A History of Christian Doctrine

The Post-Apostolic Age to the Middle Ages

A.D. 100-1500

Volume 1

David K. Bernard

A HISTORY of Christian Doctrine

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Cover Design by Paul Povolni

All Scripture quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise identified.

Printed in United States of America

Printed by

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Preface

This book surveys the history of Christian doctrine from approximately A.D. 100 to 1500. It generally follows chronological order and identifies the most significant events in church history, but the emphasis is on tracing doctrinal developments. To further this purpose, it discusses some events thematically rather than in strict chronological sequence.

We will use the words *church* and *Christian* in the most general sense, recognizing that the visible church structure is not necessarily the New Testament church as defined by message and experience. We will discuss the major groups of people who have identified themselves as Christian.

Occasionally material in this book may seem complex and foreign, but some treatment of details is necessary to provide background and to impart a feel for significant issues and problems. The main objective is to introduce the leading historical figures and movements in Christendom and to convey a basic understanding of their doctrines.

This information will provide various perspectives on biblical issues and will aid in dialogue with people of different backgrounds. The reader will see when, how, and why certain biblical doctrines were abandoned and certain unbiblical doctrines embraced, and will see how God has worked to restore and revive fundamental truths that were largely forgotten.

This book arose out of teaching two semesters of church history for five years at Jackson College of Ministries in Jackson, Mississippi. The rough draft was transcribed from lectures taped for the extension program of Kent Christian College in Dover, Delaware. Special thanks goes to Karla Christian, Vita Sharpe, Ruth Patrick, Connie Bernard, and especially Claire Tinney for transcribing this material. It was an immense project! After considerable additions, deletions, and revisions, this book is the result.

It is important to remember that only the Bible is our authority for doctrine. History cannot alter or replace biblical truth. Nor can history prove the validity of doctrine, but it can provide insight into how key doctrines were handled over the centuries. It can help to dispel the myth that our fundamental doctrines are of recent origin. The clear teaching of Scripture is enough to tear away the shrouds of nonbiblical tradition, but a historical survey can aid in the process.

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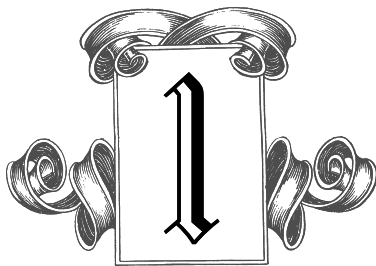
The Study of Doctrine in Church History

Why is it important to study the history of doctrine in Christianity? We can identify several reasons. First, a study of this nature can help to confirm the apostolic doctrine as revealed in Scripture and to analyze the teachings of God's Word in light of discussions in church history.

A second purpose is to trace the development of false doctrines. If we conclude that some doctrines taught in Christendom today are erroneous, the question arises, Where did these false doctrines begin? Church history can help show us which doctrines were original, which were not, how false doctrines entered Christendom, and how they became, in some cases, part of the mainstream of historic Christendom.

A third benefit of this study is learning about the

major denominations and movements, thereby providing a context for dialogue today. The goal is to identify each major category of Christendom and learn where it began, why it began, and what its distinctive, characteristic doctrines are.

Scope of Study

At the outset, let us define the boundaries of our study. We will start with the death of the apostles, or the end of the apostolic era; therefore, we will begin with the second century A.D. By using the words *church* and *Christianity*, we will not make a value judgment as to the accuracy of the doctrines of various groups. Rather, we will use the words *church*, *Christian*, and *Christendom* in the most general sense, speaking of the visible structures known collectively as Christianity. When we speak of Christian doctrines we do not mean that a particular belief is correct or has been officially endorsed, only that some people within Christendom have believed and taught it.

We would expect to find true apostolic believers within the visible, historical church, or at least associated in some way with it at various times, but the visible church is not always identical to the invisible church, the true church, the church of God. We will focus on all those who have historically gone by the label of Christian, whether or not their experience and doctrine seem identical to that of the apostles in the first century.

Our study will be an overview, not an exhaustive investigation. We will not describe in great detail all the movements, personalities, and events in church history, but we will seek to give at least a survey of church histo-

ry, particularly focusing on doctrinal history. We will not place heavy emphasis on names, places, and dates, but we will look primarily at the origins of various doctrines and movements throughout the history of Christianity.*

Major Themes

1. *A great falling away.* It is evident when we study early church history that there was a great falling away, a great infusion of false doctrine. Indeed we find warnings and indications of this falling away in the New Testament itself. It contains admonitions to the early church not to embrace false doctrine as well as warnings concerning false prophets, false teachers, and false doctrines that were already creeping in among the churches. (See Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 11:19; Ephesians 4:14; II Timothy 4:3; Hebrews 13:9; II Peter 2:1; I John 4:1; II John 10; Revelation 2:14, 15, 24.) It also predicts that in the latter days would come a great falling away, seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons. (See Matthew 24:11-12, 24; II Thessalonians 2:3; I Timothy 4:1.)

Even in the first-century church, then, problems had already begun to develop. In Revelation 2 and 3, letters to seven churches in Asia Minor reveal serious errors of doctrine and practice in various local assemblies in the first century. In the second century, this process of doctrinal corruption accelerated. In short, we find a great influx of false doctrines over the centuries. That is not to say these doctrines polluted everyone, but widespread heresies and

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*For a chronological list of important people, events, and dates in Christianity, along with important secular dates, see Appendix A.

doctrinal difficulties certainly existed in the first few centuries.

2. *A faithful remnant*. At least a few people in church history continued to hold onto the apostolic doctrine and the apostolic experience. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "On this rock I will build my church," speaking of the rock of the revelation of who He was, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He said "the gates of hell will not prevail against" the church, so as a matter of faith we can affirm that God has always had a people throughout history. (See Romans 11:2-5.) He has always had a church. The apostolic church as defined by the experience and message of the Scriptures has never entirely faded away.

This belief does not mean that as a matter of history we can necessarily identify a fully apostolic group known by a particular name at every decade throughout the hundreds of years of church history. It does not mean we can trace an unbroken historical succession of an organization or series of organizations. It does not mean that at every point in time a group of people taught every doctrine we believe to be biblical. We can find in various centuries, however, people who baptized in Jesus' name, people who received the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues, and people who enunciated various doctrines that we think are important to being truly apostolic.

At some times, great numbers of people adhered to the apostolic faith; at other times, perhaps just a handful did so. For certain decades we may not have a historical record of anybody who was identical to the apostles in experience and teaching. But as a matter of faith, even when there may be historical gaps, we can affirm that

God had a people born of water and the Spirit, believers who experienced biblical salvation.

3. *A circular pattern.* We can discern a trend of events in church history, and we can represent it by a circle. The church began with great evangelistic growth, with a great burst of power and fervor as recorded in the Book of Acts. Then came a gradual falling away into false doctrine, and as this falling away intensified, for the most part the visible church fell into apostasy, having little or no real experience with God.

This apostasy was not permanent, at least not in a historical sense. Over the centuries, particularly after the medieval period, we find a step-by-step restoration of various doctrines, beliefs, and experiences, returning closer to the original apostolic pattern.

It is not entirely accurate to say "the church" was restored, because the true church as defined by apostolic experience is what it is. The apostolic message has always been the same; the true church of God has always been defined in the same way. In that sense the church never needs to be restored. If there were people in a certain century who were filled with the Spirit, then they did not need restoration to that experience. When we speak about restoration, we mean a renewed understanding of certain doctrines and a widespread acceptance of certain works of God. Perhaps we can say the church has been renewed or revived (restored to health and vigor).

The church has always existed since the Day of Pentecost, but the visible or professing church has not always kept the teachings of God's Word. In some cases, the professing church structure, the majority, the mainstream, has gone into error, heresy, or perhaps even apostasy.

The process of doctrinal decline and restoration is the circular pattern we can discern. We can identify various doctrines that have followed such a trend: the apostolic church taught them with fervor; they fell into disfavor, were ignored, or were contradicted over the centuries; and then gradually more people returned to those doctrines.

To generalize, historically speaking in Christendom we find a great falling away, an entering into apostasy, and then, at least among some professing Christians, a gradual restoration to more biblical doctrines. In the twentieth century there came a great revival of apostolic doctrine and experience, with multitudes accepting the full gospel message of baptism in Jesus' name and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There are possible scriptural indications of this cyclic pattern, this falling away and gradual restoration. Isaiah 28:10-12 speaks of truth being built line upon line, precept upon precept. Joel 2:23-28 depicts various pests destroying the people and work of God but promises that gradually God will restore everything these pests have eaten.

Revelation 2 and 3 may provide a similar indication. It is important to recognize that this passage speaks of seven literal churches in the first century who had the problems described. But it seems clear that God inspired these letters for inclusion in the text of Scripture because these churches represent typical problems that can occur throughout church history. We can receive instruction today from the examples, problems, and recommendations for each of the seven churches.

Some commentators view these seven churches as

indicative in some way of the overall trend in church history. They note a burst of fervor initially (Ephesus and Smyrna), some falling away and compromise (Ephesus and Pergamos), a greater encroachment of false doctrine (Thyatira), widespread apostasy (Sardis), and then a great restoration along with continued apostasy before the coming of the Lord (Philadelphia and Laodicea).

When we integrate the three major themes that we have discussed, we conclude that the New Testament experience of salvation has always existed somewhere upon the earth. We cannot find a strict apostolic succession in the sense of historical figures or a continuous stream of pastors and leaders, so we cannot say that a particular organization is identical to the New Testament church as a matter of historical linkage. But we can make a partial argument for doctrinal succession.

That is, we can find various groups in church history who received the basic New Testament experience of salvation as described in the Book of Acts. When a group had essentially the same fundamental doctrine as found in the New Testament, we can consider it an apostolic church, or a New Testament church. In that sense, we can make somewhat of an argument of doctrinal succession throughout history. We cannot fill every gap, but we can find enough groups at different places and times scattered throughout history to give us confidence that God has always had a people since the founding of the New Testament church. In this sense, the church is continuous.

Difficulties in Reconstructing Church History

There are several difficulties in trying to reconstruct church history. We cannot always know with absolute

certainty what ancient people believed about every point in question. Here are some reasons why.

1. *Bias can affect writers and historians.* Every doctrinal writer and church historian has his own presuppositions, which can affect his objectivity. Early writers were no exception. It was only natural for them to tend to slant things in their favor, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unconsciously. When they described the doctrine of someone they disagreed with, they often made it look foolish or illogical, because to them it was. Sometimes they simply did not understand a point their opponents made.

History is written by the victors. Whenever there were clashes in history, the people who won usually were the ones who left the record of what happened. Often the views of a minority are preserved only in the writings of their opponents. To see the difficulty here, we can imagine trying to understand and assess the Pentecostal movement solely by reading the documents of critics and skeptics. How accurately could some define the doctrine of Oneness, or explain the experience of the Holy Spirit baptism, if all he had were records of opponents who castigated, smeared, and misrepresented these teachings, whether intentionally or not?

We should also note that there is doctrinal bias among church historians today. We cannot evaluate church history simply by reading church historians. We must go back to the primary sources themselves and look at them from our perspective. Of course, another historian would say we have a bias, but at least we try to establish the "bias" of our doctrinal position from the Bible. We cannot depend totally on writings from church historians who

come with a different doctrinal perspective. Instead, we must read the original historical sources as much as possible to see what the writers said for themselves. By examining these writings from our point of view, we may uncover information, evidence, or possibilities that other church historians have missed.

2. *Writers of a certain age do not always represent the views of the majority of believers at that time*. The writings that survive from a particular era may not have been written by the most influential leaders or teachers of the time. Before the invention of printing in the West in the 1400s, all documents had to be copied by hand. If later scribes deemed a manuscript to be unimportant or heretical, they had little desire to copy it repeatedly. Censors often destroyed writings later judged to be heretical. Generally, what has been preserved from early times are documents that fit the beliefs of the people who had the opportunity to preserve or discard them.

Only a fraction of the writings from early times still exist, and it is difficult to say how representative the remnant is. If a writer was a known bishop, pastor, or other church leader, we have some reason to believe he represented a significant view in the church. If a writer is unknown or had no significant position in the church, it is quite possible that he was not truly representative of the church of his time. Perhaps he gained greater favor with later generations, who preserved his work, than he enjoyed in his own lifetime.

We should also consider that people who tend to write do not always reflect the piety and views of the average person. Particularly in ancient times, those who had the leisure and education to write scholarly treatises may

have had a different perspective from the average believer. Even in our own day, the works of major theologians are often much more liberal than the views of most lay members in their own denominations.

3. *There is always the strong possibility of interpolations (insertions) in ancient manuscripts.* The scribes who copied manuscripts by hand often changed statements, whether by mistake, misunderstanding, or deliberate alteration. They often felt free to add clarifications, "corrections," or simply their own views. Comparisons of different manuscripts of the same works reveal that interpolations were quite common.

Sometimes a scribe involved in a theological controversy would insert a few lines supportive of his own position into a book by an ancient, widely respected leader. The temptation was great to use such an authoritative figure to help resolve a dispute. On the other hand, if a scribe found a questionable phrase in the work of such an author, he might feel it important to edit the work and strike the offending or potentially dangerous words. As a result, we are not always sure that we actually have the original words or views of a certain author. Sometimes we can only guess or suppose.

4. *As already noted, false doctrines existed in the earliest times.* Even if we were to find a nonbiblical document from the first century, its antiquity does not guarantee that it is truly apostolic or teaches the correct doctrine, for the New Testament reveals there were false teachers even in the first century. Moreover, documents from the second century were written approximately a century after the founding of the New Testament church, and one hundred years is a long time in doctrinal history. For

example, vast doctrinal changes, innovations, and movements have developed in the twentieth century: the entire modern Pentecostal movement arose in this century.

People from all theological perspectives disagree with the earliest postbiblical writings on some points. For instance, evangelical Protestant scholars typically conclude that the earliest postbiblical writers did not clearly proclaim the doctrine of justification by faith but fell into legalism.

5. *Early terms were often imprecise, especially in light of later controversies*. For example, in the Middle Ages and during the Reformation great controversies arose over the Lord's Supper. The issue was whether the bread and the fruit of the vine were symbolic, or whether Christ's blood and body were physically present. Both sides in these debates appealed to writers from the first few centuries. For instance, a proponent of the doctrine of the real presence would find a writer who described the Lord's Supper as a partaking of Christ's body. But did the writer mean this statement to be figurative or literal? It is difficult to know for certain, since he wrote before the controversy existed.

Early writers did not anticipate later disputes and therefore did not guard against certain misinterpretations. We cannot demand of them a precision of terminology that was foreign to their time, nor can we make them speak of doctrinal issues that arose after their time. In some cases there is enough evidence to predict what position they would have taken had they lived during a certain controversy. In many cases, however, they did not use certain definitive terms, or at least not with the connotation or precision of later times.

It can be anachronistic to cite certain writers in support of a particular doctrine, even though they may have used words that later acquired a certain theological significance. When we study ancient authors, we must determine what their words meant in the context of their writings and their times.

6. *Sources for church history are neither authoritative nor infallible*. Only Scripture can claim those distinctives. It is from Scripture alone that we must derive instruction for salvation, Christian living, and Christian belief.

Our sole authority is the Bible, the Word of God. God has inspired and preserved it for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16). If an ancient, well-respected source seems to teach a doctrine that is contrary to Scripture, we must choose the message of Scripture.

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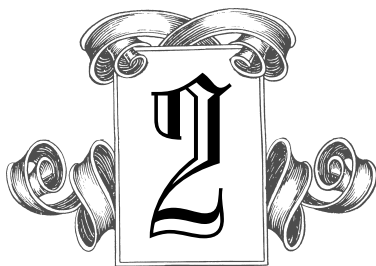
Early Post-Apostolic Writers

A.D. 90–140

We begin our study at the end of the first century A.D. and the beginning of the second. Most of the apostles died long before the end of first century. John was the last one to die, in the late 90s. The first writers we will discuss, then, are postbiblical and post-apostolic.

They were not the second generation of leaders after the apostles, however, for we find those men in the New Testament as younger associates and co-workers of the apostles. The latter probably assumed prominence and leadership in the A.D. 60s through 80s. For instance, the apostle Paul was martyred in the 60s, and his successors were such people as Timothy and Titus. These men did not leave any written record, except what is incorporated in the New Testament, such as the Gospel of Mark and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews.

When we pick up after the New Testament, after the days of the apostles, then, we are actually dealing with the third generation or later of pastors and church leaders. We are already removed at least one generation from the apostles.

Of course, the times overlap. Some of the people we will discuss knew the apostles or heard them preach. But with the possible exception of the successors of John, these writers were not the direct successors of the various apostles.

The men we are speaking about, the generation of leaders and writers after the completion of the New Testament and the death of the last apostle, are often called the Apostolic Fathers. This term is not accurate, however. "Apostolic" signifies that they were followers of the apostles, and "fathers" signifies that they were founding leaders. Actually, in most cases they were not directly associated with the apostles. Moreover, we should consider Jesus Christ and the New Testament apostles and prophets to be the foundation of the church, not these men (Ephesians 2:20). It is more appropriate to call them Post-Apostolic writers or Post-Apostolic leaders.

We will call the age in which these men wrote the Post-Apostolic Age. It spans the time from approximately A.D. 90 to 140, with some of the writings perhaps being as late as 150.

Writings of the Age

We only have limited information from this time. Writings survive from five authors whom we can identify, but only the first four are significant:

1. *Clement of Rome*, bishop of Rome in the 90s. He wrote a letter to the church at Corinth.

2. *Polycarp*, bishop of Smyrna. We have a brief letter he wrote to the Philippians about 100. He was burned at the stake at age 86. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* was written in a later age, about 155, and in its present form contains both fanciful details and doctrinal errors.

3. *Ignatius*, bishop of Antioch, whose writings date from about 110. We have seven genuine letters from him. He was martyred by being thrown to the lions.

4. *Hermas*, who wrote *The Shepherd*, c. 140-45, a quite popular book in its day. He is otherwise unknown to us, but tradition says he was from Rome. Apparently Hermas did not hold any office in the church.

5. *Papias*, bishop of Hierapolis about 125. We only have fragments preserved in the writings of later authors.

Aside from these identifiable writers, we have several works whose authors are anonymous or who wrote under a pseudonym.

1. The so-called *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 100-20). Historians agree that the author was not Paul's companion, but someone who lived much later than his time, so it is often more accurately called the *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas*.

2. An anonymous book called the *Preaching of Peter* (c. 110-30). Historians concur that it was not written by Peter, but it is a story about him told as if by him. It is neither authentic nor accurate.

3. *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, or *Didache (did´-ah-kee)* in Greek, of which only one copy, dated 1056, survives. Scholars agree that it was certainly not written by the twelve apostles, but it claims to reflect their teaching. It is not a first-century document, as often supposed. Internal and external evidence reveal that it is

no earlier than 120 and perhaps considerably later. It contains doctrinal errors that do not reflect the original teachings of the church.[1]

4. The so-called *Second Epistle of Clement*, a sermon by an unknown author. It was traditionally ascribed to Clement of Rome, but modern scholars concur that he did not write it. Various historians date it from 100 to 150.

Teachings of the Age

These writings are our sources for what Christians believed and taught in the age following the apostolic era. While they are not always consistent with each other, we can make some general observations and identify some common themes, particularly in the writings of the authors who were known church leaders.

For the most part, the writings are not speculative or philosophical, but they adhere closely to the language of Scripture. We do not find treatises on systematic theology, in which an author discusses a certain doctrine in detail and seeks to draw logical conclusions from various passages of Scripture related to the chosen subject. Instead, most of these documents are simply letters. They were not intended as theological dissertations.

From the modern Apostolic Pentecostal viewpoint, there is little objectionable or even questionable in these letters. Most of the statements that Apostolics would question or contradict appear in the anonymous or pseudonymous writings.

Let us look briefly at what these authors had to say on important doctrinal subjects.

1. *Monotheism.* These writings emphasize the doc-

trine of one God, just as the Old Testament proclaims and the New Testament echoes. There is no mention of "trinity" or "three persons," nor do any other distinctively trinitarian terms or concepts appear. Instead, there is simply the teaching of one God and Lord of all.[2]

Pseudo-Barnabas and Hermas made a few statements that could refer to a preexistent Son, but they can also be interpreted in a manner consistent with Oneness. If they intended to make a personal distinction, their view would not be trinitarian, but binitarian (two persons) and subordinating the second person to the first.[3]

2. *Deity of Jesus Christ*. These writings strongly emphasize Christ's true deity, calling Him "the Scepter of the majesty of God," "the Lord our God," "our God, Jesus Christ," "the inseparable Spirit," "God, even Jesus Christ," "Christ our God," "our Lord and God," "Father," and "the Son of God."[4] Ignatius was particularly fond of calling Jesus Christ "our God," and Polycarp heartily endorsed the epistles of Ignatius. In *Epistle to Polycarp* 3, Ignatius said, "Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes, impalpable and impassible, yet who became passible [capable of suffering] on our account; and who in every kind of way suffered for our sakes."

These writings make a scriptural distinction between the Father and the Son, relating the Son to the Incarnation, the manifestation of God in flesh. They do not make a personal distinction with regard to the Holy Spirit. There are a few references to God acting as the Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the Holy Spirit, similar to what we find in the New Testament itself. (See II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Peter 1:2.) The Oneness

understanding and interpretation of these New Testament passages corresponds very well to similar statements in the Post-Apostolic Age.

We cannot say that these men were explicitly antitrinitarian, because as we will see, the doctrine of the trinity had not yet developed. Nevertheless, their terminology and thoughts correspond closely to modern Oneness. Their emphasis on the oneness of God, the true deity of Jesus Christ, and the true humanity of Jesus Christ is the essentially the same as we find in the Oneness movement today and stands in sharp contrast to later trinitarian thought and expression.

3. *The humanity of Christ and His saving work.* These early writers unquestionably regarded Jesus as a real man who died for our sins and rose again. At the same time, they recognized that the Spirit of God dwells fully in Him by identity, so that He is our Lord, our God, and our Savior.

4. *Faith, repentance, and water baptism.* They stressed faith and repentance (the need to turn from the old life of sin), and they presented water baptism as the essential complement to repentance. They regarded it as necessary for the washing away of sins. Hermas wrote, "We descended into the water and received remission of our former sins," and Pseudo-Barnabas spoke of "that baptism which leads to the remission of sins."[5]

Moreover, just as in the Book of Acts, they baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.[6] For instance, Hermas spoke of being baptized "in the name of the Lord" and "in the name of the Son of God." He stated that "no one shall enter into the kingdom of God unless he receive His holy name" and that we receive the name of the Lord at water baptism.

Clement, Ignatius, and Hermas all strongly emphasized the importance, sacredness, and power of the name of God, which they identified as Jesus.[7]

The *Didache* refers both to baptism in the name of the Lord and to baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It appears, however, that the latter reference is an interpolation or alteration from later times.[8] Significantly, in the same manuscript of 1056 that preserves the *Didache* we find another trinitarian "correction," namely an alteration of a statement in *II Clement* that identifies Christ as the Spirit.[9]

These writings do not clearly express the doctrine of justification by faith, however. Clement taught that we are saved by the blood of Jesus and our faith in Him, not our works, but the *Didache*, *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, and *II Clement* indicate that Christians can earn forgiveness or other merits by good works such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and strict morality. Significantly, these works are by unknown authors, and the first three express questionable ideas in other areas as well.

5. *The manifestation of the Holy Spirit*. These writings mention the "full outpouring of the Holy Spirit" and miraculous gifts of the Spirit; the *Didache* describes prophets in the church of that day who spoke "in the Spirit."[10] It is evident that, just as in the Book of Acts, people were receiving the Holy Spirit and exercising various spiritual gifts.

6. *Holiness of life*. We find an emphasis on good works, living a holy life, and being separated from evil practices of the world.[11] Hermas proclaimed that if a Christian commits a major sin, he must seek a second experience of repentance in order to be saved.

7. *Church government and fellowship*. It appears that all the believers in a city were considered part of one church, that each church was responsible for its own internal affairs, and that each church had several ministers but one senior pastor to lead it. Ignatius emphasized that every church had a supreme pastor, or bishop, and that all believers in the city needed to submit to his leadership. These writings also reveal that there was close fellowship and coordination among the churches and that the bishops communicated with, admonished, and advised one another.

8. *The Scriptures*. The Post-Apostolic writers accepted both testaments as the inspired Word of God. They quoted from twenty-three New Testament books—all except Philemon, II and III John, and Jude—and there are possible references to Philemon, II John, and Jude.[12] They did not have occasion to mention a few of the smaller books of the New Testament, but it is clear that these men were well acquainted with the books of our Bible and regarded them as Scripture.

9. *The Lord's Supper*. They celebrated the Lord's Supper. They did not speak of it as a sacrifice for sin, but as the Eucharist, or thanksgiving offering. They also expressed that partaking of the Lord's Supper pointed toward the second coming of Jesus Christ.

10. *The last things*. We do not find any detailed prophetic schemes in these simple writings, but there is strong emphasis on the second coming of Jesus Christ. The writers of the Post-Apostolic Age looked for His soon return.

Conclusions

The writers of the Post-Apostolic Age were mostly bib-

lical and apostolic in their approach. Oneness Pente-
costals will find some phrases in these writings that they
do not agree with, particularly in the writings of Hermas
and in the pseudonymous writings. Protestants in general
and Evangelicals likewise find some points of disagree-
ment with the Post-Apostolic writers. For instance, they
often say that their emphasis on water baptism and works
of holiness is legalistic and undermines justification by
faith.

For the most part, however, these writings display the
doctrine of the apostles, the doctrine of the New Testa-
ment. This is especially true in the writings of the three
important writers who were bishops in the church at this
time—Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp.

In the immediate Post-Apostolic Age, A.D. 90 to 140,
we find adherence to the doctrines of the New Testa-
ment—emphasis on one God, Jesus as the true God and
true man, repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus
Christ as part of the salvation experience, the baptism of
the Holy Ghost, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and
holiness of life. In short, we find a vibrant apostolic
church.

The writings are not of the quality of the New Testa-
ment. We would not expect them to be, because they are
not inspired as the New Testament is. They are simple and
their total doctrinal content is comparatively scanty. As
far as we can tell, however, in the immediate Post-Apos-
tolic Age, believers as a whole still embraced the message
and experience of the apostles.
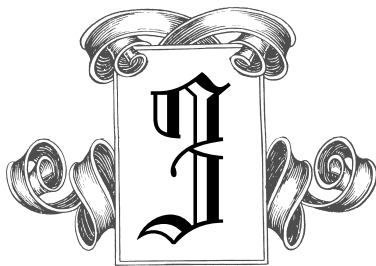
Early Heresies

In the Post-Apostolic Age (c. 90-140) and the Age of the Greek Apologists (c. 130-80), a number of groups arose that separated from the mainstream church. These groups and their distinctive doctrines are typically called heresies, from the Greek word *hairesis*, meaning "choice" and, by extension, "party, sect, schismatic group."

