An Introduction to Church History

Class Notes

Compiled and presented by:
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How much do you know about church history? Fifteen key names from church history are hidden in the word-search. Each name completes one of the sentences below. Feel free to use a hymnal or Bible. If you don’t know an answer, guess!

1. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down.
2. Early Christians met in houses (Romans 16:5).
3. Emperor Constantine claimed that he saw a cross in the sky.
5. One bishop accused Hildegard of Bingen, a mystic, of heresy.
6. Many Protestants call John Wycliffe “the Morning Star of the Reformation.”
7. Martin Luther wrote “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”
8. John Calvin wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion.
9. Menno Simons was an early Anabaptist leader.
10. Bartolome de Las Casas fought his country’s exploitation of Native Americans.
11. Charles Wesley, who wrote the hymn “And Can It Be”, was part of a “Holy Club” at Oxford University.
12. Charles Spurgeon was an English pastor in the mid-1800s.
13. Karl Barth’s commentary on Romans criticized the liberal theology of the 1800s.
15. Billy Graham has been called the “best loved American Christian.”
Christians have a special interest in history because the very foundations of the faith which they profess are rooted in history. Church history is thus a matter of profound interest to the Christian who desires to be enlightened concerning his spiritual ancestry.

The Definition Of Church History

The English word for history came from the Greek word *historia*, which is derived from the Greek verb *historeo*. This word was used by the Attic Greeks and originally meant to learn by inquiry or investigation. It denoted the activities of one seeking knowledge. The word is used by Paul in Galatians 1:18 to describe his interview with Peter in Jerusalem. Like any true historian, he sought to learn about Christianity by a process of inquiry.

The Greeks subsequently began to use the word *historikos* the product of inquiry, the record; whereas the other indicated the process by which the record is made.

The German noun *geschichte*, a form of the verb *geschehen*, which means to happen, refers to history as event rather than to history as a process or a product.

From all this we see that the word history refers to event, documents, process or product. The crowning of Charlemagne in 800 as emperor of the Romans was an historic event. The historian’s study of the sources to ascertain the facts of the event is process, and the account of those facts is history as product. History as event is absolute and cannot be changed once it happens, but history as sources, process and product is relative and subject to change.

History may be defined as the interpreted record of the socially significant human past, based upon organized data collected by the scientific method from archaeological literary or living sources.

Church history, then, is the interpreted record of the origin, progress and impact of Christianity upon human society, based upon organized data gathered by scientific method from archaeological, documentary or living sources. It is the interpreted, organized story of the redemption of man and the earth.

The Value Of Church History

Why does church history matter? Sally carefully labels her paper, “Church History.” As Charlie Brown glances over her shoulder, Sally considers the subject. “When writing about church history,” Sally scribbles, “we have to go back to the very beginning. Our pastor was born in 1930.”

Charles Schulz’s comic strip may be amusing, but it isn’t too far from the truth. In sermons and devotional books, we encounter names like Augustine, Calvin, Spurgeon,
and Moody. Their stories interest us, but we have a tough time fitting the stories together. The average Christian’s knowledge of church history ends with the apostles and doesn’t begin again until the twentieth century.

Still, Christian history deeply affects every Christian. It affects how we read the Bible. It affects how we view our governments. It affects how we worship. The church’s history is our family history. Past Christians are our mothers and fathers, our aunts and uncles, our in-laws and (in some cases) our outlaws!

When a child in Sunday School asks, “How could Jesus be God and still be like me?” she’s asking a question that, in AD 325, three hundred church leaders discussed in a little village named Nicaea (modern Iznik, Turkey). Somehow, what those leaders decided will influence your answer.

If you wonder, “Why are there so many different churches?” the answer is woven somewhere within 2,000 years of struggles and skirmishes. When you read words like “predestined” or “justifies” in Paul’s letter to the Romans, it isn’t only Paul and your pastor who affect what you believe. Augustine, Aquinas, Martin Luther, and Jonathan Edwards also influence your response, whether you realize it or not. Still, the story of Christianity can seem like a vast, dreary landscape, littered with a few interesting anecdotes and a lot of dull dates.

What we don’t recognize sometimes is that church history is a story. It’s an exciting story about ordinary people that God has used in extraordinary ways. Yet, most church members will never read Justo González’s thousand-page The Story of Christianity. Only the most committed students will wade through all 1,552 pages of Ken Latourette’s A History of Christianity. Fewer still will learn to apply church history to their lives.

That is the purpose of this class, to help you at least get a brief overview of church history. We want to give you a brief glimpse of what God has been doing in the church for the last 2,000 years.

Church history is only a dreary academic exercise in the remembering of facts unless some thought is given to the matter of its value to the Christian. The student who is conscious of the values to be achieved in the study of the history of the Christian Church has a powerful motivation to a real interest in this particular area of human history.

**Church History As A Synthesis**

One of the primary values of church history is that it links the past factual data of the Christian Gospel with the future proclamation and application of that gospel in a present synthesis that creates understanding of our great heritage and inspiration for its further proclamation and application. Church history shows the Spirit of God in action through the Church during the ages of its existence.
Church History As An Explanation Of The Present

We can understand the present much better if we have some knowledge of its roots in the past. The answer to the puzzling query concerning the presence of over two hundred and fifty religious groups in the United States is to be found in church history. The principle of separation found a place early in the history of the Church which the Reformation was to accentuate.

Different beliefs and liturgical practices become more understandable in the light of past history. Methodists kneel at the rail for communion because for many years the Methodists constituted a church within the Anglican Church, and Wesley, who was reluctant to break with the Anglican Church, followed its liturgical customs. In contrast, Presbyterians are served the Communion in their seats.

Present-day problems of the Church are often illuminated by study of the past. The refusal of most modern dictatorial rulers to permit their people to have any private interests separate from their public life in the state is more easily understood if one remembers that the Roman emperors did not think that one could have a private religion without endangering the existence of the state.

Church History As A Guide

The correction of existing evils within the Church or the avoidance of error and false practice is another value of the study of the past of the Church. The present is usually the product of the past and the seed of the future. Paul reminds us in 1Corinthians 10:6, 11 that the events of the past are to help us avoid the evil and emulate the good. Ignorance of the Bible and the history of the Church is a major reason why many advocate false theologies or bad practices.

Church History As A Motivating Force

Church history also offers edification, inspiration or enthusiasm that will stimulate high spiritual life. Paul believed that knowledge of the past would give hope to the Christian life (Romans 15:4). No one can study the brave stand of Ambrose of Milan, in refusing Emperor Theodosius the Communion until he repented of his massacre of the Thessalonian crowd, without being encouraged to stand for Christ against evil in high political or ecclesiastical circles. The industry and drive which enabled Wesley to preach over ten thousand sermons during his life and to travel thousands of miles on horseback is bound to be a rebuke and a challenge to Christians who have much better means for travel and study than Wesley had but do not make adequate use of them.

There is also edification in the process of becoming aware of one’s spiritual ancestry. There is as much need for the Christian to become aware of his spiritual genealogy as there is for the citizen to study the history of his land in order that he might become an intelligent citizen. The Christian ought to be as aware of the main outlines of the growth and development of Christianity as he is of Biblical truth. Then he will have a sense of
being a part of the Body of Christ, which includes a Paul, a Bernard of Clairvaux, and Augustine, a Luther, a Wesley or a Booth.

One who is fearful for the future of the Church in countries where it is now persecuted will become more hopeful as he realizes the indestructible character of the Church in past ages. Neither external persecution nor internal unfaithful officialdom or false theology could stand against the perennial power of renewal that is revealed in the history of revival in the Church. Even secular historians give credit to the Wesleyan revival as the agency which saved England from the equivalent of the French Revolution. The study of church history offers a stabilizing influence in an age of secularism, for one sees the power of God operating in past history.

**Church History As A Practical Tool**

The doctrines of the Trinity, of Christ and of sin, and soteriology will never be properly understood unless one is aware of the history of the period from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Constantinople in 680.

An abundance of illustrative material for his sermons also awaits the efforts of the diligent student of church history who intends to preach.

**Church History As A Liberalizing Force**

Finally, church history has a cultural value. The history of Western civilization is incomplete and unintelligible without some understanding of the role of the Christian religion in the development of that civilization. The history of man can never be divorced from the history of his religious life.

The man who has studied the history of the Church will never again be denominationally provincial. He will sense the unity of the true Body of Christ throughout the ages. He will also be humble as he encounters the giants of his spiritual past and realizes how much he owes to them. He will become more tolerant of those who differ with him on non-essential but who, with him, accept the great basic doctrines of the Faith, such as the vicarious death and resurrection of Christ, which were emphasized by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4.

**The Organization Of Church History**

**Branches Of Church History**

The political element involves the relations between the Church and the state, and the secular environment of the Church. An understanding of the political, social, economic and aesthetic forces at work in history is essential if one is going to interpret church history properly.
The propagation of the Christian faith cannot be ignored. This involves study of foreign missions, home missions and city missions, and the story of any special technique by which the Gospel has been carried to others. The story of missions has its heroes and martyrs and is an integral part of the story of the Church. The essential person-to-person nature of the spread of Christianity and the unlimited possibilities for a Church faithful to its Lord is shown in a study of the propagation of the faith.

This propagation has many times brought persecution to the Church. Study of persecution reveals the truth of Tertullian’s dictum that the blood of the martyr is often the seed of the Church. This branch of church history, far from leading to discouragement, shows rather that the Church has made its greatest advances in periods of persecution or immediately thereafter.

Polity is the study of the government of the Church. It necessitates consideration of the government of the Church by bishops (episcopacy), elders (Presbyterianism), the congregation in a system of direct rather than representative democracy (congregationalism), or modifications of these three systems. Consideration of the position of the minister and the growth of the distinction between clergy and laity is also a part of this topic. Discipline and forms of worship (liturgy) are related to polity.

Polemics, concerns the struggle of the Church to fight heresy and to think out its own position, is an important aspect of the development of the Church. It involves study of the opposing heresies and of the formulation of dogma, creeds and Christian literature in answer to heresies. The literature of the Church Fathers is a particularly rich field for the study of polemics.

Still another branch of our study may be called praxis. It is the consideration of the practical outworking in life of the Christian faith. The home life, charitable work and the influence of Christianity upon the life of the day are parts of this branch of Church history.

Christianity could not continue to grow unless it gave attention to the problem of presentation or propaganda. This involves study of the educational system of the Church, its hymnology, liturgy, architecture, art and preaching.

**Periods Of Church History**

We must remember that history is “a seamless garment.” By this Maitland meant that history is a continuous stream of events within the framework of time and space. For that reason periodization of church history is merely an artificial device to cut the data of history into easily handled segments and to aid the student in remembering the essential facts. Because the division of history into periods does aid the memory, does help one to deal with one segment at a time and does present the view of life in that period, it is
worthwhile to organize history chronologically. The following is a chronological order of some of the main events in my estimation of church history:

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>64</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Titus Destroys Jerusalem</td>
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<td>C. 150</td>
<td>Justin Martyr Writes His <em>Apology</em></td>
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<td>C. 156</td>
<td>The Martyrdom of Polycarp</td>
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<td>177</td>
<td>Irenaeus Becomes Bishop of Lyons</td>
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<td>C. 196</td>
<td>Tertullian Begins to Write Christian Books</td>
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<td>C. 205</td>
<td>Origen Begins Writing</td>
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<td>Cyprian Writes <em>On the Unity of the Church</em></td>
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<td>Anthony Begins His Life as a Hermit</td>
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<td>312</td>
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<td>432</td>
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<td>529</td>
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<td>563</td>
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<td>590</td>
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<td>664</td>
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<td>716</td>
<td>Boniface Sets Out as Missionary</td>
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<td>731</td>
<td>The Venerable Bede Completes His <em>Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation</em></td>
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<td>732</td>
<td>The Battle of Tours</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>Charlemagne Crowned Emperor</td>
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<td>863</td>
<td>Cyril and Methodius Evangelize Slavs</td>
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<td>909</td>
<td>Monastery Established at Cluny</td>
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<td>988</td>
<td>Conversion of Vladimir, Prince of Russia</td>
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<td>1054</td>
<td>The East-West Schism</td>
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<td>1093</td>
<td>Anselm Becomes Archbishop of Canterbury</td>
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<td>1095</td>
<td>Pope Urban II Launches the First Crusade</td>
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<td>1115</td>
<td>Bernard Founds the Monastery at Clairvaux</td>
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<td>C. 1150</td>
<td>Universities of Paris and Oxford Founded</td>
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<td>1173</td>
<td>Peter Waldo Founds the Waldensians</td>
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<td>1206</td>
<td>Francis of Assisi Renounces Wealth</td>
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<td>1215</td>
<td>The Fourth Lateran Council</td>
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<td>1273</td>
<td>Thomas Aquinas Completes Work on <em>Summa Theologica</em></td>
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<td>1321</td>
<td>Dante Completes <em>The Divine Comedy</em></td>
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<td>1378</td>
<td>Catherine of Siena Goes to Rome to Heal the Great Schism</td>
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<td>C. 1380</td>
<td>Wycliffe Oversees English Bible Translation</td>
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<td>1415</td>
<td>John Hus Burned at the Stake</td>
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1456 Johann Gutenberg Produces the First Printed Bible
1478 Establishment of the Spanish Inquisition
1498 Savonarola Executed
1512 Michelangelo Completes the Sistine Chapel Ceiling
1517 Martin Luther Posts His Ninety-five Theses
1523 Zwingli Leads Swiss Reformation
1525 Anabaptist Movement Begins
1534 Henry VIII’s Act of Supremacy
1536 John Calvin Publishes *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*
1540 The Pope Approves the Jesuits
1545 Opening of the Council of Trent
1549 Cranmer Produces the Book of Common Prayer
1559 John Knox Returns to Scotland to Lead Reformation
1572 Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre
1608-1609 John Smyth Baptizes the First Baptists
1611 Publication of the King James Bible
1620 Pilgrims Sign the Mayflower Compact
1628 Comenius Driven From His Homeland
1646 The Westminster Confession of Faith
1648 George Fox Founds the Society of Friends
1662 Rembrandt Completes the *Return of the Prodigal Son*
1675 Philip Jacob Spencer Publishes *Pia Desideria*
1678 John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Published
1685 The Births of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel
1707 Publication of Isaac Watt’s *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*
1727 Awakening at Herrnhut Launches Moravian Brethren
1735 Great Awakening Under Jonathan Edwards
1738 John Wesley’s Conversion
1780 Robert Raikes Begins Sunday Schools
1793 William Carey Sails for India
1807 The British Parliament Votes to Abolish the Slave Trade
1811 The Campbells Begin the Disciples of Christ
1812 Adoniram and Ann Judson Sail for India
1816 Richard Allen Founds African Methodist Episcopal Church
1817 Elizabeth Fry Begins Ministry to Women in Prison
1830 Charles G. Finney’s Urban Revivals Begin
C. 1830 John Nelson Darby Helps Start Plymouth Brethren
1833 John Keble’s Sermon “National Apostasy” Initiates the Oxford Movement
1854 Hudson Taylor Arrives in China
1854 Soren Kierkegaard Publishes Attacks on Christendom
1854 Charles Haddon Spurgeon Becomes Pastor in London
1855 Dwight L. Moody’s Conversion
1856 David Livingstone Publishes *Missionary Travels*
1865 William Booth Founds the Salvation Army
1870 Pope Pius IX Proclaims the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility
1886 Student Volunteer Movement Begins
1906  Azusa Street Revival Launches Pentecostalism
1910-1915  Publication of *The Fundamentals* Launches Fundamentalist Movement
1919  Karl Barth’s *Commentary on Romans* Is Published
1921  First Christian Radio Broadcast
1934  Cameron Townsend Begins Summer Institute of Linguistics
1945  Dietrich Bonhoeffer Executed by Nazis
1948  World Council of Churches Is Formed
1949  Billy Graham’s Los Angeles Crusade
1960  Beginnings of the Modern Charismatic Renewal
1962  Second Vatican Council Begins
1963  Martin Luther King, Jr., Leads March on Washington
1966-1976  Chinese Church Grows Despite Cultural Revolution

**The Age Of The Apostles**

The beginning of the Christian Church is reckoned from the great day on which the Holy Ghost came down, according as our Lord had promised to His Apostles. At that time, "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven," were gathered together at Jerusalem, to keep the Feast of Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks), which was one of the three holy seasons at which God required His people to appear before Him in the place which He had chosen (Deuteronomy 16:16). Many of these devout men there converted by what they then saw and heard, to believe the Gospel; and, when they returned to their own countries, they carried back with them the news of the wonderful things which had taken place at Jerusalem. After this, the Apostles went forth "into all the world," as their Master had ordered them, to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The Book of Acts tells us something of what they did, and we may learn something more about it from the Epistles. And, although this is but a small part of the whole, it will give us a notion of the rest, if we consider that, while St. Paul was preaching in Asia Minor, Greece, and at Rome, the other Apostles were busily doing the same work in other countries.

We must remember, too, the constant coming and going which in those days took place throughout the world, how Jews from all quarters went up to keep the Passover and other feasts at Jerusalem; how the great Roman empire stretched from our own island of Britain as far as Persia and Ethiopia, and people from all parts of it were continually going to Rome and returning. We must consider how merchants travelled from country to country on account of their trade; how soldiers were sent into all quarters of the empire and were moved about from one country to another. And from these things we may get some understanding of the way in which the knowledge of the Gospel would be spread, when once it had taken root in the great cities of Jerusalem and Rome. Thus it came to pass, that, by the end of the first hundred years after our Savior’s birth something was known of the Christian faith throughout all the Roman empire, and even in countries beyond it; and if in many cases, only a very little was known, still even that was a gain, and served as a preparation for more.
The last chapter of the Acts leaves St. Paul at Rome, waiting for his trial on account of the things which the Jews had laid to his charge. We find from the Epistles that he afterwards got his liberty, and returned into the East. There is reason to suppose that he also visited Spain, as he had spoken of doing in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter 15: 28); and it has been thought by some that he even preached in Britain; but this does not seem likely. He was at last imprisoned again at Rome, where the wicked Emperor Nero persecuted the Christians very cruelly; and it is believed that both Peter and Paul were put to death there in the year of our Lord 68. The bishops of Rome afterwards set up claims to great power and honour, because they said that Peter was the first bishop of their church, and that they were his successors. But although we may reasonably believe that the Apostle was martyred at Rome, there does not appear to be any good ground for thinking that he had been settled there as bishop of the city.

All the Apostles, except John, are supposed to have been martyred (or put to death for the sake of the Gospel). James the Less, who was bishop of Jerusalem, was killed by the Jews in an uproar, about the year 62. Soon after this, the Romans sent their armies into Judea, and, after a bloody war, they took the city of Jerusalem, and destroyed the Temple.

Thirty years after Herod's time another cruel emperor, Domitian, raised a fresh persecution against the Christians (AD 95). Among those who suffered were some of his own near relations; for the Gospel had now made its way among the great people of the earth, as well as among the poor, who were the first to listen to it. There is a story that the emperor was told that some persons of the family of David were living in the Holy Land, and that he sent for them, because he was afraid lest the Jews should set them up as princes, and should rebel against his government. They were two grandchildren of St. Jude, who was one of our Lord's kinsmen after the flesh, and therefore belonged to the house of David and the old kings of Judah. But these two were plain countrymen, who lived quietly and contentedly on their little farm, and were not likely to lead a rebellion, or to claim earthly kingdoms. And when they were carried before the emperor, they showed him their hands, which were rough and horny from working in the fields; and in answer to his questions about the kingdom of Christ, they said that it was not of this world, but spiritual and heavenly, and that it would appear at the end of the world, when the Saviour would come again to judge both the quick and the dead. So the emperor saw that there was nothing to fear from them, and he let them go.

It was during Domitian's persecution that St. John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he saw the visions which are described in his "Revelation." All the other Apostles had been long dead, and St. John had lived many years at Ephesus, where he governed the churches of the country around. After his return from Patmos he went about to all these churches, that he might repair the hurt which they had suffered in the persecution. In one of the towns which he visited, he noticed a young man of very pleasing looks, and called him forward, and desired the bishop of the place to take care of him. The bishop did so, and, after having properly trained the youth, he baptized and confirmed him. But when this had been done, the bishop thought that he need not watch over him so carefully as before, and the young man fell into vicious company, and went on from bad to worse, until at length he became the head of a band of robbers, who kept the whole country in
terror. When the Apostle next visited the town, he asked after the charge which he had put into the bishop's hands. The bishop, with shame and grief, answered that the young man was dead, and, on being further questioned he explained that he meant dead in sins, and told all the story. John, after having blamed him because he had not taken more care, asked where the robbers were to be found, and set off on horseback for their haunt, where he was seized by some of the band, and was carried before the captain. The young man, on seeing him, knew him at once, and could not bear his look, but ran away to hide himself. But the Apostle called him back, told him that there was yet hope for him through Christ, and spoke in such a moving way that the robber agreed to return to the town. There he was once more received into the Church as a penitent; and he spent the rest of his days in repentance for his sins, and in thankfulness for the mercy which had been shown to him.

