resurrected it."<sup>146</sup>
  - j. Over time, the last members of the original council moved to Lausanne, where they finally disbanded.
  - k. Then in 1449, Felix V gave up his claim to the papacy.
5. The results of the conciliar movement

---

<sup>146</sup> Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, Vol 1, 346.

- a. "By [1449], it was clear that the papacy had won, and that from that time councils would be subject to it, and not vice versa."<sup>147</sup>
- b. "[B]y the end of the fifteenth century, the dreams of Marsilius of Padua had vanished, the leaders of reform by church councils were frustrated and repudiated, and the revolts of Wyclif and Hus were crushed. The value of the period lies in the demonstration it gives that reform of the papal church from within was impossible."<sup>148</sup>
- c. **The Beginning of the Colonialization of Christianity:** I simply want to mention here that the fifteenth century and moving into the sixteenth century, although a time of great difficulty for the Catholic Church (Renaissance and Reformation), was also a time of vast expansion, especially from Spain and Portugal. I hope you all know what happened on October 12, 1492.
- d. **From Heresy to Witch Hunting**
  - 1. There was a growing concern about witchcraft in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it wasn't until the Renaissance that witchcraft came to occupy the same place as heresy.
  - 2. In 1370-80 the Inquisition decreed in a series of tracts that witchcraft must be dealt with as severely as heresy.
  - 3. Whole new areas of theological studies sprang up regarding the occult: the varieties of witchcraft, the correct ways of detecting it, the proper punishments it merited, etc. This should be seen as a remarkable development in light of the fact that the Renaissance humanist project was one devoted at shedding light on superstition, relics, and the like.
  - 4. Nevertheless, there was a great surge of energy to rid Europe of witches.
  - 5. In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII published a papal bull that made burning of witches an official Catholic Policy.
  - 6. In 1486, the most influential book on witchcraft was written by two high-ranking inquisitors, the Dominican friars Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Mallificarum* ("Hammer of the Witches"), which was reprinted for nearly 200 years. You could learn everything you needed to

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 232-33.

know about witched (and vampires) and how to deal with them. Here's an excerpt:

Therefore a prudent and zealous Judge should seize his opportunity and choose his method of conducting his examination according to the answers or depositions of the witnesses, or as his own previous experience or native wit indicates to him, using the following precautions.

If he wishes to find out whether she is endowed with a witch's power of preserving silence, let him take note whether she is able to shed tears when standing in his presence, or when being tortured. For we are taught both by the words of worthy men of old and by our own experience that this is a most certain sign, and it has been found that even if she be urged and exhorted by solemn conjurations to shed tears, if she be a witch she will not be able to weep: although she will assume a tearful aspect and smear her cheeks and eyes with spittle to make it appear that she is weeping; wherefore she must be closely watched by the attendants.

In passing sentence the Judge or priest may use some such method as the following in conjuring her to true tears if she be innocent, or in restraining false tears. Let him place his hand on the head of the accused and say: I conjure you by the bitter tears shed on the Cross by our Saviour the Lord JESUS Christ for the salvation of the world, and by the burning tears poured in the evening hour over His wounds by the most glorious Virgin MARY, His Mother, and by all the tears which have been shed here in this world by the Saints and Elect of God, from whose eyes He has now wiped away all tears, that if you be innocent you do now shed tears, but if you be guilty that you shall by no means do so. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

And it is found by experience that the more they are conjured the less are they able to weep, however hard they may try to do so, or smear their cheeks with spittle. Nevertheless it is possible that afterwards, in the absence of the Judge and not at the time or in the place of torture, they may be able to weep in the presence of their gaolers.

And as for the reason for a witch's inability to weep, it can be said that the grace of tears is one of the chief gifts allowed to the penitent; for S. Bernard tells us that the tears of the humble can penetrate to heaven and conquer the unconquerable. Therefore there can be no doubt that they are displeasing to the devil, and that he uses all his endeavour to restrain them, to prevent a witch from finally attaining to penitence.

But it may be objected that it might suit with the devil's cunning, with God's permission, to allow even a witch to weep; since tearful grieving, weaving and deceiving are said to be proper to women. We may answer that in this case, since the judgments of God are a mystery, if there is no other way of convicting the accused, by legitimate witnesses or the evidence of the fact, and if she is not under a strong or grave suspicion, she is to be discharged; but because she rests under a slight suspicion by reason of her reputation to which the witnesses have testified, she must be required to

abjure the heresy of witchcraft, as we shall show when we deal with the second method of pronouncing sentence.

A second precaution is to be observed, not only at this point but during the whole process, by the Judge and all his assessors; namely, that they must not allow themselves to be touched physically by the witch, especially in any contract of their bare arms or hands; but they must always carry about them some salt consecrated on Palm Sunday and some Blessed Herbs. For these can be enclosed together in Blessed Wax and worn round the neck, as we showed in the Second Part when we discussed the remedies against illnesses and diseases caused by witchcraft; and that these have a wonderful protective virtue is known not only from the testimony of witches, but from the use and practice of the Church, which exorcizes and blesses such objects for this very purpose, as is shown in the ceremony of exorcism when it is said, For the banishing of all the power of the devil, etc.

But let it not be thought that physical contact of the joints or limbs is the only thing to be guarded against; for sometimes, with God's permission, they are able with the help of the devil to bewitch the Judge by the mere sound of the words which they utter, especially at the time when they are exposed to torture.

And we know from experience that some witches, when detained in prison, have importunately begged their gaolers to grant them this one thing, that they should be allowed to look at the Judge before he looks at them; and by so getting the first sight of the Judge they have been able so to alter the minds of the Judge or his assessors that they have lost all their anger against them and have not presumed to molest them in any way, but have allowed them to go free. He who knows and has experienced it gives this true testimony; and would that they were not able to effect such things!

Let judges not despise such precautions and protections, for by holding them in little account after such warning they run the risk of eternal damnation. For our Saviour said: If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Therefore let the judges protect themselves in the above manner, according to the provisions of the Church.<sup>149</sup>

7. One estimate puts the death toll as high as nine million real or alleged witches killed during the craze, which lasted well into the seventeenth century.

---

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/downloads/MalleusAcrobat.pdf>

## 17. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

### **In this lecture:**

1. What Was the Reformation?  
Defining the Religious Revolution of the Sixteenth Century
2. Causes of the Reformation
3. Martin Luther – the Accidental Revolutionary

### A. **What Was the Reformation? Defining the Religious Revolution of the Sixteenth Century**

1. The subtitle for this point gives some shape to how we ought to understand the Reformation in Europe of the sixteenth century – it was a revolution.

[T]he Reformation represented a religious upheaval and, therefore, a revolution in worldview. If one turns to contemporary historiography regarding this signally important period, it would be easily to lose sight of this fact, since the period is more commonly referred to as Early Modern Europe. Without denying the value of contemporary scholarship and the obvious fact that the Reformation brought social, economic, and political developments of the first magnitude, what struck many *at the time* was its character as a religious revolution.<sup>150</sup>

2. But in order to understand it more comprehensively, we must acknowledge that the Reformation was one of many revolutions of the sixteenth century. As historian Mark Noll has said,

[T]he sixteenth century seems simply to overflow with critical turning points. . . . They made the age of Luther and Loyola – which is also the era of John Calvin, Charles V, Christopher Columbus, Nicolas Copernicus, Albrecht Dürer, Elizabeth I, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Henry VIII, Margaret of Navarre, Menno Simons, Michelangelo, Thomas More, Philip II, William Tyndale, Francis Xavier, and many more – such an important century in the history of Christianity.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Scott Amos, "The Reformation as a Revolution in Worldview" in Hoffecker, *Revolutions in Worldview*, 206-207, italics added.

<sup>151</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 157.

3. The nature of the Reformation revolution: decidedly theocentric; that is, it was “a religious revolution whose leading figures expressed an intensely theocentric perspective in their writings. The Reformers juxtaposed the power, majesty, and holiness of God with human weakness and sinfulness.”<sup>152</sup> This God-centered, God-exalting approach to theology had at least the following consequences:
  - a. Opposition of some elements of Renaissance Humanism, most notably humanism’s man-centered and highly optimistic view of man’s capability and powers of achievement.
  - b. Opposition of the medieval synthesis that also led to a more man-centered view of the universe, placing reason (especially Aristotelian philosophical categories) on a par with revelation. And although the later Medieval period saw a decline in High Scholasticism, the influence of Thomas Aquinas did not disappear.
  - c. Opposition of the now fully systematized system of human merit and achievement that had been infecting the doctrine of salvation for several hundred years.
  - d. A strong and decisive movement toward the Bible as the authoritative source of revelation from the God on whom the whole universe centers.

## **B. Causes of the Reformation**

1. Church crises of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century
  - a. The “Babylonian Captivity”
  - b. The Great Schism
  - c. The death of the conciliar movement
2. Church corruption
  - a. Simony
  - b. Pluralism: An officer holding more than one office at a time.

---

<sup>152</sup> Amos, “The Reformation,” 207.

- c. Absenteeism: A church official not participating in the life of his congregation but receiving an income nevertheless.
  - d. Nepotism
  - e. The sale of indulgences
  - f. Moral decline of the papacy
    - 1) Pope Alexander VI had numerous affairs and several children out of wedlock
    - 2) 1/5 of all priests in the diocese of Trent kept concubines in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
    - 3) Some traded sexual favors for the absolution of sins during confession (the way Confession is given and received today is a direct result of Counter Reformation attempts to clean up the church's mess).
  - g. Clerical ignorance: Many local parish priests were illiterate.
3. Pre-reformation reformers and reform movements
- a. John Wycliffe
  - b. John Hus
  - c. Cathars
  - d. Petrobrusians
  - e. Waldensians
4. Renaissance Humanism
5. The invention of the printing press, which enabled the teaching of the Reformation, especially beginning with Martin Luther to spread like wildfire.
6. And to all of these causes, the following:

Social convulsions produced popular uprisings including the Peasant Revolt in Germany and the Pilgrimage of Grace in England. Western powers established colonies that spanned the globe, taking the first auspicious step toward European world domination that endured some 450 years. New industries and the influx of precious metals from the Spanish Empire's New World colonies resulted in an economic boom that insured the increasing influence and wealth of the middle class. Discoveries and inventions in science and technology initiated the "Age of Science" that would come fully into its own in the succeeding century. Politically, the titanic struggles between the Habsburgs of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, on the one hand, and the Valois of France, on the other, signaled the rise of the nation-states. Moreover, with the coming of the Turks to the very walls of Vienna, Europe was threatened with invasion in a manner it had not faced since the early Middle Ages.<sup>153</sup>

c. **Martin Luther – the Accidental Revolutionary:**<sup>154</sup> But perhaps the greatest cause of the Reformation was a German Augustinian monk with an hyperactive conscience and even worse bowels – Martin Luther (1483-1546).

1. Background

a. Augustinian monk

b. Taught at the University of Wittenberg

c. Johan Tetzel, a German Dominican, was authorized by Pope Leo X to sell indulgences: "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." The pope was using this money to finance the building of St Peter's in Rome.

2. The Ninety-five Theses (October 31, 1517)

a. Martin Luther: "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God, except precisely that little point at which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all battlefields besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>154</sup> For this language I am indebted to the title of Chapter 2 of Alister E McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution – a History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (Harper Collins, 2007).

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in David C Calhoun's lecture notes for his spring 2006 course "Reformation and Modern Church History" taught at Covenant Seminary.

- b. The selling of indulgences was the trigger for Martin Luther's first open expression of his defiance of the teaching of the church.
- c. Luther's purpose was to contrast the Bible's teaching with what the church requires.
- d. Nailed to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral (or perhaps sent to his resident bishop) – nevertheless, they were heard loud and clear, and can be summarized under the following two points:<sup>156</sup>
  - 1) The sale of indulgences was exploitative of the economy of the German nation. Luther accused the pope of building St Peter's out of the "skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep."<sup>157</sup>
  - 2) The pope had no authority over purgatory, and even if he did, forcing people to pay their way out was contrary to Christian charity.
- e. Different scholarly takes on the Ninety-five Theses
  - 1) Philip Schaff—Luther's theses do not protest "against indulgences, but only against their abuse"; "more Catholic than Protestant."
  - 2) B. B. Warfield—Revolutionary: Luther's theses attack not only the abuses of indulgences, not only the theory of indulgences, but the whole sacerdotal conception of salvation; "remainders of Romanism...very few and very slight....The strength and purity of the evangelicalism of the Theses is manifested in nothing more decisively than in their clear proclamation of the dependence of the soul for salvation on the mere grace of God alone."
- f. Nevertheless, considering how much controversy the church had faced in its near 1600-year history, McGrath is correct to describe Luther's dissent as "a seemingly trivial protest by an unknown German academic at one of Europe's most insignificant universities."<sup>158</sup> In fact, Pope Leo initially saw the Ninety-five Theses as a dispute between Augustinian and Dominican monks, a theological argument between clergy, an "in-house" debate not worth his time in light of the political trouble he was having. But once the political issue of the new Holy Roman Emperor was decided, Leo did not have to hold back. So on June 15, 1520 he issued a papal decree condemning Luther as a heretic.

---

<sup>156</sup> Adapted from McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 48.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 17.

Luther defied the pope and continued his crusade of reformation. "His reformation would be more than a protest against the pope; it would be a positive and constructive renewal of the church."<sup>159</sup> He had no idea at this time what was about to happen.

3. The Leipzig Disputation – a debate with renowned Catholic theologian Johann Eck at Leipzig in 1520. Although Luther did not fare well in the debate (he got crushed), but nevertheless he quit himself well and got himself noticed, especially by German humanists, who saw him as an able exponent of the very program they were advocating.
4. The Diet of Worms (1521): This is not referring to a weight-loss program – the all worms diet. A "diet" is an imperial court assembly. Worms (pronounced "Vorms" is a city in Germany).
  - a. When Luther arrived, spread out in the imperial chamber was all of Luther's writings. In fact, there was such a pile that Charles and his aides expressed doubt as to whether any single person could have written so much. He was asked publicly to recant – to confess openly his mistakes about the gospel, the nature of the church, and the current state of Christendom.
  - b. After a day longer of deliberation he said, "Therefore, I ask by the mercy of God, may your most serene majesty, most illustrious lordships, or anyone at all who is able, either high or low, bear witness, expose my errors, overthrowing them by the writings of the prophets and the evangelists. Once I have been taught I shall be quite ready to renounce every error, and I shall be the first to cast my books into the fire."<sup>160</sup>
  - c. This, however, was too ambiguous for the court. So the emperor's spokesmen pressed him further, to which he replied with perhaps his most famous words: "Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simply answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is held captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against

---

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in Noll, *Turning Points*, 153-154.

conscience.”<sup>161</sup> And finally, “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”<sup>162</sup>

- d. At this point, Luther had no intention of breaking off from the church. He firmly believed that nothing good could be achieved through schism, but regrettably, he his excommunication in 1520 and his condemnation at the Diet of Worms in 1521 ruled out any possibility of reunion. The only alternative was most revolutionary – start over.
  - e. Before the council could burn him for heresy, he was “kidnapped” by bandits and held captive in Wartburg Castle for ten months, a kidnapping arranged by Frederick the Wise of Saxony to allow Luther to continue his work, including his massive work of translating the Bible into vernacular German!
5. The theology of the cross: This was the ground of all of Luther’s theological work and the focal point of his understanding of the Christian faith.<sup>163</sup> As one theological historian has said, “If we are to understand Luther’s continuing appeal it must be with his theology that we begin and end.”<sup>164</sup>
- a. The Foundation—“The righteous will live by faith” Luther—“By the one solid rock we call the doctrine of justification by faith alone (sola fide), we mean that we are redeemed from sin, death and the devil, and are made partakers of life eternal, not by self-help but by outside help, namely by the work of the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ alone” (solus Christus).
    - 1) Luther’s search for the meaning of Romans 1:17
      - a) God’s righteousness = God’s requirement
        - First crisis—the thunderstorm

I was a good monk, and kept my order so strictly that I could say that if ever a monk could get to heaven through monastic discipline, I was that monk... And yet my conscience would not give me certainty, but I always doubted and said, “You didn’t do that right. You weren’t contrite enough. You left that out of your confession.” The more I tried to remedy an

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>163</sup> The following has been adapted from Calhoun’s lecture notes for “Reformation and Modern Church History.”