We will use the word *heresy* in this sense, recognizing that some such sects in history grossly deviated from the Word of God while others may actually have been closer to the original teachings than the institutional church of their day. In some cases, what historians have called heresy may have been a reaction to unbiblical teachings and conditions and not really a heresy in the biblical sense of the word. (See Acts 24:14.)

In this chapter we will discuss four early groups that arose in opposition to the mainstream church. They had their roots in the Post-Apostolic Age or before, they developed their distinctive identities around this time, they broke away from the institutional church in the second century A.D., and leading Christian writers of the second and third centuries condemned them as heretics.

The Ebionites

The first group we will discuss is the Ebionites. They were Jewish Christians who continued to hold to their Jewish culture and identity so much that it affected their understanding of the gospel. It appears that their name came from a Hebrew word meaning "poor" and was applied to them because many of the early Jewish Christians were poor. (See Romans 15:26.)

Of course, Christianity began among the Jews; all the apostles were Jewish. While they continued to live as Jews, they came to realize that Christ was the fulfillment of the law, that they were justified by faith and not by the law, and that there was no need to teach Gentile Christians to keep the law of Moses. (See Acts 15; Galatians 3.)

Even in New Testament times, however, some Jewish Christians insisted that keeping the law of Moses was necessary to salvation and tried to force Gentile Christians to be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5). These Judaizers, as they are known, rejected the ministry of Paul, and he sharply rebuked their doctrine (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1; 4:10-11, 17; 5:1-12; Philippians 3:2-3). He wrote the Epistle to the Galatians particularly to oppose this false teaching.

Not surprisingly, the Judaizers refused to accept Paul's letters as inspired of God. At first they were a fac-

tion within the church, but gradually they were forced out of the church.

The most extreme of them said that Jesus was not God manifested in the flesh but merely a man upon whom the Spirit descended at His baptism. They considered Him to be anointed by the Spirit and a great prophet in the tradition of the Old Testament, but not truly God. They believed His mission was to bring a revival of repentance, a restoration of Old Testament worship, and a renewed emphasis on the law of Moses. By these views they denied the fundamental doctrine of Jesus Christ and the New Testament message of salvation.

Some writers have applied the label of Ebionite to all Jewish Christians who continued to keep the law of Moses. Such people were not necessarily heretical, but the adjective *heretical* properly applies to all who made the keeping of the law necessary for salvation and especially to all who denied the deity and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Gnosticism

The Gnostics were powerful opponents of Christianity in the second century. Gnosticism originated in paganism as a combination of Oriental religion and Greek philosophy. The result was a form of mystical philosophy that was supposed to bring salvation.

As the Gnostics encountered various religions, they tried to absorb them by taking elements from them and mascarading as proponents of those religions. They took this approach to Judaism and also to Christianity with some degree of success during this time. In short, Gnosticism was *eclectic*, meaning that it selected ideas from

various philosophies and religions, and *syncretistic*, meaning that it blended these ideas together to form new doctrines.

The most prominent Gnostic leaders were Saturninus, Basilides, and Valentinus. Second-century writers stated that Simon Magus, the Samaritan magician in Acts 8, was an early proponent of Gnostic ideas.

The Gnostics received their name from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means "knowledge." The essence of Gnosticism was the teaching of salvation by higher knowledge. The Gnostics held that, while a person could experience salvation by faith, the true way of salvation was by supernatural knowledge. This saving knowledge did not come through study of the Scriptures but through divine, mystical revelation, an idea similar to the concept of enlightenment as taught by some Eastern religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Gnostics based their doctrinal system on a strong dualism adapted from Greek philosophy. They believed that the world is composed of two distinct entities, spirit and matter. Spirit is good, pure, and holy, while matter is evil. Originally we were pure spirit beings, but in a great conflict between spirit and matter we became entrapped in matter. In other words, we are good, holy, preexistent spiritual entities who somehow became entangled in evil matter and who need to be liberated from the world of matter.

This dualism greatly affected the Gnostics' doctrine of God. They said that the God who created this world of matter was actually inferior and antagonistic to us. He was not the supreme God, or else He would not have created such an evil thing as this world. The supreme God is

pure spirit, and out of Him came various emanations, a progression of lesser and lesser divine beings called *aeons*. The most inferior of these is Jehovah, also called the Demiurge. He is the Creator and in essence responsible for our current predicament because he created the world of matter in which we have become imprisoned.

According to the Gnostics, the Redeemer, whom they identified with Christ, is the highest aeon or emanation from God. He came down to earth to redeem or emancipate us from the world of matter. He is not actually God Himself, because the supreme Deity is so pure that He could never have direct contact with this sinful world.

This view posed a problem for the Gnostics, however, for the Bible proclaims that Christ came in the flesh. If flesh is evil, how could this good emanation of God come in such an evil way?

The Gnostics tried to resolve this dilemma by the doctrine of *docetism*, which says that Christ was a spirit being only. He appeared to have flesh, but really He did not; He was purely spirit.

Some Gnostics further taught the doctrine of *Cerinthianism*, named for Cerinthus, an early proponent. This belief separates Jesus and Christ into two beings: Jesus, a normal man who was born, and Christ, a pure spirit. Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism and remained with Him until just before His death. Since this pure spirit could not participate in death, Christ left Jesus on the cross. This view resembles the doctrine of the extreme Ebionites.

The Gnostics classified people in three categories based on spirit, soul, and body. First, there are spiritual people, the spiritual elite, who are predestined to salvation.

These are the ones who have *gnosis*, or spiritual knowl-
edge. They are saved or liberated from the evil world of
matter by their higher revelation. Then there is a second
class of people called the "psychical," or "soulish," peo-
ple. (The Greek word *psyche* means "soul.") These are
the people who have faith, and if they continue to believe,
there will be a way of salvation for them too. Finally, there
is a third group of people, the carnal. They simply live in
this fleshly, evil world and do not seek or receive deliver-
ance. They are predestined to damnation.

This trichotomy, or threefold classification, does not
emphasize ethics or morality. It provides no motivation
for a person to try to become holy in his earthly life, for
the flesh is unalterably evil. There is no incentive to prac-
tice ethics and morality, because the flesh will do whatev-
er it is going to do. It is useless to worry about the flesh;
rather, a person should just focus upon the spirit.

Some Gnostics became ascetics, denying and disci-
plining the flesh with fasting and severe punishments on
the ground that the flesh is bad and needs punishment.
Other took the very carnal route of libertinism, saying it
does not matter what the flesh does. According to them,
one should let it indulge in whatever it wants, for it is only
the spirit that counts.

In this doctrinal system there was no true resurrec-
tion, for eternal life was only spiritual. In fact, there real-
ly was no doctrine of personal immortality. Somehow the
spirits of the saved would be liberated to rejoin the uni-
versal spirit and become absorbed in it, a concept found
in some Eastern religions such as Hinduism. The wicked
would be annihilated, or wiped out of existence.

The Gnostics rejected the literal interpretation of the

Old Testament but interpreted it allegorically to fit their own doctrines. They also had a number of apocryphal books, books written to promote their doctrine that they claimed were part of the New Testament but that the church as a whole rejected.

While Gnosticism as an organized system developed after New Testament times, many of its ideas were already prevalent in that day. The writings of John and Paul refute many of these doctrines. John 1:1-14 and I John 4:2-3; 5:20 proclaim that Jesus Christ is the true God come in the flesh and that this fact is a cardinal doctrine of the church. Colossians teaches that in Jesus Christ all believers (not merely an elite) can have full spiritual knowledge, that Jesus Christ is the fullness of God incarnate and not merely an emanation, that salvation is by faith in Him, and that we are to avoid both asceticism and libertinism. (See Colossians 1:9-10; 2:9-12, 20-23; 3:5-10.)

In sum, Gnosticism denied many essential doctrines of Christianity, including the oneness of God, the Incarnation, the Atonement, salvation by faith, and the new birth. Today it may seem very foreign to us, and we may be surprised to think that it could have ever been a powerful rival to biblical Christianity, yet it was very appealing in its day. Its mysticism gave it a strong affinity with Oriental religions, and its advocacy of salvation by higher knowledge aligned it with the philosophical approach of the time.

As we will see in later chapters, many Christians were affected by Gnosticism. Their thinking was influenced not only by the Greek philosophy of the day but also by Gnosticism and its emphasis on salvation by knowledge. Some prominent teachers such as Origen borrowed many ideas

from Gnostic teachings. Nevertheless, major Christian writers of the second and third centuries, particularly Irenaeus, strongly opposed Gnosticism.

Marcion

The third major heretical group began with a man named Marcion. Many Christian writers of his day classified him as a Gnostic, but his system was significantly different. His theology did contain a number of Gnostic elements, and like Gnosticism it incorporated both pagan and Christian features. Nevertheless, he developed a doctrine and a movement of his own.

The basis of Marcion's theology was a belief in two deities—the Creator, or Demiurge, and the Redeemer. The Creator is evil and the one who inspired the Old Testament, which Marcion rejected. The Redeemer is good and the only God Christians should worship. He came to this world as Jesus Christ. He did not truly come in the flesh, however, for Christ was a spirit being only. Here we see Gnostic dualism and docetism mixed with biblical concepts about the oneness of God and the full deity of Christ.

Marcion accepted as Scripture only ten of the Pauline Epistles and a mutilated version of the Gospel of Luke. He rejected the rest of the New Testament because of quotations from the Old Testament and contradictions to his doctrine.

Marcion taught that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, and his followers practiced water baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ."[1] Here too we see echoes of biblical teaching. On the whole, though, Marcion's doctrine was not scriptural but heretical.

The Marcionites broke away from the mainstream

church around 144. Their emphasis on the supreme deity of Christ and their baptismal formula were not points of contention, however. Evidently, at this date the church as a whole still taught that Jesus was fully God (rather than a second person) and practiced Jesus Name baptism as in the Book of Acts and in the first century. When the Marcionites left the church, they continued to use the standard baptismal formula, even though it was later altered in the institutional church.

Another thing to note about the Marcionites is that they tended to asceticism. They taught strict discipline and even punishment of the body, and they rejected marriage.

Montanism

A presbyter named Montanus, from the region of Phrygia in Asia Minor, founded the fourth group we will discuss. Although considered heretical by leading writers of the second and third centuries, in some ways the Montanists were perhaps more biblical than some of their opponents. Unlike the other groups we have discussed, their overall theology was in harmony with Scripture. They were expelled from the institutional church around 177.

The Montanists placed great importance on personal holiness of life. They objected to the mainstream church because it seemed to be departing from the more strict, separated lifestyle of holiness and embracing more and more worldliness.

Another major emphasis of the Montanists, probably their most distinctive tenet, was the work of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. Again, they accused the mainstream church of gradually minimizing and losing

the miraculous gifts, such as prophecy and speaking in tongues. Tertullian, a leading writer in the early third century who ultimately became a Montanist, proclaimed that speaking in tongues was an important mark of a valid church.

In turn, their opponents alleged that Montanus claimed to fulfill Christ's promise of the coming of the Comforter (Paraclete) in John 14. Of course, Jesus actually spoke of the Holy Spirit in that passage. It is not clear that Montanus actually claimed to be the Holy Spirit incarnate, however, for it seems that his critics made this charge because he gave prophecies in the first person. But this practice does not necessarily mean that he claimed to be the manifestation or incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Even today, when people give interpretations or prophecies they often speak from God's point of view, using the pronoun "I" in reference to Him. It is possible, then, that the opponents of Montanus took his statements out of context and so distorted their meaning.

It does seem that the Montanists went to excess in some areas, tending toward legalism and asceticism. Of course, self-denial is a scriptural concept (Mark 8:34-37). But when people begin to punish the body, to impose severe, nonbiblical restrictions of their own making, or to seek salvation by meritorious works, then they go beyond the bounds of Scripture.

At least some of the Montanists became extremists in this area. For example, they taught that a Christian should not remarry after his or her spouse died. The movement ultimately rejected marriage completely, saying that it was a concession to human sinfulness and that truly holy people would abstain from marriage and remain celibate.

Of course, both teachings deviated from the New Testament (I Corinthians 7:39; Hebrews 13:4).

Montanus stressed the priesthood of all believers. He tried to reform the ecclesiastical structure as the church seemed to become more and more hierarchical and to place more and more power in the hands of clergy as distinct from laity. The bishops, who originally were simply pastors of cities, were gradually extending their power over other churches in their areas. Montanus tried to call the church back to a more simple structure in which everyone was recognized as having a ministry in the church and could exercise spiritual gifts.

This group's major emphases—the work of the Holy Spirit, holiness, and the priesthood of all believers—were apparently biblical and a corrective to emerging problems, but it seems that they went too far in stressing these aspects. Their problem was not doctrine as much as practice.

The Montanists placed strong emphasis on the doctrine of the last things. They considered Montanus to be the last great prophet before the end of the world, and they looked for the soon coming of Jesus Christ and the consummation of the age.

There is evidence that the Montanists were originally modalists, meaning they held that God is absolutely one, that Jesus is the one true God manifested in flesh, and that God is not a trinity of persons.[2] Moreover, they did not baptize in trinitarian titles,[3] so they must have adhered to the original Jesus Name formula. This is not surprising, for the doctrine of the trinity did not develop until the third century.

Some third-century writers said that one faction of the Montanists was modalist,[4] so evidently others of them

eventually embraced trinitarianism. In fact, as we shall see, a famous third-century convert to Montanism named Tertullian was quite instrumental in developing the doctrine of the trinity.

Conclusion

Of the four major schismatic groups that challenged the established church in the second century, the first three—the Ebionites, the Gnostics, and the Marcionites—were definitely heretical in their doctrine. The fourth group, the Montanists, was possibly more orthodox than the emerging leadership of the visible church in this time, but they too went to extremes and were ultimately excommunicated from the organized structure.

It is interesting to contrast the predominant formative influences of these groups. The Ebionites were a heresy based in Judaism, the Gnostics were rooted in paganism, the Marcionites mixed paganism and Christianity, and the Montanists drew their ideas from within Christianity.

Each group is an instructive example of how doctrines can develop and emphases can change. The New Testament itself shows how some of the fundamental ideas of Ebionitism and Gnosticism emerged and began deceiving believers. The doctrines of Marcion and Montanism, while deviating to a greater or lesser extent from the New Testament, still bear indirect witness to the original apostolic teaching. That is, in tracing how they developed we can see where they started from; we find influences of the biblical doctrines of the oneness of God, the deity of Jesus Christ, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, and holiness of life.

The Greek Apologists
A.D. 130-180

The next generation of writers after the Post-Apostolic Age were the Greek Apologists. They are so called because they wrote apologies, or defenses of the faith, in the Greek language. They used Greek because it was the international language of commerce and culture in the eastern Roman Empire, where Christianity began and where it had the greatest strength in this age. The Greek Apologists were active from about 130 to 180; their oldest existing writings date from about 150.

Persecution of Christianity

To understand what motivated the Apologists to write, we first need to understand the opposition that Christians faced. Originally, Christians were persecuted by the Jews,

as we find in the New Testament (Acts 5:17-18; 7:57-59; 8:1-3; 9:1-2).

Next they were persecuted by the pagans, with the first severe Roman persecution occurring under Emperor Nero in the A.D. 60s. Tradition says both Peter and Paul were martyred during the Neronic persecution.

From the time of Nero until the last great persecution, under the reign of Emperor Diocletian, there were ten major persecutions in all. Persecution finally ended in 313, when the Roman co-emperors Constantine and Licinius promulgated the "Edict of Milan," which was actually a concordat between them. It legalized Christianity and instituted an official policy of toleration.

From Nero until about A.D. 250, most of the persecutions were local or did not occur throughout the empire simultaneously. In certain localities and times, persecution were severe and some people were martyred, but there was not a concerted official effort across the empire.

From 250 to 313, however, as paganism declined and Christianity expanded, there were empire-wide attempts to stamp out Christianity. Some of the persecutions during this time became very brutal indeed. The harshest persecutions were under the emperors Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian.

In many cases, pagan opposition to Christianity was based on misunderstandings and false, scurrilous rumors. Since Christians often met in secret to avoid persecution, it was easy for their opponents to spread malicious gossip about what they did when they gathered together. It was commonly reported that Christians murdered people, sacrificed babies, ate human flesh, drank human blood, conducted orgies, and so on.

In addition, pagan writers attacked Christianity on the ground that it undermined the state and the fiber of society. They advanced numerous intellectual objections based on the prevailing philosophies of the day, which were principally Greek in origin.

The Response of the Apologists

Throughout the second and third centuries, then, Christians felt the need to defend themselves—not physically but intellectually. They did not take up arms, for that was against their principles, and in any case, they had no means of doing so. But they did defend themselves in writing against pagan accusations and objections.

There was a need to respond publicly to correct the scandalous rumors. More substantially, there was a need to explain the doctrines of Christianity in order to defend it against pagan philosophical attacks.

The Greek Apologists sought to do just that. They wrote to dispel false accusations, to show that Christianity promoted a superior morality, and to demonstrate intellectually that it was the truth.

In trying to present Christianity to pagans, the Apologists drew extensively from Greek philosophy, which was the common intellectual ground upon which practically everyone in their society could meet. They did not appeal primarily to Scripture, because their adversaries did not accept Scripture.

The basic approach of the Apologists was to demonstrate that Christianity is a good philosophy—in fact, the best philosophy, the truest philosophy. Whenever possible, they employed and endorsed Greek philosophical terms and concepts in order to make Christianity seem

reasonable, attractive, and fitting to the pagans in the culture of the day.

Major Writers

The major writers whose works survive from the Age of the Greek Apologists are as follows:

1. Marcianus *Aristides*, a philosopher in Athens who became a Christian. His *Apology*, addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, is probably the oldest surviving work in this category, dating to 150 and perhaps as early as 125 or 130.

2. The anonymous author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which is generally dated about 150 although it may be as early as 130. While not an apologetic writing, it was once attributed to Justin, and it expresses some thoughts characteristic of this time.

3. Flavius Justinus, or *Justin*, by far the most influential and prolific Greek Apologist. Justin was born in a Roman colony in Samaria and became a Greek philosopher. After his conversion to Christianity he traveled as a lay preacher, but he was never ordained as a minister. He continued to call himself a philosopher and to wear the philosopher's cloak. He resided in Rome on two different occasions and was ultimately beheaded there for his faith. Later writers often surnamed him Philosopher and Martyr. Important works of Justin include his *First Apology* (c. 150), *Second Apology*, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, and *On the Resurrection*.

4. *Tatian* of Syria, a disciple of Justin who eventually became a Gnostic and founded an ascetic sect known as the Encratites ("abstainers"). He wrote *Address to the Greeks* (c. 150), and he compiled the *Diatessaron*, the

earliest harmony of the Gospels, of which only fragments remain.

5. *Melito*, bishop of Sardis, of whose writings only fragments remain. He authored *Apology*, or *To Marcus Aurelius* (c. 170), *On God Incarnate*, *The Key*, *Discourse on the Cross*, *On the Nature of Christ*, *Discourse on Soul and Body*, and *On Faith*.

6. *Theophilus*, bishop of Antioch from 168 to 181 and author of *To Autolycus*, a pagan friend.

7. *Athenagoras*, a philosopher reportedly of Athens. He addressed his *Plea for the Christians* (c. 177) to the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and also wrote a treatise, *On the Resurrection*.

In addition, we have a few insignificant fragments from and references to other authors, including Quadratus, Claudius Apollinarius of Hierapolis, Miltiades, and Ariston of Pella. Many works mentioned as being from this time are lost.

It is significant that most of the writings that remain are apologies addressed to pagans. We have only a few doctrinal treatises and no sermons or letters to churches such as have survived from the Post-Apostolic Age.

Moreover, with few exceptions, we do not have writings from the leaders of the church in this age, again quite unlike what has come to us from the Post-Apostolic Age. The most important existing works do not come from bishops, pastors, or other recognized leaders, but from converted philosophers who held no offices in the church. Their philosophical approach was probably very different from what the average Christian heard in the preaching and teaching of his local church. It is unlikely that the writings we have are representative of church

leaders, pastors, or average believers, especially near the beginning of the age.

As a result, it is difficult to characterize this era. The best we can do is to study the Greek Apologists, even though it seems clear that they represented only a narrow segment of the church: an intellectual elite who were not church leaders and whose main concern was to make Christianity seem acceptable in light of pagan thought. In fact, most of our information comes from one man—Justin—either directly from his writings or indirectly from the people he influenced.

Let us examine what the Apologists taught. We will look primarily at the writings of Justin but will note where other writers differed from him.

God and the Logos

In the Age of the Greek Apologists, we find a progressive shift away from the biblical doctrine of Oneness and the substantially identical views of the Post-Apostolic Age. The vague possible indications of a preexistent Son by Pseudo-Barnabas and Hermas become explicit in this age.

Near the beginning of the age stood Aristides, whose doctrine of God was for the most part biblical Oneness, and the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which still retained a predominantly biblical view but began to separate God and the Word. At the apex of the age, Justin and his disciple Tatian clearly differentiated the Father and the Word as two distinct beings. By the end of the era, Theophilus and Athenagoras had begun to express a vague, undefined form of triadism (threefold nature of God), although the former still used some Oneness expressions. Melito still

maintained a predominantly Oneness view of God, but even some of his terms had become distorted, at least as they have come down to us.[1]

God's oneness. Like the writers of the Post-Apostolic Age, the Greek Apologists proclaimed that there is one God, not the many gods of the pagans. In contrast to Greek and Roman polytheism, they affirmed monotheism.

The doctrine of the Logos. Nevertheless, in this age we find a compromise of the pure monotheism of the Bible, particularly with the Apologists' doctrine of the Logos. *Logos* is a Greek term translated as "Word," and it represented a very popular Greek philosophical concept during this time. To the Greeks, the Logos was the reason of God or the reason by which the universe was sustained. It was not a god in a personal sense; rather it referred to the principles by which the universe operated.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John used this term in his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). As a monotheistic Jew, he used it in sharp contrast to prevailing pagan philosophies, drawing instead upon the Old Testament background of God's Word as God Himself in action and in self-revelation. (See Psalm 107:20; Isaiah 55:11.) There was no thought that the Word was a second person. (See Isaiah 44:24; 45:5-6; 46:5, 9.) While John surely knew how his pagan contemporaries used the term, under divine inspiration he used it in a unique way to point both Jews and Gentiles to Jesus Christ as the one true God manifested in the flesh.

To summarize the doctrine of the Logos in John 1, in the beginning God existed alone. At the same time, His

plan, His thought, His mind, His reason, His expression was with Him and was Him from eternity past. In the fullness of time God manifested himself in flesh. His plan, reason, and thought was expressed or uttered. God revealed Himself. John thereby identified Jesus as the one true God of eternity past. He was not an afterthought, but the eternally foreordained revelation of God Himself.

As an analogy, before someone can speak a word or a message, the mind must first think it. First it is an unexpressed word; then, at the right time, it is uttered or expressed. Similarly God's mind, reason, plan, or Word was unexpressed in times past. The Incarnation was God's plan from the beginning, but it did not actually take place until the fullness of time.

The Greek Apologists, particularly Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, and Athenagoras, seized upon the Logos as a means of making Christianity palatable to the pagans of their day. They said, in effect, "The Logos you have been speculating about for hundreds of years is the basis of our faith. The Logos that controls the universe is actually Jesus Christ." But to do that, instead of using the context of the Old Testament and the Gospel of John, the Apologists went to Greek philosophy to develop, define, and explain their doctrine of the Logos.

To a great extent, the philosophy of the time was based upon the ideas of the Greek philosopher Plato. Plato taught that there are two worlds: the good, real world of ideas or forms and the imperfect, physical world of phenomena that reflects the world of ideas. The summit of the world of ideas is the one supreme, perfect God, who is uninvolved with the evil world of matter and who is impassible—incapable of emotional feeling and suffering.

The world of ideas serves as an intermediary between God and the physical world.

For people who were educated with these ideas, it was difficult to believe the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is the supreme God Himself who came in flesh to suffer and die for the redemption of fallen humanity. The Gnostics dealt with the conflict between Greek philosophy and Christianity on this point by essentially following the former. To them God remained impassible but related to the world through a series of aeons, of which the Creator was one and the Redeemer was another.

Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenistic Jewish philospher who lived around the time of Christ, likewise struggled to reconcile Greek philosophy and Judaism. He had a motive similar to that of the Apologists: he sought to make Judaism seem reasonable and acceptable to pagans. His solution was to proclaim that God is one but also to speak of the Logos as God's intermediary in creating the world.

His concepts were not always clear and were perhaps even contradictory in places. He referred to the Logos as the son of God, first-begotten of God, and even a second god, but he seemed to use these phrases metaphorically, for he did not describe the Logos as having personality distinct from God. In essence, he tried to fuse Greek and Jewish thought by employing the popular Greek concept of the Logos, identifying it with God's Word and wisdom as described in the Old Testament, and using this idea to explain how the one true God of the Bible could relate to the world without Greek concepts being violated.

Thus he said God created the world by His Logos, God speaks to the world by His Logos, and God interacts

with people by His Logos. He even found a way to include the revered Greek philosophers in the picture, stating that the one true God of the Bible who communicated with Moses also communicated with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle by the Logos. He always stopped short of making the Logos a second person, however.

The leading Apologists adopted Philo's approach in their own attempt to reconcile Greek thought with Christianity, with a significant new development: they clearly did make the Logos a second person. Such a notion was abhorrent to the Jewish mind, steeped in the absolute, uncompromising monotheism of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:21-22). However, it seemed plausible to Gentiles of the day, including the Apologists, whose background was polytheism (I Corinthians 8:5).

The Apologists explained that Jesus Christ is not the supreme God, not the Father, but a second person, the Logos, who is the same as the Logos of Greek philosophy. In this way they sought to convince pagans that Christianity was legitimate as a philosophy and ultimately to show them that it was actually the best and truest philosophy.

The Apologists' doctrine of the Logos was a departure from the strict monotheism of the Bible and of the earlier Post-Apostolic Age. It marks the beginning of a personal differentiation in the Godhead among Christian writers. We find no hint of this Logos doctrine in the earlier writings of the Post-Apostolic writers, although it bears some resemblance to the ideas of the Gnostics.