John, in his old age, was much troubled by false teachers, who had begun to corrupt the Gospel. These persons are called "heretics", and their doctrines are called "heresy" from a Greek word which means "to choose", because they chose to follow their own fancies, instead of receiving the Gospel as the Apostles and the Church taught it. Simon the sorcerer, who is mentioned in the eighth chapter of the Acts, is counted as the first heretic, and even in the time of the Apostles a number of others arose, such as Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander, who are mentioned by Paul (1 Timothy 1:19f; 2 Timothy 2:17f). These earliest heretics were mostly of the kind called Gnostics,--a word which means that they pretended to be more knowing than ordinary Christians, and perhaps Paul may have meant them especially when he warned Timothy against "science" (or knowledge) "falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20). Their doctrines were a strange mixture of Jewish and heathen notions with Christianity; and it is curious that some of the very strangest of their opinions have been brought up again from time to time by people who fancied that they had found out something new, while they had only fallen into old errors, which had been condemned by the Church hundreds of years before.

St. John lived to about the age of a hundred. He was at last so weak that he could not walk into the church; so he was carried in, and used to say continually to his people, "Little children, love one another." Some of them, after a time, began to be tired of hearing this, and asked him why he repeated the words so often, and said nothing else to them. The Apostle answered, "Because it is the Lord's commandment, and if this be done it is enough."

The Fire In Rome

Without the Roman Empire, Christianity might never have spread so successfully. You could say the empire was a tinderbox awaiting the spark of Christian faith.

The empire’s unifying elements aided in the expansion of the Gospel: Roman roads made travel easier than it had ever been before; throughout the realm, people spoke Greek; and the mighty Roman army kept peace. As a result of the increased mobility, pockets of migrant craftsmen settled for a time in a major city—Rome, Corinth, Athens, or Alexandria—then moved on to another.
Christianity stepped into an open climate, religiously. In a sort of “new age” movement many people had begun to embrace eastern religions—the worship of Isis, Dionysus, Mithras, Cybele, and others. Worshipers searched for new beliefs, but some of these religions had been declared illegal, because they were suspected of offensive rituals. Other faiths were officially recognized—like Judaism, which had enjoyed a protected position since the days of Julius Caesar, though its monotheism and biblical revelation set it apart from the other ways of worship.

Taking full advantage of the situation, Christian missionaries traveled throughout the empire. In the Jewish synagogues, craftsmen’s quarters, and tenements, they shared their message and won converts. Soon all the major cities, including the imperial capital, had churches.

Christians challenged the social order. Paul had declared, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). In other words, every person matters whatever his or her social status. Early Christians lived out Paul’s words. The results offended the Romans.

The church challenged the entire structure of Roman society by welcoming the lower classes and by valuing every human life. Roman law prevented slaves from inheriting property. Ancient custom treated women as lesser beings. Christians welcomed slaves and women as equals. If a Roman father didn’t want his child, he left the infant alone in a field, to die. By adopting abandoned infants, Christians defiled the Roman father’s refusal to raise unwanted children.

Rome, center of the empire, drew people like magnet. Paul had wanted to visit the city (Romans 1:10-12), and by the time he wrote his letter to the Roman church, he could greet many Christians there by name (Romans 16:3-15)—perhaps because he had met them on his travels.

When Paul arrived in Rome, he did so in chains. The Book of Acts closes with the apostle under rather loose house arrest, receiving guests and teaching them.

Tradition tells us that Peter, too, spent time with the Roman church. Though we have no definite numbers on it, we can guess that under the leadership of these two men the church grew strong, including nobles and soldiers as well as craftsmen and servants.

For three decades the Roman officials perceived Christianity as a branch of Judaism—a legal religion—and had little interest in persecuting the new Jewish “sect.” But many Jews scandalized by the new faith, went on the attack, even trying to draft Rome into the conflict.

Roman obliviousness to the situation may be shown in the report of the Roman historian Tacitus. In one of the tenements of Rome he reports a disturbance among the Jews at the instigation of a certain “Chrestus.” Tacitus could have misheard; the people were probably arguing about Christos, that is, Christ.
By A.D. 64, some Roman officials had begun to realize that Christianity differed significantly from Judaism. The Jews rejected the Christians, and more and more others saw Christianity as an illegal religion. Even before Rome’s fatal fire, public opinion may have begun to turn against the fledgling faith. Though the Romans eagerly accepted new gods, Christianity was not willing to share honors with any other faith. As Christians challenged the deep-set polytheism of Rome, the empire struck back.

On July 19th a fire broke out in a working-class section of Rome. For seven days it raged, consuming block after block of crowded tenements. Ten of the fourteen wards were destroyed, and many people died.

Legend has it that Emperor Nero “fiddled” while Rome burned. Many of his contemporaries thought Nero was responsible for the fire. When the city was rebuilt, at great public expense, Nero seized a substantial hunk of land for himself and built his Golden Palace on the site. The fire may have been a quick way to achieve urban renewal.

Deflecting the blame from himself, the emperor established a convenient scapegoat—the Christians. They had set the fire, he charged. As a result, Nero vowed to hunt them down and have them killed.

The first wave of Roman persecution lasted from shortly after the fire until Nero’s death in 68. With barbaric bloodthirstiness, he had Christians crucified and set afire. Their bodies lined the roman roads, providing torchlight. Christians dressed in animal skins were mauled by dogs in the arena. According to tradition, both Peter and Paul became martyrs in Nero’s persecution; Paul was beheaded, and Peter was crucified upside-down.

But persecution occurred sporadically and remained localized. An emperor might heat up the persecution for ten years or so, but a time of peace would follow, only to be abruptly broken when a local governor lashed out at the Christians in his area—with Rome’s blessing. This pattern lasted for two and a half centuries.

Tertullian, a second-century Christian writer, said, “Blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Amazingly, each time persecution erupted, there were more Christians to persecute. In his first letter, Peter had encouraged Christians to endure suffering, confident of the ultimate victory and rule that would be established in Christ 1 Peter 5:8-11). The growth of the church under such pressure in part proved his words.

Polycarp (Circa 156)

Polycarp of Smyrna was a prominent pastor who had known the apostle John. When several Christians were executed at the arena in Smyrna, the crowd began to chant, “Away with the atheists! Find Polycarp!” (Because they rejected Roman gods, Jews and
Christians were often called “atheists.” The authorities tortured one of Polycarp’s hiding place. The elderly pastor surrendered peacefully.

At the judgment seat, the governor said, “Have respect for your old age. Say, ‘Away with the atheists!’”

The proconsul tried again: “Take the oath, and I shall release you. Curse Christ!”

The bishop stood firm. “Eighty-six years have I served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?”

In the arena, the exchange continued between the bishop and the proconsul. At one point, Polycarp chided his inquisitor: “If you…pretend that you do not know who I am, listen plainly: I am a Christian. If you want to learn the teaching of Christianity, set a day and give me a hearing.”

The proconsul threatened to throw him to the wild beasts. “Call them,” said Polycarp. “If this were a change from the bad to the good, I would consider it, but not a change from the better to the worse.”

Threatened with fire, Polycarp countered, “Your fire burns for an hour and goes out, but the fire of the coming judgment is eternal.” Polycarp was burned alive.

**St Ignatius (AD 116)**

When our Lord ascended into Heaven, He left the government of His Church to the Apostles. We are told that during the forty days between His rising from the grave and His ascension, He gave commandments unto the Apostles, and spoke of the things belonging to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:2f). Thus they knew what they were to do when their Master should be no longer with them; and one of the first things which they did, even without waiting until His promise of sending the Holy Ghost should be fulfilled, was to choose Matthias into the place which had been left empty by the fall of the traitor Judas (Acts 1:15-26).

After this we find that they appointed other persons to help them in their work. First, they appointed the deacons to take care of the poor and to assist in other services. Then they appointed presbyters (or elders), to undertake the charge of congregations. Afterwards, we find Paul sending Timothy to Ephesus, and Titus into the island of Crete, with power to "ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5), and to govern all the churches within a large country. Thus, then, three kinds (or orders) of ministers of the Church are mentioned in the Acts and Epistles. The deacons are lowest, the presbyters, or elders, are next; and, above these, there is a higher order, made of the Apostles themselves, with such persons as Timothy and Titus, who had to look after a great number of presbyters and deacons, and were also the chief spiritual pastors (or shepherds) of the people who were under the care of these presbyters and deacons. In the New Testament, the name of "bishops,"
(which means "overseers") is sometimes given to the Apostles and other clergy of the highest order, and sometimes to the presbyters, but after a time it was given only to the highest order, and when the Apostles were dead, the bishops had the chief government of the Church. It has since been found convenient that some bishops should be placed above others, and should be called by higher titles, such as archbishops and patriarchs, but these all belong to the same order of bishops; just as in a parish, although the rector and the curate have different titles, and one of them is above the other, they are both most commonly presbyters (or, as we now say, priests), and so they both belong to the same "order" in the ministry.

One of the most famous among the early bishops was St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, the place where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Antioch was the chief city of Syria, and was so large that it had more than two hundred thousand inhabitants. Peter himself is said to have been its bishop for some years; and, although this is perhaps a mistake, it is worth remembering, because we shall find by-and-by that much was said about the bishops of Antioch being Peter's successors, as well as the bishops of Rome.

Ignatius had known John, and was made bishop of Antioch about thirty years before the Apostle's death. He had governed his church for forty years or more, when the Emperor Trajan came to Antioch. In the Roman history, Trajan is described as one of the best among the emperors; but he did not treat the Christians well. He seems never to have thought that the Gospel could possibly be true, and thus he did not take the trouble to inquire what the Christians really believed or did. They were obliged in those days to hold their worship in secret, and mostly by night, or very early in the morning, because it would not have been safe to meet openly; and hence, the heathens, who did not know what was done at their meetings, were tempted to fancy all manner of shocking things, such as that the Christians practised magic; that they worshipped the head of an ass; that they offered children in sacrifice; and that they ate human flesh! It is not likely that the Emperor Trajan believed such foolish tales as these; and, when he DID make some inquiry about the ways of the Christians, he heard nothing but what was good of them. But still he might think that there was some mischief behind; and he might fear lest the secret meetings of the Christians should have something to do with plots against his government; and so, as I have said, he was no friend to them.

When Trajan came to Antioch, St. Ignatius was carried before him. The emperor asked what evil spirit possessed him, so that he not only broke the laws by refusing to serve the gods of Rome, but persuaded others to do the same. Ignatius answered, that he was not possessed by any evil spirit; that he was a servant of Christ; that by His help he defeated the malice of evil spirits; and that he bore his God and Saviour within his heart. After some more questions and answers, the emperor ordered that he should be carried in chains to Rome, and there should be devoured by wild beasts. When Ignatius heard this terrible sentence, he was so far from being frightened, that he burst forth into thankfulness and rejoicing, because he was allowed to suffer for his Saviour, and for the deliverance of his people.

It was a long and toilsome journey, over land and sea, from Antioch to Rome, and an old man, such as Ignatius, was ill able to bear it, especially as winter was coming on. He was to be chained, too, and the soldiers who had the charge of him behaved very rudely and
cruelly to him. And no doubt the emperor thought that, by sending so venerable a bishop in this way to suffer so fearful and so disgraceful a death (to which only the very lowest wretches were usually sentenced), he should terrify other Christians into forsaking their faith. But instead of this, the courage and the patience with which St Ignatius bore his sufferings gave the Christians fresh spirit to endure whatever might come on them.

The news that the holy bishop of Antioch was to be carried to Rome soon spread, and at many places on the way the bishops, clergy, and people flocked together, that they might see him, and pray and talk with him, and receive his blessing. And when he could find time, he wrote letters to various churches, exhorting them to stand fast in the faith, to be at peace among themselves, to obey the bishops who were set over them, and to advance in all holy living. One of the letters was written to the Church at Rome, and was sent on by some persons who were travelling by a shorter way. St. Ignatius begs, in this letter, that the Romans will not try to save him from death. "I am the wheat of God," he says, "let me be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather do ye encourage the beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body, so that, when dead, I may not be troublesome to any one." He even said that, if the lions should hang back, he would himself provoke them to attack him. It would not be right for ordinary people to speak in this way, and the Church has always disapproved of those who threw themselves in the way of persecution. But a holy man who had served God for so many years as Ignatius, might well speak in a way which could not become ordinary Christians. When he was called to die for his people and for the truth of Christ, he might even take it as a token of God's favour, and might long for his deliverance from the troubles and the trials of this world, as Paul said of himself, that he "had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23).

He reached Rome just in time for some games which were to take place a little before Christmas; for the Romans were cruel enough to amuse themselves with setting wild beasts to tear and devour men, in vast places called amphitheatres, at their public games. When the Christians of Rome heard that Ignatius was near the city, great numbers of them went out to meet him, and they said that they would try to persuade the people in the amphitheatre to see that he might not be put to death. But he entreated, as he had before done in his letter, that they would do nothing to hinder him from glorifying God by his death; and he knelt down with them, and prayed that they might continue in faith and love, and that the persecution might soon come to an end. As it was the last day of the games, and they were nearly over, he was then hurried into the amphitheatre (called the Coliseum), which was so large that tens of thousands of people might look on. And in this place (of which the ruins are still to be seen), St Ignatius was torn to death by wild beasts, so that only a few of his larger bones were left, which the Christians took up and conveyed to his own city of Antioch.
Justin Martyr (AD 166)

Although Trajan was no friend to the Gospel, and put St. Ignatius to death, he made a law which must have been a great relief to the Christians. Until then they were liable to be sought out, and any one might inform against them; but Trajan ordered that they should not be sought out, although, if they were discovered, and refused to give up their faith, they were to be punished. The next emperor, too, whose name was Hadrian (AD 117-138) did something to make their condition better; but it was still one of great hardship and danger. Notwithstanding the new laws, any governor of a country, who disliked the Christians, had the power to persecute and vex them cruelly. And the common people among the heathens still believed the horrid stories of their killing children and eating human flesh. If there was a famine or a plague,—if the river Tiber, which runs through Rome, rose above its usual height and did mischief to the neighboring buildings,—or if the emperor's armies were defeated in war, the blame of all was laid on the Christians. It was said that all these things were judgments from the gods, who were angry because the Christians were allowed to live. And then at the public games, such as those at which St. Ignatius was put to death, the people used to cry out, "Throw the Christians to the lions! away with the godless wretches!" For, as the Christians were obliged to hold their worship secretly, and had no images like those of the heathen gods, and did not offer any sacrifices of beasts, as the heathens did, it was thought that they had no God at all, since the heathens could not raise their minds to the thought of that God who is a spirit, and who is not to be worshipped under any bodily shape. It was, therefore, a great relief when the Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138 to 161), who was a mild and gentle old man, ordered that governors and magistrates should not give way to such outcries, and that the Christians should no longer be punished for their religion only, unless they were found to have done wrong in some other way.

There were now many learned men in the Church, and some of these began to write books in defence of their faith. One of them, Athenagoras, had undertaken, while he was a heathen, to show that the Gospel was all a deceit; but when he looked further into the matter, he found that it was very different from what he had fancied; and then he was converted, and, instead of writing against the Gospel, he wrote in favour of it.

Another of these learned men was Justin, who was born at Samaria, and was trained in all the wisdom of the Greeks; for the Greeks, as they were left without such light as God had given to the Jews, set themselves to seek out wisdom in all sorts of ways. And, as they had no certain truth from heaven to guide them, they were divided into a number of different parties, such as the Epicureans, and the Stoics, who disputed with St. Paul at Athens (Acts 17:18). These all called themselves "philosophers," (which means, "lovers of wisdom"); and each kind of them thought to be wiser than all the rest. Justin, then, having a strong desire to know the truth, tried one kind of philosophy after another, but could not find rest for his spirit in any of them.

One day, as he was walking thoughtfully on the seashore, he observed an old man of grave and mild appearance, who was following him closely, and at length entered into talk with him. The old man told Justin that it was of no use to search after wisdom in the books of the philosophers, and went on to speak of God the maker of all things, of the
prophecies which He had given to men in the time of the Old Testament, and how they had been fulfilled in the life and death of the blessed Jesus. Thus Justin was brought to the knowledge of the Gospel; and the more he learnt of it, the more was he convinced of its truth, as he came to know how pure and holy its doctrines and its rules were, and as he saw the love which Christians bore towards each other, and the patience and firmness with which they endured sufferings and death for their Master's sake. And now, although he still called himself a philosopher, and wore the long cloak which was the common dress of philosophers, the wisdom which he taught was not heathen but Christian wisdom. He lived mostly at Rome, where scholars flocked to him in great numbers. And he wrote books in defence of the Gospel against heathens, Jews, and heretics, or false Christians.

The old Emperor Antoninus Pius, under whom the Christians had been allowed to live in peace and safety, died in the year 161, and was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, whom he had adopted as his son. Marcus Aurelius was not only one of the best emperors, but in many ways was one of the best of the heathens. He had a great character for gentleness, kindness, and justice, and he was fond of books, and liked to have philosophers and learned men about him. But, unhappily, these people gave him a very bad notion of Christianity, and, as he knew no more of it than what they told him, he took a strong dislike to it. And thus, although he was just and kind to his other subjects, the Christians suffered more under his reign than they had ever done before. All the misfortunes that took place, such as rebellions, defeats in war, plague, and scarcity, were laid to the blame of the Christians; and the emperor himself seems to have thought that they were in fault, as he made some new laws against them.

Now the success which Justin had as a teacher at Rome had long raised the envy and malice of the heathen philosophers; and, when these new laws against the Christians came out, one Crescens, a philosopher of the kind called "Cynics", or "doggish" (on account of their snarling, currish ways), contrived that Justin should be carried before a judge, on the charge of being a Christian. The judge questioned him as to his belief, and as to the meetings of the Christians; to which Justin answered that he believed in one God and in the Saviour Christ, the Son of God, but he refused to say anything which could betray his brethren to the persecutors. The judge then threatened him with scourging and death: but Justin replied that the sufferings of this world were nothing to the glory which Christ had promised to His people in the world to come. Then he and the others who had been brought up for trial with him were asked whether they would offer sacrifice to the gods of the heathen, and as they refused to do this, and to forsake their faith, they were all beheaded (AD 166). And on account of the death which he thus suffered for the Gospel, Justin has ever since been especially styled "The Martyr."
The Emperor Marcus Aurelius died in 181, and the Church was little troubled by persecution for the following twenty years.

About this time a false teacher named Montanus made much noise in the world. He was born in Phrygia, and seems to have been crazed in his mind. He used to fall into fits, and while in them, he uttered ravings which were taken for prophecies, or messages from heaven: and some women who followed him also pretended to be prophetesses. These people taught a very strict way of living, and thus many persons who wished to lead holy lives were deceived into running after them. One of these was Tertullian, of Carthage, in Africa, a very clever and learned man, who had been converted from heathenism, and had written some books in defence of the Gospel, but he was of a proud and impatient temper, and did not rightly consider how our Lord Himself had said that there would always be a mixture of evil with the good in His Church on earth (Matthew 13:38, 48). And hence, when Montanus pretended to set up a new church, in which there should be none but good and holy people, Tertullian fell into the snare, and left the true Church to join the Montanists (as the followers of Montanus were called). From that time he wrote very bitterly against the Church; but he still continued to defend the Gospel in his books against Jews and heathens, and all kinds of false teachers, except Montanus. And when he was dead, his good deeds were remembered more than his fall, so that, with all his faults, his name has always been held in respect.

After more than twenty years of peace, there were cruel persecutions in some places, under the reign of Severus. The most famous of the martyrs who then suffered were Perpetua and her companions, who belonged to the same country with Tertullian, and perhaps to his own city, Carthage. Perpetua was a young married lady, and had a little baby only a few weeks old. Her father was a heathen, but she herself had been converted, and was a "catechumen"-- which was the name given to converts who had not yet been baptized, but were in a course of "catechising", or training for baptism. When Perpetua had been put into prison, her father went to see her, in the hope that he might persuade her to give up her faith. "Father," she said, "you see this vessel standing here; can you call it by any other than its right name?" He answered, "No." "Neither," said Perpetua, "can I call myself anything else than what I am--a Christian." On hearing this, her father flew at her in such anger that it seemed as if he would tear out her eyes; but she stood so quietly that he could not bring himself to hurt her, and he went away and did not come again for some time.

In the meanwhile Perpetua and some of her companions were baptized; and at her baptism she prayed for grace to bear whatever sufferings might be in store for her. The prison in which she and the others were shut up was a horrible dungeon, where Perpetua suffered much from the darkness, the crowded state of the place, the heat and closeness of the air, and the rude behaviour of the guards. But most of all she was distressed about her poor little child, who was separated from her, and was pining away. Some kind Christians, however, gave money to the keepers of the prison, and got leave for Perpetua and her friends to spend some hours of the day in a lighter part of the building, where her
child was brought to see her. And after a while she took him to be always with her, and then she felt as cheerful as if she had been in a palace.