<sup>164</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, “The Enduring Relevance of Martin Luther: 500 Years After his Birth,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 18, 1983.

uncertain, weak and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more I daily found it more uncertain, weaker and more troubled.

- Second crisis—the first mass: “I don’t love God! I hate God!”
- b) God’s righteousness = God’s gift
- Through his lectures on Scripture at the University of Wittenberg 1513-17 (Psalms, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews)
  - In his study: There in that study Luther tells us, with troubled conscience he “beat importunately upon Paul at that place [Romans 1:17], most ardently desiring to know what Saint Paul wanted.”
  - Third crisis—“the tower experience”: The tower was the study room in the former Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg where Luther lived. In that room the light finally dawned for Luther. He realized that “the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel” is not the righteousness that God requires, but rather the righteousness that God gives. Salvation is not an achievement. It is a gift. Salvation is not what we are able to do. It is what God provides for us, by grace alone, through faith alone. Luther said, “Thereupon I felt that I had been born again and entered paradise through wide-open doors.”

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely ‘In it the righteousness of God is revealed,’ as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.

- 6** The fundamental themes of Luther’s reforms<sup>165</sup>
- a. The Bible is the ultimate foundation of all Christian belief and practice.
  - b. The text of the Bible, and all preaching based upon it, should be in the vernacular.

---

<sup>165</sup> See McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea*, 56-58.

- c. Salvation is a free, unmerited gift of God, received by faith alone.
- d. There is no fundamental distinction between clergy and laity – “the priesthood of all believers.”
- e. The reform of the church’s life and thought was not about beginning from scratch; instead, the foundation of his thought was the Bible read through the eyes of the great religious heroes of the past.

**In this lecture: The 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Part 2**

1. Review
2. Ulrich Zwingli and the supremacy of the Bible.
3. The Anabaptists: The left wing of the Reformation
4. John Calvin

**Review**

- What Was the Reformation? Defining the Religious Revolution of the Sixteenth Century
- Causes of the Reformation
- Martin Luther – the Accidental Revolutionary

**d. Ulrich Zwingli and the Supremacy of the Bible<sup>166</sup>**

1. The birth of the “Reformed faith.”
2. A theologian of the Bible: “It is interesting to note that the question first at issue grew not out of a concern for personal assurance of salvation, as with Luther, but out of the conviction that only the Bible, evangelically interpreted, was binding on Christians.”<sup>167</sup>
  - a. *Sola scriptura*
  - b. The “regulative” principle
3. A theologian of the honor and glory of God: “If Luther’s great theme was justification by faith alone, then Zwingli’s great theme was ‘thou shalt have no other gods before me.’”<sup>168</sup>
4. Marburg, 1530: Zwingli and Luther debate the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper: Consubstantiation or memorial?
5. Zwingli the soldier and patriot

<sup>166</sup> The notes for this lecture have been adapted from Calhoun, “Reformation,” 6-8.

<sup>167</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 443.

<sup>168</sup> Calhoun, “Reformation,” 6.5.

- a. In sharp distinction from both Luther and the Anabaptists, Zwingli believed that the Christ should be the transformer of culture. "Once when he was discussing economic matters, someone asked, 'What does this have to do with the Gospel?' Zwingli's answer was, 'Much in every way.'"<sup>169</sup>
- b. Fought with the Protestants during a Swiss civil war.
- c. Died fighting Roman Catholics in a battle unrelated to the civil war at the age of 46.

## E. **The Anabaptists: The Left Wing of the Reformation**

- 1. From the Lutheran Reformation
  - a. Disagreement over the pace of the Reformation
    - 1) Dr. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt
      - a) Successor of Luther in Wittenberg after Luther was "kidnapped" and brought to Wartburg.
      - b) Very aggressive in his work to reform the city.
      - c) Impatient with Luther's slowness to bring about reform: "...in speaking of Karlstadt...some who once worked with Luther came to feel that he was but a halfway reformer."<sup>170</sup>
        - Luther said, "The cause is good, but there has been too much haste. For there are still brothers and sisters on the other side who belong to us and must still be won."<sup>171</sup>
        - Karlstadt said, "If I should see a little innocent child holding a sharp pointed knife in his hand and he wants to keep it, will I show him brotherly love by letting that little child hold that sharp knife and cut himself? Or will I break his will and force that knife out of his hands onto the floor and take it from him? When you take from the child what injures him, you do a fatherly, or brotherly, Christ-like deed."<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 6.6.

<sup>170</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 448.

<sup>171</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," 7.3.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

- 2) Thomas Muntzer: In the name of the Reformation, organized a peasants' rebellion that caused some significant damage to the city of Allstedt including the destruction of a Catholic shrine.
- b. Disagreement over the shape of the Reformation
    - 1) Extra-biblical Spiritual authority
    - 2) Holiness and justification
2. From the Swiss Reformation
    - a. Believers-only baptism
    - b. Bible-onlyism: "One of the Anabaptists said, 'Foolish Ambrose, foolish Augustine, foolish Jerome, foolish Gregory, of whom not even one knew the Lord, so help me God, nor was sent by God to teach. Rather, they were all apostles of anti-Christ.'" <sup>173</sup>
    - c. Ultimately, however, they were not overly concerned with doctrine per se. Their favorite biblical character was the thief on the cross, whom they said was "saved without any knowledge of the substance and persons of the Godhead, paedobaptism, consubstantiation, predestination, and so on and so on." <sup>174</sup>
  3. Munster, Germany – "the supreme disaster for the Radical Reformation." <sup>175</sup>
    - a. Anabaptists were able to take over the entire city.
    - b. They became revolutionaries.
      - 1) Expelled the Catholics *and* the Protestants.
      - 2) Set up an Old Testament theocracy.
      - 3) Waited for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.
    - c. The city quickly degenerated into a morass of religious fanaticism, terror, polygamy, elimination of private property, and all kinds of other abuses.

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 7.4.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Needham, *2,000 Years of Christ's Power*, Vol 3, 190.

- d. Finally, the city was besieged by an army of Catholics *and* Protestants.
    - 1) Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century almost never did anything together, unless they were fighting the Anabaptists.
    - 2) The leaders were executed, and that was the end of that experiment.
  - e. The entire movement was given a black eye by Munster. People concluded that this kind of behavior was the necessary consequence of holding to Anabaptist teaching.
4. Menno Simons (1496-1561)
- a. *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*
  - b. The “heavenly flesh” of Jesus
5. Persecution – Catholic and Protestant: “One new study on the history of the Anabaptists in Europe concluded that 85% of the Anabaptists who were executed were executed by Rome. That still leaves 15% who were executed by Protestants.”<sup>176</sup> Still, as Gonzalez says, “The martyrs were many – probably more than those who died during the three centuries of persecution before the time of Constantine.”<sup>177</sup>
6. Common strands of Anabaptist thought
- a. The Shleitheim Confession (1527), a series of seven articles of faith in order to combat internal aberrations as well as assaults from those outside Anabaptist circles.
    - 1) The church
      - a) Composed only of local associations of baptized regenerated Christians united as the body of Christ by the common observance of the Lord’s Supper.
      - b) Only weapon is excommunication.
    - 2) Repudiation of antinomian excesses of the far, far left.

---

<sup>176</sup> Calhoun, “Reformation,” 7.6.

<sup>177</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.56.

- 3) Forms of worship of the Roman, Lutheran, and Zwinglian churches are rejected as unchristian.
  - 4) Civil government is a necessary evil, but no Christian may share in it. In this connection, no Christian should bear arms or swear oaths to the state.
- b. Separation from the world.
  - c. Separation of church and state – religious liberty (which makes sense in light of the fact that they were by far a minority group in the Reformation somewhere around 1-2%).

## F. **John Calvin**

Calvin's influence extended far beyond Geneva. Thanks to his Institutes, his pattern of church government in Geneva, his academy, his commentaries, and his constant correspondence, he molded the thought and inspired the ideals of the Protestantism of France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and the English Puritans. His influence penetrated Poland and Hungary, and before his death Calvinism was taking root in southwestern Germany.<sup>178</sup>

Calvin left no successor of equal stature.<sup>179</sup>

- 1. Youth and education
  - a. "A man from the common people"
  - b. The arts at Paris (1528) and law at Orleans and Bourges (1531)
  - c. Commentary on Seneca's *On Mercy* (1532)
- 2. Conversion ("an unexpected [or sudden] conversion")
  - a. When? Somewhere between 1532-34, in his mid-twenties.
  - b. Who? "God...turned my course." But Martin Luther is the most likely human instrument.
  - c. What? "He tamed to teachableness a mind too stubborn for its years (Calvin's motto: "My heart, I give you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely.")

---

<sup>178</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 480.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

### 3 Geneva (1536-38)

- a. The role of William Farel (1489-1565). "Farel was an abrasive, aggressive, outspoken debater who managed to alienate rather than persuade his opponents."<sup>180</sup>
  - 1) Under his preaching and leadership the council of the city of Geneva accepted the principles of the Protestant Reformation. Farel found himself as one of the key figures in reordering the religious affairs of the city. He was not suited for the task...
  - 2) Enter John Calvin, traveling to Strasbourg he planned to stay a night in Geneva. While there, Farel persuaded Calvin to help the cause. Calvin agreed and assumed the office of "reader (lector) of Holy Scripture."<sup>181</sup>
  - 3) Disputation in Lausanne: In September 1536, the city was debating whether to reform. Farel, Viret (another colleague) brought Calvin along to take part in the public disputation. The debate was not going well for Farel and Viret, Calvin intervened and blew everyone away:

Apparently quoting early Christian writers from memory, Calvin insisted that he and his colleagues took them with the greatest of seriousness and saw them as authorities of significance. The audience was dazzled by the brilliance of Calvin's presentation: he quoted the third-century writer Cyprian of Carthage to the letter...and the fourth-century theologian and preacher John Chrysostom even more precisely. By the time Calvin sat down, everyone was clear on two things: the Genevan Reformation was about the renewal and continuity of the church, and a new star had risen in the Protestant firmament. Lausanne was won over to the Reformation, while Geneva was won over to Calvin.<sup>182</sup>

- b. The expulsion of Farel...and Calvin. He was devastated by the result of the Anti-Farel takeover of the city and decided simply to head where he was planning on going in the first place – Strasbourg.

### 4 Strasbourg (1538-41)

---

<sup>180</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 88.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-91.

- a. A mentor—Martin Bucer (1491-1551): “Calvin was able to develop his thinking on the relation between the city and the church, as well as the intellectual foundations of his reforming program...By 1541 he had gained considerable practical experience of church management and given much thought to the nature of a reformed church, especially in relation to issues of civil polity and discipline. The influence of Bucer is especially evident on these points.”<sup>183</sup>
  - b. A mate—Idelette de Bure (1540): “I am none of those insane lovers who embrace also the vices of those they are in love with, when they are smitten at first sight with a fine figure. This only is the beauty which attracts me: if she is chaste, if not too nice or fastidious, if economical, if patient, if there is hope that she will be interested about my health.”<sup>184</sup>
5. Geneva again (1541-64)
- a. Reluctant but willing—“[I would rather] submit to death a hundred times than to that cross [Geneva], on which one had to perish daily a thousand times over” (1540); “But when I remember that I am not my own, I offer up my heart, presented as a sacrifice to the Lord” (1541).
  - b. The shape of Calvin’s ministry
    - 1) Preacher and teacher (“minister of the Word of God in the church of Geneva”): “Upon his return, Calvin hit the town preaching. Reassuming his pulpit ministry precisely where he left off three years earlier – in the very *next* verse of his earlier exposition.”<sup>185</sup>
    - 2) Reformer (“Calvin found Protestantism a mob transformed it into an army” [B. B. Warfield])
      - a) Church
        - Basic structure of Presbyterianism (Ecclesiastical Ordinances of the Church of Geneva)
        - Independence of church in spiritual matters
        - Worship (Form of Church Prayers and Hymns)

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>184</sup> <http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/17-the-life-of-john-calvin>

<sup>185</sup> Steven J Lawson, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin* (Reformation Trust, 2007), 13.

b) State

- Calvin not a dictator: "Calvin was only granted bourgeois status at Geneva in his old age; he never became a citizen of the city. He could not stand for office and, until Dec. 1559, could not even vote in city elections; nor did he have privileged access to, or direct influence over, the city council at any point during his career."<sup>186</sup> And again: "Calvin could and did urge, cajole and plead; he could not, however, command."<sup>187</sup>
- Geneva not a theocracy
  - ◆ Principles of Old Testament civil laws
  - ◆ Heresy was a civil crime
    - Ⓒ Example: Burning of Servetus in 1553. Calvin's role was "somewhat peripheral."<sup>188</sup>

c. Calvin's death (1564)

- Ⓒ Theological contribution: "Without any doubt, the most important systematizer of Protestant theology in the sixteenth century was John Calvin. While Luther was the daring trailblazer for the movement, Calvin was the careful thinker who bound the various Protestant doctrines into a cohesive whole."<sup>189</sup>
  - a. Study of the church fathers—Chrysostom, Bernard of Clairvaux, and especially Augustine.
  - b. Study of the Scripture
    - 1) Commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testaments
      - a) Accuracy, clarity, brevity, humility
      - b) Calvin concerning his writings on Scripture

---

<sup>186</sup> Alister E McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1993), 125.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>189</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.61.

- Commentary on Romans: God limits our knowledge “first that we should be kept humble and also that we should continue to have dealings with our fellows.” “The majesty [of the Word of God] is somehow diminished...if we do not interpret it with great discretion and moderation.”
- 1544 Treatise: “God has given me grace to write what I have written as faithfully as it was in my power. I have not falsified a single passage of the Scripture, nor given it a wrong interpretation to the best of my knowledge...and always aimed at simplicity.”

c. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*

1) Development

- a) From the “little booklet” of 1536 to four books and 80 chapters of 1559.
- b) Written as “basics” of the Protestant faith to the King of France.
- c) Not revised but expanded
- d) And re-arranged: For example, Providence and predestination treated together until the 1559 edition. There providence appears in book 1 (God the Creator) and predestination in book 3 (The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ). Now it answers the question, “Where did my salvation come from?”

2) Characteristics

- a) Biblical
  - Priority of Scripture
  - Sheer volume of Scripture references. If I may borrow language from John Piper – prick Calvin and he’d bleed Bible – so do his *Institutes*.
- b) Systematic
  - Not “iron-clad logic” but a concern for orderly arrangement

- Respects the contours of biblical revelation

c) Devotional

- *Summa pietatis*—"the whole sum of piety and whatever it is necessary to know in the doctrine of salvation" (1536 subtitle).
- Words near the beginning of the final (1559) edition—"Unless [we] establish our complete happiness in [God], we will never give [ourselves] truly and sincerely to Him" (1.2.1).
- Goal is worship—doctrine of God (1.5.9), election (3.21.1), Lord's Supper (4.17.7)

d) Practical

- Written in plain language and with sensitivity to his contemporary situation.
- The principle of accommodation
  - ◆ Scripture "proceeds at the pace of a mother stooping to her child, so to speak, so as not to leave us behind in our weakness." (3.21.4)
  - ◆ "We must, therefore, consider what questions each is able to bear, and accommodate our doctrine to the capacity of the individual." (Commentary on Romans 14:1).