The Apologists equated the Logos with the Son. In other words, the Son is a second person in the Godhead, although they preferred to use the term *Logos*. Here we

find for the first time the doctrine of the preexistent Son expressed clearly and definitely.

In the New Testament, however, *Son* refers to the Incarnation. Jesus Christ is the eternal God, and His Spirit is the Spirit of God from eternity past, but Jesus was not the Son until He came in flesh in the Incarnation. (See Luke 1:35; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:5.) God was revealed in the Son; God came in flesh as the Son (II Corinthians 5:19; I Timothy 3:16).

To put it another way, the Word of God, or the Logos, was revealed in the Son. Although Jesus is both Logos and Son, in scriptural terminology there is not an exact equation of the terms. The Logos is the eternal God Himself, the eternal Spirit, the eternal divine mind (John 1:1), but the Son is specifically God coming in the flesh. The Son of God is the authentic human being who was born of the virgin Mary, lived, died for our sins, and rose again.

The Apologists' belief in two persons is not the same as the modern doctrine of the trinity. In modern trinitarianism, the divine persons are coequal, but the Apologists taught that the second person is subordinate to the first person (subordinationism).

For example, Justin said the Logos is "another God and Lord subject to the maker of all things. . . . He . . . is distinct from Him who made all things—numerically, I mean." Following the Greek concept of God, Justin told Trypho, a Jew, that it was not the Father but the Logos who spoke and appeared to people in the Old Testament: "You must not imagine that the unbegotten God Himself came down or went up from any place. For the ineffable Father and Lord of all . . . remains in His own place, wherever that is."[2]

In the beginning, said the Apologists, God existed alone, but in order to create the world He first caused His Word to come out of Him. Originally, His Word was inherent in Him in an impersonal form, but He brought forth His Word as a second person. This event they identified as the begetting of the Logos or Son.

Once again the Apologists deviated from the scriptural use of terminology. In the New Testament the term "begotten Son" refers to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and Hebrews 1:5-6 specifically relates this concept to the Incarnation. According to Matthew 1:18-20 and Luke 1:35, Jesus was not conceived by an earthly father, but the Spirit of God moved upon the womb of the virgin Mary. Therefore Jesus was literally begotten as a baby at that time and so was called the Son of God. The begetting refers to the Incarnation, not the eternal nature of Jesus Christ. The Apologists changed that understanding, however, by placing the begetting at a point in time before the creation of the world.

In sum, the Apologists interpreted John 1:1 much as Oneness Pentecostals do today. In the beginning the Word was God Himself, God's mind, God's reason inherent within Him. They deviated from Scripture by saying that before creation the Word came out of God as a second person begotten by God.

This belief contains another contrast to modern trinitarianism, which teaches that the divine persons are coeternal and that the term "begotten" refers to an eternal, ongoing process and relationship between the Father and the Son. Obviously, the Apologists did not think their second person was coeternal with the Father. The Word was created or begotten by the Father at a point in time,

and He retains an inferiority or subordination in rank.

The Holy Spirit. The Apologists did not explicitly distinguish a third person. They mentioned the Holy Spirit, but it is not clear how they viewed the Spirit. At times they seemed to identify the Spirit as simply the Spirit of the Father—the Father in emanation, not another person. At other times they seemed to identify the Spirit as the Logos, the second person. For instance, Justin said the Logos inspired the prophets of the Old Testament but also said the Spirit inspired the prophets.[3]

A few passages seem to identify the Spirit as a third person, some sort of created being inferior to the other two. In one passage Justin identified "the prophetic Spirit" as a third being to worship, after God and "the Son of the true God," while in another place he said that he worshiped God, the Son, "the other good angels," and "the prophetic Spirit."[4] Athenagoras spoke freely of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Threefold references. Theophilus was the first known writer to use the Greek word *triados* in relation to God. It is the genitive form of *trias*, which means "triad" and was later used to describe the trinity. He simply mentioned it in passing without trying to teach a doctrine: "The three days [of creation] which were before the luminaries, are types of the Triados, of God, and His Word, and His wisdom."[5] Elsewhere he identified God's wisdom with His Word and His Spirit.[6] By contrast, trinitarians of the third and fourth centuries identified wisdom as the second person.

It is not clear whether Theophilus referred to three persons, but it does not seem likely in context. He did not use the term *persons* (plural) but used *person* (singular)

in a manner incompatible with later trinitarianism, saying that the Word, which is God's power and wisdom, assumed the person of the Father, the person of God.[7]

Some people say this was the first Christian use of the word *trinity* (about 180), but most historians reserve that dubious distinction for Tertullian in the early third century, because he clearly did intend three distinct persons.

In this connection, Melito, bishop of Sardis, is quite intriguing. His writings do not display the same kind of philosophical thinking as the other Apologists. In fact, he made strong statements about the oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ. In two surviving fragments he described Jesus as "God put to death." Although two statements of his seem to indicate a preexistent Son, it does not appear that Melito followed the concepts of the other Apologists but was much closer in thought to the Post-Apostolic writers. Unfortunately, we do not have enough of his writings to make a definitive judgment.

Summary. In summary, the leading Greek Apologists made a personal distinction between the Father and the Son, or Logos. They taught a form of *binitarianism* (two persons in the Godhead), the second person being subordinate to the first. There is some indication of a threefold nature in God, or a third person, especially among two later Apologists, but they did not develop this idea to the point that historians consider it to be trinitarianism as we know it today.

Salvation

The saving work of Christ. Like the Post-Apostolic writers, the Apologists taught that salvation comes through the blood Jesus shed for our sins. They stressed

our responsibility and freedom of will to respond to God's offer of salvation. There is no hint of the later doctrine of predestination.

Faith, repentance, and water baptism. They taught the importance of faith, repentance, and water baptism, proclaiming them to be necessary to salvation. For example, Justin wrote, "Baptism . . . is alone able to purify those who have repented, and this is the water of life."[8]

The baptismal formula. We find a shift in the baptismal formula corresponding to the shift in the doctrine of God. At the beginning of this age, the church still baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. For example, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, a second-century work probably written by an unknown Asiatic presbyter, recounts a baptism using the words "in the name of Jesus Christ," apparently echoing contemporary practice. *The Shepherd* of Hermas was quite popular during this time, with some people even treating it as Scripture, and as we have already seen, it advocates baptism in the name of the Lord.

Around 150, however, Justin recited a threefold baptismal formula: "in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."[9] Significantly, it was not the later trinitarian formula—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—but it specifically included the name of Jesus. By contrast, at the Eucharist, he said the presiding minister gave "praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."[10] Apparently, Justin retained the actual name of Jesus in baptism out of deference to the older formula and also because he believed strongly in the power of the

name of Jesus.[11]

It seems that he wanted to get away from the exclusive emphasis on Jesus because, as we have seen, he did not believe Jesus Christ is the supreme God. Since he viewed the Father alone as the supreme God, no doubt he thought it most important to invoke the Father. He probably included the Holy Spirit also because the only verse of Scripture that could possibly support the invocation of the Father is Matthew 28:19, and it also refers to the Spirit. He did not replace the name of Jesus with the title of *Son*, however, perhaps so that his innovation would not be too controversial.

Historians usually cite Justin as the first person to mention a trinitarian formula. As chapter 2 notes, the sole copy of the *Didache* that we have, dated 1056, mentions both the trinitarian formula and the Jesus Name formula, but the former is probably not original, and historians generally consider Justin to be the oldest reference instead.[12]

Justin's formula does not offer much support to modern trinitarians, however. Not only is his formula different from theirs, still retaining the older invocation of the name of Jesus, but it was motivated by what trinitarians view as a heretical doctrine of God: subordination of the second person to the first.

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In every age, Christians have acknowledged the work of the Holy Spirit as part of salvation, but the controversial question is whether they should expect miraculous signs and manifestations of the Spirit. In this age, believers still expected the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit and acknowledged the spiritual gifts.

Justin wrote, "For the prophetical gifts remain with

us, even to the present time. . . . Now it is possible to see amongst us men and women who possess the gifts of the Spirit of God."[13] Celsus, a Greek philosopher of this era who wrote against Christianity, observed that Christians gave prophecies and spoke in tongues, and Origen, a third-century writer who preserved his comment, made no attempt to contradict this observation but accepted the gifts for his day.[14]

Other Teachings

The Lord's Supper. The Apologists emphasized Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. A few statements sound as if they could be advancing the later Roman Catholic doctrine that Christ's historical blood and body are physically present in the Eucharist. Since there was no clear definition, discussion, or controversy on this point, however, we cannot be certain.

The last things. These writings continue the earlier teaching of the second coming of Christ. We also find in them the first discussion of the Millennium, outside the Book of Revelation itself. The Apologists apparently believed in a literal thousand-year reign of Christ upon earth after His return (premillennialism).

Holiness of life. Since most of these writings did not address Christians, they did not have much to say about how Christians should live. Nevertheless, the authors embraced and defended a holy lifestyle. They said Christians should avoid worldly pleasures and practice godliness in daily life. For instance, Tatian and Theophilus warned against attending dramas because of their lewd content, and Tatian objected to the wearing of ornaments. Athenagoras wrote against abortion and remarriage after divorce.

Conclusion

The most important point about the Apologists is that they presented Christianity as a philosophy. This approach proved to be dangerous because it introduced pagan terms and ways of thought to the discussion of Christian doctrine, leading people to formulate and evaluate theology more by rationalism and Greek philosophy than by Scripture itself. Moreover, this approach tended to reduce Christianity to a moralism rather than a revelation from God and a relationship with Him.

Instead of presenting Christianity as the revealed Word and will of God, the Apologists tried to show that it was a good philosophy and a good moral way of life—in fact, the best way. Even though this appeal was true as far as it went, and perhaps was helpful in gaining a hearing from some pagans, it fell short of presenting the essence of Christianity, and it sowed troublesome seeds for the future.

Pagans who were intellectually persuaded by this argument did not receive an adequate experience and understanding of Christian realities, and Christians who adopted this way of thought limited their own experience and understanding. By accommodating to the language and thought of their opponents, the Greek Apologists actually began to inject pagan concepts into the discussion of Christianity. This method was dangerous, and as we shall see, it had disastrous consequences for Christian doctrine.

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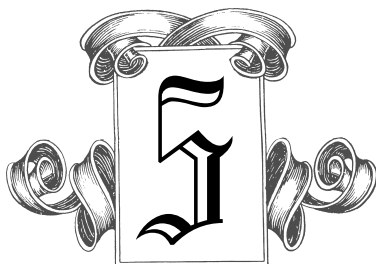
The Old Catholic Age
A.D. 170-325

The next period of time that we will discuss covers several generations, from approximately A.D. 170 to 325. We use 325 as the end date because it is the date of the Council of Nicea.

This council marked a significant change in many ways. It was the first ecumenical council in postbiblical times, meaning that delegates came from all across Christendom. (See chapter 8.) The Nicene Council helped bring about a fusion between church and state, and for several centuries afterward major doctrinal decisions were worked out in various councils.

We will call the period from 170 to 325 the Old Catholic Age. It is "old" in distinction to the Ecumenical Catholic Age, which began with the Council of Nicea and

continued with subsequent councils. It is "catholic," not necessarily in reference to the Roman Catholic Church of today, but in the original sense of being universal, because at this time there were no major divisions in Christendom. Various groups classified as heretical had split off from the church, but the mainstream body was not formally divided into different denominations or branches. All the churches generally considered themselves part of the same group, even though there were significant differences from place to place and even though the original apostolic doctrine gradually diminished in the mainstream church.

The Old Catholic Age is characterized by theological discussion and the evolution of doctrine. The Post-Apostolic writers had written on biblical themes, and the Greek Apologists had engaged in some theological reflection, but it was really in the Old Catholic Age that theologians emerged. Various writers and teachers began to develop systems of doctrinal thought, particularly in response to certain heresies or opposing views.

Many doctrines and practices characteristic of the later Roman Catholic Church and the medieval age first made their appearance or first received widespread acceptance during this time. Church leaders and writers began to examine the doctrines of God and of Christ, and while they did not resolve the issues to general satisfaction, they began to hammer out a comprehensive theological system.

As we shall see, many innovations occurred during this age, some of which we will discuss in subsequent chapters. In this age we find the first explicit teaching of the doctrine of the trinity (Tertullian, c. 210); the first

mention of infant baptism (denounced by Tertullian); the construction of the earliest known public church buildings (c. 230); the first endorsement of baptism by sprinkling (Cyprian, c. 250); and the first Christian hermits, who paved the way for monasticism (Anthony, 270).

Despite important doctrinal changes, leading writers still maintained the earlier emphasis on holiness of life, affirming many specific standards of conduct and dress. (See Appendix F.)

As described in chapter 4, Christians endured great persecution during this age, with empire-wide persecution beginning in 250 under Emperor Decius and not finally ending until the agreement between co-emperors Constantine and Licinius called the Edict of Milan in 313. As a result of this intense persecution, many people were martyred, and thousands of others fell away from the church. In 312 the Donatist Schism occurred over the question of how to treat people who had apostasized (renounced the faith) but later repented. (See chapter 11.)

Three Major Schools

To analyze the Old Catholic Age, we will divide it into three schools of thought classified roughly along geographical lines. The first school is that of Asia Minor, and its two main representatives were Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Both men originated in Asia Minor, although they conducted their careers elsewhere. *Irenaeus* moved to Gaul, where he became the bishop of Lyons (178-200), so he may reflect more the thinking in the western portion of Roman Empire. His onetime disciple *Hippolytus* (170-235) worked in Rome.

The second school we will discuss is that of North

Africa, where the primary language was Latin. The foremost theologian of this area was *Tertullian* (150-225), who began writing around 196. He was followed by his disciple *Cyprian*. Tertullian never held a prominent official position in the church—he was just a presbyter (local minister)—but Cyprian became bishop of Carthage (248-58) only two years after his baptism. Tertullian and, in the next age, Augustine were the two most influential shapers of Western theology.

The third school of thought was based in Alexandria, Egypt, which was a major center of Hellenistic (Greek) culture and philosophy. A leading thinker here was *Clement of Alexandria* (150-215). After his death he was eclipsed in significance by his disciple *Origen* (185-254), who began writing around 215. These men conducted a school for converts in Alexandria, and both were heavily influenced by the prevalent Greek philosophy. Origen was a prominent teacher and writer, although neither he nor Clement ever rose above the office of presbyter. Origen was the single most important molder of Eastern theology.

The six men we have mentioned did more than anyone else to shape the doctrines that emerged from their age. As just noted, however, most of them never held a prominent position in the church; their influence came primarily by teaching and writing. In some cases, their historical influence has been greater than their influence during their own time.

In fact, some of these men were repudiated by the church of their day or a significant portion of it. Hippolytus was a rival to the bishop of Rome. He was defeated in his efforts to attain that position, so he set up a schismat-

ic church in opposition to Callistus, the recognized bishop. Interestingly, the Roman Catholic Church considers Callistus a pope and Hippolytus an antipope, yet because of his doctrinal teaching it has made Hippolytus a saint. Tertullian became a member of the Montanists, whom the church of his day rejected as heretics and excommunicated. Cyprian led the opposition to Stephen, bishop of Rome, on the subject of baptism performed by heretics, holding that it was never valid. Origen was excommunicated from his own local church by the bishop of Alexandria, whereupon he moved to Caesarea and continued teaching there. The Council of Constantinople in 553 declared him heretical.

In addition to these men, there were a number of writers of lesser significance for the history of doctrine. Writing in Greek were *Novatian*, who led a schismatic party in opposition to the bishop of Rome; *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, a student of Origen; *Dionysius of Alexandria*, another student of Origen and later bishop; *Julius Africanus*, a philosopher, historian, and friend of Origen; *Methodius*, a bishop who wrote against Origen; *Dionysius of Rome*, a bishop who wrote against the Sabellians; *Archelaus*, a bishop who wrote against the Manicheans; *Peter*, bishop of Alexandria around 300; and *Alexander*, bishop of Alexandria who opposed Arius at the Council of Nicea.

Latin writers included *Minucius Felix*, a lawyer in Rome, probably of North African origin, who wrote an apology that used almost no Scripture; *Arnobius*, a teacher of rhetoric in North Africa and another apologist who exhibited little knowledge of Scripture; *Commodian*, a presbyter or perhaps a bishop in North Africa who

was a modalist; and *Lactantius*, a student of Arnobius and a prolific, elegant writer who in his old age tutored a son of Emperor Constantine.

There were also a number of minor writers in both Greek and Latin, most of whom are known only from fragments or references in the works of others. Finally, we have various anonymous and pseudonymous works, apocryphal writings (patterned after the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation), and miscellaneous documents.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons

A tradition says that Irenaeus (died c. 200) was the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John, but this tradition is dubious. Irenaeus himself simply says of Polycarp: "whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried (on earth) a very long time."[1] When he was a small lad Irenaeus probably heard the aged Polycarp preach, but his recollections are not those of a student.

The major work of Irenaeus is *Against Heresies* (c. 182-88), a lengthy treatise that details and refutes a variety of Gnostic beliefs. Late in life he also wrote *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching.* Unfortunately, there is some uncertainty about the original text of both books. *Against Heresies* survives only in a Latin translation of the Greek original, and *Demonstration* has come to us in only one manuscript (1265-89) of an Armenian translation (c. 600).

Church historians often consider Irenaeus to be the first true theologian of postbiblical times because, in opposition to Gnosticism and related heresies, he enunciated a comprehensive doctrinal system based on the New Testament. A central feature of his theology is his opposi-

tion to philosophical speculation. Even though his life overlapped the age of the Greek Apologists, he took a radically different approach from them. He did not start with their Logos doctrine, which owed so much to Greek philosophy, but he started with the Scriptures, and he emphasized the apostolic tradition.

For the most part, he remained close to the Scriptures, but some passages in his work echo Justin. He evidently read Justin's books and perhaps even studied under him, and so was influenced to some extent by the Greek Apologists. Overall, however, we can characterize his theology as biblical and Christocentric (centered around Jesus Christ).

Doctrines of God and of Christ. Irenaeus taught that God is one and that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. He also taught a threefold revelation of God as Father, Son (Word), and Holy Spirit (Wisdom).

Many of his statements sound like those of modern Oneness, as when he emphasized that there is only one God, identified the one God as the Father, described the Word as the mind and expression of the Father, described the Son as the visible revelation of the invisible Father, taught that Jesus is God, identified the name of Jesus as belonging to the Father, and spoke of Jesus as Father and Spirit.[2] "The Father therefore has revealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all. . . . The Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father. And for this reason all spake with Christ when He was present (upon earth), and they named Him God."[3] He called Jesus "our Father," "Saviour," "the Son and Word of God," and "Spirit."[4]

On the other hand, Irenaeus followed the Greek

Apologists by equating the Son with the Word (Logos) in terminology. He adopted Justin's interpretation of several Old Testament verses in which God supposedly addressed the Word, and like Theophilus, he said that in Genesis 2:26 God spoke to His Word and Wisdom, or the Son and Spirit.[5] It is not clear, however, whether he regarded the Son/Word and Spirit/Wisdom as aspects of God's nature, manifestations, or persons in some sense.

When Irenaeus spoke of the Father, Son, and Spirit, he used the language of manifestation; he did not speak of God's essense or eternal nature. For example, he wrote, "All receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit." The universal faith of the church as delivered by the apostles is belief

> in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God.[6]

In summary, Irenaeus associated God's threefold self-revelation with dispensations, operations, or activities of God. Trinitarian scholars generally conclude that he did not contribute significantly to the development of trinitarian dogma and that at most he believed in an economic trinity, which means making trinitarian distinctions with respect to God's operations in the world rather than His essence.[7]

From the Oneness viewpoint, Irenaeus stands in between the biblical doctrine of God and the later doctrine of the trinity, but closer to the former. He did not arrive at a halfway point like Justin and the Greek Apologists, for he did not subordinate Jesus to the Father and he did not make a clearcut distinction of two persons (much less three persons).

The saving work of Christ. Like the writers before Him, Irenaeus affirmed that Jesus Christ was a true man and that He has redeemed us by His blood. He spoke of the bread and cup of the Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ. As with the Greek Apologists, we must not make too much of this language, since it was still long before the explicit teaching that the elements of the Lord's Supper change into the physical body of Christ, and long before the ensuing controversies on that subject.

Faith, repentance, and water baptism. Irenaeus taught that faith, repentance, and water baptism are all essential to salvation. He believed that water baptism is part of the new birth, and he said of certain heretics, "This class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole (Christian) faith."[8]

In this regard, Irenaeus simply enunciated what was practically the universal teaching of the first five centuries of Christianity. The leading teachers and writers all held that water baptism is necessary for salvation—effecting the washing away, remission, or forgiveness of sins.

The baptismal formula. Irenaeus reported that some Gnostic heretics baptized with the utterance of the words "Into the name of the unknown Father . . . into Him who

descended on Jesus. . . ."[9] In contrast, Irenaeus said, "We are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions," which indicates that he baptized in the name of Jesus.[10] His *Demonstration* states, however, "We have received baptism for remission of sins in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate and died and was raised, and in the Holy Spirit of God."[11]

It could be that Irenaeus changed his baptismal formula, or it could be that his standard formula was threefold. It is significant that, like Justin, he continued to use the name of Jesus. He did not use the modern trinitarian formula, and he still deferred to the earlier emphasis and insistence on Jesus' name. Clearly, even when people began modifying the formula, for many years they were careful to retain the name of Jesus.

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Not only did Irenaeus emphasize water baptism, but he emphasized receiving the Holy Spirit. He commented upon I Corinthians 6:9-11 and 15:49:

> Now he says that the things which save are the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God. . . . And then, again when (do we bear) the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, "Ye have been washed," believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit.[12]

Moreover, he asserted that speaking in tongues is the sign of a Spirit-filled person. Commenting on I Corinthians 2:6, he wrote:

The perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the Spirit of the Father. . . . For this reason does the apostle declare, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect," terming those persons "perfect" who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms "spiritual," they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit.[13]

Some people argue that he merely alluded to miracles he had heard about, but it seems clear that he regarded tongues as the expected sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. He cited various reports simply to demonstrate the diversity of tongues and prophecies throughout the worldwide church. He further stated:

Those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform (miracles) . . . drive out devils . . . see visions . . . utter prophetic expressions . . . heal the sick by laying their hands upon them. . . . The dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. . . . It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, (scattered) throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . Nor does she perform anything by means of angelic

invocations, or by incantations, or by any other wicked curious art; but, directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .[14]

It is evident that all across Christendom people in this age received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. The exercise of various miraculous, spiritual gifts was common, expected, encouraged, and normative.

Holiness of life. Irenaeus taught that we should reject worldly lusts and works of the flesh and instead be filled with the Spirit. Since his existing works are doctrinal and polemical, arguing against and refuting heresies, we do not find a significant discussion of practical lifestyle issues.

Hippolytus

Hippolytus (died 236) was a pupil of Irenaeus, but he developed his own distinctive doctrinal views. He moved to Rome, where he bitterly opposed two successive Roman bishops, Zephyrinus and Callistus, was excommunicated by Callistus, and started a rival, schismatic church. He embraced trinitarianism along the lines of the earlier teaching of Tertullian, and he vigorously opposed the modalism of Sabellius. (See chapter 8.) His most important work is *The Refutation of All Heresies.*

Tertullian

Tertullian was the first major theologian to write in Latin, and he is often called the father of Western theology. A lawyer and teacher of rhetoric, he converted to

Christianity in middle age (c. 195). He soon became a local church presbyter in Carthage, North Africa, and began writing prolifically. We have about forty books of his, including apologies addressed to pagans, writings relating to Christian life and discipline, and doctrinal treatises, often written against heretics. About 207 he joined the Montanists, who had been expelled from the church in 177. He opposed a bishop of Rome in his day, probably Victor, for embracing modalism and rejecting Montanism.

Tertullian emphasized faith over reason and professed to reject philosophy. For instance, with regard to the death and resurrection of the Son of God he wrote, "It is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. . . . The fact is certain, because it is impossible."[15] Nevertheless, he built his theology upon that of the Greek Apologists and was thereby influenced significantly by Greek philosophy.

Tertullian interpreted Scripture literally and even materialistically. For example, acknowledging a similarity of belief with the Stoics, he held that every soul has both a spiritual and a bodily substance.

Doctrines of God and Christ. Tertullian was the first Christian writer to call God a trinity (Latin, *trinitas*) and the first to speak of God as three persons (*tres personae*) in one substance (*una substantia*).[16] Consequently, church historians generally consider Tertullian to be the father of Christian trinitarianism. "It may be said that he enlarged the doctrine of the Logos into a doctrine of the Trinity. . . . Tertullian was the first to assert clearly the tripersonality of God."[17]

Interestingly, his form of trinitarianism is not identical to the modern doctrine. Originally, he believed, God

existed alone as a unitary being. Sometime before the creation of the world, God beget the Word or Son as a distinct person, and thereby God became the Father.[18] This second person is not as "noble" or as "powerful" as the Father, for while "the Father is the entire substance [of the Godhead], the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole."[19]

He compared the relationship of the Father and the Son to that between the sun and rays from the sun. If we look merely at the rays we can call them the sun, but when we actually think of the sun itself we would not call the rays the sun. Similarly, if we think only of the second person in the Godhead, we can call Him God, but when we think of both the Father and Son together, the Father is the true God and the Son is in a secondary position.[20]

In teaching that the second divine person had a beginning in time and that this person was subordinate to the Father, he followed the Greek Apologists. Tertullian went beyond them, however, in clearly identifying the Holy Spirit as a third divine person and in emphasizing the trinitarian nature of God. He did not spend much time describing the third person, but he regarded the Spirit as emerging from the Father, remaining subordinate to the Father, and also being subordinate to the Son.[21]

Tertullian further believed that in the age to come the distinctions in the Godhead would cease. Just as the Son and Spirit originally came out of the Father, so in the end they would be drawn back into the Father.[22] Unlike modern trinitarians, then, he did not believe that the persons of the trinity were coequal or coeternal.