The martyrs were comforted by dreams, which served to give them courage and strength to bear their sufferings, by showing them visions of blessedness which was to follow. When the day was fixed for their trial, Perpetua's father went again to see her. He begged her to take pity on his old age, to remember all his kindness to her, and how he had loved her best of all his children. He implored her to think of her mother and her brothers, and of the disgrace which would fall on all the family if she were to be put to death as an evildoer. The poor old man shed a flood of tears; he humbled himself before her, kissing her hands, throwing himself at her feet, and calling her Lady instead of Daughter. But, although Perpetua was grieved to the heart, she could only say, "God's pleasure will be done on us. We are not in our own power, but in His."

One day, as the prisoners were at dinner, they were suddenly hurried off to their trial. The market-place, where the judge was sitting, was crowded with people, and when Perpetua was brought forward, her father crept as close to her as he could, holding out her child, and said, "Take pity on your infant." The judge himself entreated her to pity the little one and the old man, and to sacrifice but, painful as the trial was, she steadily declared that she was a Christian, and that she could not worship false gods. At these words, her father burst out into such loud cries that the judge ordered him to be put down from the place where he was standing and to be beaten with rods. Perhaps the judge did not mean so much to punish the old man for being noisy as to try whether the sight of his suffering might not move his daughter; but, although Perpetua felt every blow as if it had been laid upon herself, she knew that she must not give way. She was condemned, with her companions, to be exposed to wild beasts; and, after she had been taken back to prison, her father visited her once more. He seemed as if beside himself with grief; he tore his white beard, he cursed his old age, and spoke in a way that might have moved a heart of stone. But still Perpetua could only be sorry for him; she could not give up her Saviour.

The prisoners were kept for some time after their condemnation, that they might be put to death at some great games which were to be held on the birthday of one of the emperor's sons; and during this confinement their behaviour had a great effect on many who saw it. The jailor himself was converted by it, and so were others who had gone to gaze at them. At length the appointed day came, and the martyrs were led into the amphitheatre. The men were torn by leopards and bears; Perpetua and a young woman named Felicitas, who had been a slave, were put into nets and thrown before a furious cow, who tossed them and gored them cruelly; and when this was over, Perpetua seemed as if she had not felt it, but were awaking from a trance, and she asked when the cow was to come. She then helped Felicitas to rise from the ground, and spoke words of comfort and encouragement to others. When the people in the amphitheatre had seen as much as they wished of the wild beasts, they called out that the prisoners should be killed. Perpetua and the rest then took leave of each other, and walked with cheerful looks and firm steps into the middle of the amphitheatre, where men with swords fell on them and dispatched them. The executioner who was to kill Perpetua was a youth, and was so nervous that he stabbed her in a place where the hurt was not deadly; but she herself took hold of his sword, and showed him where to give her the death-wound.
From Gallienus To The End Of The Last Persecution (AD 261 -313)

Gallienus became emperor in AD 261. Gallienus sent forth a law by which the Christians, for the first time, got the liberty of serving God without the risk of being persecuted. We might think him a good emperor for making such a law; but he really does not deserve much credit for it, since he seems to have made it merely because he did not care much either for his own religion, or for any other.

And now there is hardly anything to be said of the next forty years, except that the Christians enjoyed peace and prosperity. Instead of being obliged to hold their services in the upper rooms of houses or in burial-places under ground, and in the dead of night, they built splendid churches, which they furnished with gold and silver plate, and with other costly ornaments. Christians were appointed to high offices, such as the government of countries, and many of them held places in the emperor's palace. And, now that there was no danger or loss to be risked by being Christians, multitudes of people joined the Church who would have kept at a distance from it if there had been anything to fear. But, unhappily, the Christians did not make a good use of all their prosperity. Many of them grew worldly and careless, and had little of the Christian about them except the name; and they quarreled and disputed among themselves, as if they were no better than mere heathens. But it pleased God to punish them severely for their faults, for at length there came such a persecution as had never before been known.

At this time there were no fewer than four emperors at once; for Diocletian, who became emperor in the year 284, afterwards took in Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius, to share his power, and to help him in the labour of government. Galerius and Constantius, however, were not quite so high, and had not such full authority, as the other two. Galerius married Diocletian's daughter, and it was supposed that both this lady and the empress, her mother, were Christians. The priests and others, whose interest it was to keep up the old heathenism, began to be afraid lest the empresses should make Christians of their husbands; and they sought how this might be prevented.

Now the heathens had some ways by which they used to try to find out the will of their gods. Sometimes they offered sacrifices of beasts, and, when the beasts were killed, they cut them open, and judged from the appearance of the inside, whether the gods were well pleased or angry. And at certain places there were what they called oracles, where people who wished to know the will of the gods went through some ceremonies, and expected a voice to come from this or that god in answer to them. Sure enough, the voice very often did come, although it was not really from any god, but was managed by the juggling of the priests. And the answers which these voices gave were often contrived very cunningly, that they might have more than one meaning, so that, however things might turn out, the oracle was sure to come true. And now the priests set to frighten Diocletian with tricks of this kind. When he sacrificed, the insides of the victims (as the beasts offered in sacrifice were called) were said to look in such a way as to show that the gods were angry. When he consulted the oracles, answers were given declaring that, so long as Christians were allowed to live on the earth, the gods would be displeased. And thus Diocletian, although at first he had been inclined to let them alone, became terrified, and was ready to persecute.
The first order against the Christians was a proclamation requiring that all soldiers, and all persons who held any office under the emperor, should sacrifice to the heathen gods (AD 298). And five years after this, Galerius, who was a cruel man, and very bitter against the Christians (although his wife was supposed to be one), persuaded Diocletian to begin a persecution in earnest.

Diocletian did not usually live at Rome, like the earlier emperors, but at Nicomedia, a town in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Propontis (now called the Sea of Marmora). And there the persecution began, by his sending forth an order that all who would not serve the gods of Rome should lose their offices; that their property should be seized, and, if they were persons of rank, they should lose their rank. Christians were no longer allowed to meet for worship; their churches were to be destroyed, and their holy books were to be sought out and burnt (Feb. 24, 303). As soon as this proclamation was set forth, a Christian tore it down, and broke into loud reproaches against the emperors. Such violent acts and words were not becoming in a follower of Him, "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered, threatened not" (1 Peter 2: 23). But the man who had forgotten himself so far, showed the strength of his principles in the patience with which he bore the punishment of what he had done, for he was roasted alive at a slow fire, and did not even utter a groan.

This was in February, 303; and before the end of that year, Diocletian put forth three more proclamations against the Christians. One of them ordered that the Christian teachers should be imprisoned; and very soon the prisons were filled with bishops and clergy, while the evil-doers who were usually confined in them were turned loose. The next proclamation ordered that the prisoners should either sacrifice or be tortured; and the fourth directed that not only the bishops and clergy, but all Christians, should be required to sacrifice, on pain of torture.

These cruel laws were put in execution. Churches were pulled down, beginning with the great church of Nicomedia, which was built on a height, and overlooked the emperor's palace. All the Bibles and service-books that could be found, and a great number of other Christian writings, were thrown into the flames; and many Christians who refused to give up their holy books were put to death. The plate of churches was carried off, and was turned to profane uses, as the vessels of the Jewish temple had formerly been by Belshazzar.

The sufferings of the Christians were frightful. Some were thrown to wild beasts; some were burnt alive, or roasted on gridirons; some had their skins pulled off, or their flesh scraped from their bones; some were crucified; some were tied to branches of trees, which had been bent so as to meet, and then they were torn to pieces by the starting asunder of the branches. Thousands of them perished by one horrible death or other, so that the heathens themselves grew tired and disgusted with inflicting or seeing their sufferings; and at length, instead of putting them to death, they sent them to work in mines, or plucked out one of their eyes, or lamed one of their hands or feet, or set bishops to look after horses or camels, or to do other work unfit for persons of their venerable character. And it is impossible to think what miseries even those who escaped must have undergone, for the persecution lasted ten years, and they had not only to witness the
sufferings of their own dear relations, or friends, or teachers, but knew that the like might, at any hour, come on themselves.

It was in the East that the persecution was hottest and lasted longest; for in Europe it was not much felt after the first two years. The Emperor Constantius, who ruled over Gaul (now called France), Spain and Britain, was kind to the Christians, and after his death, his son Constantine was still more favourable to them. There were several changes among the other emperors, and the Christians felt them for better or for worse, according to the character of each emperor. Galerius went on in his cruelty until, at the end of eight years, he found that it had been of no use towards putting down the Gospel, and that he was sinking under a fearful disease, something like that of which Herod, who had killed St. James, died (Acts xii. 23). He then thought with grief and horror of what he had done, and (perhaps in the hope of getting some relief from the God of Christians) he sent forth a proclamation allowing them to rebuild their churches, and to hold their worship, and begging them to remember him in their prayers. Soon after this he died (AD 311).

The cruelest of all the persecutors was Maximin, who, from the year 305, had possession of Asia Minor, Syria, the Holy Land, and Egypt. When Galerius made his law in favour of the Christians, Maximin for a while pretended to give them the same kind of liberty in his dominions. But he soon changed again, and required that all his subjects should sacrifice—even that little babies should take some grains of incense into their hands, and should burn it in honour of the heathen gods; and when a season of great plenty followed after this, Maximin boasted that it was a sign of the favour with which the gods received his law. But it very soon appeared how false his boast was, for famine and plague began to rage throughout his dominions. The Christians, of course, had their share in the distress; but instead of triumphing over their persecutors they showed the true spirit of the Gospel by treating them with kindness, by relieving the poor, by tending the sick, and by burying the dead, who had been abandoned by their own nearest relations.

Although there is no room to give any particular account of the martyrs here, there is one of them who especially deserves to be remembered. This good man, Alban, while he was yet a heathen, fell in with a poor Christian priest, who was trying to hide himself from the persecutors. Alban took him into his own house, and sheltered him there; and he was so much struck with observing how the priest prayed to God, and spent long hours of the night in religious exercises, that he soon became a believer in Christ. But the priest was hotly searched for, and information was given that he was hidden in Alban's house. And when the soldiers came to look for him there, Alban knew their errand, and put on the priest's dress, so that the soldiers seized him and carried him before the judge. The judge found that they had brought the wrong man, and, in his rage at the disappointment, he told Alban that he must himself endure the punishment which had been meant for the other. Alban heard this without any fear, and on being questioned, he declared that he was a Christian, a worshipper of the one true God, and that he would not sacrifice to idols which could do no good. He was put to the torture, but bore it gladly for his Savior's sake, and then, as he was still firm in professing his faith, the judge gave orders that he should be beheaded. And when he had been led out to the place of execution, which was a little grassy knoll that rose gently on one side of the town, the soldier, who was to have put him to death, was so moved by the sight of Alban's behaviour, that he threw away his
sword, and desired to be put to death with him. They were both beheaded, and the town of Verulam, where they suffered, has since been called St. Alban's, from the name of the first British martyr.

This martyrdom took place early in the persecution; but, (as we have seen) Constantius afterwards protected the British Christians, and his son Constantine, who succeeded to his share in the empire, treated them with yet greater favour. In the year 312, Constantine marched against Maxentius, who had usurped the government of Italy and Africa. Constantine seems to have been brought up by his father to believe in one God, although he did not at all know who this God was, nor how He had revealed Himself in Holy Scripture. But as he was on his way to fight Maxentius, he saw in the sky a wonderful appearance, which seemed like the figure of a cross, with words around it--"By this conquer!" He then caused the cross to be put on the standards (or colours) of his army; and when he had defeated Maxentius, he set up at Rome a statue of himself, with a cross in its right hand, and with an inscription which declared that he owed his victory to that saving sign. About the same time that Constantine overcame Maxentius, Licinius put down Maximin in the East. The two conquerors now had possession of the whole empire, and they joined in publishing laws by which Christians were allowed to worship God freely according to their conscience (AD 313).

**Anthony Begins His Life As A Hermit**

One of the key founders of monastic communities had no notion of founding anything—he was simply concerned for his own spiritual condition and spent much of his life alone.

Anthony was born in Egypt, probably about 250, to well-to-do parents who died when he was about twenty and left him all their possessions. A sermon text, Jesus’ command to the rich young ruler, “If you would be perfect, go and sell all you have,” changed the young man’s life. The words seemed directed to him, and Anthony took them literally. He gave his lands to his fellow villagers, sold his other property, and donated the money to the poor. He put himself under the care of an elderly Christian who taught him the joys of self-denial. Anthony lived on one meal a day of bread and water and slept on the bare ground.

After Christianity became a recognized religion under Constantine masses of people began to pour into the church, however, it became less easy to distinguish those with a real commitment to Christ from those who wanted a part of this popular religion.

Zealous Christians of this age often chose to fight back against the compromising of their faith by withdrawing from the world. Anthony sought to do that by living in a tomb. According to his biographer, Athanasius, for about twelve years Anthony was besieged by demons who took the shapes of various strange beasts and sometimes struck him, on occasion leaving him nearly dead. They were trying to call Anthony back to a world of sensuous pleasures, but Anthony always emerged triumphant.
Later Anthony moved to an abandoned fort, where he lived for 20 years without seeing a human face. His food was thrown to him over the wall. Some admirers set up crude homes near the fort, and he reluctantly became their spiritual adviser, giving them guidance on fasting, prayer, and works of charity.

Anthony died at the age of 105, to the end apparently still vigorous in mind and body. He insisted on being buried secretly, so no cult would develop around his grave.

But a cult following grew up nonetheless. Athanasius—the influential theologian who played an important role in the Council of Nicea—wrote an extremely popular Life of Anthony, in which he portrayed Anthony as the ideal monk, who could work miracles and discern between good and evil spirits. Before long, the idea that a real spiritual warrior became a monk and denied himself took hold within the church.

The practice of communities of monks living together was begun by Pachomius, a young companion of Anthony’s. For better or for worse, Anthony communicated the idea that a truly religious person withdraws from the world, abstaining from marriage, family, and worldly pleasures. Not until the Reformation would anyone seriously challenge that idea.

The Conversion Of Constantine

It was October, 312. A young general who had the allegiance of all the roman troops from Britain and Gaul was marching toward Rome to challenge Maxentius, another claimant to the imperial throne.

As the story goes, General Constantine looked up and saw a cross of lights in the sky. An inscription read, “In this conquer.” The superstitious soldier was already beginning to reject the roman deities in favor of a single god. His father had worshiped a supreme sun-god. Could this be a favorable omen from that god on the eve of battle?

Later, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream, bearing the same sign, a cross with the top bent over, resembling the Greek letters chi and rho, the first two letters of Christos. The general was instructed to mark this sign on his soldiers’ shields. He did.

As promised, Constantine won the battle.

It was one of several decisive moments in a quarter century of violent change. If you had left Rome in AD 305, to spend twenty years in the desert, you would have returned expecting to find Christianity dead or facing the final deathblows of persecution. Instead, Christianity had become the favored religion of the empire.

After Diocletian, one of the most brilliant Roman emperors, had taken power in 284, he began a massive reorganization that would shape up the military, the economy, and the civil service. For quite a while, he left the Christians alone.
One of Diocletian’s brainstorms was the restructuring of imperial power. He divided the empire into East and West; each side would have an emperor and a vice-emperor (or Caesar). Each emperor would serve twenty years, and then the Caesars would take over for twenty years, and so on. In 286, Diocletian appointed Maximian as emperor of the West, while he himself continued to rule the East. The caesars were Constantine Chlorus (father of Constantine) in the west and Galerius in the east.

Galerius was strongly anti-Christian. (He reportedly blamed the loss of one battle on a Christian soldier who crossed himself.) When the Eastern emperor took anti-Christian positions, he probably did so at Galerius’ instigation. It was all part of the reorganization of the empire—so the logic went: Rome had a uniform currency, a uniform political system, it should have a uniform religion. Christians were in the way.

Beginning in 298, Christians were rooted out of the army and civil service. In 303, the Great Persecution started. Authorities planned a crackdown on Christians to begin at the Feast of Terminalia, February 23. Churches were razed, Scriptures seized, and services prohibited. At first there was no bloodshed, but Galerius soon changed that. When Diocletian and Maximian resigned (according to the schedule), in 305, Galerius unleashed a fiercer persecution. Constantius, who ruled in the West, was generally lenient. But horror stories from the East are plentiful. Continuing through 310, the persecution took the lives of many Christian martyrs.

But Galerius was unable to crush the church. Strangely, on his deathbed, he changed his mind. In another great moment, April 30, 311, the vicious emperor gave up the fight against Christianity, issuing the Edict of Toleration. Always a politician, he insisted that he had done everything for the good of the empire, but that “great numbers” of Christians “held to their determination.” So not is was best to allow them to meet freely, as long as they were orderly about it. Further, he declared, “It will be their duty to pray to their god for our good estate.” Rome needed all the help it could get. Galerius died six days later.

But Diocletian’s grand scheme was falling apart. When Constantius died in 306, his son Constantine was proclaimed ruler by his loyal soldiers. But Maximian tried to come out of retirement and rule the West again, along with his son, Maxentius (who eventually forced Maximian—his own father—out of power). Meanwhile Galerius appointed a favorite general of his, Licinius, as the Western emperor. Each of these would-be emperors claimed a slice of the western territory. They would have to fight it out. Shrewdly, Constantine forged an alliance with Licinius and fought against Maxentius, and at the battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine prevailed.

At that point, Constantine and Licinius forged a delicate balance of power. Constantine was eager to thank Christ for his victory, so he moved to secure freedom and status for the church. In 313, he and Licinius officially issued the Edict of Milan, granting religious freedom within the empire. “Our purpose,” it said, “is to grant both to the Christians and to all others full authority to follow whatever worship each man has desired.”

Constantine immediately took an imperial interest in the church, restoring property, granting money, ruling in the Donatist controversy, and calling church councils in Arles.
and Nicea. He was also jockeying for power over Licinius, whom he finally ousted in 324.

Thus the church passed from persecution to privilege. In an amazingly short time, its prospects changed completely. After centuries as a counterculture movement, the church had to learn how to deal with power. It did not do everything well. Constantine’s own dynamic presence shaped the church of the fourth century and thereafter. He was master of power and politics; and the church learned to use those tools.

Was Constantine’s vision authentic, or was he just an opportunist, using Christianity for his own ends? Only God know the soul. Though in many ways he failed to reflect his faith, the emperor certainly took an active interest in the Christianity that he professed, often at personal risk.

God certainly used Constantine to make things happen for the church; the emperor affirmed and secured official toleration of the faith. But in doing so, he followed in the footsteps of the beaten, broken Galerius who had granted it earlier. Thus the battle against Roman persecution had in a sense been won, not at the Milvian Bridge, but in the arenas, as Christian went bravely to their deaths.

**The Council Of Nicaea (AD 325)**

We might expect to find that, when the persecutions by the heathen were at an end within the Roman Empire, Christians lived together in peace and love, according to their Lord's commandment; but it is a sad truth that they now began to be very much divided by quarrels among themselves. There had, indeed, been many false teachers in earlier times; but now, when the emperor had become a Christian, the troubles caused by such persons reached much further than before. The emperors took part in them, and made laws about them, and the whole empire was stirred by them.

Constantine was very fond of taking a part in Church matters, without knowing much about them. Very soon after the first law by which he gave liberty to the Christians, he was called in to settle a quarrel; which had been raised in Africa by the followers of one Donatus, who separated from the Church and set up bishops of their own, because they said that the bishops of Carthage and some others had not behaved rightly when the persecutors required them to deliver up the Scriptures.

When Constantine put down Licinius and got possession of the East he found that a dispute of a different kind from the quarrel of the Donatists was raging there. One Arius, a presbyter (or priest) of Alexandria, had begun some years before this time to deny that our blessed Lord was God from everlasting. Arius was a crafty man, and did all that he could to make his opinion look as well as possible; but, try as he might, he was obliged to own that he believed our Lord to be a "creature". And the difference between the highest of created beings and God, the maker of all creatures, is infinite; so that it mattered little how Arius might smooth over his shocking opinion, so long as he did not allow our Lord to be truly God from all eternity. According to such teaching, God is so radically different that He cannot share His substance with anything: Only God can be God. In his book *Thalia* Arius proclaimed that Jesus was divine, but not God. Only God the Father,
Arius said, could be immortal, so the Son had to be a created being. He was *like* the Father, but not truly God.

Arius knew the power of music. So, he put his theological ideas to a catchy tunes. Within weeks Alexandrians were singing in the streets, “Once the Son did not exist!” Church members who rejected Arius’ ideas responded with a chorus that Christians still sing: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” (Today, we call this chorus “Gloria Patri.”)

The bishop of Alexandria, whose name was Alexander, excommunicated Arius for his impiety; that is to say, he solemnly turned him out of the Church, so that no faithful Christian should have anything to do with him in religious matters. Thus Arius was obliged to leave Egypt, and he lived for a while at Nicomedia, with a bishop who was an old friend of his. And while he was there, he made a set of songs to be sung at meals, and others for travellers, sailors, and the like. He hoped that people would learn these songs, without considering what mischief was in them, and that so his heresy would be spread.