### **In this lecture: The 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Part 3**

1. Review
2. The Reformation in England
3. The results of the Reformation
4. The Counter- and Catholic Reformation
5. The founding of the Jesuits

#### **Review**

- What Was the Reformation? Defining the Religious Revolution of the Sixteenth Century
- Causes of the Reformation
- Martin Luther – the Accidental Revolutionary
- Ulrich Zwingli and the Supremacy of the Bible.
- The Anabaptists: The Left Wing of the Reformation
- John Calvin

#### **G. The Reformation in England**

1. Church reforms under Henry VIII: “Henry VII was a man of impressive intellectual abilities and executive force, well-read and always interested in Scholastic theology, sympathetic with humanism, popular with the mass of people, but egotistic, obstinate, and given to fitful acts of terror.”<sup>190</sup>
  - a. Factors leading to the English Reformation
    - 1) Even though there was not the kind of deep dissatisfaction with the church in England as there was elsewhere in Europe, there was nevertheless concern over the low quality of clergy and even some hostility toward church leaders in cities like London.
    - 2) Influence of John Wycliffe, and his followers, the Lollards (from the 14<sup>th</sup> century).
      - a) *The Twelve Conclusions* (1395)
        - Denounced the English church’s bondage to the papacy

<sup>190</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 483.

- Advocated the marriage of the clergy
  - Condemned transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, and the holding of political office by bishops, among other things.
- 3) Influence of Martin Luther: For one reason or another, the greatest interest in his writings in the early 1520s was among academics, especially his doctrine of justification by faith, so Cambridge became an important center for the discussion of Protestant ideas.
- 4) But the most influential catalyst to reform was political. "In this respect, the [English] Reformation was largely an act of state, imposed from above by a willful king, his adroit ministers, and a pliable Parliament."<sup>191</sup>
- a) Henry wanted there to be a smooth transition of power following his death – the only problem was that he had no sons. "If the Lutheran reformation began in a monastic cell, the Anabaptist reformation in a prayer meeting, and the Calvinist reformation a scholar's desk, then the English reformation began in the affairs of state, specifically with the problem of succession to the royal throne."<sup>192</sup>
  - b) His first wife, Catharine of Aragon "gave him" only a daughter. Moreover, his marriage to Catharine, meant to bring an alliance between England and Spain did not ultimately accomplish it. So Henry sought to divorce Catharine.
  - c) Under normal circumstances the pope would likely have annulled the marriage, but because Rome was virtually under siege by Catharine's nephew, Charles V, Pope Clement VII didn't want to give unnecessary offense, so he denied Henry's request for an annulment. More than that, the pope said that Henry would be excommunicated if he married again.
  - d) As a result, Henry sought autonomy from Rome.
    - Convened a parliament to reduce the power and control of the church, the English clergy refused his demands.

---

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 481.

<sup>192</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 264.

- ◆ Henry played hardball: accusing the clergy of *praemunire* – treason, showing allegiance to a foreign power, a capital crime.
- ◆ Under duress, the clergy capitulated to Henry at least on some points.
- By God's providence, appointed a new Archbishop of Canterbury: Thomas Cranmer.
- e) Henry's marriage to Catherine was annulled by an English court in 1533 just in the nick of time. He had already begun an affair with Anne Boleyn who was now pregnant!
- f) As a result, Henry was threatened with excommunication. His response marks a significant turning point in church history, what's known as the English Act of Supremacy (1534).<sup>193</sup>
  - England's church was no longer in fellowship with Rome
  - England's church had been broken from the "catholic" church
  - England's church belonged to the English (the English monarch)
  - The Act:

Albeit the king's majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the supreme head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm in their convocations, yet nevertheless for corroboration and confirmation thereof, and for increase of virtue in Christ's religion within this realm of England, and to repress and extirp all errors, heresies, and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same; be it enacted by authority of this present Parliament, that the king our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia*; and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity of supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining; and that our said sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority from time

---

<sup>193</sup> Following Noll, *Turning Points*, 178.

to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained, or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquility of this realm; any usage, custom, foreign law, foreign authority, prescription, or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.<sup>194</sup>

- Its significance: It marked the rise of “self-consciously local, particular, and national forms of Christianity. Before the Reformation there had been many local varieties of the faith...But even the first Protestants...hoped they could encourage comprehensive changes in the existing universal church. They did not set out to break up Western Catholicism or to establish local ‘churches.’ By the time of England’s Act of Supremacy...however, more and more European regions were setting up their own distinct forms of the Christian faith. They were not promoting toleration or religious pluralism in a modern sense, but they were definitely establishing small-scale alternatives to the universal Catholic Church. This development forever changed the face of Christianity in the West.”<sup>195</sup>

## 2. Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)<sup>196</sup>

### a. Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533

#### 1) Creator of the Book of Common Prayer

- a) Loyalty to Scripture: “It is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written.”
- b) Respect for “the scriptural catholicity” of the ancient church and a desire to reinstate the purer order of the past—but only “those ceremonies which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline.”

#### 2) Burned at the stake in Oxford in 1556 (despite his recantation) at which time he gave a sermon with four points:

<sup>194</sup> <http://members.shaw.ca/reformation/1534supremacy.htm>.

<sup>195</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 179.

<sup>196</sup> Following Calhoun, “Reformation,” Study Guide 10.3.

- a) Don't love this world but God and the world to come.
- b) Next to God "obey your king and queen willingly and gladly."
- c) Love your fellow-Christians.
- d) The rich should give generously to the poor, considering "that which is given to the poor is given to God; whom we have not otherwise present corporally with us, but in the poor."

### 3. William Tyndale (1494-1536)<sup>197</sup>

- a. Tyndale in debate with Catholic clergy: "I defy the pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost" ("The Obedience of a Christian Man").
- b. New Testament with preface and notes (which have been described as "pure Luther.") 1526; completed half of the Old Testament before his strangulation and burning at the stake in 1536.
- c. He was imprisoned for several months before his death. Here is an excerpt from a letter he wrote to an unnamed official responsible for him during his incarceration, which shows his absolute commitment to translating the Bible into English.

I beg your lordship, and that of the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap; for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth too to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woolen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night-caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding the

---

<sup>197</sup> Following *ibid.*

will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ: whose spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen W. Tindalus.<sup>198</sup>

## H. **The Results of the Reformation**

1. Protestantisms: "Everything was in a state of flux, and the various reforming movements of the era shared no clear sense of a common set of beliefs, values, or ways of interpreting the Bible."<sup>199</sup>

a. Only self-consciously a single movement in retrospect; that is, during the sixteenth century, the term "Protestantism" would refer to "a family of religious movements that share certain historical roots and theological resources,"<sup>200</sup> but that would only emerge as some kind of unity "[i]n a tangled and not fully understood process of reappraisal, reorientation, and reappropriation."<sup>201</sup>

b. Splintering especially around the interpretation of the Bible

Differences of scriptural interpretation, in sum, affected Protestant teaching on almost all major issues: the meaning of the Lord's Supper and baptism, to whom these sacraments were to be administered, what was required in order to have sins forgiven after baptism, what kind of music should be used in church, whether Christians should serve in the military, how local and regional churches should be organized, whether the Roman Catholic Mass should be modified (Luther) or scrapped entirely (Anabaptists and many Reformed), whether Protestant churches should promote learning in the traditional liberal arts, and on and on.<sup>202</sup>

2. A divided Western Europe

a. Mainly Protestants in the North and Catholics in the South.

1) Protestant

a) Lutheran

b) Reformed

---

<sup>198</sup> Quoted in John Piper, "Always Singing One Note – A Vernacular Bible: Why William Tyndale Lived and Died," available at [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1840\\_Always\\_Singing\\_One\\_NoteA\\_Vernacular\\_Bible/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1840_Always_Singing_One_NoteA_Vernacular_Bible/). This lecture is worth listening to/reading in its entirety.

<sup>199</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 63.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>202</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 193.

- c) Anglican
  - d) 10% other, with Anabaptists making up the majority of the 10%.
- 2) Roman Catholic
- b. The practice in some countries of *cuius regio, eius religio* ("whose the rule, his the religion") which brought an uneasy peace that would not last.<sup>203</sup>

## i. **The Counter- and Catholic Reformation**

"[T]he sum total of counter-reform...left the Catholic Church at the end of the sixteenth century a systematically different body than it had been a century before."<sup>204</sup>

1. Counter Reformation or Catholic Reformation? The Counter Reformation is now called the Catholic Reformation because Catholic scholars have rightly pointed out that the Church was already trying to reform. Williston Walker is helpful here:

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the steady, often spectacular growth of Protestantism had elicited a powerful reaction from the Roman church. Beginning with Paul III...the popes directed churchwide efforts to repress the Protestant revolt, to correct the most glaring ecclesiastical abuses, to codify authoritative church teaching over against the Protestant schismatics and heretics, and to recover lost territories. This defensive reaction to the Protestant threat is appropriately called the Counter-Reformation; yet that designation is by no means adequate to all the facts and, taken in isolation, leads to a one-sided historical portrait. For alongside this negative response to Protestantism, one observes spontaneous movements of Catholic reform that either antedated the Protestant Reformation or originated independently of it.<sup>205</sup>

2. A surge in the founding of new religious orders
  - a. Emphases
    - 1) Common impetus: spiritual decline

<sup>203</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," 13.2.

<sup>204</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 202.

<sup>205</sup> Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 502.

- 2) Some centered around a strict devotional/contemplative life, emphasizing personal piety and ecclesiastical reform; others tended toward activism.
  - 3) Were not anti-Protestant as much as they were committed to medieval principals of piety such as poverty, chastity, and obedience. They sought to bring reform to the Catholic Church by prayer, meditation, and humble service in continuity with the ancients.
- b. Smaller orders (most were small)
- 1) The Theatines
    - a) The chief object of the order was to recall the clergy to an edifying life and the laity to the practice of virtue.
    - b) They zealously sought to combat the teachings of Martin Luther.
    - c) They founded oratories and hospitals, devoted themselves to preaching the Gospel, and reforming lax morals.
  - 2) The Clerks Regular of St Paul (or Barnabites): Instituted to revive the ecclesiastical spirit and zeal for souls among the clergy.
- c. Larger orders
- 1) The Capuchins
    - a) Set up small hermit-like settlements in the vicinity of towns
    - b) Preached where they could
    - c) Celebrated the Eucharist
    - d) Promoted special devotions in association with the main celebrations of the church calendar
    - e) Displayed fearless courage in caring for the sick, especially victims of the plague.
  - 2) The Discalced Carmelites

- a) Took their name from the practice of not wearing shoes ("discalced" means "unshod").
  - b) Inspired by the leadership of St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)
  - c) Given mostly to prayer and contemplation
- 3) The Franciscan Recollects: active in mission work, sending missionaries to North America and other parts of the world.
- 4) Results for the future:

After about a century and a half of renewed dedication to Franciscan principles, in 1700 there were nearly 35,000 Observants, over 27,000 Capuchins, nearly 13,000 Reformed Franciscans, over 6,000 Discalced Carmelites, and over 9,000 Recollects. No Protestant missionary society would be as large as even the Discalced Carmelites until the twentieth century.<sup>206</sup>

3. Papal policies of counter-reform: "Papal attempts at reform during the first half of the century were largely ineffective and half-hearted."<sup>207</sup>
- a. Pope Paul III (1534-49)
    - 1) Convened a commission to assess the church and its needs
      - a) Criticized the papacy for exaggerating claims to power.
      - b) Called upon the papacy to concentrate on its spiritual tasks and let concerns for rule, wealth, and their territories to fade into the backdrop. The sale of church offices (= positions of leadership) as well as the failure of bishops to fulfill their pastoral duties figured prominently in their report.
    - 2) Colloquium of Regensburg (1541)
      - a) Brought conciliatory Catholics like Gaspari Contarini (a Venetian diplomat and outstanding figure of the Christian Renaissance) and Protestant leaders like Martin Bucer (Calvin's mentor in Strasbourg) & Philipp Melancthon (Luther's disciple and colleague).

---

<sup>206</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 204.

<sup>207</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," 12.4.

- b) Succeeded in crafting an agreement on justification. Luther did not like the wording of their agreement as he thought it was too vague; nevertheless, the colloquium agreed on two main points:
    - God is the sole source of salvation
    - Good works are a necessary response to God's act of bringing salvation.
  - c) Failed because of disagreements over the issues of transubstantiation and the sole power of the church's teaching magisterium to interpret Scripture. And underlying all of this of course was the authority of the pope.
  - d) Ultimately a failure and "marked a turning point in Catholic efforts at reform. . . .the Catholic church chose the path of rigor and exclusion over the path of conciliation."<sup>208</sup>
4. The Council of Trent (three sessions over 18 years: 1545-57, 1551-52, and 1562-63)
- a. Systematic rebuttals to main Protestant assertions: "Trent appears most as a Counter-Reformation force in its dogmatic conclusions, for many of these were aimed directly at main assertions of the Protestants."<sup>209</sup> Because there was a greater determination about what it meant to believe Catholic doctrine, many issues that were open or debatable prior to Trent were closed. This determination was so strong that one scholar has called it the "new Trent religion."<sup>210</sup> It "marked the birth of the modern Catholic Church."<sup>211</sup> It is important to note that the Roman Catholic Church has *never* rescinded any of the assertions of the Council of Trent.
    - 1) Doctrinal
      - a) On Justification
        - Denied *sola fide*, denied that human beings were passive in justification. Rather than being justified by faith alone; men and women are justified not by faith alone. Anathematized anyone who espoused *sola fide*.

---

<sup>208</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 206.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>210</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," 12.5.

<sup>211</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.121.

- The Christian is justified by grace but free will, although weakened by sin, can and must cooperate with grace.
  - Justification is accomplished by the infusing of Christ's righteousness into the person who then actually becomes righteous.
  - Justification finally rests on the Christian's acquiring and maintaining a certain level of sanctification.
- b) Denied *sola Scriptura*, affirming instead that Scripture and tradition were coordinate sources of revelation and authority: "All saving truths and rules of conduct...are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, received from the mouth of Christ himself or from the Apostles themselves."<sup>212</sup>
- c) Mandated seven sacraments (baptism, communion, confirmation, confession matrimony, holy orders, and last rites) all necessary for salvation.
- d) Called the Mass a truly propitiatory sacrifice of Christ
- e) Rejected the assurance of salvation. Only by special revelation can a Christian be certain that he or she is the elect or presently in a state of grace.
- 2) Ecclesiastical
- a) Confirmed the Vulgate and the Latin order of the Mass as official church documents as official church documents against either Scripture or liturgies in local languages.
  - b) Reformed the moral life of the church (confessionals).
  - c) Ordered bishops to reside in their sees (no absenteeism).
  - d) Condemned pluralism (holding multiple offices).
  - e) Regulated indulgences and the use of relics.

---

<sup>212</sup> <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct04.html>.

- f) Ordered the founding of seminaries for the training of the ministry.
- 3) A summary: "The pope remained, the seven sacraments remained, the sacrifice of the mass remained. Saints, confessions, indulgences remained. The council's work was essentially medieval, only the anger was new."<sup>213</sup>
- b. John Calvin's response to the Council in a work called, *Acts of the Council of Trent with the Antidote*: "The whole may be thus summed up — Their error consists in sharing the work between God and ourselves, so as to transfer to ourselves the obedience of a pious will in assenting to divine grace, whereas this is the proper work of God himself."<sup>214</sup>
- 5. The result of the Counter- and Catholic Reformation: David Calhoun uses an illustration from football to sum up the effect of the Counter Reformation:

I will try to describe [the Counter Reformation] for you with the illustration of an American football game, with the 25-year periods representing the quarters of a football game. At the end of the first quarter, the score was 7–0 in favor of the Protestants. By the end of the first half, it was 35–7, and a route was taking place. At the end of the third quarter, however, it was 42–35 in favor of the Protestants. By the end of the game, it was 42–45 in favor of the Catholics. I just made that up, and I do not have any absolute assurance about that score, but it is my way of trying to describe how the Catholic Counter-Reformation very effectively recovered territory that had been lost in the middle and toward the end of the century.<sup>215</sup>

## J. **The Founding of the Jesuits (the Society of Jesus)**

- 1. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)
  - a. Was a soldier, but hung up his sword, giving it over to Mary, and dedicated himself to be a soldier of the church.
  - b. While Martin Luther was translating the New Testament into German in 1521, a man named Ignatius of Loyola was had taken a retreat to a cave in order to address the religious turmoil in his life. Here in the cave at Manresa, he sought God's guidance. He describes his

<sup>213</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 278.