He did speak of the three persons as sharing the one divine substance, what modern trinitarians call coessen-

tiality or consubstantiality. Even here, however, he was not completely consistent with later trinitarianism, for he argued that the angels share in the one divine substance much as do the Son and Spirit.[23]

This comparison shows that Tertullian's concept was a form of tritheism (belief in three gods). In fact, his opponents accused him of tritheism, although he tried to deny the charge by saying he believed in three divine persons but not three gods. The opponents seem more convincing, for in conjunction with his idea that every spirit has a bodily substance, Tertullian indicated that each person of the trinity has his own body.[24]

By Tertullian's own admission, "the majority of believers" rejected his doctrine of the trinity on the ground that it denied the cardinal Christian doctrine of monotheism (belief in one God) and contradicted the "rule of faith," which was a standard confession of fundamental doctrine that all Christians made, probably at baptism. Tertullian retorted that his opponents were "simple," as the majority "always" is, insinuated that they were "unwise and unlearned," and stated that they did not understand the "economy" of God in that He is "three in one."[25] Tertullian went on to record that his opponents, whom historians call the modalists, affirmed the absolute oneness of God and deity of Jesus Christ.

Tertullian's position seems elitist, reminiscent of the emphasis on the superior, hidden knowledge of the spiritually minded few as taught by the Gnostics and later by Origen, another early champion of the trinity. The majority of believers did not reject his doctrine of the trinity because they were ignorant or because it was too sophisticated for their simple minds, however, but because it

contradicted Scripture, their most ancient confessions of faith, and common sense.

In sum, Tertullian, more than any other person, is the originator of Christian trinitarianism, but his formulation is heretical by modern trinitarian standards. Namely, he denied coeternity, denied coequality, and had problems defining consubstantiality.

In his defense, trinitarian scholars usually say that it is not fair to judge him by the orthodoxy of a later time. In other words, the orthodox creeds and formulas had not yet been framed and adopted; the church was just beginning the process of developing and understanding trinitarianism. But this argument exposes the error of trinitarianism: it concedes that one cannot determine trinitarian orthodoxy by the Scriptures, which, as Protestants affirm, is the sole authority for doctrine. Rather one must trace the historical development of trinitarianism and then judge orthodoxy by various extrabiblical creeds.

Tertullian anticipated the later development of the doctrine of Christ, saying that Christ has two natures, human and divine. They have distinct properties but are united.

Doctrine of humanity (anthropology). In *A Treatise on the Soul*, Tertullian taught that the body and soul are formed together at conception by the natural process of procreation (the doctrine of traducianism). He opposed the doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration of souls.

He also taught that everyone is born with a nature of sin inherited from Adam (the doctrine of original sin). While we are marred by sin, there is still some awareness of God in us. We are capable of responding to the grace of

God and being born again. We are not individually pre-destined, but we have freedom of the will.

Doctrine of salvation. In his treatises *On Repentance* and *On Baptism*, as well as in other works, Tertullian emphasized the necessity of repentance and the new birth, which consists of both water and Spirit. He taught that in water baptism we are born of water, have our sins washed away, and are prepared for the Holy Spirit. He reluctantly allowed a second repentance, but no more, for those who commit major sins after baptism.

Tertullian explained that God's grace has provided salvation for us and that repentance is a gift from God. He acknowledged that no one can pardon sin or grant the Spirit except God, and he held that faith is the means by which we receive the new birth. He insisted, however, that saving faith must involve an active response: "'Unless a man have been reborn of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens,' has tied faith to the necessity of baptism." He defended the proposition that "without baptism, salvation is attainable by none," answering numerous objections.[26]

While Tertullian affirmed justification by faith, he described repentance as earning forgiveness. It is the "satisfaction" or payment God requires in order to forgive sins at baptism and afterward. This language set the stage for the later doctrine of penance.

Tertullian counseled that the baptism of children be deferred till they are old enough to understand its significance. He described the rituals that a baptismal candidate underwent in his church, including being immersed three times, tasting a mixture of milk and honey immediately after baptism, and refraining from the daily bath for a

whole week after baptism. He admitted that there was no "positive Scripture injunction" for these rules, even saying that triple immersion was "a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel," but he defended them on the basis of "tradition, and custom, and faith."[27] Following his trinitarian theology, Tertullian baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and was the first known writer to cite Matthew 28:19 as giving the actual formula to use.

Tertullian believed in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues and the exercise of the spiritual gifts (*charismata*) of I Corinthians 12. He regarded them as signs of the true church, stating that they were the norm in his day. Writing against the Marcionites, he challenged them to produce such gifts if they were a true church:

> The Creator promised the gift of His Spirit in the latter days, and . . . Christ has in these last days appeared as the dispenser of spiritual gifts. . . . Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God. . . . Let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer—only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him. . . . Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty.[28]

Christian living. Tertullian advocated a conservative lifestyle of holiness. *The Shows* instructs Christians not to attend the theater or other pagan shows and renounces

all killing of humans. *On Exhortation to Chastity*, *On Monogamy*, and *On Modesty* teach against all forms of sexual immorality as well as divorce and remarriage. In addition to its advocacy of fasting, *On Fasting* advises abstention from alcoholic beverages. *On the Apparel of Women* warns against immodest or extravagant dress, makeup, hair dye, elaborate hair arrangement, false hair, and ornamental jewelry; Tertullian similarly admonished men not to adorn themselves by these means. *On the Veiling of Virgins* holds that women should wear a veil, that they should not have close-cut hair, and that men should not have flowing hair. Some try to dismiss these teachings merely as Montanist extremism, but they appear to be characteristic of Christianity generally during this time, as evidenced by the corresponding teachings of Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, and others.

Cyprian

Like Tertullian, Cyprian strongly advocated trinitarianism, the necessity of water baptism as part of the new birth, and a conservative holiness lifestyle, including avoidance of immodest dress, makeup, jewelry, ornamentation, and theater attendance. He too opposed the bishop of Rome in his day (Stephen), but unlike Tertullian, he became a bishop himself and remained an integral part of the institutional church.

Cyprian's conflict with Stephen occurred over the baptism of heretics. Stephen accepted the prior baptism of people in splinter groups if they later joined the mainstream church, but Cyprian insisted that they be rebaptized. Stephen especially valued baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, no matter who performed it, because of the

power of the name of Jesus. Cyprian rejoined that the Book of Acts taught baptism in the name of Jesus for the Jews only; everyone else must be baptized with the trinitarian formula.

An anonymous treatise on rebaptism from this time, probably written by a bishop opposed to Cyprian, strongly affirmed baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. The author stated that "heretics who are already baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ must only be baptized with the Holy Spirit." He claimed that his position had the support of "the most ancient custom and ecclesiastical tradition" and "the authority of so many years, and so many churches and apostles and bishops." Moreover, not only heretics, but many people in the church, both "Jews and Gentiles, fully believing as they ought, are in like manner baptized" by "invoking the name of the Lord Jesus."[29]

Cyprian was the earliest advocate of baptism by sprinkling, but he still considered immersion to be the normal practice. He described baptism as a dipping but allowed sprinkling for the sick.[30] He also advocated infant baptism on the ground that all are born in sin.

The controversy between Cyprian and Stephen was significant for the development of ecclesiology, the doctrine concerning the church. Cyprian's view—that heretics must be rebaptized—ultimately prevailed, and so did his rationale, as follows. First, salvation rests in the institutional church, not outside it. Second, the authority of the church is invested in the bishops. Therefore baptism, which is necessary for salvation, is only valid if performed under a recognized bishop of the established church.

Cyprian's ecclesiology became the doctrine of the

Roman Catholic Church, with an important qualification: Roman Catholicism affirms the supremacy of the bishop of Rome as the universal pope, while Cyprian denied it. Cyprian acknowledged that the bishop of Rome was the leading bishop, the first among equals, but denied that he was the supreme arbiter of doctrine or church discipline.

Clement of Alexandria

The life of Clement of Alexandria (died c. 215) overlapped with the age of the Greek Apologists, and he followed in their tradition, relying heavily upon Greek terminology, philosophy, and speculation and emphasizing the doctrine of the Logos. Church historians often call him the first of the "Greek fathers," the prominent theologians of the Greek-speaking church, and he was indeed the father of Alexandrian theology. His most important works are *The Exhortation to the Heathen* (for evangelism), *The Instructor* (for converts), and *The Miscellanies*.

A pagan philosopher before his conversion, Clement became superintendent of a school for new converts. He stressed the importance of knowledge. In contrast to Tertullian, he said that to know is greater than to believe, and he was fond of interpreting Scripture allegorically. Perhaps the best way to see the tendencies and results of his theology is to examine the similar theology of Origen, his more famous disciple and successor as superintendent of the catechetical school.

Although Clement combined biblical revelation and philosophical speculation, he still maintained a conservative biblical lifestyle. Many of his stands on holiness of life are quite similar to those of revival movements

throughout church history and to the Apostolic Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century.

In *The Instructor*, Clement wrote strongly against attending worldly shows; wearing makeup, hair dye, ornamental jewelry, immodest clothing, extremely costly clothing, or clothing associated with the opposite sex; gluttony; drinking; dancing; and various sins of the flesh.[31] He taught women to let their hair grow freely but men to cut their hair short.[32] In this regard, he agreed with the teaching of the New Testament, the early post-apostolic church, and contemporaries such as Tertullian.

Origen

Origen (died 254) is the chief representative of the school of Alexandria. He spoke of Christianity as the highest philosophy and stated that his purpose was to synthesize, or blend together, the Bible and Greek philosophy. Like Clement, he followed in the tradition of the Greek Apologists, but he went further than they did. He was a prolific writer whose major extant works are *On First Principles* (his foremost doctrinal treatise), *Against Celsus* (apology in response to a pagan attack), and *Commentaries* (we have much of the material on Matthew and John).

Origen's *Commentary on John* is the first significant work of biblical exegesis (critical explanation and analysis). Unfortunately, he and the entire school of Alexandria were characterized by allegorical exegesis of Scripture. That is, instead of simply reading Scripture according to the ordinary and apparent meaning of its words and their grammatical-historical definition, he typically sought for a hidden, deeper, "spiritual" meaning. He was not content

to extract principles and make relevant applications from biblical stories and parables, but he tried to make every historical account and parable teach deep doctrinal truths that are not apparent from the biblical context. Moreover, he often denied the literal meaning.

As an example, Origen doubted that the story of Christ's purging of the Temple was "real history." Instead, the significance of the story is that the words of Jesus will drive away "earthly and senseless and dangerous" tendencies in "the natural temple," which is "the soul skilled in reason." The money in the story represents "things that are thought good but are not," while the sacrificial animals are "symbolic of earthly things" (oxen), "senseless and brutal things" (sheep), and "empty and unstable thoughts" (doves).[33]

Obviously, someone who uses the allegorical method can support any doctrine he wishes, for his interpretation is not tied to the objective meaning of Scripture. Instead of laying aside presuppositions and asking what the Bible says to us, he approaches the Bible with his preexisting beliefs and tries to find them in hidden parallels and codes. Instead of bringing meaning out of Scripture, he tries to put meaning into Scripture.

Origen's allegorical method of interpretation stemmed from his view, shared by the Gnostics and Clement of Alexandria, that knowledge is superior to faith. Consequently, many historians have described Clement and Origen's doctrine as a form of Christian Gnosticism. Origen's views and emphases were similar to those of the Gnostics in many ways, but he retained enough basic Christian elements to be acceptable to many.

Doctrines of God and of Christ. Although Tertullian emphasized faith over reason while Origen emphasized reason over faith, and although the former interpreted Scripture literally while the latter did so allegorically, on the doctrine of God both succumbed to the strong influence of Greek philosophy and the Greek Apologists. Like Tertullian before him, Origen taught that God is a trinity of persons (Greek, *hypostases*) and that the Holy Spirit is a third divine person.[34] While he sometimes spoke of the members of the trinity as being equal, he actually subordinated the second person to the first and the third person to the first and second.[35] Tertullian in the West and Origen in the East were the first and foremost champions of trinitarianism in ancient Christendom, and both were vital to its development and acceptance.

Origen introduced two related concepts that were crucial to the progressive formulation of trinitarianism: the doctrine of the eternal Son and the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son.[36] The Apologists and Tertullian had identified Father and Son as two persons, but they taught that the Son was begotten at a certain time before creation. Origen reasoned that if the Son is truly God, He must be eternal, coeternal with the Father.

Consequently, the Son's begetting could not refer to a point in time, but to an eternal process, to an eternal relationship with the Father. There was never a time when He was not. He has always been, and is always being, begotten (generated) by the Father.

By these doctrines, Origen also moved towards the later trinitarian doctrine of coequality of the Father and the Son. He established equality in time, but He still spoke of the Son as deriving His substance from the

Father, indicating a subordination of origin or existence. Some statements of Origen seem to indicate that the two persons are of the same substance, but to avoid modalism he made a difference. For example, he said the Son "is a separate being and has a separate essence of His own," is "a second God," was "created" by the Father, is "inferior" to the Father, and is not "the Most High God."[37] Interestingly, at the Council of Nicea, both those who said the Son was inferior to the Father and those who said the Son was equal to the Father, quoted Origen in support of their position.

Origen taught that Christ has two natures, divine and human, that are united. The divine nature is dominant and deifies the humanity.

Doctrine of man (anthropology). Origen believed that human souls were preexistent spirits who fell into sin and consequently were placed in bodies of flesh. Actually, then, our life is a kind of reincarnation. Here we see the Greek philosophical influence and the kinship to Gnosticism.

Doctrine of salvation (soteriology). Origen believed that Christ's atonement was real, and he spoke of Christ as our propitiation before God, our redemption, and our righteousness. He described Christ's death as a ransom to the devil, which the devil could not keep. He extended Christ's work of redemption to the angels and to the age to come.

Origen said that the apostles preached the message of redemption clearly in order to save people, most of whom are somewhat dull spiritually, but the more zealous Christians should seek the hidden meaning behind these statements and attain true spiritual wisdom. The vast majority

of Christians know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the Word (Logos) made flesh, and so are saved by faith in Him. However, there is a higher way of salvation: receiving the eternal Word, having faith in the eternal Reason (Logos) that was with God and was God before the Incarnation.[38] In its truest form, then, Christianity proclaims wisdom and reason as the way of salvation rather than simple faith and redemption. Again, we hear an echo of Gnosticism.

Origen taught repentance and water baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and he advocated infant baptism. He held that forgiveness was available after baptism if a person would repent. Like Tertullian, he used the trinitarian baptismal formula, invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Doctrine of the last things (eschatology). Origen spiritualized heaven and hell, regarding them not as places but as conditions. He taught the ultimate salvation of everyone (universalism). Following Plato, he said every soul would undergo a time of purging. After this process, all sinners, including the devil, would ultimately be saved.
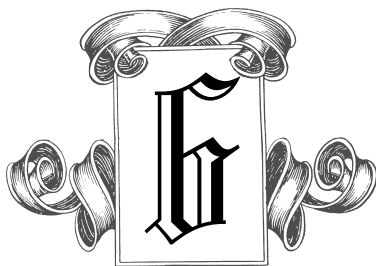
The Ecumenical Catholic Age
A.D. 325-787

We call the period from A.D. 325 to 787 "ecumenical" because it was characterized by seven major church councils that formulated doctrine. It is "catholic" because Christendom still perceived itself as a whole, without official divisions such as denominations. In this age, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, most of the distinctive doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy developed. We can particularly identify major developments in five crucial areas.

1. *Theology*. Important controversies raged over the doctrines of God, Christ, human nature, and salvation, resulting in official formulations that define "orthodoxy." To this day, the three main branches of traditional Christendom—Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and

Protestantism—appeal to these creeds, especially those concerning God and Christ. The sacramental system of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy also began to take shape during this time. The canon of Scripture, while already recognized and used from the earliest times, was officially endorsed near the beginning of the age.

2. *Ecclesiology*. The church offices and hierarchical structure of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy developed in this age. In the West, the bishop of Rome successfully asserted supremacy as the pope.

3. *Monasticism*. The first Christian hermits had appeared in the Old Catholic Age, but in this age monasteries, the monastic way of life, and orders of monks and nuns became an integral part of Christendom.

4. *Blending of pagan and Christian elements.* With the wholesale "conversion" of pagans to Christianity under social, political, and legal pressure, as well as outright force, it was inevitable that pagan practices would infiltrate the church. Indeed, many superstitious, nonbiblical elements became standard during this time, establishing the pattern for medieval Catholicism.

5. *Distinction between East and West*. The eastern and western wings of Christendom had different languages (Greek and Latin, respectively), liturgies, and theological approaches. To some extent these differences were significant even in the Old Catholic Age, but with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the establishment of the papacy, which the East never accepted, they became more pronounced. While the official split between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy did not occur until 1054, their separate courses were set during this age.

This chapter presents an overview of the Ecumenical Catholic Age, while chapters 7-13 explore in greater detail the significant areas of development just identified.

Constantine and His Successors

The fourth century brought earthshaking changes to Christianity. The catalyst was Constantine I (the Great), the first Roman emperor to become a Christian.

The account of the conversion of Constantine has come to us in several versions, but the story focuses on the decisive battle in October 312 at Milvian Bridge near Rome in which he defeated Maxentius, his major rival to the imperial throne. Constantine's biographer, Eusebius, related the following account, taken from the emperor himself.

The day before the battle, Constantine appealed to the God of the Christians to give him victory over the pagan Maxentius. In response, God gave him and his army a vision of a shining cross in the sky with the inscription, "In this (sign) conquer." That night, Christ reportedly appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to make a standard in the form of a cross under which to fight. The account of Lactantius, tutor of the emperor's oldest son, makes no mention of a vision but says Constantine was instructed in a dream to place the sign of the cross on the shields of his soldiers.

In any case, Constantine won the battle; his opponent, Maxentius, drowned in the Tiber River. As a result, Constantine and Licinius, his brother-in-law, became co-emperors, Constantine ruling in the West and Licinius in the East.

Encouraging a sinful ruler to massive bloodshed for

personal advancement instead of calling him to repentance does not sound like something the gentle, peacemaking Christ of the Gospels would do. Nor does Constantine's conversion resemble those in the Book of Acts, for it lacked repentance, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Constantine did not publicly embrace Christianity until 324, and he was not baptized until he was on his deathbed in 337. He delayed on the theory that he could continue his sinful lifestyle and then receive complete remission of sins in the end.

Historians generally conclude that, whatever personal experiences or beliefs he may have had, Constantine shrewdly perceived that paganism was dying, that Christianity was the wave of the future, and that he could use the latter as a means of consolidating his political power and unifying his diverse realm. He and his successors seized control of the church's hierarchy, appointed and deposed bishops, convened councils, dictated church decisions on a variety of matters, and banished dissenters.

In January 313, Constantine and Licinius held a summit in the northern Italian city of Milan. They reached an agreement, called the Edict of Milan, that guaranteed full religious freedom to Christians, like that afforded to adherents of other religions. This concordat marked the end of the persecutions, the most severe of which had occurred not long before, in 303-4 under the emperors Diocletian and Galerius.

In 324 Constantine defeated Licinius in battle, becoming sole emperor. Despite his solemn pledge not to do so, in 325 he had Licinius executed. In 326 he arranged the murder of two presumed rivals: Licinianus, his eleven-

year-old nephew and the son of Licinius, and Crispus, his own eldest son. There is considerable suspicion that he was also responsible for the death of his second wife, Fausta, in the same year.

In the meantime, Constantine realized that a great controversy over the deity of Jesus Christ threatened to divide his newly won empire, and in 325 he convened the first ecumenical council to resolve this problem. It met in Nicea, a crossroads in Bithynia (northwest Asia Minor), twenty miles from the imperial residence in Nicomedia. Constantine paid the expenses of the delegates and opened the council as the honorary presiding officer.

The Council of Nicea is a milestone of church history for several reasons. (1) It was the first, but not final, official step in the formulation of orthodox trinitarianism. (2) It marked the beginning of the use of ecumenical councils to resolve doctrinal disputes. (3) To a great extent it helped effect the merger of church and state.

With regard to the last point, the Roman emperor powerfully influenced the decision of the council. Afterwards, he pronounced its decrees to be divinely inspired, promulgated them as laws of the empire, and made disobedience punishable by death. For the first time a political ruler convened an ecclesiastical council, became a decisive factor in determining doctrine, and instituted a church creed. For the first time Christendom adopted a creed other than Scripture and made subscription to it mandatory. And for the first time the state inflicted civil penalties on people who did not conform to church dogma.

When Constantine died in 337, his three sons divided the empire among them, but they soon began warring for

supremacy. After Constantine II and Constans were slain, Constantius became emperor. He began persecuting pagans and prohibiting their sacrifices, but he was not successful in stamping out paganism. His successor, Julian the Apostate, tried to reinstitute paganism and suppress Christianity. Upon his death, there came a series of Christian emperors. In 381, Theodosius I (the Great) made Christianity the official state religion; he outlawed all pagan practices and was largely successful in suppressing them. Christianity—but not the apostolic doctrine—reigned supreme. Greek and Roman paganism was completely dead by about 500.

By the fifth century, however, the Western Roman Empire was coming under great threat from invading barbarian tribes. In 410 Alaric and his army of Visigoths sacked Rome for the first time. Although they soon left, the city never recovered its power and prestige. In 451 Attila and his Huns invaded Italy, but he overextended himself. The emperor sent Pope Leo I with two other delegates to meet him at the gates of Rome, and they persuaded him to spare the city. The Vandals under Gaiseric sacked Rome in 455. The traditionally cited end of the Western Roman Empire came in 476, when a group of Germanic tribes led by the Herul chieftan Odovacar (Odoacer) conquered Rome. He deposed the last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus, and became the first barbarian king of Italy.

In 330 Constantine had established "New Rome," or Constantinople, as his capital. It was the site of an old Greek colony named Byzantium (now Istanbul, Turkey) on the west side of the strategic Bosporus Strait that separates Europe from Asia. When Rome fell, the Eastern

Roman Empire, subsequently known as the Byzantine Empire, continued on with its seat at Constantinople. The Byzantine emperor Justinian I (the Great) reconquered much of the territory of the old Roman Empire for a time, and in 529 he promulgated the famous Justinian Code, a compilation and revision of Roman law. The Byzantine Empire was a blend of Roman government, Greek culture, and Eastern Orthodox religion. It survived until its conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

The Further Spread of Christianity

Christianity had already spread throughout the Roman Empire before this age, and during this era it extended to European peoples living outside or invading the Roman Empire. In the second and third centuries it had reached the Gauls, Britons, and Germans, but the fall of the Western Roman Empire slowed its advance and even reversed it in some areas. In the sixth century, Christianity resumed its great expansion.

In the fourth century, Ulfilas, a bishop, spread Arian Christianity to the Goths, inventing the Gothic alphabet for evangelistic purposes and translating the Bible into Gothic. The Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Vandals, and other barbarian tribes quickly embraced this variation of Christianity. For a time, their military and political ascendancy posed a great threat to trinitarianism. In 496 the Franks under Clovis converted en masse to mainstream Christianity, and this example, along with various politicial circumstances, ultimately led the Germanic tribes that had embraced Arianism to convert to trinitarian Christianity.

In 432 Patrick, a native of Britain, went to Ireland as a

missionary and eventually converted the entire country. Around the same time pagan Germanic tribes invaded Britain. In 597, Pope Gregory I sent Augustine (not the famous theologian) to convert these Anglo-Saxons who now inhabited England. He became the first archbishop of Canterbury, and in 663 the Synod of Whitby decisively aligned the English church with Rome.

Many Germanic peoples remained pagan for centuries, but various missionaries gradually advanced Christendom among them. The most noted missionary to Germany was Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon who began his work in 716. By the end of the eighth century most of the Germans, and most Europeans, were Christians, at least in name. The Slavs, including Russians, were the major exception; their Christianization did not come until the tenth century.

Major Schools and Writers

We can classify the major theological writers of the Ecumenical Catholic Age under three schools of thought: the Antiochene, the Alexandrian, and the Western.

1. *The Antiochene School*

Ephraem the Syrian (died 387) lived as a hermit in a cavern near the city of Edessa. Ordained a deacon, he refused the position of bishop. He wrote commentaries, sermons, and hymns in Aramaic.

John Chrysostom (345-407) was patriarch of Constantinople. Posterity gave him his surname meaning "golden-mouthed" because of his great oratorical ability. He is noteworthy for his expository, exegetical sermons and his advocacy of a conservative lifestyle of holiness in a worldly church age.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 429), a bishop, was the outstanding theologian of this school. He emphasized the distinction between Christ's deity and humanity, thus setting the stage for the great Christological controversy between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria.

Theodoret (390-457), bishop of Cyrus, held a moderate Christological view similar to that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. He was condemned by the Council of Ephesus but exonerated by the Council of Chalcedon on the condition that he denounce Nestorius. He was also a church historian.

Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428-31), further advanced the Antiochene emphasis on Christ's two natures. He was condemned by the Council of Ephesus and banished on the ground that his doctrine divided Christ into two persons.

2. *The Alexandrian School*

Athanasius (295?-373), bishop of Alexandria, was the leader of the victorious party at the Council of Nicea and the foremost champion of orthodox trinitarianism.

In the long struggles after Nicea over the doctrine of God, Athanasius received aid from three prominent theologians of Cappadocia: *Basil of Caesarea* (329-79), a bishop; *Gregory of Nyssa* (335-94), a bishop and the younger brother of Basil; and *Gregory of Nazianzus* (330-90), their friend, who served a short time as bishop of Constantinople. Using Greek philosophical concepts, these "Cappadocian Fathers" refined trinitarianism and made it broadly acceptable. Basil founded a monastery in 358, laying the foundation for such communities in the future.

Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), bishop, emphasized

the union of Christ's humanity and deity to the point that the humanity became abstract. He bitterly attacked Nestorius, and by unscrupulous, vicious, and even violent means he succeeded in discrediting and defeating his opponent.

Eutyches, a presbyter and abbot of a monastery in Constantinople, further stressed the Alexandrian concept of Christ's unified divine-human nature and indicated that His humanity became deified. He was condemned and deposed in 448 for teaching that Christ had only one nature (monophysitism).

3. *The Western School*

Hilary (315-67), bishop of Poitiers, was a strong defender of trinitarianism.

Ambrose (340-97), bishop of Milan and another important advocate of trinitarianism, was the imperial president of upper Italy when he was elected bishop by popular demand. He did not want the position, and in fact he had not yet been baptized. Submitting to the will of the people, however, he was baptized and eight days later consecrated as bishop. In 390 he defied Emperor Theodosius by refusing to serve him communion after he brutally killed thousands in Thessalonica. This action established a precedent of religious leaders asserting moral authority over civil rulers.

Jerome (340-420), a scholar and ascetic in Rome, is best known for his tranlation of the Bible into Latin, the Vulgate (405). It became the standard Western Bible for over a thousand years, and the Roman Catholic Church regards the translation itself as inspired and authoritative. Jerome was a strong advocate of monasticism.

Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo Regius in

North Africa, is the single most significant theologian of ancient times. After living an immoral life as a young man, he embraced Manicheism (a popular dualistic religion), then Neo-Platonism (revived Greek philosophy), and finally Christianity, converting in 386 and being baptized by Ambrose in 387. He became a prolific writer and crafted an original systematic theology that owes much to the thought and method of Plato.

While Tertullian was the first Latin theologian, Augustine is more properly considered the father of Western theology, because many of his doctrinal formulations became the authoritative, established orthodoxy in the West. Roman Catholicism particularly follows his teachings on the church and the sacraments (especially water baptism), while the Protestant Reformers, notably Luther and Calvin, adopted his views on sin, grace, and predestination. Both Catholics and Protestants embrace his conception of the trinity.

Leo I (the Great) (pope, 440-61) was the first bishop of Rome to claim full papal powers and to receive endorsement of his claims from the emperor. He was influential in resolving the controversy over the doctrine of Christ.

4. *Other Writers*

Eusebius of Caesarea (265-340), a bishop, is sometimes called the father of church history because he was the first writer to attempt a thorough history of Christianity, in his *Ecclesiastical History*. A close associate of Constantine, he wrote *Life of Constantine*, a onesided, flattering, and even fawning biography of the emperor.

"Dionysius the Areopagite" (c. 500) was the pseudonym of a Syrian monk who authored a number of mystical,

neo-Platonic works. They were extremely influential because, until the fifteenth century, most people believed they were written by Paul's convert in Athens of this name (Acts 17:34).

Boethius (480-525), a Roman, blended Christianity and philosophy, teaching salvation by Neo-Platonism. In the Middle Ages, his writings were a major source of classical philosophy and thus highly influential.

Benedict (480-549) founded a monastery at Monte Cassino and the Benedictine order of monks. His *Rule*, written in 540, sets forth principles and directives for monastic life, and it became the standard in the West on such matters.

Gregory I (the Great) (pope, 590-604) was the first bishop of Rome to exercise the full powers of the papacy. He endorsed and popularized many practices and beliefs of relatively recent development, setting the pattern in the West for the next five hundred years. He is a transitional figure, belonging more to the Early Middle Ages than to the ancient age.

Maximus the Confessor (580-662) was a monk who championed the doctrine of two wills in Christ, which ultimately prevailed at the Council of Constantinople in 680. He was exiled and persecuted for his teaching, reportedly by having his tongue and right hand cut off; hence the title of Confessor. He is sometimes called the father of Byzantine theology.

John of Damascus (675-754) represents the developed theology of the East, much as Augustine does in the West. The last of the ancient Greek theologians, he systematized and epitomized Eastern thought.

Other writers during this time include *Didymus of*

Alexandria, a blind man who followed Origen's theology and was the last significant teacher of the catechetical school; *Cyril of Jerusalem*, a bishop who defended trinitarianism against the Arians; *Epiphanius*, bishop of Salamis, Cyprus, who specialized in identifying heresies and who vigorously opposed Origen's theology; the Greek church historians *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, *Evagrius*, and *Theodorus Lector*; and the Latin church historians *Rufinus* and *Cassiodorus*.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Let us briefly identify the seven great councils that define this age. They are called ecumenical because both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy accept them as valid. Protestants generally accept all but the last, but consider only the first four to be of prime significance. The councils were all convened by the authority of the state and were all held in the East. Only a minority of bishops could attend any given council. The Greek-speaking church was overrepresented and usually dominant, but in some cases Western delegates played decisive roles.

1. *Nicea I*, 325, was convened by Constantine I, near the imperial residence at Nicomedia. It affirmed that Christ is God and that the Father and the Son are of the same substance, condemning the Arian view that Christ is a lesser divine being. By implication it partially endorsed the trinitarian views of Athanasius, spokesman of the winning party, who taught that the Father and Son were distinct but equal persons in the Godhead.

2. *Constantinople I*, 381, summoned by Theodosius I, condemned Apollinarianism, the view that Christ's

humanity was incomplete, and it affirmed the deity and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, it gave final approval to the Athanasian, Cappadocian doctrine of the trinity: the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three coequal, coeternal, consubstantial persons in one Godhead.

3. *Ephesus*, 431, called by Theodosius II and dominated by Cyril of Alexandria, condemned the views of Nestorius, concluding that his emphasis on the two natures of Christ wrongly divided Christ into two persons.

4. *Chalcedon*, 451, was held near Constantinople. Summoned by the Eastern emperor Marcian at the prompting of Pope Leo I, this council formulated what became the orthodox expression of Christology: Christ has two natures, divine and human, but is only one person. It condemned both Nestorius and Eutyches.

5. *Constantinople II*, 553, convened by Justinian, condemned the view that Christ had only one nature (monophysitism).

6. *Constantinople III*, 680, under Constantine Progonatus, condemned the doctrine that Christ had only one will (monotheletism).

7. *Nicea II*, 787, under Empress Irene, endorsed the worship of images. Technically, it said the worship given to images is honor but not devotion.

In the next few chapters, we will turn to a more detailed investigation of the development of Christian doctrine. To do so, we will examine individual topics, in some cases stretching back to the Old Catholic Age and even before to trace various ideas, controversies, and decisions on the major subjects.

7

The Canon of Scripture

The canon is the list of books accepted as Scripture, the books inspired by God. Jesus and the apostles accepted the Hebrew Scriptures, our Old Testament, as the Word of God. After the founding of the church on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and their associates to write our New Testament. It is apparent that the early church accepted these writings as inspired as soon as they were written.

The early post-apostolic writers quoted both Old and New Testament books as the authoritative Word of God. At first, they did not attempt to justify their use of various books, but as time went on, they recognized a need to establish exactly which ones they should consider as Scripture. Several factors motivated them to a consideration of the canon.

First and most pressing, some people, particularly those in heretical movements, began to challenge generally accepted views of what constituted Scripture. Some heretical groups, particularly the Gnostics, began to propose books of their own to include in Scripture. Other groups, particularly the Marcionites, began to reject portions of Scripture that had already been accepted historically. Spurious books, which falsely claimed apostolic authorship, also began to circulate.

Second, the church began to recognize its need to ensure the use of appropriate literature for doctrinal instruction, for combating false doctrines, and for evangelism.

Third, in times of persecution, pagan authorities strove to confiscate and destroy Scripture. Books were precious because they had to be copied by hand, and a local congregation often had only one copy of the Bible. Christians went to great lengths, even risking their lives, to protect copies of Scripture on behalf of the church. Those who handed over portions of Scripture to the authorities, even under duress, were considered traitors. Thus early Christians needed to know beyond doubt which books were worth preserving at all costs.

The canon was actually recognized from the earliest times at the grass roots. There was a near-universal acceptance of the books of Scripture in the local churches at various places all across Christianity. We should not look primarily to formal lists or councils as the definers of the Scripture, for they simply ratified what had been the accepted practice for many years. From the earliest times, local churches and pastors used these books as Scripture.

The Old Testament

With respect to the Old Testament, the post-apostolic writers had clear guidance. They accepted the books that the Jews had historically deemed to be the Word of God. (See Romans 3:1-2.) In this they followed the example of Jesus and the writers of the New Testament, who used the Old Testament to establish their teaching without giving any indication that their Scriptures were any different from what the Jews universally accepted.

The New Testament definitely quotes as Scripture, or otherwise alludes to as authoritative, twenty-nine of our thirty-nine Old Testament books, or using the Hebrew enumeration, nineteen of twenty-four books. Of the remaining five Hebrew books, Ezra-Nehemiah and Ecclesiastes are possibly quoted or alluded to, and Lamentations was sometimes appended to Jeremiah, which is quoted. Only Esther and Song of Solomon definitely have no mention, and this means only that the New Testament authors had no occasion to use them for the specific purposes of their writings.[1]

Melito, bishop of Sardis about A.D. 170, produced the earliest Christian list of the Old Testament that we have, and it includes every book but Esther. Another list from about the same time or a little later (MS 54, published by Bryennios) lists all the books including Esther. The next list was drawn up by Origen, in the early third century, and his was identical to the Hebrew Bible except for an addition to Esther.[2]

Some Christian groups accepted as canonical or semi-canonical a number of Jewish writings dating from about 200 B.C. to 30 B.C. and one from about A.D. 100. They are commonly called the Apocrypha. Some are additions to

biblical books. At the Council of Trent in 1546, the Roman Catholic Church officially accepted eleven of them as Scripture. The Protestants reject them as canonical.

Some writers in early Christendom, notably Tertullian and Augustine, gave full or partial endorsement to at least some of the Apocrypha. Under the influence of Augustine, regional councils in North Africa in the late fourth and early fifth centuries endorsed the Apocrypha. Other writers, such as Origen and Athanasius, did not regard them as Scripture. Some did not deem them canonical but used them for study and preaching. Jerome, translator of the Vulgate (Latin Bible), insisted strongly that they were not the Word of God.

There are many reasons why the church as a whole did not accept these writings.[3] (1) The Jews never accepted them. (2) They were writen after Malachi, the last of the inspired prophets of the Old Testament. (3) The authors were unknown men who did not claim inspiration, and some of the books falsely claim authorship by biblical men who lived long before they were composed. (4) Neither Jesus nor the New Testament writers ever quoted them or referred to them as Scripture. (5) They contain doctrinal errors, such as prayer for the dead, salvation by works, almsgiving as atonement for sins, and the preexistence of souls. (6) They contain inferior moral teaching, such as extolling the drinking of wine, commendation of suicide in some instances, and justification of seduction and deceit for a worthy cause. (7) They contain historical, chronological, and geographical errors. (8) They contain many fanciful passages.

To summarize, the books that received universal or near-universal acceptance as part of the Old Testament

are the same books that the Jews historically recognized and the same books that Protestants recognize today.

The New Testament

Turning to the New Testament, the post-apostolic church accepted as inspired the books that came with apostolic authority—written either by the apostles themselves or by associates who received apostolic approval of their writings. The early Christians realized that the apostles had unique authority as eyewitnesses and as people specifically commissioned by Jesus for this purpose.[4] Christians of the first century had special qualifications for recognizing the canon, for they had personally received sound doctrine from the apostles and were personally acquainted with the writers of the New Testament. They had the unique ability to judge the authenticity and validity of the books in circulation at that time.

F. F. Bruce identified five criteria used in the early centuries of the Christian era to recognize which books God had inspired: apostolic authority, antiquity (age), orthodoxy (doctrinal correctness), catholicity (universal use), and traditional use.[5] Antiquity and orthodoxy were subsidiary criteria to help determine apostolic authority.

The New Testament itself contains evidence of the reading, circulation, collecting, and quoting of inspired writings. The epistles of Paul were read to believers and circulated among the churches (I Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 4:16; I Thessalonians 5:27). John intended for Revelation to be read generally (Revelation 1:3). Paul quoted from Luke's Gospel (Luke 10:7; I Timothy 5:18). Peter recognized all of Paul's epistles as Scripture (II Peter

3:15-16). Jude apparently quoted Peter (II Peter 3:2-3; Jude 17-18).

The post-apostolic authors quoted extensively from New Testament books, relying upon them as scriptural authority. When we examine the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Pseudo-Barnabas, Papias, and the anonymous authors of the *Didache* and the *Epistle to Diognetus*, we find that from about A.D. 95-150 early Christian writers definitely quoted from twenty-three New Testament books. These include all except four very short books—Philemon, II and III John, and Jude—and there are possible references to all of these but III John. Near the end of the second century, Irenaeus quoted from all the books except Philemon and III John.[6]

The earliest canonical list we have is the *Muratorian Fragment* (c. 170). It refers to at least twenty-two of the New Testament books and probably twenty-three.[7] It does not list Hebrews, James, I Peter, and II Peter, but this could be due to a break in the manuscript. Looking to the earliest translations of Scripture, the Old Latin Version, translated about 200, included every book but the four just named. The Old Syriac Version, in circulation around 400 but based on a text from about 200, included every book but II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation.

In short, by about 150 we find numerous quotations representing every book of New Testament except one to four short personal letters. By about 200 we have clear post-apostolic witnesses to every book of the New Testament.

In the early third century Origen referred to all twenty-seven books, identifying a few as disputed. In the early fourth century Eusebius listed all twenty-seven books

with similar comments. Athanasius in 367 is the first known writer to list our New Testament canon exactly and without any qualification. Regional councils at Hippo (393) and Carthage (397 and 419) in North Africa, under the influence of Augustine, confirmed the same list.

It is important to note that these councils simply ratified what grass-roots believers as a whole had practiced for centuries:

> The decisions of church councils in the fourth and fifth centuries did not determine the canon, nor did they even first discover or recognize it. In no sense was the authority of the canonical books contingent upon the later church councils. All those councils did was to give *later, broader, and final* recognition to what was already a fact, namely, that God had inspired them and that the people of God had accepted them in the first century.[8]

Twenty of our New Testament books were never seriously questioned or disputed. They are the four Gospels, Acts, the thirteen Pauline Epistles, I Peter, and I John. We have clear evidence from the earliest post-apostolic times that those who knew the apostles personally and heard their teaching accepted these books. These twenty books comprise seven-eighths of the New Testament text and teach in full all the New Testament doctrines. There was some question or opposition from various quarters about the remaining seven books—Hebrews, James, II Peter, II John, III John, Jude, and Revelation.[9]

Hebrews does not bear the name of its author, and for that reason some people were reluctant to accept it.

Gradually that opposition was overcome on the basis of Alexandrian tradition, which said Paul was the author. Modern scholars generally say that Paul was not the author because the style of Hebrews is significantly different from that of the thirteen epistles bearing Paul's name. They acknowledge, however, that its themes are so similar to those of Paul's writings that the author must have been a colleague or co-worker of Paul. This explanation would account for the book's acceptance from the earliest times as bearing Paul's authority and yet its stylistic differences from Paul.

Some questioned the Epistle of James because of its emphasis on works, thinking it contradicted the doctrine of justification by faith as expressed particularly in Paul's letters. Rightly understood, however, there is no contradiction, but a harmony. The Bible clearly teaches salvation by grace through faith. The Book of James simply stresses that when the Bible talks about genuine faith, it does not speak of mere mental assent or verbal profession; rather it requires an active, obedient faith that has a visible effect in our lives. The only way to demonstrate faith and show its validity is by works.

Some people questioned the authenticity of II Peter because of differences in style from I Peter. Probably the simplest way to explain the discrepancy is to note that a scribe named Silvanus recorded the first epistle (I Peter 5:12). It is likely that Peter dictated I Peter, that Silvanus smoothed out the grammar and offered elegant phraseology, and that Peter approved the final result. By contrast, Peter evidently wrote II Peter in his own hand without assistance.

II and III John were also questioned as to their gen-

uineness. They are both very small letters and were originally sent to individuals, so it is easy to see why they did not have a widespread circulation at first. After John's death at the close of the first century, people in the vicinity of the original readers probably began to realize the importance of what they had and began to distribute them more widely. As other churches began to receive them, some asked, If these letters are authentic, why have we not seen them before now? The strong similarity to the Gospel of John and I John in style and content ultimately resolved this question in favor of John's authorship.

Jude raised some questions by its citation of Enoch. The quote appears in an apocryphal book called *I Enoch*, and the question arose as to whether Jude thereby endorses a spurious book. But both *I Enoch* and Jude may have obtained this information from a common, more ancient source. If Jude indeed quotes from *I Enoch*, it simply recognizes that the book preserves an accurate tradition or records a truthful prophecy. This use does not necessarily mean an endorsement of all *I Enoch's* contents.

Finally, some objected to the Book of Revelation. Actually Revelation was one of the earliest books to be cited as Scripture. The most serious objections came in the third century from people who resisted its doctrine of the Millennium. They felt that this teaching gave too much support to the Jews. The answer to this attack was that we have no right to discredit an inspired, apostolic book simply because we do not like some of its teachings.

When we analyze the Christian writings of the second and third centuries, we find that they reproduce all but eleven verses of the New Testament.[10] That is an amazing

testimony as to how much the early Christians used the New Testament books, how highly they regarded them, and how the text has been preserved over the centuries.

Many books written in early post-apostolic times were rejected by virtually everyone as not being inspired of God. These included numerous supposed gospels as well as some acts, epistles, and apocalypses. The early church rejected them as canonical because they did not have apostolic approval. Most were obvious forgeries, and they typically contained fanciful stories and heretical doctrines. They have almost no theological or historical value, but they do reveal various ideas and popular thinking of the time.

A few books were accepted by some, receiving temporary and local recognition. Examples are the epistles of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius. Other books were anonymous or pseudonymous. Even when people accepted these books as inspired, they typically gave them only semicanonical, secondary status, placing them in an appendix to the Scriptures or at the end of a list. Usually their limited acceptance came only because of a mistaken belief that they had apostolic authority.

Ultimately they were rejected as canonical for several reasons. Some obviously had only temporary or local application. Some were forgeries, such as the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. In some cases, such as the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas*, and the *Didache*, people realized that the authors were not apostles or their associates as some had supposed. It also became clear that just because a book was written near the end of the apostolic age, or shortly after the apostolic age, or by someone who had known the apostles, did not

mean it carried apostolic authority.

No major canon or council in the history of Christianity ever endorsed these other books. Occasionally someone today will claim to publish the so-called lost books of the New Testament, but these books were never accepted by any significant group for a significant period of time. The books of our New Testament are the ones that believers historically accepted from the earliest times and that the various branches of Christianity have consistently ratified throughout history.
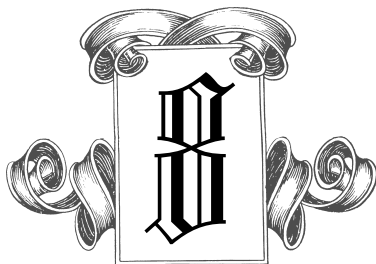
The Doctrine of God

As we have seen, in the Old Catholic Age Tertullian, Origen, and others developed a trinitarian concept of God. Not everyone accepted this innovation, however. Historians use the label *monarchians* for people during this time who rejected the emerging doctrine of the trinity and continued the earlier emphasis on God's oneness. They derive the term *monarchian* from Greek words meaning "one rule," referring to the one, sovereign God who rules the universe.

Dynamic Monarchianism

Church historians distinguish two kinds of monarchians, dynamic and modalistic. The dynamic monarchians defended God's oneness by saying that Jesus is not God

in the fullest sense of the word. Rather, He is a human being who somehow became divine by the anointing or indwelling of God's Spirit. Historians call their view "dynamic," meaning "changing," because of the idea that Christ's nature changed over time from simple to divine humanity. This view undercuts the true meaning of the Incarnation.

A modern Oneness Pentecostal author, William Chalfant, suggests that ancient and modern trinitarian writers have misunderstood the dynamic monarchians.[1] Perhaps they did teach the true deity of Christ but emphasized His humanity in order to explain passages of Scripture that trinitarians relied upon. For instance, maybe they stated that the Son was inferior to the Father, meaning the humanity of Christ and not His deity. (See John 14:28.) Trinitarians could have misunderstood because they used the title of Son to refer to Christ's deity. Since none of the writings of the dynamic monarchians have survived, it is difficult to know exactly what they taught. Based on the scant historical record preserved by their opponents, however, it appears that the dynamic monarchians deviated in a significant way from Oneness theology.

The leading teacher of this group was Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch. He reportedly taught that God is one, that the Logos (Word) and the Spirit are not distinct persons from the Father, and that Jesus was a man made divine by the indwelling of the Logos (divine reason). He apparently did not consider Jesus to be God in the strict sense of the word, however; his opponent Malchion alleged that "he put a stop to psalms sung in honour of Christ."[2]

Modalistic Monarchianism

The second classification of people who opposed early trinitarianism—modalistic monarchianism, or modalism—was far more important. The modalists emphasized that God is absolutely one, with no distinction of persons. According to them, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three persons but three ways, or "modes," in which God has manifested or related Himself to the world. In particular, Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the one God, the Father. The fullness of God is incarnate in Jesus.

According to renowned church historian Adolph Harnack and others, from A.D. 180 to 300 modalistic monarchianism was the most serious rival to trinitarianism.[3] In fact, as Tertullian and other early trinitarians reluctantly acknowledged, during much of this time it was the view of the majority of believers.[4]

Before 180 there was no controversy over the doctrine of the trinity because no one explicitly taught in trinitarian terms. As discussed in chapter 2, most writings of the Post-Apostolic Age expressed biblical concepts and were compatible with Oneness doctrine. That began to change around 150 in the Age of the Greek Apologists with Justin's doctrine of the Logos as a second divine person. Not everyone accepted this innovation, however, for Justin alluded to people who rejected his position and who insisted that the Logos is "indivisible and inseparable from the Father."[5]

The modalists emerged as a group in the late second century in Asia Minor, where the church had been established in New Testament times. It appears that they adhered to earlier views on the Godhead but became identified as a group because they opposed the concept of

a plurality of persons in the Godhead introduced by the Greek Apologists and further developed by early trinitarians.

Irenaeus, the first prominent author of the Old Catholic Age, nowhere spoke against the modalists, although he was a contemporary from Asia Minor. As we have seen, he expressed many Oneness ideas but no clear concept of a trinity of eternal persons. He wrote against heresies, but apparently he felt no need to write against modalism because it expressed standard views of the time. The conflict between modalism and trinitarianism did not begin until around 200 because that is when clearly trinitarian ideas were first propounded.

To establish their teaching, the modalists appealed to passages in Isaiah, John 10:30, Colossians 2:9, and many other verses. Although no modalistic writings have survived intact, we have many descriptions and quotations of them by their trinitarian opponents such as Tertullian and Novatian.

How do the modalists relate to modern Oneness Pentecostals? First, there is no historical link; the two movements arose independently based on a study of Scripture. Second, we actually know very little about the modalists, and what we know comes from their opponents. We cannot be sure about their views on various subjects or about possible differences within their ranks. Third, many speculative things have been written about them, some of which appear to be distortions or errors, and it would not be fair to link Oneness Pentecostals to such characterizations.

In short, people today should study and evaluate the Oneness doctrine based on what contemporary adherents

proclaim, not on second-hand reports of third-century teachings and controversies. Nevertheless, it is clear that the modalists affirmed the two points essential to the doctrine of Oneness, namely that there is one God with no distinction of persons and that Jesus is the manifestation in flesh of the true God in all His fullness.

In elaboration of their position, the modalists taught that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, not another person. Likewise, the Logos is not a second person, as trinitarians and the Greek Apologists thought, but the mind of God and the activity of God. Thus the Logos and the Son are not identical in terminology; the Son relates exclusively to the Incarnation, while the Logos relates both to God in eternity and the Incarnation.

The modalists spoke of Jesus as the Son in that He is a true man, God in the flesh. They spoke of Jesus as the Logos in that He is the revelation of the eternal God, the active expression of God in this world. The modalists denied that the Son is a second person, that the Son is eternal, and that the Son preexisted the Incarnation. Jesus is eternal as the one true God, the Father, the Spirit, the Logos, but when He became flesh He became the Son, God incarnate.

The modalists are sometimes called Patripassians, from Latin words meaning "the Father suffered." This label stems from Tertullian's attempt to ridicule modalism as follows: If Jesus is the Father incarnate, then the Father was crucified and the Father died. How ridiculous to imagine that the Father could die!

What made his argument so powerful in his day was an important tenet of Greek philosophy, particularly emphasized in Neo-Platonism: God is impassible, or

incapable of emotional feeling and suffering. God is so lofty that He cannot fully interact with this world; thus the God who interacts with us cannot be the supreme God. As we saw in chapter 3, this assumption rested at the heart of Gnosticism.

In the Gnostic view, Jehovah, the Creator, is not the true God but an aeon (an emanation from the true God, a lesser divine being). Christ is the highest aeon, but still only an emanation from the supreme God because God Himself cannot interact with the world.

The Greek Apologists' views were similarly shaped by this philosophical concept. For them, the true God is the Father, but the God who interacts with us is the Logos, a secondary God, a lesser God. In combating the modalists and developing his doctrine of the trinity, Tertullian embraced the same fundamental concept.

In view of this prevailing idea in the culture, Tertullian's argument made much headway. It was difficult for many people to believe the supreme God Himself actually came to this world, suffered for us, and died. The modalists protested that Tertullian wrongly characterized their position. Like writers in the Post-Apostolic Age, they indeed affirmed that God the Father suffered in Christ, but they defended themselves against Tertullian's charge as follows: The Spirit of God did not die, but Jesus died as a man. Of course, the indwelling Spirit fully participated in that agonizing experience.

Like the modalists, Oneness theologians today state that God was in Christ at the Crucifixion. They do not say that God's Spirit went unconscious, died, or ceased to exist, for that is impossible, but the flesh died, and the incarnate Spirit partook of that suffering in whatever way

a Spirit can. God was incarnate at the Atonement.

Tertullian's argument undercuts the full deity of Christ even from a modern trinitarian perspective. He did speak of the sufferings of God and the death of God, meaning the second person, but thought it absurd to say this about the first person. If there are three coequal persons of God, however, and if it is unthinkable for the first person to suffer or die, then it would likewise be unthinkable for the second person to suffer or die. According to Tertullian's logic, only the Father is the supreme God and therefore incapable of suffering, while Jesus Christ is a subordinate, inferior person and therefore capable of suffering.

Tertullian wrote a book against Praxeas, a leading modalist teacher from Asia Minor who preached in Rome about 190. Hippolytus wrote against Noetus, a disciple of Praxeas and another prominent teacher of modalism. Other modalists were Cleomenes, Epigonus, and Commodian, a North African presbyter or bishop. Three Roman bishops—Victor, Zephyrinus, and Callistus—sided with modalism when controversy erupted. Catholics today consider them popes.

Probably the most prominent modalist in the Old Catholic Age was Sabellius, who preached in Rome in the 200s, and so the modalists are often called Sabellians. We know very little about Sabellius himself, and it is impossible to determine what he really believed in detail. Most of the sources of information about him are trinitarians who lived a century later.

Some historians distinguish Sabellius from the older modalists by saying that Sabellius taught a successive revelation of God: He was first the Father, then He became

the Son, and finally he became the Holy Spirit. He did not operate simultaneously as Father, Son, and Spirit, but successively. If this is indeed what Sabellius taught, then it is different from the older modalism and from Oneness today. Oneness theology holds that God is the eternal Father and Spirit and that when He came in flesh as the Son He did not cease to be Father and Spirit.