When Constantine first heard of these troubles, he tried to quiet them by advising Alexander and Arius not to dispute about trifles. But he soon found that this would not do, and that the question whether our Lord and Saviour were God or a creature was so far from being a trifle, that it was one of the most serious of all questions. In order, therefore, to get this and some other matters settled, he gave orders for a general council to meet. Councils of bishops within a certain district had long been common. In many countries they were regularly held once or twice a year; and, besides these regular meetings, others were sometimes called together to consider any business which was particularly pressing. Some of these councils were very great; for instance, the bishop of Alexander could call together the bishops of all Egypt, and the bishop of Antioch could call together all the bishops of Syria and some neighboring countries. But there was no bishop who could call a council of the whole Church, because there was no one who had any power over more than a part of it. But now, Constantine, as he had become a Christian, thought that he might gather a council from all quarters of his empire, and this was the first of what are called the general councils.

It met in the year 325, at Nicaea (or Nice), in Bithynia, and 318 bishops attended it. A number of clergy and other persons were also present; even some heathen philosophers went out of curiosity to see what the Christians were to do. Many of the bishops were very homely and simple men, who had not much learning; but their great business was only to say plainly what their belief had always been, so that it might be known whether the doctrines of Arius agreed with this or no; and thus the good bishops might do their part very well, although they were not persons of any great learning or cleverness.

There was a great deal of arguing about Arius and his opinions, and the chief person who spoke against him was Athanasius, a clergyman of Alexandria, who had come with the bishop, Alexander. Athanasius could not sit as a judge in the council, because he was not a bishop, but he was allowed to speak in the presence of the bishops, and pointed out to them the errors which Arius tried to hide. So at last Arius was condemned, and the emperor banished him with some of his chief followers. And, in order to set forth the true
Christian faith beyond all doubt, the council made that creed which is read in the Communion-service in our churches—all but some of the last part of it, which was made at a later time, as we shall see. It is called the Nicene Creed, from the name of the place where the council met; and the great point in it is that it declares our blessed Lord to be "Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance" (that is to say, of the same nature) "with the Father." For this truth, that our Lord has the same nature with the Almighty Father—this truth that He is really God from everlasting—was what the Arians could not be brought to own.

The Nicene Creed

- I 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 sustenance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

- Who, for us men 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 the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

- And I believe in the Holy Ghost, 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 I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Christian Worship

In the early days of the Gospel, while the Christians were generally poor, and when they were obliged to meet in fear of the heathen, their worship was held in private houses and sometimes in burial-places under-ground. But after a time buildings were expressly set apart for worship. Between the death of Valerian and the last persecution (A.D. 261-303) these churches were built much more handsomely than before, and were furnished with gold and silver plate and other rich ornaments. And after the conversion of Constantine, they became still finer and costlier. The clergy then wore rich dresses at service, the music was less simple and the ceremonies were multiplied. Some of the old heathen temples were turned into churches, but temples were not built in a shape very suitable for Christian worship and the pattern of the new churches was rather taken from the halls of justice, called "Basilicas", which were to be found in every large town. These buildings were of an oblong shape, with a broad middle part, and on each side of it an aisle,
separated from it by a row of pillars. This lower part of the basilica was used by merchants who met to talk about their business, and by all sorts of loungers who met to tell and hear the news. But at the upper end of the oblong there was a half circle, with its floor raised above the level of the rest; and in the middle of this part the judge of the city sat. Now if you will compare this description with the plan of a church, you will see that the broad middle part of the basilica answers to what is called the "body" or "nave" of the church; that the side aisles are alike in each; and that the further part of the basilica, with its raised floor, answers to the "chancel" of a church; while the holy table, or "altar", stands in the place answering to the judge's seat in the basilica. Same of these halls were given up by the emperors to be turned into churches, and the plan of them was found convenient as a pattern in the building of new churches.

On entering a church, the first part was the Porch, in which there were places for the catechumens (that is to say, those who were preparing for baptism); for those who were supposed to be possessed with devils, and who were under the care of the exorcists, and for the lowest kinds of those who were undergoing penance. Beyond this porch were the "Beautiful Gates", which opened into the "Nave" of the church. Just within these gates were those penitents whose time of penance was nearly ended; and the rest of the nave was the place for the "faithful"—that is to say, for those who were admitted to all the privileges of Christians. At the upper end of the nave, a place called the "Choir" was railed in for the singers; and then, last of all, came the raised part or "chancel", which has been spoken of. This was called the "Sanctuary", and was set apart for the clergy only. The women sat in church apart from the men; sometimes they were in the aisles, and sometimes in galleries. Churches generally had a court in front of them or about them, in which were the lodgings of the clergy, and a building for the administration of baptism, called the "Baptistery".

In the early times, churches were not adorned with pictures or statues; for Christians were at first afraid to have any ornaments of the kind, lest they should fall into idolatry like the heathen. No such things as images or pictures of our Lord, or of His saints, were known among them; and in their every-day life, instead of the figures of gods, with which the heathens used to adorn their houses, their furniture, their cups, and their seals, the Christians made use of emblems only. Thus, instead of pretending to make a likeness of our Lord's human form, they made a figure of a shepherd carrying a lamb on his shoulders, to signify the Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep (St. John 10:11). Other ornaments of the same kind were—a dove signifying the Holy Ghost, a ship, signifying the Church, the ark of salvation, sailing towards heaven; a fish, which was meant to remind them of their having been born again in the water at their baptism; a musical instrument called a lyre, to signify Christian joy; and an anchor, the figure of Christian hope. About the year 300, the Council of Elvira, in Spain, made a canon forbidding pictures in church, which shows that the practice had then begun, and was growing; and also that, in Spain, at least, it was thought to be dangerous (as indeed it too surely proved to be). And a hundred years later, Epiphanius, a famous bishop of Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, tore a curtain which he found hanging in a church, with a figure of our Lord, or of some saint, painted on it. He declared that such things were altogether unlawful, and desired that the curtain might be used to bury some poor man in, promising to send the church a plain one instead of it.
Christians used to sign themselves with the sign of the cross on many occasions, and figures of the cross were early set up in churches. But crucifixes (which are figures of our Lord on the cross, although ignorant people sometimes call the cross itself a crucifix) were not known until hundreds of years after the time of which we are now speaking.

The church-service of Christians was always the same as to its main parts, although there were little differences as to order and the like. Justin Martyr describes the service as it was in his time. It began, he says, with readings from the Scriptures; then followed a discourse by the chief clergyman who was present; and there was much singing, of which a part was from the Old Testament psalms, while a part was made up of hymns on Christian subjects. The discourses of the clergy were generally meant to explain the Scripture lessons which had been read. At first these discourses were very plain, and as much as possible like ordinary talk; and from this they got the name of "homilies", which properly meant nothing more than "conversations". But by degrees they grew to be more like speeches, and people used to flock to them, just as many do now, from a wish to hear something fine, rather than with any notion of taking the preacher's words to heart, and trying to be made better by them. And in the fourth century, when a clergyman preached eloquently, the people used to cheer him on by clapping their hands, waving their handkerchiefs, and shouting out, "Orthodox!" "Thirteenth apostle!" or other such cries. Good men, of course, did not like to be treated in this way, as if they were actors at a theatre; and we often find St. Chrysostom and St Augustine objecting to it in their sermons, and begging their hearers not to show their admiration in such foolish and unseemly ways. But it seems that the people went on with it nevertheless.

In the time of the Apostles the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the evening, as it had been by our blessed Lord Himself on the night in which He was betrayed. Thus it was, for instance, when the disciples at Troas "came together upon the first day of the week (Sunday) to break bread" (that is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper), and "Paul preached unto them, and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). In the service for this sacrament there was a thanksgiving to God for His bounty in bestowing the fruits of the earth. The congregation offered gifts of bread and wine, and from these the elements which were to be consecrated were taken. They also brought gifts of money, which was used for the relief of the poor, for the support of the clergy, and for other good and religious purposes. Either before or after the sacrament, there was a meal called the love-feast, for which all the members of the congregation brought provisions, according as they could afford. All of them sat down to it as equals, in token of their being alike in Christ's Brotherhood; and it ended with psalm-singing and prayer. But even in very early days (as St. Paul shows us in his first epistle to the Corinthians 11:21f), there was sad misbehavior at these meals; and besides this, such religious feasts gave the heathen an excuse for their stories that the Christians met to feed on human flesh and to commit other abominations in secret. For these reasons, after a time, the love-feast was separated from the Holy Communion, and at length it was entirely given up.

In the second century, the administration of the Lord's Supper, instead of being in the evening as at first, was added on to the morning service, and then a difference was made between the two parts of the service. At the earlier part of it the catechumens and
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penitents might be present, but when the Communion office was going to begin, a deacon called out, "Let no one of the catechumens or of the hearers stay." After this none were allowed to remain except those who were entitled to communicate, which all baptized Christians did in those days, unless they were shut out from the Church on account of their misdeeds. The "breaking of bread" in the Lord's Supper was at first daily, as we know from the early chapters of the Acts (2:46); but this practice does not seem to have lasted beyond the time when the faith of the Christians was in its first warmth, and it became usual to celebrate the holy Communion on the Lord's day only. When Christianity became the religion of the empire, and there was now no fear of persecution, the earlier part of the service was open not only to catechumens and penitents, but to Jews and heathens; and in the fifth century, when the Church was mostly made up of persons who had been baptized and trained in Christianity from infancy, the distinction between the "service of the catechumens" and the "service of the faithful" was no longer kept up.

The length of time during which converts were obliged to be catechumens before being admitted to baptism differed in different parts of the Church. In some places it was two years, in some three years; but if during this time they fell sick and appeared to be in danger of death, they were baptized without waiting any longer.

At baptism, those who received it professed their faith, or their sponsors did so for them, and from this began the use of creeds, containing, in few words, the chief articles of the Christian faith. The sign of the cross was made over those who were baptized "in token that they should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end." The kiss of peace was given to them in token of their being taken into spiritual brotherhood; white robes were put on them, to signify their cleansing from sin; and a mixture of milk and honey was administered to them, as if to give them a foretaste of their heavenly inheritance, of which the earthly Canaan, "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8, etc.) had been a figure. Other ceremonies were added in the fourth century, such as the use of salt and lights, and an anointing with oil in token of their being "made kings and priests to God" (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9), besides the anointing with a mixture called "chrism" at confirmation, which had been practised in earlier times.

During the fourth century there was a growth of superstitions and corruptions in the Church. Great numbers of converts came into it, bringing their old heathen notions with them, and not well knowing what they might expect, but with an eager desire to find as much to interest them in the worship and life of Christians as they had found in the ceremonies and shows of their former religion. And in order that such converts might not be altogether disappointed, the Christian teachers of the age allowed a number of things which soon began to have very bad effects; St. Augustine complained that in his time (which was about the year 400) ceremonies "were grown to such a number that the estate of Christian people was in worse case concerning that matter than were the Jews." Among the corruptions which were now growing, although they did not come to a head until afterwards, one was an excess of reverence for saints, which led to the practices of making addresses to them, and of paying superstitious honours to their dead bodies.
Another corruption was the improper use of paintings or images, which even in St. Augustine's time had gone so far that, as he owns with sorrow, many of the ignorant were "worshippers of pictures." Another was the fashion of going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in which Constantine's mother, Helena, set an example which was soon followed by thousands, who not only fancied that the sight of the places hallowed by the great events of Scripture would kindle or heighten their devotion, but that prayers would be especially pleasing to God if they were offered up in such places. And thus great numbers flocked to Palestine from all quarters, and even from Britain, among other countries, and on their return they carried back with them water from the Jordan, earth from the Redeemer's sepulchre, or what they believed to be chips of the true cross, which was supposed to have been found during Helena's visit to Jerusalem. The mischiefs of this fashion soon showed themselves. St. Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa, wrote a little book expressly for the purpose of persuading people not to go on pilgrimage. He said that he himself had been neither better nor worse for a visit which he had paid to the Holy Land; but that such a pilgrimage might even be dangerous for others because the inhabitants of the country were so vicious that there was more likelihood of getting harm from them than good from the sight of the holy places. "We should rather try," he said, "to go out of the body than to drag it about from place to place." Another very learned man of the same time, St. Jerome, although he had taken up his own abode at Bethlehem, saw so much of the evils which arose from pilgrimages that he gave very earnest warnings against them. "It is no praise," he says, "to have been at Jerusalem but to have lived religiously at Jerusalem. The sight of the places where our Lord died and rose again are profitable to those who bear their own cross and daily rise again with Him. But for those who say, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' let them hear the Apostle's words, 'Ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you,' (1 Corinthians 3:16) The court of heaven is open to approach from Jerusalem' for the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

There were, indeed, some persons who rose up to oppose the errors of which I have been speaking. But unhappily they mixed up the truths which they wished to teach with so many errors of their own, and they carried on their opposition so unwisely, that, instead of doing good, they did harm, by setting people against such truth as they taught on account of the error which was joined with it, and of the strong way which they took of teaching it. By such opposition the growth of superstition was not checked, but advanced and strengthened.

**Athanasius’s Letter Recognizes The New Testament Canon**

How can a Christian be certain what books should appear in the New Testament?

When Paul mentioned Scripture to Timothy (“All Scripture is inspired…” [2 Timothy 3:16 RSV]), he referred to the Old Testament, but even within the pages of the New Testament, we have indications that Christians had begun to regard the Gospels and Paul’s epistles as somehow special. Peter wrote that Paul’s epistles are sometimes “hard to understand.” Nevertheless, Paul’s wisdom was God given, and Peter chided the
“ignorant and unstable” who distort Paul’s words as they distort other Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16 RSV). Obviously Peter had begun to realize that Christians had some edifying writings other than the Old Testament works.

The Jews had established that some books—what we call the Old Testament—were clearly inspired by God, while others were not. As they faced heresies Christians also began to feel the need to distinguish between those truly inspired writings and the questionable ones.

Two major criteria used by the church to identify the canon (canon is the Greek word for “standard”) were apostolic origin and the use of the writing in the churches.

When it considered apostolic origin, the church included Paul among the apostles. Although Paul had not walked with Christ, he had met Him on the road to Damascus, and his widespread missionary activity—testified to by the Book of Acts—made him the very model of an apostle.

Each Gospel had to be attached to an apostle. Thus Mark’s Gospel, which was associated with Peter, and Luke’s which was associated with Paul, took a place in the canon. After the death of the apostles, Christians valued the books’ witness, even if they did not bear an apostle’s name.

Concerning the use of the writing in churches, the guideline seemed to be, “If many churches use this and it continues to edify them, it must be inspired.” Though that standard shows a rather pragmatic approach, logic lay behind it. Something inspired by God will no doubt inspire many worshipers. A writing that was not inspired would eventually fall out of use.

Unhappily, these standards alone could not settle the books of the canon. Many blatantly heretical writings carried the name of an apostle. In addition, some churches used writings others did not care to use.

By the end of the second century, the four Gospels, Acts, and Paul’s epistles were highly valued almost everywhere. Though no “official” list existed, churches had a growing tendency to turn to these as having spiritual authority. Influential bishops such as Ignatius, Clement of Rome, and Polycarp had helped these writings achieve wide acceptance. Yet much dispute remained over Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

Heresy has a way of making orthodox Christians clarify their position. As far as we know, the first attempt at a canon was made by the heretic Marcion, who included only ten of Paul’s thirteen epistles and a heavily edited Gospel of Luke. Later heretical groups would cherish their own special “secret books,” usually ones that had an apostle’s name attached to them.
One early orthodox list, compiled around the year 200, was the Muratorian Canon of the Church of Rome. It included most of our present-day New Testament, but added the Revelation of Peter and the Wisdom of Solomon. Later listings would omit one book and leave in another, but they remained quite similar. Works such as the Shepherd of Hermas, the Didache, and the Letter of Barnabas were highly regarded, though many felt reluctant to view them as inspired Scripture.

In 367 the influential, highly orthodox bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, wrote his widely circulated Easter Letter. In it he named the twenty-seven books we now include in our New Testament. Hoping to guard his flock from error, Athanasius stated that no other books could be regarded as Christian Scripture, though he allowed that some, like the Didache, might be useful for private devotions.

Athanasius’s list did not settle the matter. The Council of Carthage in 397 confirmed his list, but the Western churches were slow to settle on a canon. Wrangling continued over the questionable books, though eventually all accepted Revelation.

In the end Athanasius’s list received general acceptance, and churches throughout the world since have not seriously deviated from his wisdom.

The Monks

The word "monk" properly means one who leads a "lonely" life; and the name was given to persons who professed to withdraw from the world and its business that they might give themselves up to serve God in religious thoughts and exercises. Among the Jews there had been whole classes of people who practised this sort of retirement: some, called "Essenes", lived near the Red Sea; and others, called "Therapeutae," in Egypt, where a great number of Jews had settled. Among the heathens of the East, too, a like manner of living had been common for ages, as it still continues to be; and many of them carry it to an excessive strictness, as we are told by travellers who have visited India, Thibet, and other countries of Asia.

Nothing of the kind, however, is commanded for Christians in the New Testament; and when Scripture warrant for the monkish life was sought for, the great patterns who were produced were Elijah and St John the Baptist--the one of them an Old Testament prophet; the other, a holy man who lived, indeed, in the days when our Lord Himself was on the earth, but who was not allowed to enter into His Church, or to see it fully established by the coming of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost. But still it was very natural that the notion of a life of strict poverty, retirement from the world, and employment in spiritual things, should find favour with Christians, as a means of fulfilling the duties of their holy calling, and so it seems that some of them took to this way of life very early. But the first who is named as a "hermit" (that is to say, a dweller in the wilderness) was Paul, a young man of Alexandria, who, in the year 251, fled from the persecution of Decius into the
Egyptian desert, where he is said to have lived ninety years. Paul, although he afterwards became very famous, spent his days without being known, until, just before his death, he was visited by another great hermit, St. Antony. But Antony himself was a person of great note and importance in his own lifetime.

He was born in the district of Thebes, in Egypt, in the very same year that Paul withdrew from the world. While a boy, he was thoughtful and serious. His parents died before he had reached the age of twenty, and left him considerable wealth. One day, when in church, he was struck by hearing the story of the rich young man who was charged to sell all that he had, give to the poor, and follow our Lord (Luke 18:18-22). At another time he was moved by hearing the charge to "take no thought for the morrow" (Matthew 6:34). And in order to obey these commands (as he thought), Antony parted with all that belonged to him, bade farewell to his only sister, and left his home, with the intention of living in loneliness and devotion. He carried on this life for many years, and several times changed his abode, that he might seek out some place still wilder and more remote than the last. But he grew so famous that people flocked even into the depths of the wilderness to see him. A number of disciples gathered around him, and hermits or monks began to copy his way of life in other parts of Egypt. Antony's influence became very great; he made peace between enemies, comforted mourners, and gave advice to all who asked him as to spiritual concerns; and when he took the part of any oppressed person who applied to him, his interference was always successful. Affairs of this kind sometimes obliged him to leave his cell (as the dwellings of the monks were called); but he always returned as soon as possible, for he used to say that "a monk out of his solitude is like a fish out of water." Even the emperors, Constantine and his sons, wrote to him with great respect, and asked him to visit their courts. He thanked them, but did not accept their invitation, and he wrote more than once to them in favour of St. Athanasius, whom he steadfastly supported in his troubles on account of the faith. On two great occasions he visited Alexandria, for the purpose of strengthening his brethren in their sufferings for the truth. The first of these visits was while the last heathen persecution, under Maximin, was raging. Antony stood by the martyrs at their trials and in their death, and took all opportunities of declaring himself a Christian; but the persecutors did not venture to touch him: and, after waiting till the heat of the danger was past, he again withdrew to the wilderness. The second visit was in the time of the Arian disturbances, when his appearance had even a greater effect than before. The Catholics were encouraged by his exhortations, and a great number of conversions took place in consequence. Antony died, at the age of a hundred and five, in the year 356, a few days before the great bishop of Alexandria was driven to seek a refuge in the desert.

Antony, as we have seen, was a hermit, living in the wilderness by himself. But by-and-by other kinds of monks were established, who lived in companies together. Sometimes they were lodged in clusters of little cells, each of them having his separate cell, or two or three living together; sometimes the cells were all in one large building, called a monastery. The head of each monastery, or of each cluster of cells, was called "abbot", which means "father". And in some cases there were many monasteries belonging to one "order", so that they were all considered as one society, and there was one chief abbot over all. Thus the order founded by Pachomius, on an island in the Nile, soon spread, so
that before his death it had eight monasteries, with three thousand monks among them; and about fifty years later, it had no fewer than fifty thousand monks.