<sup>214</sup> [http://www.lgmarshall.org/Calvin/calvin\\_trentantidote.html](http://www.lgmarshall.org/Calvin/calvin_trentantidote.html)

<sup>215</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," 12.2.

experience in his autobiography (notice the striking similarity to Luther):

At that point he came to have much travail with scruples...it...seemed to him that there were some things that he had not confessed. And this caused him great affliction, because even having confessed...other things, he was not at peace.

Then...the confessor ordered him not to confess anything of the past, but only those things that were very clear to him. But to him all these things were very clear, and therefore this order was of no benefit to him, and he was still in great travail.

When he had such thoughts, very often the temptation came to him with great force, to jump from a big hole in his room, next to the place where he prayed. But then, acknowledging that to kill himself would be a sin, he would cry out, "Lord, I shall do naught to offend thee."

...from that day on he was free of those scruples, being certain that our Lord had wished to free him by His mercy.<sup>216</sup>

- c. While in the cave conceived a book called *The Spiritual Exercises*, which was to become one of the most influential in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. It contains a series of guided meditations to be used for Christian growth. "One of Loyola's spiritual exercises, for example, was meant to make the horrors of hell real:

Here in imagination the shrieks and groans and blasphemous shouts against Christ our Lord and all the saints. Smell in imagination the fumes of sulphur and the stench of filth and corruption. Taste in imagination all the bitterness of tears and melancholy and growing conscience. Feel in imagination the heat of the flames that play on and burn the souls."<sup>217</sup>

2 Organized in 1534, established by the pope in 1540.

3 "Rules for Thinking within the Church"

- a. A Jesuit must have absolute obedience to the church (the pope): "If we wish to be sure that we are right in all things, we should always be ready to accept this principle: I will believe that the white that I see is black, if the hierarchical church so defines."<sup>218</sup>
- b. A Jesuit must oppose all forms of true Augustinianism in the church: "We may speak of faith and grace, so far as we can with the help of God, for the greater praise of His divine majesty, but not in such a way,

<sup>216</sup> Quoted in Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.117.

<sup>217</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 275.

<sup>218</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 12.1.

especially in these dangerous times of ours, that works and free-will shall receive any detriment or come to be accounted for nothing."<sup>219</sup>

4. It took twelve years of study and self-examination to become a Jesuit.
5. Specialized in education; founded great Jesuit universities that still exist today, such as Loyola here in the US.
6. Francis Xavier (1506-1552)
  - a. Great missionary pioneer for the Jesuits
  - b. Traveled first to India, then to Japan
  - c. At his death there were over 1,000 Jesuits in Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa.
7. Significance of the Jesuits
  - a. The most powerful and most significant expression of the Catholic Reformation (Counter Reformation) that thoroughly revitalized the Roman Catholic Church.
    - 1) Most influential in winning Protestant regions back to Rome.
    - 2) Played a profound role in encouraging and solidifying the faith of Catholics who wavered in their faith at such a tumultuous time in history.
  - b. Symbolized the strength of what would become traditional Roman Catholicism for 300 years. Their zeal in establishing Catholic doctrine and practice in the 16<sup>th</sup> century played a very large role in shaping Roman Catholicism. "[T]he Society of Jesus was a powerful weapon in the hands of a reformed papacy."<sup>220</sup>
  - c. Their missionary zeal made them a potent force in the history of Christianity. They brought the Catholic faith to India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, and the coast of China. "This was done...150 years before anything comparable can be found among Protestants, and 250 years before anything comparable among English-speaking Protestants."<sup>221</sup>

---

<sup>219</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.118.

<sup>221</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 202.

## κ. **A Final Word on the Sixteenth Century**

The sixteenth century was one of the most convulsed periods in the entire history of Christianity. In a few decades, the towering edifice of medieval Christianity collapsed. Salvaging what it could from the debacle, the Council of Trent set the tone for modern Catholicism, while several Protestant confessions arose amid the ruins. The ancient ideal of a single church, with the pope as its visible head – which had never been current in the East – now lost its power also in the West. From that point on western Christianity was divided among various traditions that reflected great cultural and theological differences.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.122.

## 18. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

### In this lecture:

1. The age of the Enlightenment
2. German Pietism
3. Anglicanism and the Puritans
4. Reformed Orthodoxy

A. **The Age of the Enlightenment:** “Summaries of this age emphasize the following: new epistemological methods of rationalism or empiricism replaced traditional alliances between philosophy and theology in the search for truth; rising confidence in the Newtonian science provided powerful new perspectives on nature and the laws by which it operates; a new intellectually elite class, the *philosophes*, believed that reason mated with science could inaugurate an era of progress politically, economically, and socially; and new religions such as deism and Unitarianism challenged outmoded faiths of Protestantism and Catholicism.”<sup>223</sup>

1. Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

a. The scientific method: a method of inquiry that “derives axioms from the senses and particulars rising by a gradual and unbroken ascent, so that it arrives at the most general axioms last of all.”<sup>224</sup>

b. His influence for the birth of deism

1) Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Veritate* (1624) argued that knowledge of God did not come from Scripture and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, but from reason. He set forth five “Common Notions of Religion” as the basis for all religious belief<sup>225</sup>:

a) Belief in the existence of a supreme being

<sup>223</sup> W Andrew Hoffercker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginning of Modern Culture Wars” in *Revolutions in Worldview*, 240.

<sup>224</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 242.

<sup>225</sup> Following *ibid.*, 243.

- b) Worship was owed to this supreme being
- c) Virtue and piety are the proper forms of worship
- d) Sins ought to be expiated by repentance
- e) Rewards and punishments exist both in this world and the next

2 René Descartes (1596-1650)

- a. Begin with *dubito* ("doubt"). The foundation and beginning of all philosophizing begins with systematic doubt. Only by systematically doubting something could you hope to arrive at certainty.
- b. *Cogito, ergo sum*: "Cartesian rationalism effectively inaugurated the 'modern self' or the 'subjective turn,' a shift from knowledge as objectively rooted in biblical revelation to knowledge as authenticated and demonstrated by human reason."<sup>226</sup>
- c. The Cartesian "ontological argument": Rather than a priori argument for God (beginning with the assumption that God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived"), Descartes' ontological argument: Since a less than perfect nature cannot produce a perfect nature, then the idea of a perfect nature could only originate from a more perfect being; namely, God.<sup>227</sup>

3 John Locke (1632-1704)

- a. His epistemology represents the founding of what philosophers call empiricism: ideas enter the mind only through experience, sensation and reflection. As such, a person has no direct knowledge of the world, his or her knowledge is only indirect.
- b. His political philosophy
  - 1) Denied divine right of kings
  - 2) Suggested that the legitimacy of any government is "contractual," that is, it is determined by the consent of the governed.

---

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>227</sup> See *ibid.*

- 3) Life, Liberty, and Property are inalienable rights of humanity given to mankind by the Creator.
- c. Reason trumps revelation: For Locke, reason becomes the standard by which revelation is judged.
- 4. The religious consequences of the Enlightenment: "By the conclusion of the Enlightenment, compartmentalization of religious faith as a pattern of private belief separate from philosophical speculation epitomized the modern worldview. What previously captivated thinkers in the Reformation – seeing public life as the arena where Christian faith in a personal, transcendent God would manifest itself in a diversity of vocations that would transform every aspect of cultural life – now became the prerogative of the secular use of reason and science."<sup>228</sup>

## B. German Pietism

- 1. Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705): The church in Germany had already been losing its zeal. He argued that the reason for this was an over-intellectualization of the faith – Christianity is not so much an intellectual belief as it is a practical faith. His *Pia Desideria* outlined his views in six points<sup>229</sup>:
  - a. Christians ought to study the Bible, not with an academic goal in mind, but with the aim of increasing personal devotion.
  - b. Christians should return to Luther's priesthood of believers to foster greater lay participation. Lay ministry should awaken people from spiritual passivity by mutual instruction and correction.
  - c. Christianity is not so much a doctrine to be believed as a way of life.
  - d. Christian apologetics should be concerned with winning the whole person more than winning theological arguments. A moderate, charitable spirit should replace polemical debate.
  - e. Ministerial education should stress both experiential and intellectual preparation for ministry. Moral and spiritual qualifications should rank above intellectual prowess when selecting pastors.

---

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 262.

- f. Evangelical preaching on practical experience should replace sermons on theology. Preaching should be simple, designed to build up the piety of the people.
- 2. A key summary point: Pietism saw the Christian faith as primarily a subjective and individual experience, only secondarily was it objective.

### c. **Anglicanism and the Puritans**

- 1. Elizabeth I and the *via media*
  - a. The middle way called Anglicanism has been characterized as a middle ground between Protestantism and Catholicism, or even a reformed Catholicism, but according to Alister McGrath, "this is simply historical nonsense."<sup>230</sup>
  - b. Elizabeth was interested in creating a sustainable Protestantism in light of the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics throughout Europe. "Anglicanism would be defined by the place of the monarch as the ground and guarantor of its religious identity and stability."<sup>231</sup>
- 2. Adopted all the central beliefs of Protestantism including...<sup>232</sup>
  - a. The rejection of papal authority
  - b. The insistence that preaching and all public worship should be in the vernacular
  - c. The insistence upon Communion in both kinds (bread and wine) for the laity
  - d. The affirmation of the clergy's right to marry
  - e. A set of official pronouncements of faith, all of which affirmed core Protestant beliefs
    - 1) The Homilies ("...authorized sermons issued in two books for use in the Church of England during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. They were to provide for the Church a new model of

---

<sup>230</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 122.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Following *ibid.*

simplified topical preaching as well as a theological understanding of the Reformation that had taken place in England”<sup>233</sup>).

- 2) The Thirty-nine Articles
  - 3) The Book of Common Prayer
- f. “The Millenary Petition” (1603)
- 1) Presented to James I (successor to Elizabeth I)
  - 2) Signed by more than 1,000 ministers of the Church of England
  - 3) Stressed loyalty to king and country
  - 4) Called for reforms involving “the removal of the ‘burden of human rites and ceremonies.’”<sup>234</sup>
    - a) Making the sign of the cross in baptism
    - b) Wearing clerical dress
    - c) Using a ring in the marriage service
    - d) Bowing at the name of Jesus
- g. Battles with King James
- 1) Rejected Millenary Petition because he was persuaded that his rule was dependent upon the episcopacy for its future since the ultimate goal of Puritanism was to overthrow the monarchy altogether. Only a close working alliance would allow James to protect the throne from his two enemies: The Papists and the Puritans.
  - 2) James did, however, throw the Puritans bones that promised future change that never happened or amounted to very little.
  - 3) The Puritans had hoped that a new translation of the Bible into English (the King James Version 1611) would strengthen their position; instead, it used the traditional language favored by the Anglicans rather than those preferred by the Puritans.

---

<sup>233</sup> <http://www.anglicanlibrary.org/homilies/index.htm>.

<sup>234</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 124.

- 4) For many Puritan groups, compromise seemed impossible. In 1607 a group from Scrooby, England fled to Holland and eventually migrated on the Mayflower to establish the Plymouth Colony in North America in 1620.
- h. The English Civil War (1642-1651)
- 1) Charles I (James' successor) tried to rule England without Parliament, dissolved it because he was unpopular for his pro-Catholic and anti-Puritan leanings.
  - 2) Married a Catholic (Henrietta Maria of France).
  - 3) In 1629, Parliament resolved that anyone who brought religious innovations into the country was to be regarded an enemy of the state.
  - 4) So the king dissolved Parliament and ruled directly.
  - 5) In 1642, the King and Parliament declared war on each other. Everyone in the country was forced to choose sides, down Anglican and Puritan lines.
  - 6) Parliament eventually won the war under Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). He took over and the King was taken as a prisoner to Caversham Park.
  - 7) On Jan 1, 1649, Charles was charged with being a "tyrant, traitor, and murderer." He was sentenced to death by the "regicides," men who believed that it was biblically justifiable to kill oppressive monarchs.
  - 8) The "Rump Parliament" – so-called because Cromwell had allowed only those who supported the trial to attend – convicted Charles and executed him on Jan 30.<sup>235</sup>
  - 9) Parliament ruled without a king for 11 years, but "[i]n the end, the Puritan Commonwealth died of exhaustion, infighting, disillusionment, and lack of vision."<sup>236</sup>

---

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 142.

## **d. Reformed Orthodoxy**

### **1. The Synod of Dordt (1618-1619)<sup>237</sup>**

#### **a. Background**

- 1) 1589: Despite having enjoyed many years of freedom and prosperity and theological unity, a controversy had been brewing in the Netherlands.
- 2) Professor Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) was asked to refute a colleague's unorthodox teaching on predestination. Well, instead of refuting them, Arminius was persuaded by them and found himself defending the very views he had been commissioned to defeat.
- 3) Though himself a student of Theodore Beza, John Calvin's colleague and successor in Geneva, and apparently committed to the Reformed teaching of the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, Arminius became uncomfortable with the sovereignty of God in grace, uncomfortable with a view that now appeared to him to limit the free offer of the gospel and the responsibility of man. He no longer accepted the classical view of original sin, believing instead that people were capable of choosing the good.
- 4) Twenty years later, Arminius died in 1609; his views, however, remained alive. The year following his death, the supporters of his position drafted a five-article remonstrance—a legal document used to state grievances, calling on the church leadership of the Netherlands to amend the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism to reflect Arminius' theological convictions.

#### **b. The articles**

- 1) The five so-called Remonstrant Articles of 1610 put forward five positions:
  - a) God predestines those who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, shall believe, whereas those who do not respond, he "leaves in sin."

---

<sup>237</sup> For further reflection consult R W Glenn, "The Doctrines of Grace" sermon series available at [www.solidfoodmedia.com](http://www.solidfoodmedia.com).

- b) Jesus Christ died for all and obtained redemption for all, yet only believers come to “enjoy this forgiveness.”
  - c) We have neither saving grace in ourselves nor any ability to save ourselves, so that the new birth through the Holy Spirit of Christ is necessary in order to “will and effect what is truly good.”
  - d) While good things can be accomplished only with assistance of grace, yet the mode of operation of that grace can be resisted.
  - e) Those who are in Christ have his full power to fight against temptation only if they are “ready for the conflict and desire his help,” to which a phrase is added that raises the question and calls for further examination of Scripture to decide whether believers can fall away from grace.
- 2) Now at first glance the five points of Arminianism do not seem radically at odds with the orthodox view, but a closer look shows a considerable difference, a difference so considerable that bitter conflict immediately arose over the five Remonstrant articles.
  - 3) After the failure of a number of meetings to settle the matter, a synod was called that was to be fully international. It opened November 14, 1618 and closed on May 16, 1619, taking 154 sessions to complete the work of addressing the Arminian errors. The final result of this Synod of Dordt, that is, the synod that met in the town of Dordrecht—the final result of the Synod of Dordt is what has come to be known as the Canons of Dordt, the orthodox response to the five points of the Remonstrants.
  - 4) And it is these Canons of Dordt, the church’s response to the five articles of the Remonstrant Arminians that have come to be known as the five points of Calvinism.
  - 5) Some important qualifications
    - a) Calling the Canons of Dordt the five points of Calvinism is a kind of anachronism. After all, John Calvin died more than fifty years before the synod convened. This leads me to my second point.
    - b) The five points of Calvinism do not encapsulate the entire teaching of John Calvin. Calvin wrote a commentary on the

entire Bible (give or take) and his magnum opus, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Along with this are various and sundry other writings and hundreds of sermons. Five points could hardly do justice to the teaching of Calvin.

- c) Related to this is the idea that the Canons of Dordt are a pointed response to specific claims, or better, grievances of the Arminians. Thus even if they never had garnered the moniker “the five points of Calvinism” they should not be construed as a comprehensive statement of the Reformed faith, or even a Reformed doctrine of salvation.
- d) With these three points I am not saying that calling the Canons of Dordt “Calvinism” is entirely a bad thing. Knowledge of John Calvin’s theology, though infinitely more pastoral and passionate than his successors, leads us inexorably to the conclusion that Calvin would certainly have sided with the orthodox over and against the Arminians.
- e) Therefore we think it fair and reasonable to continue to call the Canons of Dordt the five points of Calvinism, at least for purposes of preaching, teaching, and discussion.