Actually it appears that trinitarians misunderstood Sabellius on this point, as they sometimes do with Oneness believers today. Sabellius taught that we know God as Father in creation, Son in redemption, and Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, but this explanation does not require successive manifestations. It is probable that his doctrine aligned with that of the older modalists but his opponents misunderstood his views. Because of this distortion, it is not helpful to speak of Oneness believers as Sabellians, but we can say that Sabellius affirmed the two points essential to Oneness theology: the numerical oneness of God and the absolute deity of Jesus Christ.*

Ante-Nicene Developments

As chapter 5 discussed, the first theologically significant use of the word *trinity* and the first clear teaching of three persons in the Godhead came with Tertullian. It is evident that Tertullian himself evolved in his doctrinal understanding. One of his writings, *Against Hermogenes*, discusses only two divine persons, the Father and the Son, and says the Son emerged from the Father sometime prior to the creation of the world. At first, then, it

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*See Appendix B for a list of modalists and others in church history who embraced the essential tenets of the Oneness view.

seems that he followed the teaching of the Greek Apologists. It is not until he wrote *Against Praxeas*, around 210, that we have the first clear evidence of trinitarianism, identifying three persons instead of just two.

He was soon joined by Origen, around 215-30, who championed trinitarianism in the East. Origen was the first to teach that the Son is eternal. He also taught that the Son is eternally being begotten by the Father, a concept possibly borrowed from Gnosticism.

At first the word *person* itself probably was not controversial, because it originally referred to a face, mask, or role played by an actor.[6] Thus it was quite compatible with a Oneness or modalistic view. In fact, Sabellius used the original Greek term for person, *prosopon*, to describe God's manifestations. Unfortunately, early trinitarians employed *person* (Latin, *persona*; Greek, *hypostasis*) to mean a distinction of personalities and identities.

Although Tertullian and Origen both taught that there were three divine persons, they actually said little about the Holy Spirit. They devoted most of their discussion of the Godhead to proving that the Father and Son are two distinct persons. Against the modalists they emphasized that Jesus is not the supreme God but a subordinate second person.

Other writers brought greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the third person. One of the first to do so was Novatian, around 240-50, a staunch trinitarian who opposed Sabellius. He also led a schism from the church in Rome, insisting that backsliders could not receive forgiveness for certain major sins.

Another man who shaped trinitarian theology during this time was Bishop Dionysius of Rome, one of the few

leaders before Nicea who held that the members of the trinity are coequal and coeternal. In an attempt to thwart Sabellianism, his contemporary, Bishop Diony-sius of Alexandria, made statements that were very tritheistic and that greatly subordinated Jesus to the Father. Dionysius of Rome challenged these statements, promoting a trinity of coequal persons and convincing Dionysius of Alexandria to modify his views. The out-come was an agreement that the Son is not a creature but truly a person of the trinity like the Father. This dis-cussion became an important foreshadowing of the fourth-century trinitarian formulations of Nicea and Con-stantinople.

During the Old Catholic Age a shift occurred from Oneness beliefs to a form of trinitarianism and from the Jesus Name baptismal formula to a trinitarian formula. At the beginning of this age, modalism was the predominant view, but by around 300 a form of trinitarianism was dom-inant in Christendom. By this time, people who held One-ness concepts and who baptized in Jesus' name were in retreat, probably in the minority, and in many cases already separated from the institutional church into groups that were considered heretical.

Trinitarianism was not yet in its modern form, howev-er. Most champions of trinitarianism in this age did not believe that the persons of the trinity were coequal and coeternal, and thus their views are heretical by modern trinitarian standards. They typically divided the personal-ity of God in tritheistic fashion, and they denied the full deity of Jesus Christ by subordinating Him in deity to the Father.

Examples of tritheistic language are as follows: the

Father and the Son are "two separate persons" and "two different beings" (Tertullian); the Son is "one individual produced from a different one" (Hippolytus); the Word is a "second God," "a separate entity" and "a separate being [who] has an essence of his own" (Origen).[7]

Examples of subordinationistic language are as follows: the deity of Jesus was "created" (Tertullian and Origen); not as old, strong, noble, powerful or great as the Father, "a derivation," "a portion of the whole Godhead," and not "God Himself, the Lord Almighty" (Tertullian); "born" (Tertullian, Origen, and Novatian); "inferior" (Origen and Novatian); not eternal (Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Novatian); subject to the Father (Tertullian, Origen, and Novatian); "made God," a "second God," "a god," not "the most High God," and God only in a relative sense (Origen).[8]

Not only do these statements contradict the modern trinitarian doctrines of coeternity, coequality, and consubstantiality (coessence) of the three persons, but they stand diametrically opposed to the essential tenets of ancient modalism, modern Oneness, and the biblical teaching about God.

The Council of Nicea, A.D. 325

In the early fourth century a great controversy erupted in Alexandria, Egypt, between Arius, a presbyter, and Alexander, the bishop, over the deity of Jesus Christ. Alexandria was a major center of Greek culture and philosophy, which heavily influenced both sides of the debate. The controversy spread rapidly and threatened the unity of the institutional church. Although Alexander excommunicated Arius, Arius received support from

some influential people, including Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia.

When Constantine succeeded in becoming sole emperor of Rome in 324, he publicly embraced Christianity. Politically, he saw Christianity as an effective tool of unifying his domain and therefore viewed the Arian controversy as a significant threat to his goal. To solve the problem, in 325 he convened the first ecumenical council of Christendom since Bible days, paying for the delegates to come to the town of Nicea, near the imperial residence.

The central issue at the Council of Nicea was the identity of Jesus Christ in relation to the Godhead. The main questions were, Is Jesus truly God? and Are the Father and the Son of the same essence? The council was not strictly a debate over modalism versus trinitarianism, although modalism was a factor. As things turned out historically, it was more of a debate as to how to define the second person of the trinity.

Some of the participants were basically modalistic or Oneness in their thinking. In fact, one prominent member of the victorious party, Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, vigorously promoted a form of modalism after the council, and another, Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, was later condemned for modalism. Moreover, many of the average participants, who may not have really understood the theological dispute, could have had predominantly Oneness concepts.

The catalyst for the controversy, however, was the doctrine of Arius. Essentially, he took the subordinationism of the Greek Apologists and the early trinitarians to an extreme. In fact, the Arians appealed to early writers, particularly Origen, as support. The views of Arius also

resembled an extreme form of dynamic monarchianism. He said there is one God, not a trinity, and that Jesus is not truly God but, in effect, a demigod. He is a created being of greater rank than humans but not equal to the Father. The Arian position is equivalent to that of Jehovah's Witnesses today.

At the Council of Nicea the leading spokesman against Arius was Athanasius, a young archdeacon from Alexandria who later succeeded Alexander as bishop. He taught that there are three persons in one God and that these three persons are coequal, coeternal, and coessential. The debate centered on the Father and the Son; neither side spoke definitively about the Holy Spirit. Primarily, the Arians attacked the deity of Jesus while Athanasius defended it, saying that Jesus is equal to the Father in every way yet a second person.

Three factions developed at the council: a minority of Arians, a minority of Athanasians, and a majority who did not fully understand the issues involved but who wanted peace. In general, this third group took an intermediate position, but it is difficult to characterize them as a whole. Historians sometimes call many in this group Origenists or Semi-Arians. The majority did not necessarily embrace the complete trinitarian doctrine of Athanasius, but they eventually voted with him in defense of Christ's deity and against the Arian view.

Athanasius considered all who opposed Arianism to be on his side, and some of his strongest supporters at this time were, or turned out to be, modalists. The creed that the Council of Nicea passed clearly rejected Arianism, but it did not definitely establish trinitarianism or reject modalism.

Athanasius used four lines of reasoning to uphold the deity of Christ: (1) The Scriptures teach it. (2) The church has always worshiped Jesus. (3) To be our Savior, Jesus has to be God. (4) He is the Logos, and based on philosophical considerations, the Logos has to be God. He argued that Jesus is of the same essence as the Father.

It is easy to see how Athanasius's position could appeal to a Oneness believer. Faced with a choice between Arius and Athanasius on the deity of Jesus Christ, Oneness believers would choose the latter. In fact, the Arians objected that the doctrine of Athanasius sounded too much like that of Sabellius.

When the council convened, Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia offered an Arian creed, which the assembled bishops immediately rejected. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea proposed a compromise creed that satisfied almost everyone, but Athanasius and his group objected because it was ambiguous and did not resolve the issue. Wanting the widest agreement possible, Constantine pressed for inclusion of the word *homoousios* ("same essence") to describe the Father and the Son. His personal advisor, Bishop Hosius of Cordova, probably gave him this suggestion.

In the end, persuaded by the oratory of Athanasius and heeding the bidding of the emperor, the council agreed to use the word *homoousios,* affirming that Jesus is of the same substance as the Father. The emperor pronounced the resulting creed to be divinely inspired, promulgated it as the law of the land, and insisted that every bishop at the council sign it or be deposed and exiled. Only Arius and two bishops refused to sign the creed, and they were exiled. Eusebius of Nicomedia and two other

bishops did not sign the attached condemnatory clause and were removed from office. Some of the signers had strong reservations, however, and some, such as Eusebius of Caesarea, promptly began interpreting it contrary to its intent.

The creed formulated by the Council of Nicea, which is not the so-called Nicene Creed used today, affirmed belief in

> one God, the Father almighty, . . . and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten; that is, of the essence [*ousia*] of the Father, God of God, light of light, very [true] God of very [true] God, begotten not made, being of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father . . . and in the Holy Ghost.

This terminology is compatible with both Oneness and trinitarian thinking, although the clause "God of God" may erroneously imply a distinction of persons. Athanasius believed one divine person was begotten from another divine person, but a Oneness believer could use the same words to mean the one God came in flesh and therefore God who dwelt in Jesus is the same as God before the Incarnation.

The original creed directly refutes Arianism by saying that Jesus is of one substance with the Father. To the creed itself was appended a clause pronouncing an anathema (curse) upon various Arian statements. One of these can be seen as incompatible with modern Oneness terminology, for it denounces the view that there was a time when the Son was not, and Oneness theology says the

role of the Son began with the Incarnation. The purpose of the clause was not to refute modalism, however, but the Arian idea that the divine nature of Christ had a beginning.

Ironically, another portion of the anathema clause contradicts modern trinitarianism terminology, as well as that of Origen, for it denounces the view that the Father and Son are of a different *hypostasis*. As used here and in Hebrews 1:3, *hypostasis* basically means "substance," but trinitarians later began using it to mean "person" and affirming that indeed the Son is a different *hypostasis* from the Father.

In summary, the Nicene Council was a clear rejection of Arianism but not a clear rejection of modalism. From a historical perspective, it was the first official step in the establishment of trinitarianism, but at the time that was by no means clear. From the trinitarian perspective of Athanasius, it vindicated the coequality and coessence of two divine persons, the Father and the Son, but some of his most vocal supporters did not accept the distinction of persons and some of his most vocal critics saw it as an endorsement of Sabellianism.

Post-Nicene Developments

The Council of Nicea did not end the controversy; the struggle continued for another sixty years, occasionally erupting in violence and bloodshed. In fact, during this time probably more professing Christians died at each other's hand than in all the persecutions by the pagan Roman emperors.[9] In retrospect, given that the Athanasian doctrine eventually won out, Nicea was a watershed event, but at the time that was not at all apparent.

To a great extent, the debate hinged on religious and secular politics. The noted church historian Jaroslav Pelikan observed, "Doctrine often seemed to be the victim—or the product—of church politics and conflicts of personality. . . . The political history of these decades is in many ways more important . . . than the doctrinal history."[10] Bishops were deposed, exiled, and reinstated, depending upon which way the political wind blew. Athanasius himself was exiled at least five times and died in 373 with his doctrine seemingly defeated.

After Nicea, Arius made conciliatory overtures to Constantine, who held another council in Nicea in 327 that supported Arius. In 335 Constantine convened a council in Tyre that deposed and exiled Athanasius and reinstated Arius. The night before Arius was to be formally restored to fellowship at the church in Constantinople, he died. Athanasius considered this to be the judgment of God and circulated a gruesome story about the manner of his death, comparing it to that of Judas. The Arians (and some historians) claimed Arius was actually poisoned by the Athanasians.

In 337 Constantine was baptized on his deathbed by the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia. Upon his death, his three sons permitted the exiled bishops, including Athanasius, to return. In the West, Constantine II and Constans followed the Nicene doctrine, which prevailed there; in the East, Constantius was a strong advocate of Arianism, which prevailed there. In 339 Eusebius of Nicomedia became bishop of Constantinople, and it became a stronghold of Arianism for the next forty years.

In 353 Constantius became sole emperor, and the empire became officially Arian. Liberius, bishop of Rome,

was deposed and replaced by Felix II, an Arian. Liberius signed an Arian creed to regain his position but later returned to the Nicene view.

Much of the opposition to Nicea centered around the word *homoousios* because the modalists had earlier used it to describe their view of the absolute deity of Jesus as the Father incarnate. Many bishops preferred instead the word *homoiousios*, a difference of only one *iota* (Greek letter). They are often called Semi-Arians because the literal translation of this word is "like essence" or "similar essence." Many of them were closer to Athanasius in thought, however, and opposed Arianism. Their endorsement of *homoiousios* was not so much a concession to Arius as a rejection of Sabellius.

Thus while the opponents of Nicea were seemingly triumphant, they soon split into factions. Some contended that the Son was fundamentally different from (unlike) the Father, some held that the Son was like the Father, and some (the Semi-Arians) were willing to say He was like the Father in every respect.

Historians generally conclude that a decisive factor in the victory of trinitarianism was the eloquence and determination of Athanasius himself. He perceived that the Semi-Arians were actually closer to his position than to Arianism and formed an alliance with them, once again creating a majority. In this endeavor, he received significant assistance from three prominent theologians from Cappadocia—Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus—who, using Greek philosophical concepts and terms, refined Athanasian trinitarianism to make it broadly acceptable.

The Cappadocians stated that God is three

hypostases (persons) in one *ousia* (substance), making a distinction between two Greek words that had been synonymous, meaning "substance, essence, nature." This is the orthodox definition of trinitarianism today, and it is equivalent to Tertullian's earlier Latin formulation of three *personae* in one *substantia*.

In distinguishing person from substance, the Cappadocians drew from Plato's concept that everything in our world is a particular instance of a universal form in the unseen, real world of ideals. As an example, every human being is a personification of the ideal of humanity.

Thus the Cappadocians taught that there is one substance of God but three individual particularizations: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Just as Peter, James, and John are three persons who share the same essence of humanity, so the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons who share the same essence of deity.[11]

Athanasius accepted the Cappadocians' formulation as valid, even though he felt that speaking of three *hypostases* divided the Godhead too much and even though the original statement of Nicea had condemned any division of the Godhead into more than one *hypostasis*. Many Semi-Arians, who thought that the Nicene terminology was too Sabellian, likewise accepted the Cappadocians' formulation.

The Cappadocians shifted emphasis from the deity of Christ to a threefold nature of God. Instead of simply presenting one God whom we encounter fully and personally in Jesus Christ, in the words of doctrinal historian Reinhold Seeburg they had "three personalities and an abstract, impersonal essence."[12] Despite their denials, the Cappadocians' doctrine amounts to tritheism, belief in

three gods. To them, God is obviously three; the mystery is how the three could be one. By contrast, Athanasius had emphasized the oneness of the Father and the Son; to him the mystery is how the one God could be a trinity.

The Cappadocians taught that the three persons are coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial, yet they, as well as Athanasius, still retained some subordinationism in their thinking. They spoke of the Father as the head of the trinity, the source, origin, and commander of the other two persons.[13]

They also maintained that each person fully participates in the work of the others, such as creation, redemption, and regeneration. How then can we distinguish them? Their answer was, and this is the standard trinitarian explanation today, that the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten (generated), and the Holy Spirit is proceeding (spirated).[14] But what do these distinctions mean, and what is the difference between each of them? The Cappadocians conceded that the answer lies outside human language or knowledge. Thus we are left with meaningless philosophical distinctions that actually explain nothing.

In sum, the very terms and relationships that supposedly define the three persons are themselves indefinable or incomprehensible. There is no objective, scriptural meaning. The doctrine of the trinity is reduced to an abstract philosophical construct based on circular reasoning as follows: How do we know the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons? Because the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit is proceeding. What does "begotten" mean in this context? We cannot know, but it is what makes the Son different

from the Father. What does "proceeding" mean? We cannot know, but it is what makes the Spirit different from the Father and the Son. Truly, as trinitarians then and now affirm, the doctrine of the trinity is a mystery that humans cannot understand.

After the Council of Nicea, there was also a serious controversy over the identity of the Holy Spirit. To this point, the focus of debate had been on the relationship of the Father and the Son. Both Arians and Athanasians made a distinction in the Godhead between the Father and the Son, saying that the Son is a second divine person. The same logic and methods of interpretation led to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is yet another person.

A great diversity of views arose. Some said the Holy Spirit is simply God Himself in spiritual manifestation, not to be distinguished as another person. Some said the Spirit is the impersonal energy of God. Others, such as Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, considered the Spirit a created being or an angel. Some, like Athanasius and the Cappadocians, held that the Holy Spirit is a third divine person.

The Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381

To put a final end to the Arian controversy, as well as to resolve controversies over the nature of Christ and the identity of the Holy Spirit, Emperor Theodosius, a defender of Nicea, convened the first Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. This council was the decisive moment theologically for the orthodox doctrine of the trinity, ratifying and expanding the decision of the Council of Nicea.

The Council of Constantinople vindicated the doctrine of Athanasius and the Cappadocians. Athanasius and

Basil were dead by this time, but the two Gregorys were present and exerted considerable influence. The council affirmed that the Father and Son are distinct, equal persons, and it further established that the Holy Spirit is a third coequal person.

Many people today mistakenly assume that the doctrine of the trinity received full expression and final acceptance at the Council of Nicea, but that idea is based on the faulty notion that the Nicene Creed came directly from that council. Actually, the present Nicene Creed reflects the decisions of both Nicea and Constantinople, and it came into general use around 500. The truth is that trinitarianism developed over two centuries, receiving initial, partial support at Nicea but attaining final form and complete official acceptance at Constantinople.

Developments after Constantinople

In the fifth century, there arose a real possibility that Arianism could win the day after all. Although trinitarianism had triumphed in the Roman Empire, the empire was crumbling under barbarian attacks, and most of the barbarians converted to Arian Christianity. That threat ended in 496 with the conversion of the Franks to trinitarian Christianity, soon followed by most of the other barbarian tribes.

After Constantinople, a further controversy arose that became a factor in the eventual split of the Eastern and Western churches. Eastern theologians taught that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only, while the Westerners taught that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Reflecting the Western view, the Synod of Toledo in 589 inserted a statement in the Nicene Creed

known as the *filioque* clause ("of the Son"), but the Eastern church never accepted it. It is a major theological distinction between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

In later theology, Augustine is the supreme representative of the Western view of the trinity. Like Athanasius, he focused primarily on the unity of God, stating that each person possesses the entire divine essence under a different point of view. He did not want to compare the trinity to three humans, but he reluctantly spoke of God as three persons because orthodox terminology was already established. Augustine emphasized the coequality of the persons and rejected the subordinationism retained in the thinking of Athanasius and the Cappadocians.

Some of his analogies tend toward modalism, such as when he compared the trinity to memory, intelligence, and will in one human personality and to the human mind remembering, understanding, and loving God. One well-known analogy is tritheistic, however: the trinity is like one who loves (Father), the beloved (Son), and the love between the two (Spirit).

The Athanasian Creed, which was not written by Athanasius, came into being between the fifth and eighth centuries, and it expresses the strong coequality taught by Augustine. Only the West officially recognizes it because it teaches the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, but aside from that point, it expresses the basic tenets of the East as well. The Roman Catholic Church and most historic Protestant churches regard the Athanasian Creed as an important statement of faith. Indeed, it is the most explicit and definitive statement of trinitarianism from ancient times.

From a Oneness viewpoint, the Athanasian Creed is a good example of how trinitarianism is unscriptural, self-contradictory, and incomprehensible. For instance, it indicates two begettings of the Son, saying the Son is eternally begotten and was also born in time. It affirms that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each God, yet there are not three Gods but one God.

In the eighth century, John of Damascus brought further refinements. Like Augustine, he rejected most elements of subordinationism and said the three persons were not like three men. He described their relationship as "mutual interpenetration" (circumincession) without commingling. In other words, the nature of each is fully contained in the others and each participates fully in the work of the others, yet each remains distinct.

Creeds

As we have seen, creeds played an important role in ancient doctrinal controversies, especially those on the Godhead. From early times, it appears that Christians developed simple statements of faith, originally using excerpts from Scripture. The purpose was to identify what a convert needed to believe before he was baptized. (See Acts 8:36-37.) Then, as various heresies emerged, such statements became increasingly important to identify truth from error.

The earliest "rule of faith" (fundamental doctrines or statements that were accepted generally) focused on faith in the one God.[15] From it developed various creeds in different locales. One of the oldest we have is the Old Roman Symbol from sometime in the late second century; it is the basis of the Apostles' Creed used today. The Old

Roman Symbol expresses faith in the one God; in the atoning work of Jesus Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection; and in the salvation provided through His gospel, namely, the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the future resurrection.

The Apostles' Creed, which was not written by the apostles, grew over the centuries as various statements were added in response to new doctrinal challenges. Most of it consists of scriptural language, and it can be viewed as compatible with the apostolic doctrine. However, its name is misleading, it does not speak to some important doctrinal issues facing the contemporary church, and it is often understood today as a trinitarian statement. On balance, then, its value for Oneness believers is minimal.

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy view the ancient creeds as authoritative sources of doctrine. In theory, Protestantism affirms the sole authority of Scripture, but in practice most Protestant churches appeal to the creeds as definitive and normative.

We must recognize, however, that only Scripture is authoritative for doctrine. (See Galatians 1:8-9; II Timothy 3:15-17; Jude 3; Romans 3:1-4.) We can use statements of faith to express our understanding of Scripture and to establish a basis for cooperative efforts, but we must not elevate the words of humans to the level of inspiration. Unlike the practice in the Ecumenical Catholic Age and in many Christian circles today, we cannot rely on creeds to establish doctrine or determine someone's salvation.*

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*See Appendix C for the text of the major creeds we have discussed.

Summary

Briefly, here are the major steps in the development of trinitarianism.

1. About 150 the Greek Apologists, beginning with Justin, defined the Word to be the Son, described the Word/Son as a second divine being begotten by God the Father at a point in time before creation, and said that the Word was subordinate to God. A threefold baptismal formula was introduced, along with some vague notions of threeness in relation to God.

2. About 210 Tertullian introduced the term *trinity* and formulated the concept of one God in three persons. In his trinity, the Father alone is eternal, and He is superior to the other two persons.

3. About 215-30 Origen likewise promoted trinitarianism, contributing the key doctrines of the eternal Son and the eternal generation of the Son. He thereby prepared the way to elevate the status of the second person, although he himself still taught that the Father was superior to the other two persons.

4. Under the influence of Athanasius, the Council of Nicea in 325 rejected Arianism. It declared that the Father and the Son are of the same substance, making them equal.

5. The Council of Constantinople in 381 followed the doctrine of Athanasius and the Cappadocians. It clarified the status of the Holy Spirit and placed all three persons on an equal footing.

6. Based in part on the theology of Augustine and produced sometime in the fifth to eighth centuries, the Athanasian Creed put in definitive form the doctrine of the victors of Nicea and Constantinople. It declared the

coequality, coeternity, and consubstantiality of the three persons.

Over two hundred years passed from the first teaching of a plurality of divine persons (two) (c. 150) to the full acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity (381). About one hundred years passed from the introduction of trinitarianism (c. 200) to the time it became dominant (c. 300), almost another century before it reached its definitive form and received official acceptance (381), and yet a third century before all significant political threats to it ended (496).*

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*For further discussion and documentation of the material in this chapter, see *Oneness and Trinity, A.D. 100-300* and *The Trinitiarian Controversy in the Fourth Century* by David K. Bernard. For a list of people who rejected trinitarianism but upheld the deity of Jesus Christ, see Appendix B.
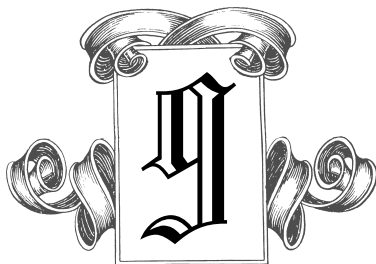
The Doctrine of Christ

By the end of the fourth century, the controversies in the institutional church over the doctrine of God had subsided. The attention of theologians shifted to other areas, and new debates arose. The next major subject of controversy was Christology—the doctrine of Jesus Christ, particularly His humanity and the relationship of deity and humanity in Him.

The Councils of Nicea and Constantinople established that Christ is truly God, although they did so imperfectly by identifying Him as the second coequal person of the trinity. There was a consensus that He is not merely a man and not a demigod. The next question became, How is He a man? If He is truly God, then how did God manifest Himself in the flesh?

According to I Timothy 3:16, the true mystery of godliness is the Incarnation. There is no mystery as to how many gods there are, for Scripture reveals that God is absolutely and indivisibly one (Deuteronomy 6:4). But the mystery is, How did God come in the flesh? How was the baby Jesus and then the man Jesus also God? In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, theologians began to wrestle with these questions.

Docetism

In the second century, the Gnostics taught docetism, the doctrine that Christ was a spirit being only. They denied that He was a man. All the early church leaders and writers rejected this view and emphasized the real humanity of Jesus Christ. They understood that if Jesus were not truly human then we do not have an atonement for our sins.

It is essential to Christianity that Jesus really was a man, that God really came in the flesh. I John 4:3 says, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Apollinaris

The great Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries began with the teaching of Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea, who died about A.D. 390. Put simply, his view, called Apollinarianism, is that Christ had an incomplete human nature. He had a human body, but instead of a human spirit He simply had the divine Logos, which in trinitarian terms is the second person in the

Godhead. The Logos took the place of the human mind, so that Jesus did not have a distinct mind as a man but only the mind of God.

In other words, Jesus Christ was not a complete human being but merely God in a body. The Spirit of God animated His body; there was no inner human consciousness.

Sometimes people today will say that Jesus is God in a body or that God put on flesh as a man puts on a coat. Such statements or analogies are incomplete, however. The Bible reveals that, in addition to a human body, Christ had a human will, soul, and spirit. For example, He stated in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). There He prayed, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). At death He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Jesus acknowledged that as to His humanity His mind was limited, even though as God He knew all things. Thus, in reference to the Second Coming, he could say, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

From these passages and others like them, it is evident that Christ's humanity was more than a body. He had both humanity and deity in His Spirit. From the Oneness viewpoint, the only way to explain the biblical distinction between the Father and the Son is to recognize and emphasize the full humanity of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the Atonement depends upon His full humanity as well as full deity. If He were not fully human, how could He have purchased our redemption? How could He truly be our substitute? How could He be our

kinsman redeemer? How could He be the sacrifice of atonement for our sins?