These monks of Pachomius lived in cells, each of which contained three. Each cluster of cells had its abbot; the head of the order, who was called the "archimandrite" (which means chief of a sheepfold), went round occasionally to visit all the societies which were under him, and the whole order met every year at the chief monastery for the festival of Easter, and a second time in the month of August. The monks of St. Pachomius prayed many times a day. They fasted every Wednesday and Friday, and communicated every Sunday and Saturday. They took their meals together and sang psalms before each. They were not allowed to talk at table, but sat with their hoods drawn over their faces, so that no one could see his neighbours, or anything but the food before him. Their dress was coarse and plain; the chief article of it was a rough goat-skin, in imitation of the prophet Elijah. They slept with their clothes on, not in beds, but in chairs, which were of such a shape as to keep them almost standing. They spent their time not only in prayers and other religious exercises, but in various kinds of simple work, such as labouring in the fields, weaving baskets, ropes, and nets, or making shoes. They had boats in which they sent the produce of their labour down the Nile to Alexandria; and the money which they got by selling it was not only enough to keep them, but enabled them to redeem captives, and to do such other acts of charity.

This account of the monks of St. Pachomius will give some notion of the monkish life in general, although one order differed from another in various ways. All that the monks had was considered to belong to them in common, after the pattern of the first Christians, as was supposed (Acts 2:34; 4:32); and no one was allowed to have anything of his own. Thus we are told that when a monk was found at his death to have left a hundred pieces of silver, which he had earned by weaving flax, his brethren, who were about three thousand in number, met to consider what should be done with the money. Some were for giving it to the Church; some, to the poor. But the fathers of the society quoted Peter's words to Simon the sorcerer, "Thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8:20), and on the strength of this text (which in truth had not much to do with the matter), they ordered that it should be buried with its late owner. St. Jerome, who tells the story, says that this was not done out of any wish to condemn the dead monk, but in order that others might be deterred from hoarding.

These different kinds of monks were first established in various parts of Egypt; but their way of life was soon taken up in other countries; and societies of women, who were called "nuns" (that is to say "mothers"), were formed under the same kind of rules.

One thing which had much to do with making monkish life so common was, that when persecution by the heathen was at an end, many Christians felt the want of something which might assure them that they were separate from the world, as Christ's true people ought to be. It was no longer enough that they should call themselves Christians; for the world had come to call itself Christian too. Perhaps we may think that it would have been better if those who wished to live religiously had tried to go on doing their duty in the world, and to improve it by the example and the influence of holy and charitable lives,
instead of running away from it. And they were certainly much mistaken if they fancied that by hiding themselves in the desert they were likely to escape temptations. For temptations followed them into their retreats, and we have only too many proofs, in the accounts of famous monks, that the effect of this mistake was often very sad indeed. And we may be sure that if the good men who in those days were active in recommending the life of monks had been able to foresee how things would turn out, they would have been much more cautious in what they said of it.

It was not every one who was fit for such a life, and many took it up without rightly considering whether they were fit for it. The kind of work which was provided for them was not enough to occupy them thoroughly, and many of them suffered grievously from temptations to which their idleness laid them open. It was supposed, indeed, that they might find the thoughts of heavenly things enough to fill their minds; and, when a philosopher asked Antony how he could live without books, he answered that for him the whole creation was a book, always at hand, in which he could read God's word whenever he pleased. But it was not every one who could find such delight in that great book, and many of the monks, for want of employment, were tormented by all sorts of evil thoughts, nay, some of them were even driven into madness by their way of life.

The monks ran into very strange mistakes as to their duty towards their kindred. Even Antony himself, although he was free from many of the faults of spiritual pride and the like, which became too common among his followers, thought himself bound to overcome his love for his young sister. And, as another sample of the way in which monks were expected to deaden their natural affections, I may tell you how his disciple Pior behaved. Pior, when a youth, left his father's house, and vowed that he would never again look on any of his relations—which was surely a very rash and foolish and wrong vow. He went into the desert, and had lived there fifty years, when his sister heard that he was still alive. She was too infirm to go in search of him, but she contrived that the abbot, under whose authority he was, should order him to pay her a visit. Pior went accordingly, and, when he had reached her house, he stood in front of it, and sent to tell her that he was there. The poor old woman made all haste to get to him; her heart was full of love and delight at the thoughts of seeing her brother again after so long a separation. But as soon as Pior heard the door opening, he shut his eyes, and he kept them shut all through the meeting. He refused to go into his sister's house, and when he had let her see him for a short time in this way, without showing her any token of kindness, he hurried back to the desert.

It was not long before the sight of the great respect which was paid to the monks led many worthless people to call themselves monks for the sake of what they might get by doing so. These fellows used to go about, wearing heavy chains, uncouthly dressed, and behaving roughly, and they told outrageous stories of visions and of fights with devils which they pretended to have had. By such tricks they got large sums of money from people who were foolish enough to encourage them; and they spent it in the most shameful ways.
But besides these vile hypocrites, many monks who seem to have been sincere enough ran into very strange extravagances. There was one kind of them called "Grazers", who used to live among mountains, without any roof to shelter them, browsing, like beasts, on grass and herbs, and by degrees growing much more like beasts than men. And in the beginning of the fifth century, one Symeon founded a new sort of monks, who were called "Stylites" (that is to say, pillar saints), from a Greek word, which means a pillar. Symeon was a Syrian, and lived on the top of one pillar after another for seven-and-thirty years. Each pillar was higher than the one before it; the height of the last of them was forty cubits (or seventy feet), and the top of it was only a yard across. There Symeon was to be seen, with a heavy iron chain round his neck, and great numbers of people flocked to visit him. And when he was dead, a monk named Daniel got the old cowl which he had worn, and built himself a pillar near Constantinople, where he lived three-and-thirty years. The high winds sometimes almost blew him from his place, and sometimes he was covered for days with snow and ice, until the emperor Leo made him submit to let a shed be built round the top of his pillar. The fame and influence which these monks gained were immense. They were supposed to have the power of prophecy and of miracles; they were consulted even by emperors and kings, in the most important matters; and sometimes, on great occasions, when a stylite descended from his pillar, or some famous hermit left his cell, and appeared among the crowds of a city, he was able to make everything bend to his will.

We must not be blind to the serious errors of monkery; but we are bound also to own that God was pleased to make it the means of great good. The monks did much for the conversion of the heathen, and when the ages of darkness came on, after the overthrow of the Roman empire in the West, they rendered inestimable service in preserving the knowledge of learning and religion, which, but for them, might have utterly perished from the earth.

**Conversion Of Augustine**

Lord, make me chaste, but not yet,” prayed a sensual intellectual who was flirting with Christianity—and a lot of other things as well. Once he had surrendered himself to God, that man would have no trouble being chaste and would become one of the most influential authors the church has known.

This complex man was Aurelius Augustinus, better known as Augustine. Born in 354, in Tagaste, he had a devout Christian mother named Monica. His pagan father, Patricius, was a Roman official.

Because they saw their son’s brilliance, Monica and Patricius arranged the best schooling for him. He studied rhetoric in Carthage and was stimulated by reading Latin authors such as Cicero. Convinced by his studies that truth was life’s goal, at first he rejected Christianity because he saw it as a religion for the simple-minded.
While still in his teens, Augustine took a concubine, who bore him a son. For the rest of his life, Augustine would look back on his days in Carthage with loathing. In his *Confessions* he commented, “I came to Carthage, where a cauldron of unholy loves was sizzling and crackling around me.”

The restless young man tried Manichaeism, which taught that the world was a battleground for light and dark, flesh and spirit. But Manichaeism couldn’t satisfy his desire for the ultimate truth. Neither could Neoplatonism.

Hounded by his one spiritual dissatisfaction, Augustine moved from Carthage to Rome to Milan, teaching rhetoric. In Milan he met Bishop Ambrose and learned that not all Christians were simple-minded; this man was brilliant.

In 387, as Augustine sat in a garden in Milan, he heard a child’s singsong voice say, “Take it and read; take it and read.” Augustine read what was nearby: Paul’s Letter to the Romans. As he read Romans 13:13, 14, Paul’s words about clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus instead of gratifying our sinful desires took hold, and Augustine believed. Later he wrote, “It was as though the light of faith flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.”

Though Augustine could have been happy leading a quiet monastic life, his reputation as a brilliant Christian spread. In 391 he was pressured into being ordained a priest. In 395 he became bishop of the North African city of Hippo.

Every controversy of his day involved Bishop Augustine. A group called the Donatists felt great concern for having a moral clergy. Under the persecution of Emperor Diocletian, some clergy had given copies of the Scriptures to their persecutors, to be burned. Later, some of these “hander-overs,” as they were called, were reinstated as clergy. The Donatists refused to accept these “traitors” and set up a rival church. Thousands of Donatists lived in Augustine’s see.

Augustine denied the need for a rival church. Though there may be some less than holy persons in the church, he said, the church is one. The sacraments, which Augustine defined as visible signs of an invisible grace, are not effective because of the priest’s righteousness, but because God’s grace operates through them. Augustine’s view prevailed, and Donatism lost momentum.

Pelagius, a British teacher, spread the heresy that man’s work in choosing God was essential. Though God’s grace played a role, it was not everything. Pelagius didn’t quite teach that man could save himself, but he denied that sin was inherited from Adam.

Augustine countered that no one could choose good unless God led him to it. In fact, God had predestined the elect, His redeemed ones, and nothing man could do would change that eternal decree. In 431, a year after Augustine’s death, the Council of Ephesus officially condemned Pelagianism.
Not only did Augustine challenge heresy, he wrote of his own spiritual quest in his *Confessions*, which is probably the first real spiritual autobiography. The famous words “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you” come from its opening paragraph.

Because Augustine’s teaching has become so basic to Christianity, we don’t realize how original he was in his day. His thoughts have trickled down to both Catholic and Protestant theologians. Luther and Calvin constantly quoted him; they liked his emphasis on God’s grace and man’s inability to save himself.

Augustine wrote hundreds of treaties, letters, and commentaries. His classic work *On the Trinity* is probably the best-known work on that subject. However, his most important work was *City of God*, a monumental work written in response to the fall of Rome to the Visigoths. Some people blamed the Christians, arguing that Rome fell because its people had neglected the native gods. So Augustine responded by defending and explaining God’s plan and working in history. Since Cain and Abel, he said, there have been two cities in the world: the City of God (the faithful) and the City of Man (pagan society). Though they intertwine, God will see that the City of God, the church, will endure through eternity.

Though Augustine wrote at the end of the ancient world, his thoughts would dominate scholars of the Middle Ages and last into the Reformation.

**Councils Of Ephesus And Chalcedon (AD 431-451)**

Augustine died just as a great council was about to be held in the East. In preparing for this council, a compliment was paid to him which was not paid to any other person; for, whereas it was usual to invite the chief bishop only of each province to such meetings, and to leave him to choose which of his brethren should accompany him, a special invitation was sent to Augustine, although he was not even a metropolitan, but only bishop of a small town. This shows what fame he had gained, and in what respect his name was held, even in the Eastern Church.

The object of calling the council was to inquire into the opinions of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople. It would have been well for it if it had enjoyed the benefit of the great and good Augustine's presence; for its proceedings were carried on in such a way that it is not pleasant to read of them. But, whatever may have been the faults of those who were active in the council it laid down clearly the truth which Nestorius was charged with denying--that (as is said in the Athanasian creed) our blessed Lord, "although He be God and man, yet is He not two, but one Christ;" and this council which was held at Ephesus in the year 431, is reckoned as the third general council.

Some years after it, a disturbance arose about a monk of Constantinople, named Eutyches, who had been very zealous against Nestorius, and now ran into errors of an opposite kind. Another council was held at Ephesus in 449; but Dioscorus, bishop of
Alexandria, and a number of disorderly monks who were favourable to Eutyches, behaved in such a furious manner at this assembly, that, instead of being considered as a general council, it is known by the name "Latrocinium," which means a meeting of robbers. But two years later, when a new emperor had succeeded to the government of the East, another general council was held at Chalcedon (pronounced kal-SEE-don) (AD 451); and there the doctrines of Eutyches were condemned, and Dioscotus was deprived of his bishopric. This council, which was the fourth of the general councils, was attended by six hundred and thirty bishops. It laid down the doctrine that our Lord is "One, not by conversion [or turning] of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God: One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person; for, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

According, then, to these two councils, which were held against Nestorius and Eutyches, we are to believe that our blessed Lord is really God and really man. The Godhead and the manhood are not mixed together in Him, so as to make something which would be neither the one nor the other (which is what the creed means by "confusion of substance"); but they are in Him distinct from each other, just as the soul and the body are distinct in man, and yet they are not two persons, but are joined together in one Person, just as the soul and the body are joined in one man. All this may perhaps be rather hard for young readers to understand, but the third and fourth general councils are too important to be passed over, and, even if what has been said here should not be quite understood, it will at least show that all those distinctions in the Athanasian creed mean something, and that they were not set forth without some reason, but in order to meet errors which had actually been taught.

I may mention here two other things which were settled by the Council of Chalcedon--that it gave the bishops of Constantinople authority over Thrace, Asia, and Pontus; and that it raised Jerusalem, which until then had been only an ordinary bishopric, to have authority of the same kind over the Holy Land. These chief bishops are now called "patriarchs", and there were thus five patriarchs--namely, the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

The 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 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. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word 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 has handed down to us.

**Jerome Completes The Vulgate**

From the beginning the church has accepted the necessity for Bible translation. Though the common Greek of the New Testament was widely understood in the Roman empire, not everyone knew the language, and the church had the goal of reaching everyone with the Gospel.

Early translations appeared in various languages, notable Latin (which in time became the language of the empire), Syriac, and Coptic. Though we may admire the zeal of the first translators, alas, they did not always show a good command of Greek.

From 366 to 385 Damasus was bishop of Rome. Though Rome’s bishopric was held in great esteem, it had not yet achieved power beyond the other bishoprics, and Damasus liked power. He wanted to free Western Christianity from the dominance of the East. Greek had long been the accepted language of the church, but Damasus wanted the Western church to become clearly Latin. One way he could accomplish this was to have the Bible translated into Latin.

Damasus’s secretary was named Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, though he is better known to the church as Jerome. He was trained in Latin and Greek classics, and Jerome berated himself for his fondness for secular authors. To chastise himself he practiced a life of renunciation and withdrew to Syria to study Hebrew. By the time he entered Damasus’s service, Jerome had become one of the greatest living scholars.

So Damasus suggested that his secretary produce a new Latin translation of the Bible, one that would throw out the inaccuracies of older translations. Damasus sought uniformity. Just as he had standardized the worship service of the churches under his authority, he wanted to standardized set of Scriptures.
Jerome began his work in 382. Jerome was a monk and before retreating to the desert, Jerome felt ashamed because he admired pagan authors.

Jerome’s hatred of everything physical led to some unusual habits and teachings. It was Jerome who first defended the idea that Jesus’ mother remained a virgin throughout her life. Jerome also refused to wash his body, claiming that Christ had cleansed him once for all. Still, he could not escape his physical longings. In a final effort to rid his mind of everything but God, he learned Hebrew.

When Damasus died in 384, Jerome apparently nursed a desire to take the bishop’s position in Rome. Partly in bitterness at not being chosen and partly out of a desire to rid himself of distractions, Jerome moved from Rome to the Holy Land, settling in Bethlehem. In 405 he finished this translation. But it had not been his only task. During those twenty-three years, he also churned out commentaries and other writings and served as spiritual counselor for some wealthy—and very devout—widows. He became involved in every theological battle of his day, contributing eloquent—and often caustic—letters that are still dramatic reading.

Jerome had begun his translation by working from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. But soon he established a precedent for all good Old Testament translators: Work from the original Hebrew. In his quest for accuracy, Jerome consulted many Jewish rabbis.

Jerome had been struck by the fact that the Jewish Scriptures did not include the books we call the Apocrypha. Because they had been included in the Septuagint, Jerome was compelled to include them in his translation, but he made his opinion clear: These were liber ecclesiastici (“church books”), not liber canonici (“canonical books”); thought the Apocryphal books could be used for edification, they could not establish doctrine. Hundreds of years later, the leaders of the Reformation would go one step farther and not include them at all in the Protestant Bible.

The divine library, as Jerome called the Bible, was finally available in a well-written, accurate version, in the language commonly used in the Western churches. It became known as the Vulgate (from the Latin vulgus, “common”). Jerome’s enormous influence caused all serious scholars of the Middle Ages to highly regard his translation. Martin Luther, who knew Hebrew and Greek, quoted from the Vulgate throughout his life.

Because Jerome’s work had the church’s seal of approval, other translators had a hard time following him. Until the Reformation, only a few translations were made into common European languages, and even then, instead of working from the Greek New Testament, translators returned to the Vulgate.

Ironically, the translation of the Bible into a language every Western church could use probably caused the church to have a worship service and Bible no layman could understand. Jerome’s translation gave Latin the imptus Damasus had sought, but the
Vulgate became so sacrosanct that eventually translating the bible into common tongues was prohibited.

**Fall Of The Western Empire (AD 451 – 476)**

The empire of the West was now fast sinking. One weak prince was at the head of it after another, and the spirit of the old Romans, who had conquered the world, had quite died out. Immense hosts of barbarous nations poured in from the North. The Goths, under Alaric, who took Rome by siege, in the reign of Honorius. Forty years later, Attila, king of the Huns, who was called "The scourge of God," kept both the East and the West in terror. In the year 451, he advanced as far as Orleans, and, after having for some time besieged it, he made a breach in the wall of the city. The soldiers of the garrison, and such of the citizens as could fight, had done their best in the defence of the walls; those who could not bear arms betook themselves to the churches, and were occupied in anxious prayer. The bishop, Anianus, had before earnestly begged that troops might be sent to the relief of the place; and he had posted a man on a tower, with orders to look out in the direction from which succour might be hoped for. The watchman twice returned to the bishop without any tidings of comfort; but the third time he said that he had noticed a little cloud of dust as far off as he could see. "It is the aid of God!" said the bishop and the people who heard him took up the words, and shouted, "It is the aid of God!" The little cloud, from being "like a man's hand" (1 Kings 18:44), grew larger and drew nearer; the dust was cleared away by the wind, and the glitter of spears and armour was seen; and just as the Huns had broken through the wall, and were rushing into the city, greedy of plunder and bloodshed, an army of Romans and allies arrived and forced them to retreat. After having been thus driven from Orleans, Attila was defeated in a great battle near Chalons, on the river Marne, and withdrew into Germany.

In the following year (452), Attila invaded Italy, where he caused great consternation. But when the bishop of Rome, Leo the Great, went to his camp near Mantua, and entreated him to spare the country, Attila was so much struck by the bishop's venerable appearance and his powerful words, that he agreed to withdraw on receiving a large sum of money. A few months later he suddenly died, and his kingdom soon fell to pieces.

By degrees, the Romans lost Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Africa; and Italy was all that was left of the western empire.

Genseric, had led the Vandals into Africa, long kept the Mediterranean in constant dread of his fleets. Three years after the invasion of Italy by Attila, he appeared at the mouth of the Tiber (AD 455), having been invited by the empress Eudoxia, who wished to be revenged on her husband, in consequence of his having told her that he had been the cause of her former husband's death. As the Vandals approached the walls of Rome, the bishop, Leo, went forth at the head of his clergy. He pleaded with Genseric as he had before pleaded with Attila, and he brought him to promise that the city should not be burnt, and that the lives of the inhabitants should be spared, but Genseric gave up the place for fourteen days to plunder, and the sufferings of the people were frightful. The
Vandal king returned to Africa with a vast quantity of booty, and with a great number of captives, among whom were the unfortunate empress and her two daughters. On this occasion the bishop of Carthage, Deogratias, behaved with noble charity;—he sold the gold and silver plate of the church, and with the price he redeemed some of the captives, and relieved the sufferings of others. Two of the churches were turned into hospitals. The sick were comfortably lodged, and were plentifully supplied with food and medicines; and the good bishop, old and infirm as he was, visited them often, by night as well as by day, and spoke words of kindness and of Christian consolation to them.

This behaviour of Deogratias was the more to his honour, because his own flock was suffering severely from the oppression of the Vandals were Arians. Genseric treated the Catholics of Africa very tyrannically, his son and successor, Hunneric, was still more cruel to them; and, as long as the Vandals held possession of Africa, the persecution, in one shape or another, was carried on almost without ceasing.

The last emperor of the West, Augustulus, was put down in the year 476, and a barbarian prince named Odoacer became king of Italy.

**Gregory 1 Becomes Pope**

Though no longer capital of an empire, Rome still had prestige. After all, the ancient city had connections with The Apostles Peter and Paul.

For many years the bishops of Rome had attempted to increase their power. Slowly theirs had achieved a favored position over the other sees, and the bishop of Rome had become the pope.

Yet the man who would do the most to bolster the authority and power of the papacy did not do so for political gain. A humble monk who did not seek high office, he rose to the papacy over his own objections.

Gregory was born in 540 to a noble Roman family with a history of political service. He became prefect of Rome—the highest civil office. Yet he did not feel cut out for public life and resigned, divvying up his estates for the founding of monasteries and joining one himself. A few years later, he would become an abbot.

His piety—and no doubt his background as a skillful administrator—attracted attention. In 590, when the pope died, the Romans unanimously asked Gregory to become his successor. Though Gregory refused, the public will prevailed.