## 2. Westminster Assembly (1643-1647)<sup>238</sup>

- a. Occasion: A special assembly was convened by Parliament to consult on matters of church policy and doctrine following wars with Scotland.
- b. Members: 121 religious leaders – thoroughly ecumenical (Protestantly speaking):
  - 1) The Episcopalians—James Ussher, Daniel Featley
  - 2) The Presbyterians—including Stephen Marshall, William Gouge
  - 3) The Erastians—John Selden, Thomas Coleman, John Lightfoot
  - 4) The Independents—“the five dissenting brethren”: Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, Sidrach Simpson

---

<sup>238</sup> Adapted from Calhoun, “Reformation,” Study Guide 18.

- 5) The Scots—Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Robert Baillie, Samuel Rutherford, Archibald Johnston, John Maitland

c. Work

- 1) Revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles (July through October 1643)
- 2) "The Four Points of Uniformity"
  - a) Form of Church Government (October 1643 through April 1645)
  - b) Directory for Public Worship (October 1643 through April 1645)
  - c) Confession of Faith (April 1645 through December 1646)
    - Reformed theology—Differences in doctrine among the Westminster divines "lay for the most part within the recognized limits of the reformed system, and there was little disposition to press them to extremes or to narrow their creed to a party document" (B. B. Warfield).
    - Federal or covenant theology
  - d) Catechisms (January 1647 through April 1648)—"one more exact and comprehensive, another more easie and short for new beginners."
    - Shorter Catechism
    - Larger Catechism

## 19. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

### **In this lecture:**

1. The age of Romanticism
2. German pietism and the Moravians
3. Revival in England and America

### A. The Age of Romanticism

1. Basic Tenets
  - a. A reaction to Enlightenment Rationalism; therefore...
    - 1) Feelings over intellect
    - 2) The natural over the synthetic/mechanistic
    - 3) The artist over the scientist: "The artist stands on mankind like a statue on its pedestal....Only an artist can divine the meaning of life" (Novalis).
  - b. A product of Enlightenment Rationalism...
    - 1) Pantheistic or deistic (some atheists)
    - 2) A self-originated, humanistic epistemology
2. Romantic religion
  - a. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)
    - 1) *The Christian Faith*: a systematic interpretation of Christian dogmatics
    - 2) Argued that "the essence of religion consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence."

### 3. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

#### a. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*

#### b. The moral argument for the existence of God

- 1) The “categorical imperative”: the inherent and inescapable sense of right and wrong that belongs to every member of the human family comes from the God who created a moral order. In fact, Kant went so far as to argue that in order for our sense of moral obligation to be meaningful, certain other things must also be true:<sup>239</sup>
  - a) Justice is necessary, where right behavior is rewarded and bad behavior is punished. If crime pays, there is no practical reason to be virtuous. From here he asked, “What then would be necessary for justice to take place?” His answer is number 2.
  - b) Life after death must exist because we know that this world does not dispense justice perfectly. But maybe the next life will be as unjust as life now, which leads to number 3...
  - c) What you have to have in the next life is a judge who himself is morally perfect and righteous because if that judge isn't perfectly righteous, we would be subject to the possibility of injustice. Now suppose that this perfect judge was morally upright and did the best job he could, but unfortunately was limited in his knowledge, and therefore made mistakes for lack of information. If there were to be justice, this could not be the case, which leads to the fourth prong of Kant's argument...
  - d) This judge must also be omniscient (= all-knowing) so that he can account for all the facts. Suppose you have life after death, and a final judgment presided over by a perfectly righteous judge who knows everything. Will *that* ensure justice? Not yet, there is one more essential element – number 5:
  - e) The judge must have the *power* to enforce his judgment because if he were powerless or restricted in any way by some outside agency from bringing justice to bear then there's no guarantee

---

<sup>239</sup> Adapted from a radio broadcast by R C Sproul entitled, “Kant's Moral Argument,” aired on December 24, 2007 available at [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org).

that he will be able to do it. Therefore this judge must also be omnipotent (= all-powerful) in order for justice to prevail.

## B. German Pietism and the Moravians

1. Basic impetus: a reaction against an emerging stale Lutheran orthodoxy
2. Key figures
  - a. August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)—*Pietas Hallensis, or a Public Demonstration of the Footsteps of a Divine Being yet in the World*
  - b. Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf (1700-1760): “Few men have shown such personal devotion to Christ, and he gave the true cornerstone of his character in his declaration to his Herrnhut congregation; ‘I have only one passion. It is He, none but He.’”<sup>240</sup>
3. Spiritual awakening
  - a. Bible study: Johannes Albert Bengel (1687-1752)—“Put nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden, that is really in them.”
  - b. Prayer
  - c. Social concern
  - d. Missions
    - 1) 60 missionaries went from Halle during the 18th century, beginning with Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, Christian Friedrich Schwartz, and Heinrich Plütschau who went to India in 1706.
    - 2) Over half of all Protestant missionaries of the 18th century were Moravians
4. Dominant theme: regeneration (personal experience of being born again)
5. The historical impact of German pietism: “Pietism made an enormous contribution not only to the German people but to Christianity worldwide. It shifted emphasis in eighteenth-century churches from avid controversy to the care of souls. It made preaching and pastoral visitation central

---

<sup>240</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 329.

concerns of the Protestant ministry. It enriched Christian music enormously. And it underscored the importance of a spiritual laity for a revived church."<sup>241</sup>

### c. **Revival in England and America**

1. The backdrop: Rationalistic deism of post-Puritan Anglicanism
2. John Wesley (1703-1791)
  - a. His conversion: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."<sup>242</sup>
  - b. Organizational leadership
    - 1) Field preaching to outdoor evangelistic events
    - 2) Moravian small groups to bands, societies, and circuits and from there to the Methodist Church.
      - a) John oversaw all the nuts and bolts of the small groups, including what were called "Band Societies" – same-sex accountability groups. Everyone who attended was required to answer these questions:
        - Have you peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?
        - Do you desire to be told of your faults?
        - Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?
        - Consider! Do you desire that we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?
        - Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

---

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> [http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item\\_id=5951&loc\\_id=639,624](http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item_id=5951&loc_id=639,624)

- Is it your desire and design to be on this, and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?
  - b) After joining, group members could be asked the preceding questions "as often as occasion offers," while the following questions were asked at every meeting:
    - What known sin have you committed since our last meeting?
    - What temptations have you met with?
    - How were you delivered?
    - What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?<sup>243</sup>
  - 3) Voluntary mercy agencies to precedent-setting social action.
- c. Doctrinal distinctives
  - 1) Arminian – believed that God’s restored free will to lost humanity.
  - 2) Believers could lose their salvation through deliberate, impenitent sin
  - 3) Christians could reach a place of "Christian perfection," what was called "entire sanctification" meaning that they could expect to be free from every conscious sin in thought, word, and deed. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has said, "The trouble with John Wesley was that he was too logical...he took certain statements and pressed them to their logical conclusions irrespective of other statements in the same Scriptures."<sup>244</sup>
  - 4) Stressed the work of the Holy Spirit
- d. The impact of John Wesley (and his brother, Charles, who was always with him).
  - 1) To hymnody
    - a) O for a Thousand Tongues
    - b) Jesus, Lover of My Soul

---

<sup>243</sup> Quoted in C J Mahaney (editor), *Why Small Groups?* (Sovereign Grace Ministries, 1996), 7.

<sup>244</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 24.2.

- c) Arise, My Soul, Arise
- d) Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- e) Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
- f) Hark, the Herald Angels Sing
- g) And Can It Be?

- 2) In general: “[The Wesleys’] adjustments to Protestant traditions were – along with the innovations of the Wesleys’ fellow Anglican George Whitefield (1714-70) – probably the most important single factor in transforming the religion of the Reformation into modern Protestant evangelicalism.”<sup>245</sup>

### 3. George Whitefield (1714-1770)

#### a. His pre-conversion experience

- 1) In 1732, George Whitfield matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford. While at Oxford, he joined what was jeeringly referred to as the “Holy Club”:

Its members practised [*sic.*] early rising and lengthy devotions, and strove for a self-discipline which left no moment wasted throughout the day. At nightfall they wrote a diary which enabled them to scrutinize their actions and condemn themselves for any fault. They partook of the [Lord’s Table] every Sunday, fasted each Wednesday and Friday, and hallowed Saturday as the Sabbath of Preparation for the Lord’s Day....They sought to persuade others to refrain from evil and attend church. They regularly visited Oxford’s prisons...and the Poor House, and each member contributed to a fund with which they relieved the needs of inmates and maintained a school for the prisoners’ children. This programme [*sic.*] of endeavor, aided by *these works of charity, they believed, somehow ministered towards the salvation of their souls.*<sup>246</sup>

- 2) In his journal he writes,

I now began, like them, to live by rule, and to pick up the very fragments of my time, that not a moment of it might be lost. Whether I ate or drank, or whatsoever I did, I endeavoured [*sic.*] to do all to the glory of God. Like them, having no weekly Sacrament at our own college, though the rubric required it, I received it every Sunday at Christ Church. I joined with them in keeping the stations by fasting Wednesdays and Fridays and left no means unused which I thought would lead me nearer to Jesus Christ.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 223-24.

<sup>246</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Vol 1 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1970), 67-68, emphasis added.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

I fasted myself to death all the forty days of Lent, during which I made it a point of duty never to go less than three times a day to public worship, besides seven times a day to my private prayers.<sup>248</sup>

By degrees I began to leave off eating fruits and such like, and gave the money I usually spent in that way to the poor. Afterward, I always chose the worst sort of food, . . . I wore woolen gloves, a patched gown and dirty shoes.<sup>249</sup>

- b. His conversion experience: "Notwithstanding my fit of sickness continued six or seven weeks, I trust I shall have reason to bless God for it through the endless ages of eternity. For, about the end of the seventh week, after having undergone innumerable buffetings of Satan, and many months inexpressible trials, by night and by day, under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on His dear Son by a living faith, and, by giving me the spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption. But O! with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of, and big with glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning [122] love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disobedient soul! Surely, it was the day of my espousal--a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would, I could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud; afterwards they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."<sup>250</sup>

- c. Response to his preaching

[O]ne morning, all on a sudden, about 8 or 9 o'clock' there came a messenger and said, "Mr. Whitefield . . . is to preach at Middletown this morning at 10 o'clock'. I was in my field, at work, I dropped my tool that I had in my hand and ran home and ran through my house and bade my wife get ready quick to go and hear Mr. Whitefield preach at Middletown and ran to my pasture for my horse with all my might, fearing I should be too late to hear him. I brought my horse home and soon mounted and took my wife up and went forward as fast as I thought the horse could bear, and when my horse began to be out of breath I would get down and put my wife in the saddle and bid her ride as fast as she could and not stop or slack for me except I bade her, and so I would run until I was almost out of breath and then mount my horse again, and so I did several times to favour my horse.

---

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>250</sup> <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/believers/weishampelthw/THW049.HTM>

On high ground I saw before me a cloud or fog rising, I first thought off from the great river but as I came nearer the road I heard a noise something like a low rumbling of horses feet coming down the road and this cloud was a cloud of dust made by the running of horses feet. It arose some rods in the air, over the tops of the hills and trees, and when I came within about twenty rods of the road I could see men and horses slipping along in the cloud like shadows and when I came nearer it was like a steady stream of horses and their riders, scarcely a horse more than his length behind another, all of a lather and some with sweat. . .

We went down with the stream, I heard no man speak a word all they way, three miles, but everyone pressing forward in great haste, and when we got down to the old meetinghouse there was a great multitude—it was said to be 3 or 4000 people assembled together. . . . I turned and looked towards the great river and saw ferry boats running swift, forward and backward, bringing over loads of people, the oars rowed nimble and quick. Everything, men, horses and boats, all seemed to be struggling for life, the land and the banks over the river looked black with people and horses. All along the 12 miles I saw no man at work in his field but all seemed to be gone.<sup>251</sup>

d. The American Scene

- 1) Spiritual deadness: Increase Mather said, "The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone generation" (1678).
- 2) The Half-Way Covenant (1662): This provided a partial church membership for the children and grandchildren of church members. Those who accepted the Covenant, and agreed to follow the creed and rules of the church, could become church members without claiming a spiritual experience. The half-members could not vote on any issues within the church, although all members could participate in Communion.
- 3) The threat of Romanticism/liberalism

e. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

- 1) The pastor
  - a) Promoting and protecting revivals

---

<sup>251</sup> Quoted in Iain Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987), 163-64.

- The books—*A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1736), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival in New England* (1742), *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746).
  - “No one could recognize more fully than Edwards the evil that mixes with the good in . . . seasons of religious excitement. He diligently sought to curb excesses, and earnestly endeavored to separate the chaff from the wheat. But no one could protest more strongly against casting out the wheat with the chaff” (B. B. Warfield).<sup>252</sup>
- 2) The preacher and theologian
- a) Key themes
    - The glory of God in all things
    - Delight in God. John Piper’s now famous saying, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him,” is by his own admission almost verbatim lifted from JE.
    - The judgment of God: “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741) (**This is stapled to your packet**).
  - b) His delivery and approach
    - Inspiring

I don’t think ministers are to be blamed for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance. . . . I should think myself in the way of my duty to raise the affections of my hearers as highly as I possibly can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with. I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and pathetic way of preaching; and they, and they only, have been valued as preachers, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason, and correctness of method and language: but I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding, or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching;

---

<sup>252</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, “Reformation,” Study Guide 26.2.

and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same.<sup>253</sup>

- Intense: One of Edwards' contemporaries described his preaching in this way:

'the power of presenting an important truth before an audience, with overwhelming weight of argument, and with such intenseness of feeling, that the whole soul of the speaker is thrown into every part of conception and delivery; so that the solemn attention of the whole audience is riveted, from the beginning to the close, and impressions are left that cannot be effaced.'<sup>254</sup>

- Intelligent

If a minister has light without heat, and entertains his auditory with learned discourses, without a savour [*sic.*] of the power of godliness, or any appearance of fervency of spirit, and zeal for God and the good of souls, he may gratify itching ears, and fill the heads of his people with empty notions; but it will not be very likely to reach their hearts, or save their souls. And if, on the other hand, he be driven on with a fierce and intemperate zeal, and vehement heat, without light, he will be likely to kindle the like unhallowed flame in his people, and to fire their corrupt passions and affections; but will make them never the better, nor lead them a step towards heaven, but drive them apace the other way.<sup>255</sup>

3) The philosopher and theologian: *The Freedom of the Will*.

f. The results of the Great Awakening

- 1) Conversions, increase in church rolls: People were being converted *on the way* to the meeting house.
- 2) The preservation of Calvinism
- 3) The new alliance—evangelicalism: increase across all denominational lines.
- 4) Debate and controversy in particular over the nature and place of revival (Jonathan Edwards was very interested in this question).
- 5) Social effects – helping the poor, the weak, the immoral.

---

<sup>253</sup> Quoted in John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, (Baker, 1990), 82-83.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-4.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

- 6) The founding of schools
  - a) Princeton (College of New Jersey)
  - b) Dartmouth
  - c) Rutgers
  - d) Brown

## 20. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### In this lecture:

1. Protestant missionary expansion
2. Downgrade trends in theology
3. The strengthening of the papacy

A. **Protestant Missionary Expansion:** "The great era of Christian expansion was the nineteenth century. 'Never had any other set of ideas, religious or secular, been propagated over so wide and area by so many professional agents maintained by the unconstrained donations of so many millions of individuals.'" <sup>256</sup> "[F]rom this point on church history is global Christianity." <sup>257</sup>

1. Early efforts: precursors to the "Great Century" (the 19<sup>th</sup> century)
  - a. The Huguenot mission to Brazil: The church in Geneva responded to a call for pastors to go with French colonists to settle in Brazil. Pastors were needed not only to preach to those colonists but also to reach the Indians of Brazil with the Gospel.
  - b. The Dutch Calvinists
    - 1) Coined the term "Church planting" for their work in Indonesia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
    - 2) Missiological writings of Gisbertus Voetius who asserted that the Great Commission continued beyond the death of the apostles.
  - c. The English and New England Puritans
    - 1) Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company pictured an Indian and the words, "Come over and help us" (Acts 16:9); Charter charged the company officials to win the natives to "the only true God and Savior of mankind."
    - 2) David Brainerd (1718-47)

<sup>256</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 373.