People realized that the doctrine of Apollinaris undercut not only the true humanity of Christ but also the Atonement. As a result, in addition to establishing the doctrine of the trinity, the Council of Constantinople in 381 condemned Apollinarianism.

The School of Antioch

In the fifth century, two theological camps developed contrasting emphases on Christology that resulted in conflict. The two schools were identified by their allegiance to two powerful, ancient churches in prominent Greek-speaking cities that were commercial and political rivals—Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt.

The school of Antioch promoted a literal interpretation of Scripture. The theologians associated with this school opposed philosophical speculation, mysticism, and allegorical interpretation of Scripture, which were characteristic of the school of Alexandria. The Antiochenes strongly rejected both docetism and Apollinarianism.

In contrast to these views, they emphasized the humanity of Christ and the distinction between humanity and deity in Christ. They said Christ was perfect in humanity as well as perfect in deity. They explained the relationship of deity and humanity in Christ by saying the divine Logos (the second person) dwelt in a full human being. Historians commonly evaluate their position as follows: the union of deity and humanity was not so much a union of essence as a moral or cooperative union. Christ was one person in appearance, but actually humanity and deity were separate yet cooperating in Him.

The chief theologian of the Antiochene school was Theodore of Mopsuestia, who died in 429. The clash over Christology came to a head, however, with the teaching of Nestorius, patriarch (bishop) of Constantinople beginning in 428.

Nestorius

Taken to an extreme, the Antiochene teaching would indicate that Christ is not really one person, but two. Such a conclusion would undercut the Incarnation. Instead of God becoming flesh (John 1:1, 14), somehow God merely lived alongside a man. At least, this is what the Alexandrians concluded about the teaching of Nestorius, although he held the standard Antiochene position.

Nestorius compared the Logos residing in the man Jesus to someone residing in a temple or house. Appealing to John 2:19, He said Christ is both God and the temple of God. His opponents accused him of teaching two persons of Christ, but Nestorius denied the charge.

One of the chief concerns of Nestorius was the glorification of Mary by calling her *theotokos*, meaning "bearer of God" or "mother of God." This title paid homage to Mary and was a significant step in the development of the worship of Mary. The justification for its use was this: Jesus is God and man in one person, and this person was born of Mary, so we can call Mary the mother of God.

Nestorius asked how God could have a mother, concluding that Mary was not the mother of God but the mother of Christ's humanity. She was the mother of the baby Jesus but not the mother of the Spirit who dwelt in that baby.

Nestorius argued for a clear distinction between the

humanity and deity in Jesus. He did not insist upon a separation in reality, which would make two persons, but he wanted to make enough of a distinction so that he could refer to Christ's humanity without automatically involving His deity. Thus he said Mary is the mother of Christ, speaking of Him as a man, but he did not want to say Mary is the mother of God. Likewise, he said that Christ died, but he did not want to say that God, as Spirit, died.

The Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431

Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, bitterly opposed Nestorius and schemed against him. It appears that he was motivated in part by ecclesiastical politics, jealousy, and desire for power. According to Philip Schaff,

> he scrupled at no measures to annihilate his antagonist. Besides the weapons of theological learning and acumen, he allowed himself also the use of wilful misrepresentation, artifice, violence, instigation of people and monks at Constantinople, and repeated bribery of imperial officers.[1]

Cyril persuaded Emperor Theodosius II to convene the third ecumenical council, the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, to address this issue. Under the influence of Cyril, the Council of Ephesus officially condemned Nestorianism as heresy and removed Nestorius from office. The council affirmed that Christ is one person and charged that Nestorius divided the one Christ into two persons.

As a result of this action, the followers of Nestorius broke away from the mainstream church and founded the Nestorian Church. This group was responsible for intro-

ducing Christianity to China, although the Chinese Nestorian Church was later completely wiped out. Descendants of ancient Nestorianism include the Assyrian Church and a group in eastern India.

Contemporary scholars are generally sympathetic toward Nestorius, concluding that he did not separate the humanity and deity of Christ nearly as much as his opponents claimed. It appears that they distorted, misrepresented, and exaggerated his position. Martin Luther concluded that Nestorius was not a heretic and did not teach two persons of Christ.

The School of Alexandria

The opponents of Nestorius and the school of Antioch were theologians of the school of Alexandria. As we have seen, the Alexandrians were significantly influenced by Greek philosophy, and they commonly interpreted Scripture allegorically. The Alexandrian theologians emphasized the deity of Jesus Christ and the incarnation of the Logos, and they felt the Antiochenes overemphasized the humanity of Christ.

Athanasius was an early representative of Alexandrian Christology, although he lived before the major controversy and before the development of precise terminology on the subject. He taught that two natures—deity and humanity—were united into the one person of Christ, and he spoke of Mary as the mother of God. According to him, both natures participated fully in all the work of Christ, including His suffering on the cross. Christ did not suffer merely as to His humanity, but the incarnate divine Spirit participated in the suffering.

Like Athanasius, the three Cappadocians championed

the doctrine of two natures in one person, and they strongly emphasized the union of the two natures, holding it to be necessary to validate our redemption. For the redemption of Christ to be effective, they argued, Christ had to be fully human and His humanity had to be fully united with His deity.

Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus went so far as to teach that the humanity of Christ was commingled with His deity. They said human nature is capable of becoming divine, and in Christ's case, His humanity did become divine. While they affirmed that Christ was fully human, they focused more on His deity. To them, His human traits were somehow combined with or assimilated into His deity.

Cyril of Alexandria went even further in emphasizing, against Nestorius, the union of the two natures in Christ, speaking of Him as the God-man. Before the Incarnation, he said, it is possible to identify two natures in the abstract: the nature of God and the nature of humanity. Once the Incarnation took place, however, deity and humanity were so fused together in Christ that we can actually speak of one nature, a divine-human nature.

Although the Council of Ephesus condemned Nestorius, it did not clearly state what the correct doctrine was, and it did not reconcile the opposing factions. In 433, the Antiochene theologian Theodoret wrote a compromise creed that asserted the two natures of Christ (against Cyril) but accepted Mary as the mother of God (against Nestorius). For a time, this confession brought peace, with each side interpreting the key phrases in its own way. Cyril assented to it but insisted on the continued condemnation of Nestorius, who was exiled.

Eutyches

The controversy flared anew, however, with the teaching of Eutyches, a monk in Constantinople who took the Alexandrian Christology to an extreme. He vehemently insisted that after the Incarnation Christ had only one nature. His human nature was impersonal, and it was absorbed into and deified by the Logos. Even His body is not the same as ours, but a divine body. Thus we can say God was born, God suffered, and God died.

In 448 a local council in Constantinople, called a synod, condemned the view that Christ had only one nature. Leo I, bishop of Rome, endorsed its decision, as did Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople. Supporters of Eutyches convened another synod in 449, at Ephesus, which vindicated him in a partisan and violent manner. Monks backing Eutyches attacked Flavian, who died a few days later of his wounds. Because of its violent spirit and onesided, unrepresentative participation, this council became known as the Robber Synod.

The Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451

Leo, the first bishop of Rome to claim full powers as pope, emerged as the chief spokesman for the doctrine that ultimately prevailed. He taught that Christ has two natures but is only one person.

At Leo's insistence, in 451 the new emperor, Marcian, called a general council to resolve the controversy. It originally met in Nicea, but because of sharp contention among the bishops and the danger of violent outbreaks, the emperor ordered it moved to Chalcedon, near Constantinople, where it could be under direct imperial control. It was the largest of all ecumenical councils, with

about five to six hundred bishops in attendance, and it is second only to Nicea in importance.

The council embraced the views of Leo, following his language closely. For the first time, a bishop of Rome, a pope, played the decisive role in a major theological dispute, guiding the decision of an ecumenical council.

The creed adopted by the council states that Jesus Christ is "perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, that he has a rational soul and a body. He is of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father as God, he is also of one substance [*homoousios*] with us as man." It then proceeds to call Mary "the mother of God" [*theotokos*]. It further teaches:

> [Christ] is known in two natures, [which exist] without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The distinction of the natures is in no way taken away by their union, but rather the distinctive properties of each nature are preserved. [Both natures] unite in one person and one hypostasis. They are not separated or divided into two persons but [they form] one and the same Son, Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

This creed stands against the doctrines of Arius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches. To summarize the council's decision, Christ has two natures, human and divine, but He is one person. This statement is the classical explanation of Christology for Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants to this day.

To define orthodox Christology, the council employed two important words that had already been used to define

the trinity: *homoousios* and *hypostasis*. The former word had long been stripped of Sabellian connotations; here it describes an abstract substance that different persons, divine or human, can hold in common. The latter word identifies not only the persons of the trinity but specifically the one divine-human person of Jesus Christ.

It is important to realize that this entire controversy took place in a trinitarian context. From the Oneness point of view, it is obvious that we must emphasize the distinction between Christ's humanity and deity. Otherwise, there is no way to explain the prayers of Christ, His submission to the Father's will, the Son's lack of independent knowledge and power, and so on. Oneness theology stresses that these examples and others like them do not prove a plurality of divine persons but simply demonstrate and arise from the authentic humanity of Jesus Christ. He was a real man in every way, and He underwent everything in the human experience, except for sin. His humanity, as well as His deity, was full and complete.

Sometimes Jesus acted and spoke from the human perspective, as when He slept in a storm; and sometimes he acted and spoke from the divine perspective, as when He awoke and calmed the storm. On the cross, He cried from the depths of His humanity, "I thirst," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Yet on the cross He also exercised the prerogative of God alone when He promised salvation to the repentant thief: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (See Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:43, 46; John 19:28.)

From the Oneness perspective, then, neither Apollinarianism nor the Christology of Eutyches is a viable

option. A trinitarian is more susceptible to believing that Christ has only one nature, because he can explain the prayers of Christ, for example, as one divine person praying to another.

For this reason, some trinitarians today accuse Oneness Pentecostals of being Nestorian, finding comfort in classifying them as heretics on two counts: the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Christ. The point is irrelevant, because Oneness believers are not committed to the councils; they appeal solely to the Scriptures. It does not really matter whether they are deemed heretical by Constantinople, Chalcedon, or both.

Nevertheless, it does seem that the basic concept of Chalcedon—two natures in one person—is compatible with the Oneness view. The technical terms *nature* and *person* are not suitable under all circumstances, however. Derived from Greek philosophy and colored by trinitarian usage, they are inadequate to convey the full biblical concept of the Incarnation. For example, it is awkward to say one nature prayed to another, or one nature loved another, for we do not usually think of a nature speaking or loving. It is more accurate to say simply that Christ prayed as an authentic human and that the Son loved the Father as all humans are to love God. We cannot speak of persons in the Godhead, but we can say Christ is a person who lived on earth.

In short, Oneness believers do not accept the trinitarian presuppositions and concepts of Chalcedon, nor do they endorse Chalcedon's designation of Mary as the mother of God. But they do accept the basic idea that humanity and deity are united in the one person of Christ.

Oneness believers find themselves in agreement with

many points that Nestorius made, since they too emphasize the distinction between Christ's humanity and deity. But they do not embrace the error that Nestorius was accused of, namely, that Christ was two persons or that the union of deity and humanity was one of convenience or appearance only. Then again, it seems likely that Nestorius himself did not hold such beliefs and that he was trying to express Christological beliefs similar to that of Oneness Pentecostals today. Oneness Christology clearly contradicts the more extreme Alexandrian views, corresponds more closely with Antiochene explanations, and can be harmonized with the basic concept of the Council of Chalcedon.

In the final analysis, rather than debating Christology in historical and philosophical terms, from the Oneness perspective it is preferable to pass over the ancient creeds and councils and go back to Scripture. Based on Scripture we can make four important affirmations regarding Christology. (1) Christ is full and perfect God, the one true God incarnate. (2) Christ is full and perfect man, without sin. (3) There is a distinction between deity and humanity in Christ. The way to understand the Gospel accounts is to realize that Christ is both human and divine; some scenes and sayings reflect His humanity and some His deity. (4) Deity and humanity are inseparably united in Christ. Christ is not a Spirit-filled person as we are, capable of living as a human apart from the Spirit. Rather, while we can distinguish deity and humanity in Christ, both are so united that Christ is one person in every way. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh—not God merely by an indwelling, but by incarnation, identity, and essence.

The Monophysite Controversy

Chalcedon became the definitive statement of Christology, but as usual, the council did not end the controversy. Historians call the various opponents of the Chalcedonian formula the Monophysites, a label that comes from Greek words meaning "one nature."

The Monophysites insisted that Christ did not have two natures but only one. They held that after the Incarnation there was only one dominant nature, the divine. Humanity and deity were combined in such a way that Christ is fundamentally a divine being. One of the rallying slogans of the Monophysites was "God has been crucified."

The controversy continued in the East for a hundred years, marked by political intrigue, bloody riots, schisms, and internal divisions among the Monophysites. For instance, the patriarch of Alexandria was lynched in 457 for his views on Christology, and Christology became a factor in the circus competition between the Blues and Greens in Constantinople. Pelikan noted, "Even more than the christological controversies before Chalcedon the continuing debate after Chalcedon was shaped by nontheological factors, ranging from mob rule and athletic rivalry to military promotions and the domestic intrigues of the imperial household."[3]

Finally, in 553, the fifth ecumenical council was convened, the second one at Constantinople. It reiterated the decision of Chalcedon and condemned the view of the Monophysites, further explaining that the doctrine of two natures does not mean two persons or two faces as the Monophysites alleged.

Those who could not accept this decision fragmented into various churches that exist today, including the Coptic Church of Egypt (home of Alexandria), the Ethiopian Church (also called Coptic), the Jacobites (dissenters in Syria), and the Armenian Church. They are generally treated as part of Eastern Orthodoxy, and except for their doctrine of the one nature, their beliefs and practices are the same as the Orthodox churches. They consider Pope Leo I and the Council of Chalcedon to be heretical and equivalent to Nestorianism.

In recent years, a strong Oneness Pentecostal church has arisen in Ethiopia from missionary efforts of the United Pentecostal Church International. Drawing from their Monophysite heritage, at least some leaders in this group reject Chalcedonian terminology, equating it with trinitarianism, and teach that Christ has a unique, divine flesh of heavenly origin. While true Monophysitism makes sense only in a trinitarian context, some of the language of Monophysitism emphasizes the deity of Christ and so appeals to Oneness thought.

The Monothelete Controversy

Even after the Second Council of Constantinople, some people had trouble accepting the doctrine of two natures in one person. They approached the problem in another way, but their point of view was similar to that of the Monophysites. Instead of saying Christ had only one nature they said He had only one will, a divine-human will, not two. They are called Monotheletes, from Greek words meaning "one will."

It is difficult to see how this belief harmonizes with Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He

said to the Father, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). There the human will clearly submitted to the divine will. Some trinitarians explain that the will of the second person (Son) submitted to the will of the first person (Father), but this explanation does not harmonize well with the trinitarian doctrines of coequality and interpenetration of the persons.

The sixth ecumenical council, the third at Constantinople, met in 680 to deal with this issue. This council condemned the Monotheletes, stating that Christ has two wills, the human will and the divine will. The human will did not resist the divine will but was subject to the divine will at all times.

Interestingly, Pope Honorius I endorsed the Monothelete position, and this council pronounced an anathema against him. This fact poses a significant problem for Roman Catholics, who accept the decision of this council as divinely inspired yet also teach the infallibility of the pope. Moreover, in 682 Pope Leo II officially denounced Honorius as a heretic.

Many modern trinitarians use the concept of two wills to argue against the Oneness position. They point to Christ's prayers in Gethsemane and conclude that Christ and the Father must be two distinct persons because Christ had a will distinct from that of the Father. When Oneness believers respond that here we simply see the human will submitting to the divine will, these trinitarians ridicule the idea that a "nature" can have a will. Only persons can have wills, they say, so two wills mean two persons.

Unfortunately for them, this argument actually attacks trinitarian orthodoxy, for the sixth ecumenical

council accepted by traditional Christendom held precisely that Christ has two wills but is only one person. In trinitarian terminology, the two wills represent the two natures in Christ; thus a nature can have a will.

While Oneness people do not have to use the technical term *nature* to establish their point, they can appeal to the reasoning of this council. There is only one divine will; in classical trinitarianism, the three persons participate fully in each other's work and share the same will. If God could have different or opposing wills within Himself, there would be no defense against outright tritheism. As this council shows, trinitarians cannot successfully argue that the two wills in Gethsemane prove two persons. To be consistent with their own doctrine, they must recognize, as Oneness believers maintain, that Christ's prayer in Gethsemane depicts His human will submitting to the one, undivided divine will.

Again, some people dissented from the decision of the council and broke away from the mainstream church. They became known as the Maronites, and their descendants exist in Lebanon today. Over the centuries, however, the Maronites abandoned their unique doctrinal position. Rather than realigning themselves with Eastern Orthodoxy, they joined the Roman Catholic Church under a special arrangement. This agreement allows them to observe their ancient rites and liturgies, instead of what developed in the West, and to maintain their distinct ecclesiastical identity and government under the authority of the pope.

Summary

We can summarize the historical development of the

doctrine of Christ by looking at the first six ecumenical councils.

1. The Council of Nicea in 325 established the deity of Christ, rejecting Arius's belief that Christ is a demigod.

2. The Council of Constantinople in 381 established the full humanity of Christ, rejecting Apollinaris's theory of an incomplete human nature. At this point, the stage was set for the future debate over how deity and humanity coexist in Him.

3. The Council of Ephesus in 431 sought to resolve this problem by saying Christ is one person not two, thereby condemning Nestorius.

4. The Council of Chalcedon of 451 finished what Ephesus started and said Christ has two natures. The resulting formula condemns both Nestorius and Eutyches, saying that two natures, deity and humanity, are united in one person.

5. The Council of Constantinople in 553 reaffirmed the doctrine of two natures against the Monophysites and further explained that two natures do not mean two faces.

6. The Council of Constantinople in 680 affirmed, against the Monotheletes, that Christ has two wills but is not two persons.

These are the six ecumenical councils traditionally accepted by the three major branches of Christendom—Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. With the important exception of the doctrine of the trinity established at Nicea and Constantinople and the adoption of inadequate terminology at Chalcedon, Oneness Pentecostals accept the fundamental concepts of Christology that these councils expressed.
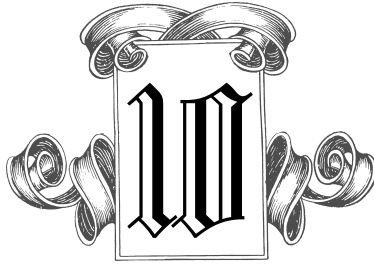
The Doctrines of Humanity and Salvation

After the controversies over the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the next great struggles in Christian thought were over the doctrine of humanity (anthropology), the doctrine of salvation (soteriology), and the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology).

Views of Human Nature

A scriptural understanding of human nature is an essential component of theology, and it is closely related to the doctrine of salvation. The crux of the matter is the Bible's teaching about the relationship between sin and human nature.

The Bible proclaims that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). It further states that all are "under sin" (Romans

3:9; 7:14; Galatians 3:22). This nature of sin comes from the disobedience of Adam (Romans 5:19), and the individual receives it at conception (Psalm 51:5). The unsaved are servants, literally slaves, of sin (Romans 6:20). Although Christians are not to live in sin, they must recognize that the nature of sin remains in them (I John 1:8; 2:1). All humans have the law (principle) of sin dwelling in them, but they can overcome it by the law of the Spirit (Romans 7:14-8:4).

These and other biblical statements gave rise to several key questions that were debated extensively in the fifth and sixth centuries. First, what does it mean to say that all are sinners, are under sin, or have a sinful nature? Is everyone born a sinner? Does having a sinful nature mean merely an ability to sin, an inclination or predisposition to sin, or a compulsion to sin? Are people born with guilt for Adam's sin, or does guilt arise only when they commit sinful acts?

Moreover, do people have a free will or not? Can they choose whether to sin or not? If they can choose, how are they slaves of sin? If they cannot choose, how are they accountable for sin? Do people determine their own destinies, or does God predetermine (predestine) who will be saved and who will be lost?

In this regard, pagans in the ancient world tended to emphasize fate or destiny. A common view was that whatever will be will be; humans have little or no control over their future. Everyone is subject to whims of the gods and to fate. The Stoics particularly promoted this concept, and the Gnostics taught that some people were predestined for salvation while some were predestined for damnation.

The early Christian writers reacted against this pagan way of thinking, because it undercut the foundation of Christianity, including repentance, discipleship, and holiness. They stressed the freedom of the will, including people's responsibility and accountability for sin and their need to believe on Jesus Christ and obey His gospel.

Justin taught the freedom of the human will to choose salvation. Irenaeus taught that humans are born in sin but have a free will. Writers of the Alexandrian school, such as Clement, Athanasius, and Cyril, emphasized the freedom of the will and presented sin as a freely chosen act rather than a hereditary condition. John Chrysostom denied inborn sin, insisting that each person has the ability to choose right or wrong. If he chooses right, then God will help him.

Tertullian strongly affirmed the sinfulness of human nature from birth (original sin). As a result he taught that everyone needs God's grace, but he did so in the context of the freedom of the will. Humans have the opportunity and responsibility to accept God's offer of salvation.

Tertullian also taught traducianism, the view that a child receives its soul at conception from its parents. Just as the body comes from the union of the father and the mother, so does the soul. The alternative, called creationism, is that every time a child is conceived God immediately creates a soul and places it in the child. The Bible does not directly address this issue, although it excludes other alternatives, such as the preexistence or reincarnation of souls. (See Genesis 2:7; Hebrews 9:27.)

Tertullian used traducianism to explain the sinful nature. When Adam and Eve sinned, they died spiritually and acquired a sinful nature. Through the natural process

of generation, they passed both their physical and spiritual characteristics to their descendants, so that every human is born a sinner.

Cyprian, Hilary, and Ambrose similarly taught the universal sinfulness (depravity) of humanity. Ambrose asserted that God's grace always has to initiate salvation (prevenient grace).

The Greek theologians, including Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Cyril, agreed that the fall of Adam and Eve weakened the human will; thus people need the assistance of divine grace to be saved. They recognized that humans have a corrupt nature, but not actual guilt, from birth.

Augustine taught the doctrine of original sin that became the position of the Roman Catholic Church: everyone is born a sinner, which includes both the nature of sin (compulsion, dominion of sin) and the actual guilt of Adam's sin. Every human being will inevitably commit sins, and from birth every human being deserves eternal damnation.

The concept of inherited guilt, however, seems to contradict basic notions of fairness, especially when applied to infants. As we have seen, the Bible does indicate that every child is born with a sinful nature, which means he cannot be righteous in himself but will commit sinful acts. Universal human experience bears witness to this truth. The Bible also indicates, however, that people are accountable for sin only when they personally violate the law of God. (See Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 2:14-15; 5:13.) How could infants be personally guilty before God when they have not committed sinful acts? For that matter, how could young children be accountable before they

are able to understand fully the concepts of law, sin, and righteousness and to exercise faith and repentance?

For adults, the question is moot, for their sinful nature has led them to commit sinful acts for which they are accountable. But the doctrine makes a signficant difference in the case of young children. If original sin means actual guilt, then babies who die would be lost in eternity, unless there is some special provision for them.

Indeed, Augustine taught, as does the Roman Catholic Church, that children who die cannot go to heaven unless they have first been baptized to take away the guilt of Adam that is in their lives. To moderate the horror of this doctrine, Catholics say that the unbaptized infant goes to limbo, a place where there is neither pleasure nor pain.

The Atonement

The writers of the second century (Post-Apostolic Age and Age of the Greek Apologists) believed that Christ died for our salvation and rose again to bring us victory, but they did not elaborate on the doctrine of the Atonement. The *Epistle to Diognetus* described Christ's death as a ransom.

Irenaeus said Christ's life was a recapitulation of all stages of human existence so that He sanctified each stage and provides salvation to people at every age. Irenaeus also spoke of Christ's death as our redemption.

Clement of Alexandria said the Logos became man so that we might become God (partake of the divine nature). Athanasius reiterated this concept of "deification," and it became an important theme in the Greek church. Athanasius also spoke of Christ's death as a substitute for our own.

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Hilary was the first writer to call Christ's death a "satisfaction" offered to God. Origen described it as a ransom paid to the devil, which the devil was not qualified to keep. Ambrose saw His death as a sacrifice to God, satisfaction of divine judgment, and a ransom to the devil. Gregory I gave perhaps the most complete expression of the Atonement in ancient times, saying that Christ's death was a sacrifice that paid our debt of death. Further elaboration came in the Middle Ages.

Pelagius

In the 400s, a man from the British Isles named Pelagius sparked great controversy over the doctrines of humanity and salvation. He taught that humans have an absolutely free will. They are free to do whatever they wish. They can live righteous lives even without divine help, or they can lead sinful lives.

If they choose the latter, then they need salvation from God. Even then, however, they turn to God by using their natural ability to choose. Salvation does not come solely by God's grace, but it is a cooperative effort between God and man. A sinner is not changed purely by the grace of God, in which God intervenes to change his life and enable him to overcome sin, but the sinner changes by choosing good over evil. Instead of needing a new birth (regeneration) in order to live a holy life, every human being has the potential to live a holy life of his own accord and by his own power.

Pelagius thus rejected the idea of original sin; people are not born with guilt or the dominion of sin or even a predisposition to sin. In theory at least, a person could live a sinless life by his own ability. In short, everyone is born

in a state of innocence like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and has the same unrestricted choice they did.

Pelagius did not believe that God's grace was absolutely necessary to enable someone to repent and live a holy life, but he understood grace as primarily the enlightenment of human reason. God moves on the human mind to help people understand what He wants them to do. Grace operates by showing a person what is good, and then he is able to do it of his own accord.

Under this view, God's grace is really a form of assistance; people can do without it if they wish. Moreover, they must make themselves worthy of divine assistance by taking the right steps. They must show God that they are attempting to live right in order for Him to interact with them.

This theory contradicts biblical passages concerning the universal sinfulness of the human race, the grace of God, and the new birth. Instead of salvation by grace—the undeserved operation of God in a person's life—Pelagius redefined grace as God's helping someone to do what he can and should do on his own. Moreover, this assistance has to be merited.