As a former statesman, the new pope brought his powers of ruling to his office. When the Lombards threatened Rome, Gregory appealed to the emperor at Constantinople for help. When none came, the bishop of Rome mustered troops, negotiated treaties, and did all required to bring peace. Gregory’s independent actions proved to the emperor’s exarch (his representative, who was in Ravenna) that Gregory was quite able to keep
order in Rome. These political moves would become some of the first steps in dividing the Christians of the Eastern and Western empires.

But Gregory did not really have political ambitions. His interests were spiritual. Greatly concerned about pastoral care, he insisted that the clergy see themselves as shepherds and servants of the flock. He referred to himself as the “servant of the servants of God,” and his Pastoral Rule, an amazingly insightful study of people’s spiritual trials and how the clergy should deal with them, because a kind of ministerial textbook for the middle Ages.

Gregory’s Dialogues was an early attempt at hagiography, “writing about the saints,” which emphasized the fantastic and miraculous, turning the saints into sort of superheroes. During his papacy, veneration of the body parts, clothing, and so on of saints was encouraged; it would become a major feature of medieval piety. For centuries no church could be established without the relic of a saint to be placed in it.

Though Gregory did not claim to be a theologian, some of his beliefs became essentials in Catholic theology. He believed in purgatory and taught that masses celebrated in behalf of the dead could relieve their pains there. In addition he helped popularize the teachings of Dionysius the Areopagite, who had written about different categories of angels. After Gregory, these ideas would become widely accepted.

Though he may not have originated the Gregorian chant, Gregory was interested in church music, and the plainsong chant owes much to his influence.

In addition, Gregory authorized an evangelization mission to Kent, under Augustine. Though Christianity had already reached Britain, in sending the mission under Augustine, he extended the power of Rome to those isles. A Christianity that looked to Rome for leadership was definitely taking shape.

The battle of Constantinople claimed the title Ecumenical (“global” or “universal”) Patriarch. Gregory both refused to accept his use of that title and rejected it for himself. Yet everything he did showed that Gregory saw himself as chief pastor of the worldwide church.

Within fourteen years Gregory achieved so much that later generations named him Gregory the Great. Perhaps he became great because he was a humble man.

The Battle Of Tours

If it weren’t for Charles Martel, we might all be speaking Arabic and kneeling toward Mecca five times a day. At Tours, Charles Martel and his Frankish army turned back the massive juggernaut of Muslim forces that had swept across North Africa and into Europe. The Battle of Tours saved the day for Western civilization.
The rapid rise of Islam is one of the most incredible movements in history. In 622, the followers of Muhammad were a persecuted band of visionaries huddled in Mecca. One hundred years later, they controlled not only Arabia, but all of North Africa, Palestine, Persia, Spain, parts of India--and they were threatening France and Constantinople.

How did they do it? Conversion, diplomacy, and a fiercely dedicated fighting force. It might also be said that the fallen Roman Empire had left the territory ripe for the picking.

Muhammad's religion developed in Mecca, one of two major Arabian cities. It was vehemently monotheistic and legalistic, but fairly simple. Muhammad claimed to have received his system from God (Allah) and said he was Al-lah's designated prophet. The citizens of Mecca opposed Muhammad's new teachings and made life rough for his followers. So in 622 the prophet took his band and fled to Medina (Arabia's other major city). This flight (hegira) marks the start of the Muslim calendar and the beginning of their incredible expansion.

Arabia at the time was a diverse collection of nomadic tribes that were always warring against each other. Islam brought unity--not only in religion, but law, economics, and politics as well. When Muhammad died (632), there was infighting among several would-be successors. But still the faith expanded.

By 636, the Muslims controlled Syria and Palestine. They took Alexandria in 642, Mesopotamia in 646. Carthage fell in 697, as the Muslims swept across North Africa, winning territory that remains in Muslim hands to this day. In 711, they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and entered Spain. They quickly solidified control of the Iberian Peninsula and eventually moved beyond the Pyrenees. In the meantime, Muslims had entered the Punjab area of India and were knocking at the door of Constantinople.

Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire, all that remained of the once-proud Roman Empire. Centuries earlier, the Roman Empire had divided into East and West, and the Western empire quickly fell to various Germanic tribes--Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Franks. The only power Rome held now was in the church, but this was growing. Through missionaries such as Augustine in England and Boniface in Germany, Rome was gaining spiritual allegiance in its old political territories.

The Muslim threat combined religion and political power. Islam not only overthrew political authorities, it converted people and offered them (or forced on them) a new religious system.

Martel gathered his forces directly in the path of the oncoming Moslem army and prepared to defend themselves by using a phalanx style of combat. The invading Moslems rushed forward, relying on the slashing tactics and overwhelming number of horsemen that had brought them victories in the past. However, the French Army, composed of foot soldiers armed only with swords, shields, axes, javelins, and daggers, was well trained. Despite the effectiveness of the Moslem army in previous battles, the terrain caused them a disadvantage. Their strength lied within their cavalry, armed with
large swords and lances, which along with their baggage mules, limited their mobility. The French army displayed great ardency in withstanding the ferocious attack. It was one of the rare times in the Middle Ages when infantry held its ground against a mounted attack. The exact length of the battle is undetermined; Arab sources claim that it was a two day battle whereas Christian sources hold that the fighting clamored on for seven days. In either case, the battle ended when the French captured and killed Abd-er Rahman. The Moslem army withdrew peacefully overnight and even though Martel expected a surprise retaliation, there was none. For the Moslems, the death of their leader caused a sharp setback and they had no choice but to retreat back across the Pyrenees, never to return again.

Charlemagne Crowned Emperor

Should church and state be one? In the ancient world, every state had its own gods—and the Roman emperor had been one of them. No one separated religion from politics. When Constantine converted and brought Christianity to the empire as its favored religion, that connection found its way into the church.

Even after the empire fell, many people clung to the ideal that there should be a Christian empire. But who would lead? Was the spiritual leader, the pope, to rule, or would authority lie in the hands of a king? Through the Middle Ages leaders would seek the answers to these questions.

By the middle of the eighth century the papacy had become powerful, yet it still had not achieved the goal of restoring order to the Western world. In 754 a forged document, the Donation of Constantine, would attempt to keep alive the idea of a Roman empire. According to the Donation, the Roman emperor Constantine had moved to Constantinople to allow the pope control of the West. Constantine had purportedly bequeathed that part of the empire to the bishop of Rome.

Following the ideas in the Donation of Constantine, the Frankish king Pepin III, son of Charles Martel, decided to take Ravenna from the Lombards and give it to the pope. In 756 the Donation of Pepin conferred the Papal States on him.

Though the pope had gained his own territory, he never achieved direct imperial control. That would lie in the hands of Pepin's son, Charles the Great—or Charlemagne.

In 771, when Charlemagne took his throne, he began three decades of conquering. He pushed the borders of his kingdom east, and in the end he controlled Burgundy, much of Italy, Alamania, Bavaria, and Thurginia. To the north he had power over Saxony and Frisia. East of these he created territories with a special military organization, called marches. They stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic. For the first time, a large part of Europe had a stable leadership.
Until Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne held the title king. On that holiday Pope Leo II crowned him emperor, and again it seemed that Western Europe had an emperor to follow in Constantine's footsteps.

Certainly Charlemagne took seriously the idea that he had become the Christian emperor, for all his official dispatches began "Charles, by the will of God, Roman Emperor."

The new emperor was an imposing man--tall, strong, a great horseman, and a fearless and sometimes cruel fighter. He presented Europe with a powerful but benevolent father figure.

Charlemagne by no means wished to lose any of his power. The emperor in Constantinople presented no problem, for he had officially recognized Charlemagne's rights. But those under him or the pope might seek to strip Charlemagne of some authority. Because his was a vast realm, Charlemagne appointed a pair of officials known as the missi dominici. These men traveled the empire to check on local officials. Even the pope could not hide from their watchful eyes, and the missi held sway over church and state.

Though he was barely literate, Charlemagne held learning in high esteem; under his peaceful rule an awakening of art and scholarship, known as the Carolingian Renaissance, took place. The emperor sponsored a palace school at Aachen. Alcuin, a brilliant Anglo-Saxon scholar, was master there; he exhorted his students “The years go by like running water. Waste not the teachable days in idleness!” Alcuin wrote textbooks on grammar, spelling, rhetoric, and logic: he also wrote biblical commentaries and took the side of orthodoxy in many theological debates.

Not only did Aachen’s school stimulate learning through the empire, Charles decreed that every monastery should have a school for teaching “all those who with God’s help are able to learn.”

The Carolingian Renaissance preserved many writings of the ancient world. As monks made copies of ancient Latin works—some of them beautifully illuminated—monasteries became “culture banks.” In many cases, without the labors of these monks, ancient works would have been lost to us.

In an age of confusion and warfare, Charlemagne’s rule provided political stability and culture. He insured that the West would retain its ancient cultural legacy, that Christianity would be spread in his empire, and that the clergy would preach on the basic elements of the faith. He also gave the pope his protection.

However, Charlemagne saw no reason to give the pope his power. Was he not a Christian emperor whose ultimate loyalty was to God? In fact, this formidable figure submitted to no one but Him.
When Charlemagne died in 814, his empire began to gradually disintegrate. It was divided among his three sons, and slowly the pope gained more and more power.

But Charlemagne had bequeathed the West an alluring vision: A Christian king with supreme authority throughout his domain. For hundreds of years popes and kings would seek such control over their own territories—and others’. It was an idea that would take a long time to die.

The East – West Schism

For many years the churches in the East had been growing apart. What had once been a single church slowly separated into two distinct identities.

Many nit-picking differences added heat to the conflict. The East used Greek as its language; the West used Latin, thanks to the Vulgate and Western theologians who wrote in that language. Forms of worship differed; the bread used in communion, the date for Lent, and how mass was celebrated. In the East clergy could marry, and they wore beards. Western priests could not marry and were clean shaven.

Theologies also differed. The East felt uncomfortable with the West’s doctrine of purgatory. The West used the Latin word *filoque*, “and from the Son,” in the Nicene Creed, after the clause about the Holy Spirit, which says the Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” To the East, that addition was heretical.

Differences that had existed for centuries exploded because of two strong willed men. In 1043, Michael Cerularius became patriarch of Constantinople. In 1049 Leo IX became pope. Leo wanted Michael—and through him, the Eastern Church—to submit to Rome. The pope sent representatives to Constantinople; Michael refused to meet them. So the representatives excommunicated Michael on behalf of the pope. The patriarch responded by excommunicating the representatives.

By each declaring that the other was not a true Christian, the two bishops created a schism. But they alone had not caused the split. The combatants had a history of differences behind them. The schism was the final act that acknowledged that.

As the creed said, both sides believed in “one holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” In 1089 Pope Urban tried to heal the breach by revoking the patriarch’s excommunication; he also promoted the First Crusade as a means of reuniting East and West. It didn’t work.

Later centuries saw attempts to reunite the churches, but none were successful. The short-lived “reunion” of 1204 increased the hostility. In 1453, when the Muslim Turks
took over Constantinople, some Eastern Christians claimed they preferred the Muslims to Catholics. A united Christendom seemed impossible.

Though the differences between the two churches may seem less than essential, at the heart it was a matter of power. In an age that saw bishops’ authority as a key to the stability of the church, no two could claim the same authority. When East and West failed to agree, they would go their separate ways.

The First Crusade (Ad 1095 – 1099)

The popes who came next after Gregory VII carried things with a high hand, following the example which he had set them. They got the better of Henry IV, but in a way which did them no credit. For when Henry had returned from Italy to his own country, and had done his best, by many years of good government, to heal the effects of the long, troubles of Germany, the popes encouraged his son Conrad, and after Conrad’s death, his younger son Henry, to rebel against him. The younger Henry behaved very treacherously to his father, whom he forced to give up his crown, and at last Henry IV died broken-hearted in 1106. When Henry was thus out of the way, his son, Henry V, who, until then, had seemed to be a tool of the pope and the clergy, showed what sort of man he really was by imprisoning Pope Paschal II and his cardinals for nine weeks, until he made the pope grant all that he wanted. But at length this emperor was able to settle for a time the great quarrel of investitures, by an agreement made at the city of Worms, on the Rhine, in 1123.

But before this time, and while Henry IV was still emperor, the popes had got a great addition to their power and importance by the Crusades—a word which means wars undertaken for the sake of the Cross. From the fourth century, it became the fashion for Christians to flock from all countries into the Holy Land, that they might warm their faith (as they thought) by the sight of the places where our Blessed Lord had been born, and lived, and died, and where most of the other things written in the Scripture history had taken place. Very often, indeed, this pilgrimage was found to do more harm than good to those who went on it, for many of them had their minds taken up with anything rather than the pious thoughts which they professed; but the fashion of pilgrimage grew more and more, whether the pilgrims were the better or the worse for it.

When the Holy Land had fallen into the hands of the Mahometans, these often treated the Christian pilgrims very badly, behaving cruelly to them, insulting them, and making them pay enormously for leave to visit the holy places. And when Palestine was conquered by the Turks, who had taken up the Mahometan religion lately, and were full of their new zeal for it (AD 1076), the condition of the Christians there became worse than ever. There had often been thoughts among the Christians of the West as to making an attempt
to get back the Holy Land from the unbelievers; but now the matter was to be taken up with a zeal which had never before been felt.

A pilgrim from the north of France, called Peter the Hermit, on returning from Jerusalem, carried to Pope Urban II a fearful tale of the tyranny with which the Mahometans there treated both the Christian inhabitants and the pilgrims; and the pope gave him leave to try what he could do to stir up the Christians of the West for the deliverance of their brethren. Peter was a small, lean, dark man, but with an eye of fire, and with a power of fiery speech; and Wherever he went, he found that people of all classes eagerly thronged to hear him; they even gathered up the hairs which fell from the mule on which he rode, and treasured them up as precious relics. On his bringing back to the pope a report of the success which he had thus far met, Urban himself resolved to proclaim the crusade, and went into France, as being the country where it was most likely to be welcomed. There, in a great meeting at Clermont, AD 1095, where such vast numbers attended that most of them were forced to lodge in tents because the town itself could not hold them, the pope, in stirring words, set forth the reasons for the holy war, and invited his hearers to take part in it. While he was speaking, the people broke in on him with shouts of "God wills it!"--words which from that time became the cry of the Crusaders; and when he had done, thousands enlisted for the crusade by fixing little crosses on their dress.

All over Europe everything was set into motion; almost every one, whether old or young, strong or feeble, was eager to join; women urged their husbands or their sons to take the cross, and any one who refused was despised by all. Many of those who enlisted would not wait for the time which had been fixed for starting. A large body set out under Peter the Hermit and two knights, of whom one was called Walter the Pennyless. Other crowds followed, which were made up, not of fighting men only; but of poor, broken-down old men, of women and children who had no notion how very far off Jerusalem was, or what dangers lay in the way to it. There were many simple country folks, who set out with their families in carts drawn by oxen; and, whenever they came to any town, their children asked, "Is this Jerusalem?" And besides these poor creatures, there were many bad people, who plundered as they went on, so as to make the crusade hated even by the Christian inhabitants of the countries through which they passed.

These first swarms took the way through Hungary to Constantinople, and then across the Bosphorus into Asia Minor. Walter the Pennyless, who, although his pockets were empty, seems to have been a brave and good soldier, was killed in battle near Nicæa, the place where the first general council had been held, but which had now become the capital of the Turks; and the bones of his followers who fell with him were gathered into a great heap, which stood as a monument of their rashness. It is said that more than a hundred thousand human beings had already perished in these ill-managed attempts before the main forces of the Crusaders began to move.

To encourage the crusades, Urban and the popes who followed him emphasized the spiritual “benefits” of way against the Muslims. Taking a page from the Koran, urban
assured the warriors that by doing this penance they would enter heaven directly—or at least reduce their time in purgatory.

When the regular armies started at length, AD 1096, part of them marched through Hungary, while others went through Italy, and there took ship for Constantinople. The chief of their Leaders was Godfrey of Bouillon, a brave and pious knight; and among the other commanders was Robert, duke of Normandy, whom we read of in English history as the eldest son of William the Conqueror, and brother of William Rufus. When they reached Constantinople, they found that the Greek emperor, Alexius, looked on them with distrust and dislike rather than with kindness; and he was glad to get rid of them by helping them across the strait to Asia.

In passing through Asia Minor, the Crusaders had to fight often, and to struggle with many other difficulties. The sight of the hill of bones near Nicaea roused them to fury; and, in order to avenge Walter the Pennyless and his companions, they laid siege to the city, which they took at the end of six weeks. After resting there for a time they went on again and reached Antioch, which they besieged for eight months (Oct. 1097--June 1098). During this siege they suffered terribly. Their tents were blown to shreds by the winds, or were rotted by the heavy rains which turned the ground into a swamp; and, as they had wasted their provisions at the beginning of the siege (not expecting that it would last so long), they found themselves in great distress for food, so that they were obliged to eat the flesh of horses and camels, of dogs and mice, with grass and thistles, leather, and the bark of trees. Their horses had almost all sunk under the hardships of the siege, and the men were thinned by disease and by the assaults of their enemies.

At length Antioch was betrayed to them; but they made a bad use of their success. They slew all of the inhabitants who refused to become Christians. They wasted the provisions which they found in the city, or which were brought to them from other quarters; and when a fresh Mahometan force appeared, which was vastly greater than their own, they found themselves shut in between it and the garrison of the castle, which they had not been able to take when they took the city.

Their distress was now greater than before, and their case seemed to be almost hopeless, when their spirits were revived by the discovery of something which was supposed to be the lance by which our blessed Lord's side was pierced on the Cross. They rushed, with full confidence, to attack the enemy on the outside; and the victory which they gained over these was soon followed by the surrender of the castle. But a plague which broke out among them obliged them to remain nearly nine months longer at Antioch.

Having recruited their health, they moved on towards Jerusalem, although their numbers were now much less than when they had reached Antioch. When at length they came in sight of the holy city, a cry of “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! God wills it!” ran through the army, although many were so moved that they were unable to speak and could only find vent for their feelings in tears and sighs. All threw themselves on their knees and kissed the sacred ground (June, 1099). The siege of Jerusalem lasted forty days, during which the Crusaders suffered much from hunger, and still more from thirst; for it was the height
of summer, when all the brooks of that hot country are dried up; the wells, about which we read so much in holy Scripture, were purposely choked with rubbish, and the cisterns were destroyed or poisoned. Water had to be fetched from a distance of six miles, and was sold very dear; but it was so filthy that many died after drinking it. The besiegers found much difficulty in getting wood to make the engines which were then used in attacking the walls of cities; and when they had at length been able to build such machines as they wanted, the defenders tried to upset them, and threw at them showers of burning pitch or oil, and what was called the Greek fire, in the hope that they might set the engines themselves in flames, or at least might scald or wound the people in them. We are even told that two old women, who were supposed to be witches, were set to utter spells and curses from the walls; but a stone from an engine crushed the poor old wretches, and their bodies tumbled down into the ditch which surrounded the city. The Crusaders were driven back in one assault, and were all but giving way in the accord; but Godfrey of Bouillon thought that he saw in the sky a bright figure of a warrior beckoning him onwards; and the Crusaders pressed forward with renewed courage until they found themselves masters of the holy city (July 15, 1099). It was noted that this was at three o'clock on a Friday afternoon--the same day of the week, and the same hour of the day, when our Blessed Lord was crucified.

I shall not tell you of the butchery and of the other shocking things which the Crusaders were guilty of when they got possession of Jerusalem. They were, indeed, wrought up to such a state that they were not masters of themselves. At one moment they were throwing themselves on their knees with tears of repentance and joy; and then again they would start up and break loose into some frightful acts of cruelty and plunder against the conquered enemy, sparing neither old man, nor woman, nor child.

Eight days after the taking of Jerusalem, the Crusaders met to choose a king. Robert of Normandy was one of those who were proposed; but the choice fell on Godfrey of Bouillon. But the pious Godfrey said that he would not wear a crown of gold where the King of Kings had been crowned with thorns; and he refused to take any higher title than that of Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre.

Godfrey did not live long to enjoy his honours, and his brother, Baldwin, was chosen in his room. The kingdom of Jerusalem was established, and pilgrims soon began to stream afresh towards the sacred places. But, although we might have expected to find that this recovery of the Holy Land from the Mahometans by the Christians of the West would have led to union of the Greek and Latin Churches, it unhappily turned out quite otherwise. The popes set up a Latin patriarch, with Latin bishops and clergy, against the Greeks, and the two Churches were on worse terms than ever.

This crusade was followed by others, but meanwhile, although the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was never strong, and soon showed signs of decay, these crusades brought the nations of the West, which fought side by side in them, to know more of each other; that they served to increase trade with the East, and so to bring the produce of the Eastern countries within the reach of Europeans; and, as I have said, already (p 199), they greatly helped to increase the power of the popes, who had seen their way to take the direction of
them, and thus get a stronger hold than before on the princes and people of Western Christendom.

Music In Church History

Just for a few moments let’s take a glimpse into the music of church history.