<sup>257</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," Lecture 28.6.

- a) Key figure for thousands of missionaries since his death, including William Carey.
- b) Diary, Thursday, May 22, 1746: "If ever my soul presented itself to God for His service, without any reserve, it did so now. The language of my thoughts and disposition now was, Here I am, Lord, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort in earth, or earthly comfort; send me even to death itself; if it be but in Thy service and to promote the kingdom....I found extraordinary freedom at this time in pouring out my soul to God for His cause, and especially that His kingdom might be extended among the Indians far remote; and I had strong hope that God would do it. I continued wrestling with God in prayer for my little flock here, and more especially for the Indians elsewhere, as well as for friends, till it was bedtime. Oh, with what reluctance did I feel myself obliged to consume time in sleep! I longed to be as a flame of fire, continually glowing in the Divine service, and building up Christ's kingdom, to my latest, my dying moment."<sup>258</sup>

## 2 The Great Century

- a. William Carey (1761-1834): India
  - 1) Discouraged from bringing the gospel to the heathen on the basis of the sovereignty of God in salvation
  - 2) Wrote *Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen* (1792)
  - 3) Preached a now famous sermon the same year, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God."
  - 4) The same year and with the help of some friends formed the Baptist Missionary Society.
- b. The London Missionary Society (1795)
  - 1) Interdenominational (Congregational)

---

<sup>258</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 28.1.

- 2) David Livingstone (1813-73): Africa: "For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay?-Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter?-Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in, and for, us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which HE made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us."<sup>259</sup>
- c. Church Missionary Society (1799)
    - 1) Anglican evangelicals
    - 2) Henry Martyn (1781-1812): India & Persia
  - d. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810)
    - 1) American Congregational (and Presbyterian)
    - 2) Ordination of the first American Foreign Missionaries (1812)—Adoniram Judson, Luther Rice, Samuel Newell, Samuel Nott, and Gordon Hall. Inscription on the tomb of Luther Rice, Pine Pleasant Baptist Church, South Carolina: "Elder Luther Rice...Perhaps no American has done more for the great missionary enterprise. It is thought the first American Foreign Mission on which he went to India, associated with Judson and others, originated with him. And if the Burmans have cause of gratitude toward Judson for a faithful version of God's Word; so they will, thro generations to come 'Arise up and call—Rice—blessed': For it was his eloquent appeals for the Heathen, on his

---

<sup>259</sup> [http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/d\\_livingstone.html](http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/d_livingstone.html)

return to America which roused our Baptist churches to adopt the Burman mission, and sustain Judson in his arduous toils."<sup>260</sup>

- e. Church of Scotland Mission Board (1824) and Other Scottish Presbyterian Church Boards
  - 1) Alexander Duff (1806-78): India
  - 2) Free Church of Scotland (1843)
  - 3) United Presbyterian Church (1847)—Mary Slessor (1848-1915): Nigeria
  - 4) Reformed Presbyterian Church—John G. Patton: New Hebrides (Vanuatu).
- f. Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (Old School) (1837)
- g. Southern Presbyterian Missions
- h. The "faith" missions – interdenominational boards that lacked official sponsorship of the denominations, relying exclusively on God's people to provide for the needs of the missionaries.
  - 1) Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission (1865)—"The Cambridge Seven," John and Betty Stam.
  - 2) Amy Carmichael: India

## B. Downgrade Trends in Theology

- 1. Revivalism and Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875)
  - a. Finney's belief was that revival was something that could be ushered in by man's power: "For a long time it was supposed by the Church that a revival was a miracle, an interposition of Divine power. It is only within a few years that ministers generally have supposed revivals were to be promoted by the use of means... God has overthrown, generally, the theory that revivals are miracles."<sup>261</sup>

<sup>260</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," 28.2.

<sup>261</sup> Charles G Finney quoted in Iain Murray, "Charles G Finney: How Theology Affects Understanding of Revival," at [http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article\\_detail.php?1316](http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_detail.php?1316). For a fuller treatment of

- b. He, therefore, suggested that in order to see people come to saving faith, it was necessary for us “to help *make* that believing a reality by appointing some outward action to *assist* a change of will.”<sup>262</sup> These so-called “new measures” included coming forward to an “anxious bench” and kneeling to make their commitment public. For Finney, this was not simply a question of methods – he believed that these actions truly aided people in coming to Jesus.
- c. His approach was opposed by some within the church for the following reasons:<sup>263</sup>
- 1) They confused an outward act with the new birth.
  - 2) They reflected a superficial view of conversion flowing from a superficial view of sin. “‘Men,’ said Finney, are not converted ‘by a change wrought in their nature by creative power’ but by ‘yielding to the truth.’”<sup>264</sup>
  - 3) Because the new measures told people that obedience to the preacher’s directions was necessary to becoming a Christian, compliance with such directions inevitably came to be treated as a means of assurance that one was now in a state of grace.
  - 4) The new teaching, by putting its emphasis on the instant action taken by an individual following the evangelist’s appeal and not upon a changed life, inevitably lowered standards of membership in evangelical churches and so encouraged an acceptance of worldliness among professing Christians. Speaking of the wrong measures which had been popularized, R. L. Dabney wrote: “We believe that they are the chief cause, under the prime source, original sin, which has deteriorated the average standard of holy living, principles, and morality, and the church discipline of our religion, until it has nearly lost its practical power over the public conscience.”<sup>265</sup>
  - 5) Finney’s teaching that revival should be normal and continuous, not extraordinary and occasional, depended for its success on a

---

the subject of revival and revivalism see his *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism from 1750-1850* (Banner of Truth, 1994).

<sup>262</sup> Murray, “Charles G Finney.”

<sup>263</sup> Adapted from *ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

change in the content of revival, the same word now came to stand for any evangelistic campaign which gathered people together in numbers, and both Finney and his followers encouraged the switch. Why pray for revival when you can hold one?

2. The "Downgrade Controversy" and Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)
  - a. On Spurgeon
    - 1) Committed to the Reformed Faith
    - 2) Committed to historic Protestantism. Reissued his own edition of the London Baptist Confession of 1689: "This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. It is not issued as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby you may be fettered, but as a means of edification in righteousness. It is an excellent, though not inspired, expression of the teaching of those Holy Scriptures by which all confessions are to be measured. We hold to the humbling truths of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of lost sinners. Salvation is through Christ alone and by faith alone."<sup>266</sup>
  - b. On the controversy: Spurgeon withdrew from the Baptist Union over issues of gospel compromise within the fellowship of churches.
    - 1) From Iain Murray's, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*. "We used to debate upon particular and general redemption, but now men question whether there is any redemption at all worthy of the name."<sup>267</sup>
    - 2) "The fact is, that many would like to unite church and stage, cards and prayer, dancing and sacraments. If we are powerless to stem this torrent, we can at least warn men of its existence, and entreat them to keep out of it. When the old faith is gone, and enthusiasm for the gospel is extinct, it is no wonder that people seek something else in the way of delight. Lacking bread, they feed on ashes; rejecting the way of the Lord, they run greedily in the path of folly."<sup>268</sup>
3. The birth of higher criticism and theological "liberalism"

---

<sup>266</sup> <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/bcof.htm>

<sup>267</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 31.2.

<sup>268</sup> Quoted in John F MacArthur, Jr, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes like the World*, Expanded Edition (Crossway, 2001), 67.

a. Historical criticism

1) Preliminaries

- a) In order to understand higher criticism, it must be put in the proper context, beginning with what is known as historical criticism, which may be defined as the evaluation or scientific investigation of works of literature. It implies the interpreter's independence from religious authority and denial of biblical infallibility. Moreover it often implies a skeptical attitude to the historical claims of Scripture.
- b) "The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect... This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no 'miracle' in this sense of the word."<sup>269</sup>

2) Kinds of historical criticism

- a) Lower criticism: Lower criticism focuses on the study of the original languages of Scripture as well as textual transmission.
- b) Higher criticism: Higher criticism focuses on the historical origins of the biblical documents, including source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism (especially in NT studies).
- 3) This approach operates from a distinctly different faith system than that from which historical Christianity had operated heretofore. It is what I might call a hyper-rational, anti-supernatural approach to the study of Scripture. This gives birth to what would be called "liberalism" in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

b. Five key books (and authors)<sup>270</sup>

- 1) *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799) by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834).

---

<sup>269</sup> Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) quoted in Walter C Kaiser & Moises Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Zondervan, 1994), 230.

<sup>270</sup> Adapted from Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 35.1-2.

- a) Charles Hodge on Schleiermacher's theology: "Deprived...of the historical Christ, or at least deprived of the ordinary historical basis for faith in Christ, he determined to construct a Christology and a whole system of Christian theology from within; to weave it out of the materials furnished by his own religious consciousness. He said to the Rationalists that they might expunge what they pleased from the evangelical records; that they might demolish the whole edifice of Church theology, he had a Christ and a Christianity in his own bosom. In the prosecution of the novel and difficult task of constructing a system of Christian theology out of the facts of Christian experience, he designed to secure for it a position unassailable by philosophy. Philosophy being a matter of knowledge, and religion a matter of feeling, the two belonged to distinct spheres, and therefore there need be no collision between them."<sup>271</sup>
- 2) *Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809-82): For many people, Darwinism became an explanation for everything (evolution as a new god). Hodge rejected Darwinism, while Warfield was much more cautious.
- 3) *Essays and Reviews* (1860): Written by seven clergymen of the Church of England who actually had taken German higher critical views of the Bible and expressed those views in English. This meant that these essays basically said that the Bible is an ordinary book, just like any other book. They said it has many good things in it, some not-so-good things in it, and some bad things in it, and people should read the Bible like any other book.
- 4) *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (1874) by Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89): This is a more or less social approach to the gospel – reducing the kingdom of God to the ministry of mercy. For him Christianity did not involve giving credence to a set of dogmas, but to action – social action.
- 5) *What is Christianity?* (1900) by Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930): In this work (a printed version of a series of lectures delivered at the University of Berlin in 1899-1900), Harnack aimed to reduce Christianity to its most basic elements, eliminated the "husks" to

---

<sup>271</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 2 (Hendrickson, 2001 reprint), 441. For his complete critique, read pp. 440-454.

get to the “kernel.” His “central thesis was that Christianity is not a matter of doctrine but of a life, kindled afresh again and again. What is distinctive about the Christian religion is the power of Jesus’ contagious personality.”<sup>272</sup> He rejected the Gospel of John as too theological and rejected miracles, insisting that “it is not miracles that matter.”<sup>273</sup> Harnack believed that Jesus consistently taught one message, summarized by Harnack in three points:

- a) The kingdom of God and its coming: The kingdom of God.
  - b) God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul: The fatherhood of God.
  - c) The higher righteousness and the commandment of love: The brotherhood of man.
- c. Stalwarts of biblical orthodoxy: Old Princeton
- 1) Charles Hodge (1797-1878)
  - 2) Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886)
  - 3) B B Warfield (1851-1921)

### c. **The Strengthening of the Papacy**

- 1. Preliminaries
  - a. Response to the French Revolution and the birth of the modern State of Italy
  - b. “Ultramontanism”
- 2. Significant dogmatic declarations
  - a. 8 Dec 1854, the immaculate conception of Mary: “It is a divinely revealed truth of faith that Mary in the first moment of her conception was freed by special grace from the stain of original sin in view of the merits of Christ.”<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> Robert B Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Roots of Gospels Criticism* (P & R, 1995), 54.

<sup>273</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 361.

- b. 1870 First Vatican Council declared the infallibility of the pope
- 1) "The Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of his office of pastor and doctor of all Christians...is endowed by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, with that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that the church should be furnished in defining doctrine of faith or morals."<sup>275</sup>
  - 2) This, too, must be understood against the backdrop of volatile change in social structures – from the aristocracy and the church to the common man. "Catholics had little doubt that the pope as successor of Peter possessed special teaching authority. The only question was how far this authority extended, whether it could be exercised independently from councils and the college of bishops, and what special preconditions would have to be met."<sup>276</sup>
    - a) In sum
      - The pope exercises full and direct authority over the whole church in matters of faith and morals as well as church discipline and administration.
      - When the pope makes a final decision for the church *ex cathedra*, the decision is "infallible and immutable, and does not require the prior consent of the Church."<sup>277</sup>

---

<sup>275</sup> Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 36.2.

<sup>276</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 362.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

## 21. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

### **In this lecture:**

1. Overview of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
2. The neo-orthodox challenge to liberalism
3. The fundamentalist challenge to modernism
4. The neo-evangelical challenge to fundamentalism

### A. Overview of the Twentieth Century

1. "An Age of Drastic Change"<sup>278</sup>
  - a. From optimism to pessimism, from belief to skepticism
    - 1) World War I: "All that horrible long night I walked along the rows of dying men, and much of my German classical philosophy broke down."<sup>279</sup>
    - 2) Beneficent colonialism or malevolent imperialism? The optimism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with respect to previous efforts at colonialism seemed to be more about the accretion of power which inevitably led to war.
    - 3) The unbridled optimism and belief that dominated the nineteenth century gave way to skepticism and even secularism, especially in Protestant Europe.
2. A bloody age for the church: "[I]t has been estimated that more Christians have been martyred for their faith in the twentieth century than in all the other centuries combined."<sup>280</sup>
3. An attempt to balance the transcendence and immanence of God: Some historical theologians have used these two categories as ways of

<sup>278</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.330.

<sup>279</sup> Paul Tillich, after the Battle of Champagne, quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," Study Guide 35.3.

<sup>280</sup> Campbell, *Heroes*, 188.

understanding all of the theological developments throughout the history of the church. We will come back to this in our conclusion; for now, I want to put it before you vis-à-vis the following quotation:

Because the Bible presents God as both beyond the world and present to the world, theologians of every era are confronted with the challenge of articulating the Christian understanding of the nature of God in a manner that balances, affirms and holds in creative tension the twin truths of the divine transcendence and the divine immanence. A balanced affirmation of both truths facilitates a proper relation between theology and reason or culture.

The theology of the twentieth century, flowing as it does out of that of the nineteenth, offers an interesting case study in the attempt to balance these two aspects of the relation of God to creation. . . . [T]wentieth century theology illustrates how a lopsided emphasis on one or the other eventually engenders an opposing movement that in its attempt to redress the imbalance actually moves too far in the opposite direction.<sup>281</sup>

**B. The Neo-Orthodox Challenge to Liberalism** (and immanence):

Theologically speaking, the pessimism reared its head in the approach that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century called neo-Orthodoxy.

1. H Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962): "In 1937, his book on *The Kingdom of God in America* . . . indicted this sort of religion by declaring that in it 'A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.'" <sup>282</sup>
2. Karl Barth (1886-1968): "Karl Barth was without doubt the most important Protestant theologian of the twentieth century." <sup>283</sup>
  - a. Trained as a liberal, involved in social activism till the war, then rethought everything.
  - b. Watershed works
    - 1) *Commentary on Romans* (1919): "As I look back at my pathway I look like a man who, groping his way in a darksome church tower, unwittingly took hold of a rope that was, in fact, a rope for a church bell, and then to his own shock heard the bells resounding over him—and far beyond." <sup>284</sup>

---

<sup>281</sup> Stanley J Grenz & Roger E Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (InterVarsity, 1992), 11-12.

<sup>282</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.377.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.362.

<sup>284</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Reformation," 35.3.