Questions: What is the longest book in the Bible? What is the one Bible book that consists entirely of songs or hymn-prayers to God? The answer to both questions is Psalms. Music is one of the priceless gifts God gave us. Music touches us as nothing else, reaching into our inner depths, giving us expression beyond the range of rational thought, offering us an instrument of praise to God and a manifestation of community as we sing together.

Music can soothe troubled hearts, as David's therapeutic ministry to King Saul showed so long ago (1 Sam. 16). Blacks and Jews are especially aware of how songs to God have historically provided their people solace, dignity, strength and hope in the midst of humiliating servitude.

One of the few specifics God has entrusted to us about heaven is that it will be filled with song.

From the church's earliest days, singing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" with thankfulness to God has been an important part of Christian worship. Several of Paul's epistles contain fragments of hymns from the first generation of Christians (Philippians 2:6-11; I Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 5:14; Colossians 1:15-20); all are Christ-centered and brief, powerful proclamations of the early church's faith.

Song In The Night

In one of the earliest extra-Biblical descriptions of Christians, about 112 A. D., the Roman Pliny wrote to the emperor Trajan that these believers "were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed . . . "

Scripture Songs

The early Christians often adopted Scriptures for songs--such as the song celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-18), the song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43), and Mary's song of praise (Luke 1:46-55). Nine such scriptural songs are Odes or Canticles important in Greek Orthodox worship to this day.

What About Instruments?

Besides their use in Sunday worship, the early Christians also used hymns at weddings and funerals. Some church fathers recommended that religious songs replace instruments
and secular songs in the home. Because musical instruments were used in pagan sacrifices and the Jewish temple worship, some Christians would not use them in public worship; they said musical instruments were part of the "childish" worship in the earlier state of God's people (a view later adopted by John Calvin). Some even opposed their use in private life as well. Much later, somewhere between the seventh and the tenth centuries, the organ was accepted into the church's worship, moving from the court ceremony of the emperor (along with the ceremonial use of candles and incense).

**Battle Of The Bands**
Music has the power to reach the soul when a sermon might simply fall on deaf ears. Some of the church's heretics realized this more than the orthodox Christians did. In the 4th century, Arius believed the Son was a creature of the Father; his writings and beliefs were condemned as heretical by several church councils. Arius wrote songs popularizing his ideas with the common people. Since church buildings were forbidden to them in the capital city of Constantinople, on worship and festival days the Arians would meet in public places, singing their songs antiphonally all night long. The tunes were catchy, and soon everyone was singing the songs, whether they believed Arius' doctrines or not. The church father Chrysostom feared this would bring people away from the truth, so he organized, with the sponsorship of Empress Eudoxia, nightly processions and hymn singing with silver crosses, candles, and pageantry. At times there were riots and bloodshed when the two sides met. The "Battle of the Bands" was an early church example of the power of music to influence a people's spiritual direction.

**A Long Interlude**
The sixth-century pope Gregory I implemented musical reforms in the Roman church which were to influence the western church for the next millennium. The "Gregorian chant" or plainsong was characterized by a lack of harmony or polyphony; there was only the melodic line. There were no strict time values, and no musical instruments were used. The effect produced had a resonant, mystical, other-worldly quality. Only men were allowed to sing; this was music for the priests and the choir, not the congregation.

**“Nothing On Earth More Mighty”**
It was left to the Reformation to restore singing to the people of the church. John Hus led the way and issued the first Protestant hymnbook in the Bohemian language. The German Reformer Martin Luther, an accomplished musician in his own right, believed music could be a powerful missionary tool in spreading the Gospel message: *With all my heart I would extol the precious gift of God in the noble art of music..... Music is to be praised as second only to the Word of God because by her all the emotions are swayed.*

Luther wrote at least 37 hymns himself. The most famous, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," is sometimes called the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation." The Reformation hymns emphasized the worship of Christ rather than the medieval worship of Mary and replaced the chanting of priests and choirs in Latin with congregational singing in the language of the people. With the Reformation the congregational hymn was reborn, and it has continued as an important part of Protestant worship to our own day.
Universities of Paris And Oxford Founded

What happens when you debate against your theology professor--and you win? Chances were, in the Middle Ages, you were branded as a heretic and thrown out of school. That was essentially what happened to the brilliant Peter Abelard. Partly as a result, the university was invented.

At first, higher education had taken place in monasteries and cathedral schools. But these schools began to attract teachers from outside the clergy, and such teachers often questioned the official dogma of the church.

That was the case with Abelard. He and some scholars like him went into "private practice," teaching and living off the fees of their students. Abelard himself had a varied career; he set up his own school at St. Dents, returned to teach at Notre Dame Cathedral, then taught on his own again. His fame drew students to Paris, but the church was never sure it could trust him. Eventually, a group of such teachers, expelled from the Notre Dame cloisters, set up shop on the left bank of the Seine.

There is some debate as to whether Bologna or Paris had the first "university." In Bologna, the teacher Irnerius set up a law school in 1088, which was granted a charter by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1159. But the name university comes from Paris. In medieval times, all trades were well organized. So the teachers and students along the Seine organized a guild of sorts, the Universitas Societas Magis-troturn et Scholarturn ("Universal Society of Teachers and Students"), under the authority of a chancellor. This chancellor, loosely responsible to the bishop of Paris, had the task of granting licenses to teach.

In 1200, Philip II of France granted the “university” official status. As at Bologna, teachers and students received some of the social privileges of the clergy, yet were separate from them. Pope Innocent III (who had studied in Paris) confirmed the school's status in 1208. University personnel actually went on strike in 1229-1231, due to a conflict with bishops over control of the educational process. Pope Gregory IX ended it with a promise of self-government for the school.

The University of Paris became the hub of scholarship for most of Europe, at least north of the Alps. Thus there developed four "nations" of study, grouping teachers and students of similar background: French, English/ German, Norman, Picardian (Low Countries ). Foreign students also needed housing, which was provided along national lines. This established the framework for "colleges" within universities. Paris also developed four fields of study: arts, medicine, law, and theology.

In 1167, even before the University of Paris had official status, Henry II prohibited English students from studying in Paris. A Studium Generale was established in Oxford. It was officially organized, under a chancellor, in 1215.

The thirteenth century was a heyday for scholarship. Paris, Oxford, and Bologna became centers of theology, philosophy, and science. These events established educational
traditions that have lasted to the present day.

**Religious Sects And Parties**

While the popes were thus trying to lord it over all men, from the emperor downwards, there were many who hated their doctrines and would not allow their authority. The Albigenses and Waldenses, still remained in great numbers, and held the opinions which had drawn so much suffering on them. The Albigenses, indeed, were but a part of a greater body, the Cathari, who were spread through many countries, and had an understanding and fellowship with each other which were kept up by secret means. And there were other sects, of which it need only be said here that in general their opinions were very wild and strange, and unlike, not only to the papal doctrines, but to the Christianity of the Bible and of the early Church. Whenever any of the clergy, from the pope downwards, gave an occasion by pride or ambition, or worldly living, or neglect of duty, or any other fault, these sects took care to speak of the whole Church as having fallen from the faith, and to gain converts for themselves by pointing out the blemishes which were allowed in it.

On the other hand, the Inquisition was set on foot for the discovery and punishment of such doctrines as the Roman Church condemned; and it was worked with a secrecy, an injustice, and a cruelty which made men quake with fear wherever it was established.

There were large numbers of persons called Mystics, who thought to draw near to God, and to give up their own will to His will, in a way beyond what ordinary believers could understand. Among these was a society which called itself the Friends of God; and these friends belonged to the Church at the same time that they had this closer and more secret tie of union among themselves. There is a very curious story how John Tauler, a Dominican friar of Strasburg, was converted by the chief of this party, Nicolas of Basel. Tauler had gained great fame as a preacher, and had reached the age of fifty-two, when Nicolas, who had been one of his hearers, visited him, and convinced him that he was nothing better than a Pharisee. In obedience to the direction of Nicolas, Tauler shut himself up for two years, without preaching or doing any other work as a clergyman, and even without studying. When, at the end of that time, he came forth again to the world, and first tried to preach, he burst into tears and quite broke down; but on a second trial, it was found that he preached in a new style, and with vastly more of warmth and of effect than he had ever done before. Tauler was born in 1294, and died in 1361.

In these times many were very fond of trying to make out things to come from the prophecies of the Old Testament and of the Revelation, and some people of both sexes supposed themselves to have the gift of prophecy. And in seasons of great public distress, multitudes would break out into some wild sort of religious display, which for a time carried everything before it, and seemed to do a great deal of good, although the wiser people looked on it with distrust; but after a while it passed away, leaving those who had taken part in it rather worse than better than before. Among the outbreaks of this kind was that of the "Flagellants", which showed itself several times in various places. The first appearance of it was in 1260, when it began at Perugia, in the middle of Italy, and
spread both southwards to Rome and northwards to France, Hungary, and Poland. In every city, large companies of men, women, and children moved about the streets, with their faces covered, but their bodies naked down to the waist. They tossed their limbs wildly, they dashed themselves down on the ground in mud or snow, and cruelly "flagellated" (or flogged) themselves with whips, while they shouted out shrieks and prayers for mercy and pardon.

Again, after a terrible plague called the Black Death, which raged from Sicily to Greenland about 1349, parties of flagellants went about half naked, singing and scourging themselves. Whenever the Savior’s sufferings were mentioned in their hymns, they threw themselves on the ground like logs of wood, with their arms stretched out in the shape of a cross, and remained prostrate in prayer until a signal was given them to rise.

These movements seemed to do good at first by reconciling enemies and by forcing the thoughts of death and judgment on ungodly or careless people. But after a time they commonly took the line of throwing contempt on the clergy and on the sacraments and other usual means of grace. And when the stir caused by them was over, the good which they had appeared to do proved not to be lasting.

John Wycliffe (AD c1324-1384)

At this time arose a reformer of a different kind from any of those who had gone before him. He was a Yorkshire man, named John Wycliffe, who had been educated at Oxford, and had become famous there as a teacher of philosophy before he began to show any difference of opinions from those which were common in the Church. Ever since the time when King John disgusted his people by his shameful submission to the pope, there had been a strong feeling against the papacy in England; and it had been provoked more and more, partly because the popes were always drawing money from this country, and thrusting foreigners into the richer places of the English Church. These foreigners squeezed all that they could out of their parishes or offices in England; but they never went near them, and would have been unable to do much good if they had gone, because they did not understand the English language. And another complaint was, that, while the popes lived at Avignon, they were so much in the hands of their neighbours, the kings of France, that the English had no chance of fair play if any question arose between the two nations, and the pope could make himself the judge. And thus the English had been made ready enough to give a hearing to any one who might teach them that the popes had no right to the power which they claimed.

His life was marked by controversy. He had a dangerous habit of saying what he thought. When his studies led him to question official Catholic teachings, he said so. He questioned the church’s right to temporal power and wealth. He questioned the sale of indulgences—letters that were commonly believed to pardon sin—and church offices, the superstitious worship of saints and relics, and the pope’s authority. He even questioned the official view of the Eucharist (the doctrine of transubstantiation) put forth by the Fourth Lateran Council. For these and other views, he regularly defended himself before bishops and councils.
There had always been a great unwillingness to pay the tribute which King John had promised to the Roman see. If the king was weak, he paid it; if he was strong, he was more likely to refuse it. And thus it was that the money had been refused by Edward I, paid by Edward II, and again refused by Edward III, whom Pope Urban V, in 1366, asked to pay up for thirty-three years at once. In this case, Wycliffe took the side of his king, and maintained that the tribute was not rightly due to the pope. And from this he went on to attack the corruptions of the Church in general. He set himself against the begging friars, who had come to great power, worming themselves in everywhere, so that they had brought most of the poorer people to look only to them as spiritual guides, and to think nothing of the parish clergy. In order to oppose the friars, Wycliffe sent about the country a set of men whom he called "poor priests." These were very like the friars in their rough dress and simple manner of living, but taught more according to a plain understanding of the Scriptures than to the doctrines of the Roman Church. It is said that once, when Wycliffe was very ill, and was supposed to be dying, some friars went to him in the hope of getting him to confess that he repented of what he had spoken and written and done against them. But Wycliffe, gathering all his strength, rose up in his bed, and said, in words which were partly taken from the 118th Psalm, "I shall not die but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." He was several times brought before assemblies of bishops and clergy, to answer for his opinions; but he found powerful friends to protect him, and always came off without hurt.

It was in Wycliffe's time that the rebellion of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw broke out, as we read in the history of England (AD 1381); but, although Wycliffe’s enemies would have been very glad to lay some of the blame of it at his door, it is quite certain that he had nothing to do with it in any way.

Think for a moment what it would mean to you if you could not own a Bible or if the Bible was not even available in your language. What if you were taught that the Bible was only for church officials to study and interpret? That was exactly the case in Wycliffe's England.

In those days almost all books were written in Latin, so that none but learned people could read them. But Wycliffe, although he wrote some books in Latin for the learned, took to writing other books in good, plain English, such as every one could understand; and thus his opinions became known to people of all classes. But the greatest thing that he did was the translation of the Bible into English. The Roman Church would not allow the Scriptures to be turned into the language of the country, but wished to keep the knowledge of it for those who could read Latin, and expected the common people to content themselves with what the Church taught. But Wycliffe, with others who worked under him, translated the whole Bible into English, so that all might understand it. We must remember, however, that there was no such thing as printing in his days, so that every single book had to be written with the pen, and of course books were still very dear, and could not be at all common.
So, nothing was more important to him than getting the Bible and its message into the language and hearts of the people. He knew the Scriptures would change lives. As he put it: *God's words will give men new life more than the other words that are for pleasure. O marvelous power of the Divine Seed which overpowers strong men in arms, softens hard hearts, and renews and changes into divine men, those men who had been brutalized by sins, and departed infinitely far from God. Obviously such miraculous power could never be worked by the work of a priest, if the Spirit of Life and the Eternal Word did not, above all things else, work with it.*

Wycliffe suffered a stroke in church and died December 31, 1384. Thirty-one years later, the Council of Constance excommunicated him, and in 1428 his bones were exhumed, burned, and the ashes scattered on the river Swift.

But even such bizarre and extreme actions could not stop the hunger for God's Word and truth that Wycliffe had uncompromisingly advocated. The chronicler Fuller put it this way:

> They burnt his bones to ashes  
> and cast them into the Swift,  
> a neighboring brook running hard by.  
> Thus the brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon,  
> Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas;  
> and they into the main ocean.  
> And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem  
> of his doctrine which now is dispersed the world over.

Wycliffe’s followers were called Lollards—priest who took on apostolic poverty and taught the Scriptures to the common people. After his death they went much farther than he had done, and some of them grew very wild in their opinions, so that they would not only have made strange changes in religious doctrine, but would have upset the government of kingdoms. Against them a law was made by which persons who differed from the doctrines of the Roman Church were sentenced to be burnt under the name of heretics, and many Lollards suffered in consequence. The most famous of these was Sir John Old castle, Lord Cobham, a brave but rather hotheaded and violent soldier, who was suspected of meaning to get up a rebellion. For this and his religious opinions together he was burnt in Smithfield, which was then just outside London (AD 1417); the same place where, at a later time, many suffered for their religion in the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary.

Wycliffe himself managed to stay within the Roman church all his life, but in the hearts and minds of his hearers, the Reformation was already quietly underway.
How appropriate that a great missionary organization founded in 1942 took its name and inspiration from the "morning star" reformer. In cooperation with other likeminded ministries, Wycliffe Bible Translators aims to translate the Bible into every one of the over 2,500 remaining languages on earth that don't have the Scriptures. John Wycliffe, no doubt, smiles with joy.

John Hus Burned At The Stake

“We'll cook his goose." Believe it or not, that phrase originated as a reference to a man whose last name means (in his native language, Czech) "goose" - John Hus. He was literally cooked - burned at the stake - but in being cooked he lit a fire of both nationalism and church reform.

John - Jan in Czech - was born in 1374 to a humble family. He was ordained as priest in 1401 and spent much of his career teaching at the Charles University in Prague, Bohemia (in what is now Czechoslovakia). He was also the preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. (Don't let "chapel" mislead you. Three thousand people packed in to hear his sermons.)

The reform-centered writings of John Wycliffe found their way into Bohemia. Studying in the days before the printing press, Hus painstakingly copied Wycliffe's books for his own use. Like Wycliffe, Hus emphasized personal piety and purity of life. He stressed the role of the Bible as authority in the church, and consequently, he lifted biblical preaching to an important status in church services.

On the walls of Bethlehem Chapel were paintings contrasting the behavior of the popes and Christ. For example, the pope rode a horse while Christ walked barefoot, and Jesus washed the disciples’ feet while the pope had his feet kissed. Such clerical worldliness offended Hus, and he preached and taught against it, while stressing personal piety and purity of life.

The archbishop of Prague told Hus to stop preaching and asked the university to burn Wycliffe's writings. Hus refused to comply, and the archbishop condemned him. Meanwhile, Hus preached against the sale of indulgences, which were being used to finance the pope's expedition against the king of Naples. The pope excommunicated Hus and placed Prague under an interdict—roughly meaning that the entire city was excommunicated and could not receive the sacraments. To relieve this situation, Hus left Prague, but he continued to preach in various churches and in the open air. And, like Jesus, "the common people heard him gladly."

Why was the hierarchy so opposed to Hus? Not only did he denounce the often immoral and extravagant lifestyles of the clergy (including the pope himself), but he also made the bold claim that Christ alone is head of the church. In his book On the Church he defended the authority of the clergy but claimed that God alone can forgive sins. He also claimed
that no pope or bishop could establish doctrine contrary to the Bible, nor could any true
Christian obey a clergymen's order if it was plainly wrong.

Hus could only meet with trouble for such teachings. In 1415 he was summoned to the
Council of Constance to defend his teachings. In being conducted there he was victim of
one of the dirtiest tricks ever played on a Christian. He was promised safe conduct by the
Emperor Sigismund. And he had the papal assurance: "Even if he had killed my own
brother . . . he must be safe while he is at Constance." Yet, Hus was arrested soon after he
arrived. He was confined in a cell under a Dominican convent. His cell was right next to
a sewer system. In effect, the Council had already made up its mind about this rebel Hus.
The Council condemned the teachings of Wycliffe, and Hus was condemned for
supporting those teachings. Especially under fire was Hus's statement that when a pope or
bishop is in mortal sin he has ceased to be pope or bishop.

The council had been called to settle the scandalous situation of having two popes, one in
Italy, one in France. This "Great Schism" (1378-1417) had to be dealt with. It was, thanks
to the council. Naturally, a council that restored the authority of one pope wasn't about to
acquit a rebel who questioned the authority of the pope. Hus's goose was indeed cooked.

Hus, sick and physically wasted by long imprisonment, illness, and lack of sleep,
protested his innocence and refused to renounce his alleged errors unless he could be
shown otherwise from Scripture. To the council he said, "I would not, for a chapel full of
gold, recede from the truth."

Formally condemned, he was handed over to the secular authorities to be burned at the
stake on July 6, 1415. On the way to the place of execution, he passed a churchyard and
saw a bonfire of his books. He laughed and told the bystanders not to believe the lies
circulated about him. Arriving at the place of execution, he was asked by the empire's
marshal if he would finally retract his views. Hus replied, "God is my witness that the
evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one
intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. Today I will gladly die." The fire
was lit. As the flames engulfed him, Hus began to sing in Latin a Christian chant: "Christ,
Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me."

After his death, John Hus's ashes were scattered on a river.

Hus had long been popular with the laypeople, and his heroic death only increased his
prestige. His followers came out in open rebellion, both against the Catholic Church and
against the German-dominated empire with which they wanted no part. Despite repeated
efforts of popes and rulers to stamp out the movement, it survived as an independent
church, known as the Unitas Fratrum or the Unity of the Brethren.
Johann Gutenberg Produces The First Printed Bible

During the Middle Ages, few people owned Bibles or books of any kind. Monks copied texts by hand, on papyrus sheets or parchment made of animal skins. The cost of both materials and the copyists’ time lay far beyond the average man’s resources—even assuming the book he might want was available.

Not many people could read their own language, and many books—the Bible included—were available only in Latin, a language even fewer understood. The average person relied on the local priest and pictures or statues in the church for information on the Bible. Often the local priest had little or no training in Latin, and his knowledge of the Bible was quite minimal. Though scholars debated Scripture and wrote commentaries, their thoughts had a hard time trickling down to the average Christian.

One of the great changes of the fifteenth century had a heavy impact on this state of affairs. In the 1440s Johann Gutenberg experimented with movable pieces of metal type. By setting books in lead type, he could make many copies, at a fraction of the cost of a hand-copied text.

In 1456 Gutenberg—or a group of which he was a part—printed 200 copies of Jerome's Vulgate Bible. The common man could not yet understand God's Word, but it was the first step in a mighty revolution.

For a while the printers of Mainz kept Gutenberg's techniques a trade secret, but by 1483, when Martin Luther was born, every large European country had at least one printing press. Within fifty years of Gutenberg's first printing of the Bible, printers had outproduced centuries of monks. Books had become available in numerous languages, and literacy had increased.

Without Gutenberg's invention, perhaps the goals of the Reformation would have taken longer to be achieved. As long as only the clergy could read God's Word and compare it to church teachings, it had a limited impact on the common Christian.

With the invention of the printing press, Luther and other reformers could make God's Word available to "every plowboy and serving maid." Luther translated the Scriptures into a vigorous, readable German version that was used for centuries. No longer did a priest, pope, or council stand between the believer and his comprehension of the Bible. Though many had claimed the average man could not understand God's Word and needed it interpreted by churchmen, Germans began to do just that.

As they read, these ordinary men and women began to feel part of the Bible's dramatic world. Household training in the faith became possible. Slowly the boundary between pastor and parishioner broke down. Instead of worrying, What will I have to confess to a priest? The believer could ask, Is my life in keeping with the Bible?
With the invention of a complex printing tool, a fire was lit across Europe—one that spread both the Gospel and literacy.

**Michelangelo Completes The Sistine Chapel Ceiling**

As one looks up at the Sistine Chapel ceiling, the larger-than-life figures seem to reach down, vividly bringing to life nine scenes from the Book of Genesis; seven Hebrew prophets; and five sybils, pagan prophetesses who supposedly foretold the Messiah’s coming. In a glance one can see that this is something greatly different from the art of the medieval world.

The spiritual, but often highly stylized and unrealistic art of the Middle Ages had given way to a new realism that made greater use of perspective and knowledge of anatomy. But the new art reflected deeper changes in thought that permanently altered the Christian world.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Renaissance had begun to take hold in Europe. The Christian poet Petrarch had unearthed ancient Latin manuscripts and popularized study of them. From this stemmed humanism, which sought to study the classics and apply their principles to life. Slowly but surely greater emphasis had begun to be placed on man, his ability to think, and his actions. Though Christianity still often had a great impact on thought, the world was slowly swinging away from a church-centered way of life. Like many Renaissance men, Michelangelo Buonarroti achieved a wide range of knowledge. He wrote beautiful poetry and became an accomplished artist, sculptor, and architect. Under the patronage of popes Julius II, Leo X, Clement VII, and Paul III, he created magnificent paintings and sculptures that reflected the spirit of his age.

Under Julius II, Michelangelo accepted the project of painting the ceiling of the pope’s private chapel, the Sistine Chapel. From 1508 to 1512 he created the magnificent frescoes of flesh-and-blood men and women, who almost seemed able to take life of their own accord. The earthiness of his portrayal of biblical stories is foreign to medieval art. Despite the spiritual themes, these people seem more of this world than the next one.

In 1534, Michelangelo would return to the Sistine Chapel, to paint the altar wall. The *Last Judgment* portrays a vigorous Christ. Massive figures of the saved rise as the grief-stricken damned fall, helpless to alter their end. When Pope Paul III saw the work for the first time, stunned, he prayed, “Lord charge me not with my sins when you come on the Day of Judgment.”

Though probably best known for his paintings, Michelangelo did not consider himself primarily a painter. His first love was sculpture, in which he excelled, as shown by the magnificent young *David*; the tender *Pieta*, which portrays Mary with her sacrificed son; and the righteous, angry *Moses*.
As man became more and more the measure of things and as the Reformation challenged the authority of the Catholic Church, the influence of humanism increased. Yet it began with Christians—and most humanists remained within the faith.

**Martin Luther Post His Ninety-Five Theses**

“As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.” So went the jingle of Johann Tetzel, the man authorized to raise money to build a new basilica in Rome. His fund-raising gimmick—the sale of indulgences—was, quite simply, selling forgiveness. Get your dear departed loved ones out of purgatory for a fee and earn credit against your own sins.

The church was rife with corruption. Church offices were bought by wealthy nobles and used to gain more wealth and power. One such noble was Albert of Brandenburg, who borrowed money to buy himself the archbishopric of Mainz and needed a way to pay back the loan. The pope authorized the sale of indulgences in Albert’s region, as long as half the money collected funded the construction of Saint Peter’s Basilica, in Rome. The rest went to Albert. Everyone was happy—except for a number of devout Germans, among them Martin Luther.

Tetzel, a Dominican monk and a popular preacher, became commissioner of indulgences; he traveled from town to town, hawking their benefits: “Listen to the voices of your dear dead relatives and friends, beseeching you and saying, ‘Pity us, pity us. We are in dire torment from which you can redeem us for a pittance.’ Do you not wish to?”

Luther, a priest and professor at Wittenberg, strongly opposed the sale of indulgences. When Tetzel came around, Luther wrote up a list of ninety-five grievances and tacked them to the church door—which served as sort of a community bulletin board. Divine forgiveness certainly could not be bought or sold, Luther said, when God offers it freely.

Indulgences, however, were just the tip of the iceberg. Luther railed against the entire corruption of the church and pressed for a new understanding of papal and scriptural authority. Tetzel was soon out of the picture (he died in 1519), but Luther went on to lead a religious revolution that radically changed the Western world.

Luther was born in 1483 to a peasant couple in Eisleben, Germany. His father, a miner, pushed him toward the study of law, sending him to the university of Erfurt. But a narrow escape from death by lightning made young Luther change course. He entered an Augustinian monastery in 1505, becoming a priest in 1507. His superiors, recognizing his academic abilities, sent him to Wittenberg University, to earn a degree in theology.

The spiritual restlessness that harassed other great Christians through the ages fell upon Luther as well. He was deeply aware of his own sin, of God’s holiness, and of his utter inability to earn God’s favor. In 1510, he journeyed to Rome and was disillusioned by the kind of mechanical faith he found there. He did everything he could to be truly pious.
He even climbed Pilate’s stairs, where Christ supposedly walked. Luther prayed and kissed each step as he went up, but even then the doubts were brewing.

In a few years he was back at Wittenberg as a doctor of theology, teaching courses on the Bible. In 1515, he began teaching on Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Paul’s words gnawed at Luther’s soul.

“My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him,” wrote Luther. “Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning…This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.”

Then, more confident in his own beliefs, and with some support from colleagues, Luther was free to speak out against corruption. He had criticized indulgence selling and the worship of relics even before Tetzel came along. Tetzel merely brought the conflict to a head. Luther’s Ninety-five Theses were amazingly restrained, considering the upheaval they caused. They were really merely an invitation to debate.

He got debate, first from Tetzel, later from the renowned scholar Johann Eck, who charged Luther with heresy. It seems that, at first, Luther expected the pope to agree with him about indulgence abuse. But as the controversy continued, Luther solidified his own opposition to the papacy. In 1520, the pope issued a bull (decree) condemning Luther’s views, and Luther burned it. In 1521, the Diet (council) at Worms ordered Luther to retract his published views. There, as legend has it, Luther stated, “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”

Thereafter, Luther was excommunicated, his writings banned. For his own protection, he was kidnapped by his patron, Frederick the Wise, and hidden in Wartburg Castle. There he worked on further theological writings and a translation of the New Testament into popular German.

But the battle was just beginning. By daring to oppose the pope, Luther had set off feelings of independence in German nobles and peasants alike. Germany became a patchwork quilt, as certain nobles came out in support of Luther and others remained loyal to Rome. Reformation was brewing in Switzerland as well, led by Ulrich Zwingli. The church and the Holy Roman Empire were distracted by political struggles throughout the 1520’s. By the time the got tough with the reformers, it was too late.

A meeting at Augsburg in 1530 came close to bringing the Lutheran cause back under the Roman umbrella. Luther’s colleague Philip Melanchthon prepared a conciliatory statement of Lutheran views, presenting their position as being true to historic
Catholicism. But the Catholic council demanded concessions that Luther would not make, and the rift became final.

In retrospect, it appears that the events of the Reformation owe a great deal to Luther’s unique personality. Without his brooding self-doubt, he might never have mined the truths of Scripture as he did. Without his zeal for righteousness, he might never have posted his protest. Without his boisterousness, he might not have attracted a sizable following. He lived in a time ripe for change, and he was ideally suited to bring it about.

Fanny Crosby

I want to take a side trip here and give you just a glimpse into the life of a great woman of church history who was a great hymn writer.

TAKE FIFTEEN hymnals and stack them one on top of another. Taken all together, that's about the number of hymns Fanny Crosby wrote in her lifetime! Of course, many of those have been forgotten today, but a large number remain favorites of Christians all over the world.

Francis Jane Crosby was born into a family of strong Puritan ancestry in New York on March 24, 1820. As a baby, she had an eye infection which a quack doctor treated by placing hot poultices on her red and inflamed eyelids. The infection did clear up, but scars formed on the eyes, and the baby girl became blind for life. A few months later, Fanny's dad became ill and died. Mercy Crosby, widowed at 21, hired herself out as a maid while Grandmother Eunice Crosby took care of little Fanny.

Grandmother took the education of her little granddaughter on herself and became the girl's eyes, vividly describing the physical world. Grandmother's careful teaching helped develop Fanny's descriptive abilities. But Grandmother also nurtured Fanny's spirit. She read and carefully explained the Bible to her, and she always emphasized the importance of prayer. When Fanny became depressed because she couldn't learn as other children did, Grandmother taught her to pray to God for knowledge.

A landlady of the Crosby's also had an important role in Fanny's development. Mrs. Hawley helped Fanny memorize the Bible, and often the young girl learned five chapters a week. She knew the Pentateuch, the Gospels, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and many of the psalms by heart. She developed a memory which often amazed her friends, but Fanny believed she was no different from others. Her blindness had simply forced her to develop her memory and her powers of concentration more.

Fanny did not look on her blindness as a terrible thing. Even at eight she composed this little verse:

Oh, what a happy child I am,
Although I cannot see!
Blindness never produced self-pity in Fanny. In her adult years she would say, "It was the best thing that could have happened to me" or "How in the world could I have lived such a helpful life as I have lived had I not been blind?"

In 1834 Fanny learned of the New York Institute for the Blind and knew this was the answer to her prayer for an education. She entered the school when she was twelve and went on to teach there for twenty-three years. She became somewhat of a celebrity at the school and was called upon to write poems for almost every conceivable occasion.

On March 5, 1858, Fanny married Alexander van Alstine, a former pupil at the Institute. He was a musician who was considered one of the finest organists in the New York area. Fanny herself was an excellent harpist, played the piano, and had a lovely soprano voice. Even as an old woman (Fanny lived to be 95) Fanny would sit at the piano and play everything from classical works to hymns to ragtime. Sometimes she even played old hymns in a jazzed up style.

After her marriage, Fanny left the Institute, and in a few years she found her true vocation in writing hymns. She had an agreement with the publishers Bigelow and Main to write three hymns a week for use in their Sunday school publications. Sometimes Fanny wrote six or seven hymns a day. She was usually paid only one or two dollars for each poem. Those who composed the tunes usually kept all the rights to the entire hymn. Though Fanny could write complex poetry as well as improvise music of classical structure, her hymns were aimed at bringing the message of the Gospel to people who would not listen to preaching. Whenever she wrote a hymn, she prayed God would use it to lead many souls to Him.

In her own day, the evangelistic team of Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey effectively brought Fanny Crosby's hymns to the masses. Today many of her hymns continue to draw souls to their Savior for both salvation and comfort: "Blessed Assurance," "All the Way My Savior Leads Me," "To God Be the Glory," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "Rescue the Perishing," "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross," "I Am Thine, O Lord," and many more.

When my lifework is ended and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see,
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

Chorus:
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand!
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand.

Anabaptist Movement Begins

To a group of Christians under Zwingli, they wanted the church to proceed quickly with reforms that would return it to a first-century ideal. Instead of focusing on church hierarchy or political systems, this more radical group sought a self-governing church ruled by the Holy Spirit.

The issue that brought on conflict was infant baptism. This dissenting group objected that the Bible showed adult baptism and wanted to make it general practice. On January 21, 1525, the Zurich council ordered their leaders to cease disputation. But the radicals only saw it as another case of political powers trying to rule their spiritual lives. That snowy evening, in a nearby village, they met and baptized one another—later they would receive the name Anabaptist, “rebaptizer,” from their detractors.

The Anabaptists wanted to do more than reform the church—they sought to return it to the state they saw portrayed in the Scriptures. Instead of a powerful institution, they wanted a brotherhood, a family of faith, created by God, who worked in people’s hearts.

The Anabaptists propounded separation of church and state, because they saw the church as something distinct from society—even a “Christian” society. They did not want political powers to compel the conscience of the believer in any way.

Nor did they favor church bureaucracies. As the first people to practice democracy in the congregation, they believed that God not only spoke through bishops and councils, but through the individual congregations.

At a time when the Muslim Turks stood at the door of Europe, the Anabaptists preached the unpopular doctrine of pacifism. The name Anabaptist became synonymous with “disruption.” New Protestant preachers had their sermons interrupted by Anabaptists, and some of the radicals caused riots. In addition, occasions of the practice of polygamy and claims of bizarre revelations from God caused both Catholics and Protestants to believe they must rid the world of this wrongheaded group. Persecution ensued, and many Anabaptists were put to death by fire or drowning.

Yet the movement spread, especially among the lower classes. Evangelism brought new believers, and some Protestants were attracted by the Anabaptist insistence on purity and biblical preaching.

To the world the Anabaptists gave the idea of separation of church and state. In its descendants, which include the Mennonites and Brethren churches, pacifism still remains an important doctrine.
1536 John Calvin Publishes “The Institutes Of The Christian Religion”

“There is not one blade of grass, there is no color in this world that is not intended to make us rejoice,” wrote a man often accused of generating a joyless Christianity.

To be certain, John Calvin was very disciplined, and once he made up his mind, he remained firm in his course. His study of law had sharpened his gift of thinking logically, and he carried his early training into his studies of theology.

In a “sudden conversion,” sometime around 1533, “God subdued and brought my heart to docility,” Calvin said. He broke from Catholicism, left his homeland, France, and settled in Switzerland as an exile.

In 1536 the 27 year old published the first editions of The Institutes of the Christian Religion, a systematic theology that clearly defended the Reformation teachings. Calvin pastored the church at St. Pierre, preached 3 services daily and produced commentaries on almost all the books of the Bible as well as writing devotional and doctrinal pamphlets.

To achieve his goal of making Geneva the kingdom of God on earth, Calvin had much to do. Notorious for their lax morals, the people of that city objected when he attempted to change their life-style. Yet Calvin’s influence spread throughout Geneva. It had a powerful influence in the schools. No one could avoid his reforms, for Calvin sought to excommunicate those whose lives did not approach scriptural standards—and every citizen of Geneva had to ascribe to Calvin’s confession of faith.

John Knox called the city under Calvin “the most perfect school of Christ since the days of the apostles.” Calvin’s moral authority reformed Geneva.

Book III of the Institutes, which contains the doctrine of predestination, has received much attention. Oddly enough, though Calvin stated it, the concept was not his alone. Luther and most of the other reformers believed it. Calvin’s forceful stating of the idea has led to the connection of the teaching with his name.

Calvin focused heavily on the sovereignty of God. He hated the way the Catholic Church had fallen into a salvation-by-works theology. Constantly the reformer repeated: “You cannot manipulate God or put Him in your debt. He saves you; you cannot do it for yourself.”

God elects to save some people, and he alone can know who is elect, the reformer taught. A moral life can show that a person is probably one of God’s chosen people. But Calvin, an intensely moral and energetic man, impressed upon his followers that they needed to show their salvation by working it out. He passed on to Calvinism the need for Christians to act to transform a sinful world.
In Book IV of the *Institutes*, Calvin created a church order based upon what he saw in the Scriptures. The congregation was to elect moral men—elders—who would guide them. He also provided for pastors, doctors (teachers), and deacons.

**Predestination**

Jacob Arminius was a popular Dutch pastor. In the late 1500’s, another pastor argued that Calvin had been wrong about predestination. Arminius agreed to defend Calvin’s views. Arminius lost the debate before it began. As he studied both sides, he became convinced that his opponent was correct.

Arminius’ conclusions split the Calvinist movement. Arminius died in 1609, but the conflict about predestination didn’t. The next year, the followers of Arminius published the *Remonstrance*, a statement that outlined five beliefs about salvation:

1. On their own, humans can do nothing good.
2. Before the foundation of the world, God chose to save everyone who would freely choose to trust Christ.
3. Jesus died for everyone, but his death only redeems believers.
4. People can choose to reject God’s attempts to save them.
5. Scripture doesn’t clearly state whether Christians can forfeit their salvation.

“These Articles,” the Arminians’ *Remonstrance* concluded, “set out what is...sufficient for salvation. It is unnecessary to look higher or lower.”

A Dutch prince tried to end the conflict in 1618. Prince Maurice despised the Arminians for political and religious reasons. So, he invited Calvinist pastors throughout Europe to gather at the city of Dort. Their task? Denounce the Arminians.

Despite the council’s political overtones, the Synod of Dort tried to draft a balanced declaration of Calvinist beliefs. The Calvinists responded to each of the Arminians’ five statements. From the Calvinists’ response, we get the five points of Calvinism:

1. Human beings are by nature spiritually dead. No one naturally desires to see Christ (Romans 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-3).
2. If someone trusts Christ, it is because God chose to regenerate that person. God’s choice is unconditional; it isn’t based on any human decision (John 6:44; Romans 9:10-16).
3. Christ’s death atoned for only those who would believe in him (John 3:16).
4. When God regenerates someone, that person will neither resist nor reject God’s grace (John 6:37, 44).
5. Every Christian will persevere in faith until the end (John 10:27-28; Romans 8:29-39).

Predestination had been only one part of Calvin’s theology. Its purpose was to assure Christians of God’s love. After the Synod of Dort, predestination became the center of
Calvinist theology. Among some Calvinists, strict confessions of faith displaced a dynamic faith-relationship with Christ.

“Thirty Years War”

The Roman Catholic Church began to lose its place in politics. In 1618 several Bohemian Protestants met their Catholic king’s envoys in Prague. The Catholic envoys refused to listen to the Protestants’ complaints. So, a mob adjourned the meeting with a violent motion (which no one seconded). They threw the envoys through a second story window.

As he plunged out the window, one envoy screamed, “Mary of Jesus! Help!” A Protestant yelled through the window, “Let’s see if your Mary helps you now!” Then, he saw movement below. “By God,” he murmured, “his Mary has helped.”

Fortunately, the envoys survived. Unfortunately, they survived because they landed in a heap of horse manure. The Holy Roman Emperor immediately declared war on the Protestants. Historians have named this foul smelling event “the Defenestration of Prague.” The resulting conflict would become known as the “Thirty Years’ War” (although, obviously, they didn’t call it that then, because they didn’t know how long it was going to last).

At first the conflict was a war for religious toleration. However, it quickly faded into a series of political skirmishes and senseless pillaging. Before the conflict ended, it had enmeshed France, Denmark, and the entire Holy Roman Empire. In the Empire alone, soldiers slaughtered 10 million citizens. In 1648 the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years’ War.

Before the Peace of Westphalia, Roman Catholic leaders had presided over international treaties. Yet the pope didn’t even appear at Westphalia in 1648. Sickened by religious conflict, Europeans began to search for something beyond Christianity to cement their societies together.

Puritans—They Weren’t What You May Think

England endured its own religious struggle during the Thirty Years’ War. A band of English reformers had met with King James I at Hampton Court in 1604. Unlike the Bohemians these reformers didn’t throw anyone through the window. Their desire was simply to purify the Church of England. So, they became known as “Puritans.”

Who were these “Puritans?” A social critic once commented, “Puritanism is the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.” His perception was dead wrong. When Puritans worshiped, they wore dull clothing—but not to be gloomy. They wanted to turn
their thoughts away from one another and toward God. Otherwise, they wore both vivid and plain colors.

Puritans enjoyed beer and complained bitterly when it ran out. They expected spouses to sustain mutually satisfying sexual relations. They swam and skated, hunted and bowled. They expressed their faith through lively relationships with one another and with God.

For Puritans, the Bible was vital. Why? They wanted to purify the church of all practices not required by Scripture. “The Church ought not,” the Puritans wrote to King James, “to be governed by…any human invention, but by the laws and rules which Christ hath appointed in his Testament.” Their preferred translation was the *Geneva Bible*.

King James disliked the Geneva Bible’s Calvinist study notes. So, when one Puritan at the 1604 Hampton Court Conference suggested a new translation, James quickly agreed. *Forty-Seven* scholars worked for 33 months on King James’ version. In *1611* the first King James Version of the Bible rolled off the presses.

It would, however, take more than a new Bible to solve England’s problems. After the Hampton Court Conference, some Puritans separated from the Anglican Church. In 1607 two so-called “*Separatist*” churches fled to Holland. For safety’s sake, one of those congregations divided. Each half would, in its own way, change the world.

One group would sail west, to a New World. They would settle on the coast of Massachusetts. We know them as *Pilgrims*. In Holland, the other group’s understanding of the church would change radically. Their heirs would include John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther King Jr., and Billy Graham. We know them as the *Baptist*. 