- 2) *Church Dogmatics* (13 volumes, 1932-1967): " *Church Dogmatics* is unquestionably the great theological monument of the twentieth century."<sup>285</sup>

c. His theology

- 1) High view of Scripture: Had a kind of rediscovery of the Bible, a reaction against the subjectivism that he had learned from many of his teachers. The only way to do this was to return to the text of Scripture.
- 2) Radically God-centered: "Bart took issue with the extreme liberalism of his day and sought to bring God into the centre of theological enquiry and Biblical study."<sup>286</sup>
- 3) Emphasized the objective "otherness," sovereignty, and transcendence of God, that God is wholly other.
- 4) Emphasized the immanence of God in Christ in whom God is wholly human or present:

By the time he began his teaching career, Barth was being credited with having begun a new theological school that some would call "dialectical theology," others "crisis theology," and still others "neo-orthodoxy." This was a theology of a God who is never ours, but always stands over against us; whose word is at the same time both "yes" and "no"; whose presence brings, not ease and inspiration in our efforts, but crisis.<sup>287</sup>

- 5) Rediscovery of the Reformers and the Protestant orthodox theologians, especially John Calvin.

c. **The Fundamentalist Challenge to Modernism:** Although Niebuhr and Barth made significant headway in challenging (and undermining) the excesses of the liberalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the eyes of many Christians, they didn't go far enough. Enter the fundamentalists.

1. Defining terms

- a. "Modernism" is another way of talking about the higher critical, rationalistic, "scientific" approach to Scripture that began to emerge

---

<sup>285</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.364.

<sup>286</sup> Campbell, *Heroes*, 176.

<sup>287</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.363.

toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one which was necessarily and fundamentally anti-supernatural because of the obvious irrationality and implausibility of miracles and because of the nature of history – a closed system of cause and effect that cannot be broken into by anything transcendent. In the end, it reflected an approach to the Christian faith, and especially the Bible that attacked the Bible's claims to divine inspiration and historical accuracy.

- b. "Fundamentalism": This term is based on a series of essays written by leading orthodox pastors and theologians between 1910 and 1915 called, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*. The work defended the basics of biblical Christianity, including the truth that "Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for the salvation of men and women, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and would return at the end of the age in great glory; that sin is real and not the product of fevered imaginations; that God's grace and not human effort is the source of salvation; and that the church is God's institution designed to build up Christians and spread the Gospel."<sup>288</sup>
2. Declaring war: two sermons of 1922
    - a. "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" by Harry Emerson Fosdick
    - b. "Shall Unbelief Win?" by Clarence Edward Macartney
  3. A voice of reason: J Gresham Machen (1891-1937)
    - a. Reluctant fundamentalist
      - 1) "Do you suppose that I do regret my being called by a term that I greatly dislike, a 'Fundamentalist'? Most certainly I do. But in the presence of a great common foe, I have little time to be attacking my brethren who stand with me in defense of the Word of God."<sup>289</sup>
      - 2) Source of his reluctance: As the movement grew it began to move in a much more militant and intolerant (in the ungodly sense) directions, moving into near complete withdrawal and retreat from

---

<sup>288</sup> Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Eerdmans, 1992), 381.

<sup>289</sup> [http://www.desiringgod.org/resourcelibrary/Biographies/1464\\_J\\_Gresham\\_Machens\\_Response\\_to\\_Modernism/](http://www.desiringgod.org/resourcelibrary/Biographies/1464_J_Gresham_Machens_Response_to_Modernism/)

the academy. Machen was troubled by the following characteristics of the new movement:<sup>290</sup>

- a) The absence of historical perspective
  - b) The lack of appreciation of scholarship
  - c) The substitution of brief, skeletal creeds for the historic confessions
  - d) The lack of concern with precise formulation of Christian doctrine
  - e) Pietistic, perfectionistic tendencies (e.g. hang-ups with smoking, etc.)
  - f) One-sided other-worldliness (i.e. lack of effort to transform culture)
  - g) A penchant for futuristic chiliasm (pre-millennialism)
- b. *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923): The title says it all. On the one side is Christianity and on the other is liberalism – the two are antithetical to one another. For him the battle was not between two expressions of Christianity, but between Christianity and another religion altogether: “The great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology.”<sup>291</sup>
4. William Jennings Bryan, the “Scopes Trial,” and the retreat of the fundamentalists
- a. John Scopes, a Tennessee schoolteacher was arrested for teaching evolution in violation of state law.
  - b. Bryan (himself a fundamentalist) was the lead attorney for the prosecution. He defined the case as a cosmic battle between good and evil: “[The case] has assumed the proportions of a battle royal between unbelief that attempts to speak through so-called science and the

---

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> J Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Eerdmans, 1994 reprint), 2.

defenders of the Christian faith... It is again a choice between God and Baal."<sup>292</sup>

- c. H L Mencken, the Baltimore columnist, though he appreciated the force and clarity of Machen's book, did not look with any favor on the fundamentalists, and offered scathing critique of Bryan and evangelical fundamentalists generally: "Evangelical Christianity, as everyone knows, is founded upon hate, as the Christianity of Christ was founded upon love. But even evangelical Christians occasionally loose their belts and belch amicably; I have known some who, off duty, were very benignant."<sup>293</sup>

d. **The Neo-Evangelical Challenge to Fundamentalism:** With the end of WWII, new voices began to emerge within conservative circles that urged a change in direction. Enter the new evangelicals.

1. The strengths and weaknesses of fundamentalism

a. Strengths:

For theologically conservative Christians, the fundamentalist episode in American church history must be ambiguous. Fundamentalists of the early twentieth century defended many convictions essential to a traditional understanding of Christianity. At a time when naturalism threatened religion, when relativism assaulted social morality, when intellectual fashions were turning the Bible into a book of merely antiquarian interest, fundamentalists said what needed to be said about the supernatural character of religion, the objectivity of Christian morality, and the timeless validity of Scripture.<sup>294</sup>

b. Weaknesses

- 1) A siege mentality: In the wake of the Scopes Trial, fundamentalism came to be associated no longer with the espousal of the basic tenets of orthodox Christianity, but instead with an oppositionist, or siege mentality that became calcified in the face of the modernist threat to biblical Christianity. Fundamentalism in this sense "takes form when members of already conservative or traditional movements experience threat."<sup>295</sup>

2) Anti-intellectual tendencies

---

<sup>292</sup> Quoted in Edwin Gaustad, ed., *A Documentary History of Religion in America Since 1865* (Eerdmans, 1983), 355.

<sup>293</sup> <http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/menck05.htm#SCOPEESC>

<sup>294</sup> Mark A Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans, 1994), 115.

<sup>295</sup> Martin Marty, quoted in McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 392.

[F]undamentalism created major problems in several ways for the life of the mind. First, it gave new impetus to general anti-intellectualism; second, it hardened conservative evangelical commitments to certain features of the nineteenth-century evangelical-American synthesis that were problematic to begin with; and third, its major theological emphases had a chilling effect on Christian thinking about the world.<sup>296</sup>

2. The National Association of Evangelicals (1942): Founded with the expressed desire to distinguish evangelicalism from fundamentalism, espousing the importance of cultural engagement and gospel transformation.
3. Billy Graham (1918- )
  - a. Worldwide evangelistic ministry began in the 40s.
  - b. Came to see fundamentalism as a barrier to evangelism.
  - c. "Is Evangelical Theology Changing?": Published in a leading fundamentalist magazine arguing that fundamentalists were committed to the slogan "earnestly contend for the faith," while the new generation preferred "you must be born again." Controversy ensued.
  - d. New York City Crusade (1955) represented a decisive break with fundamentalism, as it was arranged by a coalition of non-fundamentalist churches.
  - e. Singular influence on the strengthening of the movement: "[I]t seemed...as though the new evangelicalism, buoyed by the influence of Graham, might be a viable new movement forming the center of a wider coalition of transdenominational and denominationalist evangelicals."<sup>297</sup>
4. Fuller Theological Seminary (1947)
  - a. Charles E Fuller (1887-1968): "I agree with you perfectly that if this school is to be, it should be the best of its kind in the world. It should stand out first, as being absolutely true to the fundamentals of the faith, and second, as a school of high scholarship."<sup>298</sup>

---

<sup>296</sup> Noll, *Scandal*, 115.

<sup>297</sup> George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Eerdmans, 1987), 9.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

- b. Harold J Ockenga (1905-1985): "The new evangelicalism...embraces the full orthodoxy of fundamentalism in doctrine but manifests a social consciousness and responsibility which was strangely absent from fundamentalism."<sup>299</sup>
    - 1) Served as founding president of the NAE (1942-1944)
    - 2) Pastor of Park Street Church in Boston (1936-1969)
    - 3) President of the seminary in absentia (1947-1954, 1960-1963)
  - c. Carl F H Henry (1913-2003): Wrote a manifesto of neo-evangelicalism called, *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947) in which he "argued that fundamentalism presented and proclaimed an impoverished and reduced gospel that was radically defective in its social vision. Fundamentalism, he suggested, was too otherworldly and anti-intellectual to gain a hearing with the educated public. It shoed no interest in exploring the relationship between Christianity and culture and social life."<sup>300</sup>
5. Evaluating the (new) evangelicalism
- a. A definition: "[T]he British historian David Bebbington has identified the key ingredients of evangelicalism as conversionism (an emphasis on the 'new birth' as a life-changing religious experience), Biblicism (a reliance on the Bible as ultimate religious authority), activism (a concern for sharing the faith), and crucicentrism (a focus on Christ's redeeming work on the cross)."<sup>301</sup>
  - b. Strengths:<sup>302</sup> Conservative theology, passion and energy, thoughtful scholarship, and unity among Christians of different traditions.
  - c. Weaknesses
    - 1) Not strongly creedal (historical, traditional), based more on experience and transdenominational fellowship.
    - 2) Never rooted in the local church, based more in the parachurch and interdenominational activity.

---

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>300</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 395-96.

<sup>301</sup> Noll, *Scandal*, 8.

<sup>302</sup> Adapted from Capital Hill Baptist Church core seminar, Church History, Session 13, available at <http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/we-equip/adults/core-seminars/church-history/>

**In this lecture: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Part 2;  
the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

1. Review of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Part 1
2. Pentecostalism and her offspring
3. Missions movements and ecumenism
4. Updating Roman Catholicism:  
Vatican II
5. Influential church movements of the  
20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries
6. Organizing church history
7. Learning from our past

**REVIEW**

- Overview of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- The neo-orthodox challenge to liberalism
- The fundamentalist challenge to modernism
- The neo-evangelical challenge to fundamentalism

**E. Pentecostalism and Her Offspring**

1. Pentecostalism's beginnings in the United States
  - a. William J Seymour (1870-1922)
    - 1) "Evening Light Saints": a Christian group in Cincinnati
      - a) Radical holiness theology, including the doctrine of "second blessing entire sanctification."
      - b) Dispensational Premillennialism
      - c) Belief in worldwide revival prior to the "Rapture."
    - 2) Moved to California and founded a church based on the principles he learned in St Louis and Texas. The church was called, the "Apostolic Faith Mission," located on Azusa Street in LA. From here Pentecostalism spread rapidly through the US.

b. Contemporary reception

- 1) Appealed to the marginalized, especially through his “important concept of an ecstatic egalitarian ecclesiology.”<sup>303</sup>
- 2) Most considered it eccentric at best and dangerous at worst.
- 3) However, it began to become respectable and accepted in white middle-class America through the neo-charismatic renewal of the 1960s. The reasons for the change in attitude include...
  - a) Upward social mobility
  - b) Greater disposable income
  - c) Suburbanization
- 4) “Charismatic” experiences by mainline denominations and pastors. By the late 1960s, some form of renewal based on unusual phenomena, including speaking in tongues, was taking place in Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and even Roman Catholic churches.

c. Tenets of Pentecostalism

- 1) Most were orthodox in their understanding of the Trinity, human sinfulness, and the authority of Scripture.
- 2) Distinguishing feature of Pentecostalism “is its insistence and emphasis upon an immediate encounter with God through the Holy Spirit and the ensuing transformation of individuals.”<sup>304</sup>
- 3) Many shared a perspective on Christ in four roles: Savior, Healing, Baptizer in the Spirit, and Returning King.<sup>305</sup> This is sometimes called the Foursquare Gospel.
- 4) Emphasis on the necessity of speaking in tongues and its forms of worship, strongly experiential and involved prophesying, healings, and exorcisms.

---

<sup>303</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 417.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>305</sup> These four foci find their origin in a vision of a cross, a crown, a dove, and a cup by Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), which became the basis for the founding of her International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. See *ibid.*, 426.

- 5) Emphasis on “baptism in the Spirit,” which is understood to refer “to a special divine anointing, gift, or blessing subsequent to conversion, which is demonstrated by speaking in tongues.”<sup>306</sup>
  - 6) Worldview related easily to folk religions of many regions of the world, including Africa and Latin America (by worldview we mean its explanation and interpretation of problems in the world). The reason for the easy relationship with the folk religions was its emphasis on the supernatural to explain problems in the world.
  - 7) Populist worship style.
  - 8) Lack of intellectual sophistication.
- d. Pentecostalism or Pentecostalism? It used to be thought that Pentecostalism was simply an American phenomenon. Recent careful scholarship has demonstrated quite the opposite.
- 1) 1906 Azusa Street Revival
  - 2) 1905-1906 revival in Pyongyang, Korea
  - 3) 1905-1907 revival at Pandita Ramabai’s Mukti Mission in Poona, India
  - 4) 1908 Manchurian revival
  - 5) 1909 revival in Valparaiso, Chile
  - 6) 1914 revivals in the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Liberian Kru.
  - 7) Similar revivals in the same time period in Norway, China, and Venezuela
- e. Three historical waves of American Pentecostalism (Peter Wagner<sup>307</sup>).
- 1) Classic Pentecostalism of the early 1900s, emphasizing speaking in tongues.
  - 2) Mainline denominations appropriating spiritual healing and other charismatic practices in the 1960s and 1970s.
  - 3) Then in the 1980s, through “signs and wonders” a new wave of supernatural power had been unleashed upon the churches to

---

<sup>306</sup> McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea*, 425.

<sup>307</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 419.

enable healing, victorious living, and the defeat of supernatural evil powers.

- f. Terminological issues
  - 1) "Pentecostal" now refers to a family of churches, including the Assemblies of God, which emphasize speaking in tongues.
  - 2) "Charismatic" now refers to mainline churches influenced by the ideas and experiences of the Pentecostal movement. This influence has led to...
    - a) New and informal worship styles
    - b) An explosion of worship songs
    - c) A new concern for the dynamics of worship
    - d) Increasing dislike of formal and liturgical worship
- g. The broad influence of the movement: "Pentecostalism in its various forms is now the largest single Christian group apart from Catholicism and outnumbers the sum total of all other forms of Protestantism."<sup>308</sup>
- h. Positive and negative contribution of the movement
  - 1) Positive contribution
    - a) Spiritual vitality in daily life: "If the existence of God makes little or no impact upon the experiences of everyday life, the business of living might as well be conducted without reference to God. By opening up again the possibility of a transcendent reality virtually closed off by modernism, Pentecostalism injects the presence of God into everyday life – through social action, politics, and evangelism."<sup>309</sup>
    - b) Highlights the importance of the emotions for the Christian faith.
  - 2) Negative contribution
    - a) Historic lack of intellectual sophistication, even suspicion of the intellect has led to immaturity in the body of Christ and a resultant gullibility for many baby believers.

---

<sup>308</sup> McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 415.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

- b) The historical lack of intellectual sophistication coupled with the emphasis on an emotional response to God easily becomes emotionalism.
- c) Emotionalism makes more intellectual Christians suspicious of emotions.
- d) Emphasis on the necessity of speaking in tongues and the "Second Blessing" causes insecurity in genuine Christians and may unwittingly undermine *sola fide*.

## F. Missions Movements and Ecumenism

1. The birth of ecumenical movements: "Partly because committed Christians appeared to be in a shrinking minority, and partly because divisions among Christians had always been felt as a scandal, ecumenical movements...began to gather momentum."<sup>310</sup>
2. According to Gonzalez, "the ecumenical movement had two facets."<sup>311</sup>
  - a. "The first and most obvious was the quest for greater and more visible unity."<sup>312</sup>
  - b. "The second, with perhaps even more drastic consequences, was the birth of a worldwide church to whose mission and self-understanding all would contribute."<sup>313</sup>
3. The 1910 World Missionary Conference: British, American, and European missionaries from around the world led the discussions: The conferences represented "a great turning point in the history of Christianity...for symbolizing a dawning consciousness concerning the worldwide extension of the faith."<sup>314</sup> This conference would "eventually lead to the founding of the World Council of Churches and to other visible manifestations of Christian unity."<sup>315</sup>
  - a. Eight themes of the conference

---

<sup>310</sup> Adrian Hastings (editor), *A World History of Christianity* (Eerdmans, 1999), 503.

<sup>311</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.388.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 2.388-89.

<sup>314</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 292.

<sup>315</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2.388.

- 1) The transport of the gospel to the whole world
- 2) The church in the mission field
- 3) The place of education in national Christian life
- 4) The message of Christian mission in relation to non-Christian faiths: "[A]t Edinburgh voices were heard speculating whether Christianity should be considered the *absolutely final* revelation from God or merely the *best* revelation from God."<sup>316</sup>
- 5) The preparation of missionaries
- 6) The home base of missions
- 7) Missions and governments
- 8) The promotion of Christian unity

The conference ended with the shared conviction that the gathering was too important simply to let slip away. Discussions begun and Edinburgh in 1910 did in fact continue. Eventually they led to the establishment of the International Missionary Conference, and less directly in 1925 to the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work and in 1927 to the World Conference on Faith and Order, two organizations that eventually merged in 1948 to create the World Council of Churches. The missionary conference at Edinburgh was, therefore, the beginning of the twentieth-century ecumenical<sup>317</sup> movement.<sup>318</sup>

### **G. Updating Roman Catholicism: Vatican II**

1. Met in four separate sessions from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1965.
2. Pope John XXIII appealed for the council in hopes that it would "give the Church the possibility to contribute more efficaciously to the solution of the problems of the modern age."<sup>319</sup> "[H]e said its purpose would be *aggiornamento*, an Italian term for 'bringing up to date.' It suggests not only

---

<sup>316</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 272, italics in original.

<sup>317</sup> "Ecumenical" means worldwide or universal; "ecumenism" refers to the attitude or movement espousing ecumenical ideals. When applied to the church, these terms refer to the unity (and the pursuit of unity) in the whole church.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>319</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 302.

adaptation to the outward life of contemporary society but also a complete inward change of thought."<sup>320</sup>

3. It was the first council called neither to combat heresy, nor to pronounce new dogmas, nor to marshal the church against hostile enemies.
4. In the Pope's opening speech he said that the church must "rule with the medicine of mercy rather than with severity."<sup>321</sup>
5. Many conservative church officials did not want the council convened at all and privately referred to it as "the Pope's folly."<sup>322</sup>
6. The doctrinal results
  - a. Four "Constitutions"
    - 1) The church
    - 2) Divine revelation
    - 3) The sacred liturgy
    - 4) The church in the modern world
  - b. Nine "Decrees," including the following subjects:
    - 1) Ecumenism
    - 2) The training and life of priests
    - 3) The functions of the laity
  - c. Three "Declarations"
    - 1) Christian education
    - 2) Relationships with non-Christian religions
    - 3) Religious freedom

The traditional image of the Church of Rome, created largely by the Council of Trent, was an impregnable fortress under attack from the forces of secularism, modernism, and individualism. Within the walls men could gain security and salvation because there they could find the changeless truths of God, the true sacrifice of the Mass, and papal infallibility. . . .

Vatican II (1962-1965) introduced another image. It spoke of the Church as "Pilgrim People." It saw the Church, under God, moving through the world along with other pilgrims, caring for the weak and weary.<sup>323</sup>

---

<sup>320</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 453.

<sup>321</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

7. Practical results
  - a. Mass in local languages (rather than Latin)
  - b. Priest would face congregation
  - c. More “democracy” in the church – people would expect more from their priests; therefore, parish priests had to be more Populist in their approach to church.

## 22. **THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

A. **Influential Church Movements of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries:** I place movements from both centuries here because they share present influence in the church.

1. Pragmatic movements
  - a. Seeker-sensitive: Bill Hybels and Willow Creek
  - b. Purpose-driven: Rick Warren and Saddleback Community Church
  - c. The rise of the megachurch<sup>324</sup>
    - 1) The decline of the denominations and privatization of religion resulted in large churches gaining more of the American church “market.” These large churches grew because they shed the negative image of denominational Christianity and appealed to popular religious tastes.
    - 2) Independent and highly individualized.
    - 3) Full service including Bible classes, support groups, field trips for senior citizens, weight-loss classes, and children’s activities.
    - 4) Rarely carried a denominational label: used words like “chapel,” “community,” or “center.”
    - 5) Worship services marked by fast-paced and enthusiastic, popular, religious music.

---

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 451-52.

<sup>324</sup> Adapted from *ibid.*, 480-81.

- 6) Built around the attractive ministry of a magnetic preacher who possessed a winsome personality, with sermons stressing the Bible's practical application. Loyalty would be to the pastor himself, rather than the denomination or congregation.
- 7) Churches had the best money could buy, and flourished in the suburbs.

## 2. Post-modern movements

a. Emergent: "Emergent is an official organization in the U.S. and the U.K. Emergent Village... Emergent is the intellectual and philosophical network of the emerging movement."<sup>325</sup> The most important name to remember here is Brian McLaren.

### b. Emerging

#### 1) Definitions

- a) "Emerging is the wider, informal, global, ecclesial (church-centered) focus of the movement. ... Emerging catches into one term the global reshaping of how to 'do church' in postmodern culture. It has no central offices, and it is as varied as evangelicalism itself."<sup>326</sup>
- b) "The Emerging Church Movement includes an expanding number of leaders and a diversity of representations. For some, the movement appears to be something of a generational phenomenon – a way for younger evangelicals to reshape evangelical identity and relate to their own culture. For others, the connection with the Emerging Church Movement seems to be a matter of mood rather than methodology or theory. Elements of worship, aesthetics, and cultural iconography common to the Emerging Church Movement have been embraced by a cohort of younger evangelicals, who nonetheless hold to the indispensability of propositional truth. Nevertheless, for most Emerging Church leaders, the

---

<sup>325</sup> Scot McKnight, "Five Streams of the Emerging Church," in *Christianity Today* (Feb, 2007) available at [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/11.35.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/11.35.html), 2.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

movement appears to be an avenue for reshaping Christianity in a new mold."<sup>327</sup>

- 2) Five themes that characterize the emerging church movement:<sup>328</sup>
- a) Prophetic: Emerging "prophets" deliberately exaggerate to bring their point home, to be provocative. This has the tendency to create misunderstandings and can be divisive.
  - b) Postmodern: "Postmodernity cannot be reduced to the denial of truth. Instead, it is the collapse of inherited metanarratives (overarching explanations of life) like those of science or Marxism. Why have they collapsed? Because of the impossibility of getting outside their assumptions."<sup>329</sup>  
 Acknowledging that contemporary church life is lived out in a postmodern context, ministry in this context is unavoidable. The only question is how ministry will be carried out. Borrowing categories from Doug Pagitt, our ministry will have one of three forms:
    - We will seek to minister *to* postmoderns: Seeing postmoderns as needing rescue, we will seek to help them to see their moral relativism and epistemological bankruptcy.
    - We will seek to minister *with* postmoderns: We will live with, work with, and converse with postmoderns, seeing postmodernity as the present condition into which we are called to proclaim and live out the gospel.
    - We will seek to minister *as* postmoderns: We embrace the idea that we cannot know absolute truth, speaking of the end of metanarratives, the importance of social structures in shaping one's view of truth, and are generally suspicious of propositional truth.
  - c) Praxis-oriented: This, I see, as flowing especially from the postmodern understanding of truth. The key issue for emerging churches is that the faith must be lived out. Sometimes this can take the form of believing (and teaching) that "*how a person lives*

---

<sup>327</sup> R Albert Mohler, Jr, "What Should We Think of the Emerging Church? Part Two," (June 30, 2005) available at [www.almohler.com/commentary](http://www.almohler.com/commentary), 1.

<sup>328</sup> Adapted from McKnight, "Five Streams," 2.

<sup>329</sup> McKnight, "Five Streams," 3.

is more important than *what he or she believes.*"<sup>330</sup> Some in the movement go so far as to say that "it doesn't matter which religion one belongs to, as long as one loves God and one's neighbor as one's self."<sup>331</sup> "The foremost concern of the praxis stream is being *missional.*"<sup>332</sup>

- Missional means participating with God in his redemptive work in this world.
  - Missional means participating in the community where God's redemptive work occurs; namely, the church (not the megachurch).
  - Missional means participating in the holistic redemptive work of God in this world, redemptive work that applies to whole people and institutions – doing good to bodies, spirits, families, and societies.
- d) Post-evangelical: "The emerging movement is a protest against much of evangelicalism as currently practiced."<sup>333</sup>
- Perhaps the greatest criticism of evangelicalism is that it is "modern"; that is, that it approaches the Christian faith from the philosophical perspective of the Enlightenment. Sometimes this takes the shape of denying the Reformers' approach to theology, or at least the "Protestant Scholastics'" approach. The idea is that they were Enlightenment rationalists. "But it is historically irresponsible to claim that the Protestant Reformers believed that human reason and science were the sole means to obtaining absolute truth and certainty."<sup>334</sup> Moreover, "the Protestant orthodox disavow evidentialism and identify theological certainty as something quite distinct from mathematical and rational or philosophical certainty...in significant contrast to the Enlightenment rationalist assumption of an untrammelled constitution of humanity."<sup>335</sup> An excellent example of this is reflected in

---

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 4, italics in original.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 5, italics in original.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>334</sup> Jeffrey Jue, "What's Emerging in the Church," available at [www.fpcjackson.org/resources/apologetics](http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/apologetics), 1.

<sup>335</sup> Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Volume One: Prolegomena to Theology* (Eerdmans, 2003), 141-42 quoted in Jue, "What's Emerging," 2.

the Reformed and Protestant Orthodox approach to the doctrine of Scripture: “[t]he foundation for theology is not a scientifically verifiable Scripture, or the consensus of a community, but God himself as he has been revealed in his inscripturated Word.”<sup>336</sup> Yet in spite of this, the emerging critique of evangelicalism is its modernism.

- Thus the movement tends to be very critical of systematic theology because the diversity of theologies is alarming, because no genuine consensus has been reached, and because God didn’t reveal a systematic theology, but a storied narrative, and because language is incapable of capturing the Absolute Truth who is God. It says, “This is what I believe, but I could be wrong. What do you think? Let’s talk.”<sup>337</sup>
- e) Political: Typically Democratic, which makes it “post” for typical conservative-evangelical politics. They believe that the Democratic Party’s historic commitment to the poor and to centralizing government for social justice is what government should do.

## B. **Organizing Church History**

1. Two suggestions
  - a. Transcendent vs. Immanent

---

<sup>336</sup> Jue, “What’s Emerging,” 3.

<sup>337</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 6.

b. Head vs. Heart<sup>338</sup>

<b>Emphasis on Emotions</b>	<b>Biblical Christianity</b>	<b>Emphasis on Intellect</b>
Montanism (2 <sup>nd</sup> century)	↓	
	↓	Gnosticism (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> centuries)
Monasticism (3 <sup>rd</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> centuries)	↓	
	↓	Scholasticism (11 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
Mysticism (14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> centuries)	↓	
	↓	Reformation Orthodoxy (16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
Pietism and Methodism (17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries)	↓	
	↓	Liberalism (19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement (20 <sup>th</sup> century)	↓	
	↓	

2. My suggestion: Don't try to organize and therefore understand church history this way. This ends up doing more harm than good for several reasons.
  - a. Church history is too messy to allow itself to be neatly organized around two organizing motifs; therefore, doing so can give the impression that the history of Christianity is something that it isn't.
  - b. The messiness of church history is actually a witness to the credibility of God's providence and his faithfulness to protect his church in a fallen world; therefore, any attempt to make neat the lines can undermine the glory of God to work with and in the face of such messiness.
  - c. There are clearly more than two emphases even within centuries of church history; therefore, boiling the history of Christianity down to

<sup>338</sup> The chart below has been adapted from Robert C Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History* (Zondervan, 1986), 78.

two can give the impression that there is nothing more that needs to be said.

- d. The events of church history are related to one another in more than simple cause and effect; in fact, that approach may even find get its impetus from a very unbiblical, non-Christian approach to history that sees the circumstances of church history as in a closed continuum that may never be interrupted by the divine. Therefore to see the history of the church as a kind of pendulum may undermine a biblical view of human history and anthropology.

### c. **Learning from Our Past**

1. A challenge: We live in an anti-historical day, where things new are always better than the old. So there may be deep within our consciences (especially since the Enlightenment of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) an aversion to the past. In order to learn from history, we have to acknowledge this tendency and fight it. Learning from our past is a challenge for the present and will be for the future.<sup>339</sup>
2. Lessons to be learned (mostly from our introduction)
  - a. In order to understand where we're going, we need to understand where we came from. This is the value of history in general. Knowing your trajectory allows you to understand yourself better, to put your experience in the proper perspective.
  - b. Without knowledge of church history, Christian theology can become more theoretical than practical. Christianity is first and foremost the acts of God in time (and ultimately in Christ) more than it is morality, doctrinal formulations, or a worldview.
  - c. The study of church history provides perspective on the church's interaction with surrounding culture. Mark Noll gives the example of choice of church music. Almost all the issues we face in the modern era have been addressed at one point or another – politics, art, music, economics, etc.
  - d. The study of church history will make us slower to judge someone a non-Christian too quickly.

---

<sup>339</sup> See the excellent article by Carl R Trueman, "Reckoning with the Past in an Anti-Historical Age," *Themelios* 23.2 (February 1998): 5-21.

- e. But perhaps the most valuable thing about church history for Christians is that it provides perspective on the study of the Scriptures cf. 2 Tim 3:14-15.

I'll begin with a couple of helpful scholarly quotes and move on to flesh out how church history provides perspective on our study of the Bible.

The discipline of church history cannot by itself establish the rightness or wrongness of what ought to be believed. On the other hand, Evangelicals in particular, precisely because of their high view of Scripture, have often been content to know far too little about the history of the church; and efforts to overcome this common ignorance can only be commended. Thoughtful Christians who sincerely seek to base their beliefs on the Scriptures will be a little nervous if the beliefs they think are biblical form no part of the major streams of tradition throughout the history of the church; and, therefore, historical theology, though it cannot in itself justify a belief system, not only sharpens the categories and informs the debate but serves as a major checkpoint to help us prevent uncontrolled speculation, purely private theological articulation, and overly imaginative exegesis.<sup>340</sup>

If a contemporary believer wants to know the will of God as revealed in Scripture on any of these matters, or on thousands more, it is certainly prudent to study the Bible carefully for oneself. But it is just as prudent to look for help, to realize that the question I am bringing to Scripture has doubtless been asked before and will have been addressed by others who were at least as saintly as I am, at least as patient in pondering the written Word, and at least as knowledgeable about the human heart.<sup>341</sup>

- 1) From our historical vantage we can see that interpretations of the past, even those that were thought to be very persuasive, were in fact distortions of Scripture. This will function to make us more tentative about our own interpretative conclusions, conclusions we are drawing for the present time.
- 2) It provides perspective on what is important vs. what is more or less secondary. What is essential and what is non-essential? We will see threads running through the tapestry of church history that reemerge or persist in successive eras – they are not fads, but “classics” of the Christian faith.
- 3) It helps us to realize how dependent we are on Christians who have gone before us for many of the doctrines that for us are forgone

---

<sup>340</sup> Carson, “Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture,” 18.

<sup>341</sup> Noll, *Turning Points*, 16.

conclusions but historically had to be fought for in order to protect the Christian faith from the onslaught of false teaching.