The doctrine of Pelagius created a great stir in the Western church, but these issues did not signficantly affect the Eastern (Greek-speaking) church. Historically, the doctrines of humanity and salvation are preoccupations of the West more than the East. In 431, however, the Council of Ephesus, which was concerned more with Christology than soteriology, condemned the views of Pelagius as heresy.

Augustine
The leading opponent of Pelagius was Augustine,

bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa. In these matters, he laid much of the foundation for Western theology, particularly the theology of Roman Catholicism, although Catholics and Protestants alike see him as a great champion of orthodoxy.

First of all, Augustine taught the doctrine of original sin quite strongly. Every human being inherits both the nature and the guilt of sin from Adam. Adam's sin is imputed to all. When a baby is born, he is destined for eternal damnation.

According to Augustine, the sinful nature dominates every aspect of a person's being. Specifically, sensuality rules the human spirit. As the supreme example, he cited the sexual drive, which he regarded as part of the sinful nature.

This concept underlies much of Catholic theology today. The Catholic idea is that the more holy someone is, the less connection he or she will have with sexuality. Married couples are not supposed to "lust" after one another. They are not to use an artificial means of contraception, for that wrongly promotes sexual pleasure over procreation.

From a biblical perspective, however, God created humans with sexuality as a normal part of their nature. There was nothing sinful about it. Of course, since the fall of man, sin has affected all his being, including sexuality, which is often used in a sinful way. In marriage, however, it is wholesome (Hebrews 13:4).

Augustine taught that salvation is by grace alone. God's grace is necessary for salvation. No human being can save himself or contribute to his own salvation. He must have a sovereign act of God in his life to regenerate him.

Augustine further taught that the application of God's grace to a person's life begins with water baptism, which is essential for salvation. First of all—and Augustine was the first theologian to state this idea clearly—baptism removes the guilt inherited from Adam (but not the sinful nature itself). Second, it removes the personal sins that the person has accumulated in his life.

Under this view, baptism is suitable and indeed necessary for infants. Infants should be baptized to remove original sin and to begin the work of grace in their lives. Without baptism a person does not have the grace of God and does not have eternal life.

Ultimately baptism is not effective without a conversion of heart, but the inward conversion can occur later. As children grow up and embrace the truth, they do not need to be rebaptized but simply need to step into conscious possession of forgiveness and the Spirit. The same is true of adults who are baptized because of duress, coercion, or decision of a political leader.

Regarding justification, Augustine took what became the standard Catholic approach, saying that justification is the transformation of the natural man into the spiritual man. In Protestant theology, justification is simply the act of God in counting the sinner as righteous, but according to Augustine justification also includes the gradual process by which a person actually becomes righteous. In Protestantism, this latter work is called sanctification. Augustine considered the whole process to be part of justification.

Augustine insisted that justification is a work of God's grace. It is not a natural human development or a psychological phenomenon as Pelagius indicated. It comes by

the grace of God, beginning at baptism and continuing throughout the Christian's life.

As an integral part of his doctrine of grace, Augustine taught individual predestination to salvation, a view that first surfaced with the Gnostics. God has elected some people to salvation; before they were born, God chose them to be saved and nothing can alter His choice. He bestows His grace upon them, and as a result they are saved—not by any act of their own but by the sovereign decision of God. Their human will simply conforms to what God has already decreed.

This grace is irresistible. Those whom God has predestined to be saved will inevitably be saved. They can do nothing to change their status. They are saved "whether they like it or not." Of course, Augustine did not put it in these terms because if the grace of God works in someone's life, by definition, he desires salvation. In sum, individual destiny does not depend on human choice or merit; it depends strictly upon God's choice. To those whom God has chosen to be saved, He grants them the grace of salvation.

This doctrine of predestination, called unconditional election, certainly establishes that salvation is purely by God's grace, for it leaves man with absolutely no role to play. It raises many additional questions, however.

What about those who are not elected to salvation? Augustine sometimes stated that God simply passes them by, but he also indicated that they are consigned to damnation based solely on God's choice. They will be eternally damned no matter what they do about it; there is nothing they can do to change that situation. The logical conclusion is that every person is predestined either to

salvation or to damnation, and this view is called double predestination.

How can someone know he is one of God's elect? Since justification is a gradual process, no one can be absolutely certain. Simply being baptized and joining a Christian church do not guarantee divine election. Only time will tell if a person will persevere in the faith.

Some people may seemingly begin in the faith, but they do not endure to the end and so are lost. The reason is that they are not truly part of the elect; God's grace is not truly working in their lives. That is the way God meant it to be. They cannot persevere because the grace of God is not motivating their religious actions.

People who believe they are elect and justified have every incentive to stay in the church and live a holy life, because the only way they know their status for certain is if they continue. In theory, salvation is totally outside man, but in practice, people are urged to follow the teachings of the church throughout their lives.

The result is an emphasis on works. Since justification is a gradual process, not instantaneous, there is no point at which a person can conclude that he has been justified, is definitely one of the elect, and therefore has no further need to live a holy life. On the contrary, the best evidence of election and justification is an ongoing desire to live a Christian life. The salvation process will continue to work throughout the lives of the elect.

Augustine and his followers appealed to Scripture, such as Ephesians 1 and Romans 9, to support their position. The latter passage establishes God's sovereignty, but Romans 10 shows that God has chosen to offer salvation, not arbitrarily, but on the basis of faith. Scripture as a

whole refutes Augustinian predestination. Jesus Christ died for the whole world (John 3:16; I Timothy 2:6; I John 2:2). God desires for everyone to be saved (I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9), and the offer of salvation extends to the whole world, to whosoever will (Revelation 3:20; 22:17). Each person must respond in faith to this offer (Romans 1:16-17). Salvation is by grace, but it comes only through faith (Ephesians 2:8). The saving grace of God works in a person's life as long as he continues to live by faith (Romans 11:19-22; I Corinthians 15:2; Hebrews 10:23-39).

While salvation is wholly an act of God, it is man's responsibility to allow God to perform that work in his life. Grace can be resisted. (See Acts 7:51.) A person can start out in geniune faith and be saved, but then depart from the faith and be lost. (See Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22; James 5:19-20.) God's grace is what saves us, but we have an individual responsibility and ability either to allow His grace to work in our lives or to refuse His grace.

Augustine's doctrine of predestination never was officially adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, but it did receive widespread acceptance. The early Protestants rediscovered it and made it a cornerstone of their theology, particularly Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin. In that sense, Augustine stands as the father not only of much of Roman Catholicism but also of much of Protestantism as well.

In short, there were two opposite extremes in the fifth century on the doctrines of humanity and salvation. On one side, Pelagius said people have a totally free will and can live a holy life by their own efforts. On the other side,

Augustine said all are born in sin and from birth deserve damnation. They have no choice with respect to salvation; God alone determines whether or not each individual will be saved, and salvation is solely by His grace.

The Semi-Pelagians

Many people were not satisfied with either extreme. A middle group formed, called the Semi-Pelagians. Most of them could more properly be called Semi-Augustinians, because they were much closer to the theology of Augustine. They rejected his idea of predestination, however, on the ground that it contradicted Scripture and was a new doctrine.

They said, with Augustine, that humans are naturally sinful or depraved; they are born as sinners. Contrary to Augustine, they held that God's grace is general or universal. God does not predestine certain individuals to be saved or lost, but He offers His grace to every human being. Everyone can potentially be saved.

They accepted scriptural statements about God's predestined plan of salvation but said individual predestination is based on divine foreknowledge. That is, God elects those who are saved, but He does so based on His knowledge of their response. He extends His grace to all humanity; some accept it, while others reject it. God's foreordained plan of salvation is for those who respond in faith. In this way, the Semi-Pelagians simultaneously affirmed the sinfulness of humanity, the necessity of the grace of God, and human responsibility and freedom to accept or reject God's grace.

The Semi-Pelagians taught that a person cannot overcome sin by his own will. He must have God to free him.

But the sinner can desire deliverance, and he can believe God. He can ask God to free him. Even though his will is restricted by sin, it is not totally bound. He can desire to do good, he can desire God's grace, and he can exercise faith so that God will move in his life.

In essence, God comes to assist the weak human will. When a person approaches God in faith, God will help him. In a sense, the Semi-Pelagians described divine grace as cooperating with the human will. Saving grace does not precede the human will, however. Whereas Pelagius said salvation is completely a human choice and Augustine said it is completely a divine choice, the Semi-Pelagians took an intermediate view: humans decide but God's grace enables. People make the choice to be saved, and God gives them the power to implement that choice.

If this is so, who initiates the salvation process? Does God take the first step or does man? The Semi-Pelagians said it could happen either way. Sometimes God draws a person and that person responds, allowing God's grace to work in him. On the other hand, someone can of his own accord seek good and call upon God, in which case God will respond.

The Semi-Pelagians thus rejected Augustine's position that grace always precedes salvation. Augustine said that God must give grace before a person will even begin to seek Him. The Semi-Pelagians objected that God sometimes responds to the initial decision of a person, that sometimes a person begins seeking God of his own accord.

From the Augustinian perspective, the Semi-Pelagians compromised the doctrine of grace alone by arguing that the human will can cooperate with God's grace or even

precede God's grace. Some Semi-Pelagians emphasized the power of the human will to such an extent that they sounded almost like Pelagius himself.

Synod of Orange, A.D. 529

The views of the Semi-Pelagians were particularly strong in Gaul (France), and there the controversy was resolved, at least for a time. A synod was convened at Orange in 529 for this purpose. It was not an ecumenical council, for the problem primarily affected the Western church, and there were no representatives from the East.

First, the synod firmly rejected Pelagianism. It held that all humans are born as sinners.

Second, the synod rejected Semi-Pelagianism on the ground that God's grace always precedes and initiates salvation. No one ever begins the process on his own; whenever someone seeks salvation, it is because God has already been working in his life. God always takes the first step. His grace extends to everyone, and it is His grace that actually motivates people to respond. The first impulse of desire for God is actually a result of God's grace.

Third, the synod rejected double predestination, particularly the idea that God predestines certain people to damnation. Such a notion it held to be contrary to God's goodness. He does not foreordain evil, and He does not wish for anyone to be lost.

The synod did not make a specific statment regarding the predestination of the saved, but it distinguished foreknowledge from predestination. God knows all things in advance, but His foreknowledge is not causative. He foreordains only what is good.

A person who is regenerated can fall from the grace of salvation. In such a case, his failure is due, not to God's choice, but to his own perverted will. When a person perseveres to the end, God deserves all the credit for his salvation. It is God's grace alone that has sustained him, not his abilities. If a person is saved, it is because of the grace of God, but if a person is lost, it is because of his own will.

On the other hand, if a person has begun to follow God, he can persevere to the end if he will continue to live by faith. There is no need to worry whether he is one of the elect; he can have assurance of salvation by following the teaching of the church. Saving grace begins at water baptism, and a baptized person can have confidence in his ultimate salvation if he will continue in the faith.

Grace is universal; God desires the salvation of everyone. He extends his grace to all, but not all accept that grace. If a person is saved, he is saved by the grace of God based on the merits of Jesus Christ and not his own.

The Synod of Orange thus affirmed Augustine's doctrine of salvation by grace alone, particularly the prevenient grace of God. In essence, it endorsed a moderate form of Augustinianism.

The popes of the time supported the decision of the synod, which became the position of the Roman Catholic Church. In the Middle Ages, however, Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian ideas enjoyed a resurgence. In practice such views seem to have more influence upon the average adherent even today, for Catholicism relies heavily upon meritorious human works. In this regard, it does not follow Augustine's emphasis on salvation by grace alone, but it does follow his definition of justification as a lifelong process of becoming righteous.

As already noted, most of the early Protestants, such as the Lutherans, Reformed, and Presbyterians, went further than the Synod of Orange, completely accepting Augustine's view of predestination and its logical corollary, double predestination. For those Protestants who do not accept this doctrine of predestination, such as the Methodists, the Synod of Orange expresses their basic views with one important exception: they typically consider water baptism to be merely symbolic instead of the essential first application of saving grace.

The decision of the Synod of Orange agrees with Scripture in important ways. The Bible clearly refutes the Pelagian idea that man can save himself by his own goodness, that he can live a sinless life in his own power. (See Romans 3:9-10, 23.) It also stands against the Semi-Pelagian idea that man can initiate the salvation process or assist God in his own redemption. (See Romans 3:11-12.) As we have seen, Scripture does not teach unconditional election, but salvation by grace through faith. God's grace always initiates salvation, and His grace appears to everyone to lead them to salvation. (See John 6:44; Romans 1:20; 2:4; Titus 2:11.) At water baptism God's grace is applied for the remission of sins; however, water baptism does not stand alone. For it to be valid, personal faith and repentance must accompany it, and Christian initiation is not complete without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12-17; 10:44-48.)

In summary, the Synod of Orange said that man is a sinner, salvation is by grace, God initiates salvation, man exercises his will to accept salvation, and saving grace begins with water baptism. In theological terms, the synod affirmed human depravity and salvation by grace

alone but rejected the concepts of irresistible grace and double predestination. Somewhat paradoxically and ambiguously, however, it avoided making a decision on unconditional election.

Grace and Faith

Let us summarize the doctrine of salvation in ancient church history by comparing it to the teaching of Scripture. The Bible teaches that we receive salvation by grace through faith and not by human works (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are "justified [counted as righteous] freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and we are "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:24, 28).

Writers in the Post-Apostolic Age acknowledged that salvation was by grace through faith in Christ. Imprecise and erroneous language arose, however, particularly in the pseudonymous and anonymous writings, which indicated that Christians could earn forgiveness for sins through good works. In discussing sins committed after baptism, Hermas (early second century) and Tertullian (early third century) described acts of repentance as necessary to earn a second chance from God.

Confession of sins from a repentant heart is indeed necessary to receive God's forgiveness (Psalm 51:17; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9). Repentance is the work of God in a willing human heart. It is the condition of heart necessary to be saved, but in no sense does it earn or merit God's favor. Nevertheless, the notion of working oneself back into God's favor grew stronger, until it dominated the soteriology of the Middle Ages.

In the East, the Greek theologians emphasized human

free will, at the same time acknowledging human sinfulness and the necessity of God's grace. They understood human sinfulness as a corruption of nature and weakening of the will, but not as actual guilt due to Adam's sin. They spoke of God and man cooperating in salvation, with man being able to initiate the process. Thus the Greek church did not fully accept the views of the Synod of Orange but remained Semi-Pelagian in outlook.

The Protestant Reformation forced the Eastern church to address some of these issues more fully. In the seventeenth century it acknowledged the Augustinian doctrine that each person is guilty of Adam's sin and that baptism removes this guilt, but it continued to reject predestination.

Western theologians placed greater emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity, embracing Augustine's doctrine of original sin, including guilt for Adam's sin. For a time, the Western church affirmed the solution of the Synod of Orange: God's grace is necessary for salvation, and God must initiate the process. As chapter 12 discusses, however, the emphasis on the sacraments as necessary means of grace, including penance after baptism, undercut salvation by grace alone.

Consequently, during the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church essentially adopted Semi-Pelagianism. Today the soteriology of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy is quite similar. It took the Protestant Reformation to bring about a fresh look at the doctrines of grace and faith.

The New Birth

The New Testament teaches that the full conversion experience, or the new birth, consists of repentance,

water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial sign of tongues. (See Acts 2:1-4, 23; 10:44-48; 19:1-6.) This experience is the application of saving grace and the expression of saving faith.

In the Post-Apostolic Age and even into the Age of the Greek Apologists and the Old Catholic Age, we find ample evidence for continued emphasis and experience of these three elements. During the Old Catholic Age, we see significant changes, however, and during the Ecumenical Age the essence of each of these elements was almost completely lost. As chapter 12 discusses, the three elements collapsed into water baptism alone, which in turn was distorted into a near-magical rite.

Repentance. The early Christians placed strong emphasis on repentance, and this doctrine played a key role in early controversies over the doctrine and structure of the church as discussed in chapter 11. Even in the Old Catholic Age, there was a general consensus that personal faith and repentance were essential to a genuine conversion. In the Ecumenical Catholic Age, however, many factors combined to undermine this doctrine: the end of persecution, the official promotion of Christianity, the merger of church and state, the mass "conversion" of pagans, and the practice of infant baptism.

Water Baptism. Throughout the Old Catholic Age and the Ecumenical Catholic Age, water baptism was viewed as efficacious in remitting sins and essential to salvation. With the acceptance of infant baptism, however, it was divorced from personal faith and repentance. Moreover, with the development of the doctrine of the trinity as discussed in chapter 8, the formula changed from the name of Jesus Christ to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We have already examined evidence for the original Jesus Name formula from the Post-Apostolic Age to the Old Catholic Age. In the mid third century Stephen, bishop of Rome, approved of baptism in Jesus' name, even if performed by schismatics, and an anonymous opponent of Cyprian strongly endorsed the practice.

Various anonymous and pseudonymous books from the second and third centuries also refer to Jesus Name baptism, including the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the *Acts of Peter and Paul*, the *Recognitions of Clement*, and the *Gospel of Philip*. These writings are not always reliable doctrinally, but they preserve evidence of typical baptismal practices.[1] Such writings had a greater chance of surviving censorship by later trinitarians than did the writings of prominent advocates of Jesus Name baptism.

In the fourth century, the formula had changed, but Ambrose still held Jesus Name baptism acceptable.[2] By the end of the fourth century, however, those who continued to baptize in Jesus' name were, for the most part, outside the institutional church. The Council of Constantinople in 381 condemned Sabellian baptism, which it described as prevalent in Galatia. The Justinian Code of 529 condemned both antitrinitarianism and rebaptism. The Council of Constantinople in 553 again condemned Sabellian baptism. Other condemnations of Sabellian baptism or baptism under a single name also appear during the fifth and sixth centuries.[3] These recurring condemnations indicate that some people continued to insist upon the Jesus Name formula.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit. As the evidence from Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen shows, people were receiving the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues at the

beginning of the Old Catholic Age. In the third century, Sabellius, Asterius Urbanus, and Novatian also described the supernatural gifts of utterance as normal and expected.[4] Novatian said of the Holy Spirit:

> This is He who places prophets in the church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives power and healings, does wonderful works, offers discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of *charismata*; and thus makes the Lord's church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed.[5]

Even in the fourth century, tongues, interpretation of tongues, and other supernatural gifts were in evidence. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, described tongues and interpretation of tongues as "agents of ministry" ordained of God.[6] Ambrose, bishop of Milan, taught that all the gifts of I Corinthians 12 were part of the normal Christian experience.[7]

During the Ecumenical Catholic Age, as the emphasis on repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus faded, so did the experience of the Holy Spirit. Since the New Testament clearly teaches the essentiality of receiving the Spirit, however, people tried to assure themselves of salvation by claiming that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes automatically at the laying on of hands. Eventually this moment was identified with the act of water baptism, which was accompanied by the laying on of hands.

By late fourth and early fifth centuries, people in the

institutional church no longer expected to receive the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Book of Acts, although they knew that this experience had formerly occurred. John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, commented on I Corinthians 12:

> This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. . . . Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spoke with tongues. . . . They at once on their baptism received the Spirit. . . . [They] began to speak, one in the tongue of the Persians, another in that of the Romans, another in that of the Indians, or in some other language. And this disclosed to outsiders that it was the Spirit in the speaker.[8]

He referred to tongues not mentioned in biblical accounts, showing that he was aware of subsequent experiences.

Augustine, Ambrose's disciple, gave similar testimony. He maintained that the church in his day no longer expected to speak in tongues when receiving the Holy Spirit but admitted that formerly they did:

> For the Holy Spirit is not only given by the laying on of hands amid the testimony of temporal sensible miracles, as He was given in former days. . . . For who expects in these days that those on whom hands are laid that they may receive the Holy Spirit should forthwith begin to speak with tongues?[9]

In short, in the second, third, and early fourth centuries, many people were born of water and the Spirit just as in the Book of Acts. By the end of the fourth century and beginning of the fifth, however, the institutional church had largely lost not only the biblical doctrine of God but also the biblical doctrine and experience of the new birth. From then through the Middle Ages, we have to look primarily outside the structure of the institutional church to find people who proclaimed and received the full apostolic message.*

*For a list of people in church history who baptized in the name of Jesus, see Appendix D. For a list of those who received the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues, see Appendix E.

11
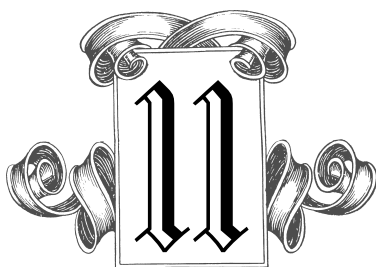
The Doctrine and Structure of the Church

Closely connected to the doctrine of salvation is ecclesiology, the doctrine concerning the church. To examine the development of this doctrine we must also study the development of the organizational structure of the church.

Worship Services

In New Testament times, Christians typically met in homes to worship. (See Acts 2:46; 5:42; 11:12; 12:12; 20:20.) When possible, they met in places specially prepared for worship. In times of persecution, particularly in Rome, they occasionally met in underground cemeteries (catacombs). We find the first evidence of specially constructed public church buildings around 230, but these were all destroyed in later persecutions. When

Constantine embraced Christianity, he began a program of constructing church buildings at state expense.

From the beginning, Christians met on the first day of the week. (See John 20:1, 19, 26; Acts 2:1; 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2.) In his *Epistle to the Magnesians*, Ignatius noted that Christians met to worship on the day of Christ's resurrection, "the Lord's day." (See Revelation 1:10.) He explained that this was not an observance of the Sabbath but a new covenant celebration of the Resurrection. The *Didache* similarly mentioned worship on the Lord's day. The *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas* and Justin also named Sunday as the day Christians met to worship.

Since Sunday was a regular work day in the pagan Roman Empire, they generally met early in the morning, in the evening, or both. As part of his support of Christianity, Emperor Constantine made Sunday a legal holiday so that Christians could worship on their special day without hindrance.

In his *First Apology*, Justin listed the following elements of a typical worship service: reading of Scripture, preaching or teaching, prayer (group and representative), offering, and the Eucharist (for baptized believers only). Bible reading was important, for in the days of handwritten manuscripts, Bibles were rare and costly, and most people did not own a personal copy. At first, worship was simple and spontaneous, but over the centuries elaborate rituals and liturgies (prescribed forms) arose, particularly as the move of the Spirit diminished.

Church Government

The New Testament speaks of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). It

uses three terms interchangeably: bishop (overseer), pastor (shepherd), and elder (presbyter). (See Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7; I Peter 5:1-4.) The elders or bishops were ministers who had leadership roles in the local church, particularly in preaching and teaching (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-2, 5; 5:17; II Timothy 4:2-5; Titus 1:7-9). A bishop was a local pastor; the use of this term to denote a hierarchical official who has authority over pastors was a later development.

Another local church office was that of deacon (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13). The deacons did not necessarily have a position of ruling, teaching, or preaching, but they assisted the pastors in the business of the church. The seven men chosen in Act 6 were probably prototypes for the office of deacon mentioned in I Timothy.

The Epistles speak of the elders or bishops of a city, using the plural. Apparently there was a group of elders for each church, not just one. We must remember, however, that while the Epistles speak of one church in a city (I Corinthians 1:2), the early Christians had no church buildings and the believers in a city could not all gather in one location for worship. For example, when Paul wrote to the church in Rome, the believers apparently met in at least five different homes (Romans 16:5, 10-11, 14-15). Probably the leaders of the various house groups were the elders of the church. They did not work in isolation but collectively.

The situation was similar to metropolitan areas today in which a group of pastors of local churches work in harmony and coordinate their efforts. Since the church in a city often had hundreds or even thousands of believers,

we can also compare it to large churches today that have a number of ministers on staff.

While there were several elders for each city, it is logical to assume that, for effective organization and action, one acted as the senior leader or presiding elder—what we might call the senior pastor or the sectional presbyter. We find evidence of such an arrangement in the New Testament. In Revelation 1:20, the Lord gave John a vision of seven stars who were "angels" of seven churches in Asia Minor, and in Revelation 2-3, He addressed a letter of commendation, rebuke, or instruction to the "angel" of each church. The Greek word for angel simply means "messenger." Since there was no need for celestial spirit beings to receive such letters, in this context it seem clear that the "angel" of each local church was the human spokesman for God, or in other words, the senior pastor.

Originally, each congregation handled its own affairs, but the churches worked together closely to promote doctrinal purity, fellowship, and evangelistic efforts. Thus Acts and the Epistles reveal that there was a significant degree of organization among the churches, and they all looked to the apostles and elders for spiritual leadership.

The apostles and elders exercised this authority by meeting together, making decisions, and sending representatives to investigate matters, communicate instructions, and receive offerings. (See Acts 8:14; 11:2-4, 22; 15:1-31; II Corinthians 8:16-24.) They developed means of approving, ordaining, and recommending pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, as well as withdrawing approval. (See Acts 13:2-3; I Corinthians 16:10-11; Colossians 4:10; I Timothy 1:20; 3:1-7; 4:14; II Timothy 2:17-18; III John 9-12.)

Originally, the leadership was invested in the apostles in Jerusalem. Peter, James, and John apparently had the highest positions of authority, as "pillars" of the church (Galatians 2:9). It appears that James was the senior pastor in Jerusalem and chairman of the council of apostles and elders that met there. Perhaps we could consider him to be general overseer or superintendent of the church. (See Acts 15:13-29; 21:18; Galatians 2:12.)

As the church grew, various individuals served as overseers of churches, regions, or areas of ministry. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, while Peter was the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:7-8). Under Paul's direction, Titus was the overseer of the island of Crete (Titus 1:5).

The church expanded from the most ancient centers of evangelism throughout outlying regions. For example, Paul resided in Ephesus for two years, during which he not only established the church there but also evangelized the entire province of Asia (Acts 19:9-10, 26). Metropolitan churches planted numerous other churches in surrounding towns and villages. As the number of churches multiplied, the pastors of newer and smaller churches looked for leadership to the pastors of mother churches—the oldest churches or the churches in the most powerful cities.

In the second century, the *Didache* described apostles, prophets, teachers, bishops, and deacons as existing in its day, with the first two traveling among the churches. The pattern of the Post-Apostolic Age was to have one bishop (presiding elder) for each city, considering all believers in the city to be part of one church. Ignatius described one bishop in charge of each church and elders and deacons who assisted him.

The New Testament teaches submission to spiritual leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17), and Ignatius placed great emphasis on submission to the bishop, elders, and deacons. He taught that believers should be subject to the bishop as to Christ, that people who break away from their bishop are in error, and that no one should celebrate the Eucharist or perform baptisms without the presence or approval of the bishop.

Scholars sometimes describe the church government of Ignatius as the monarchial episcopate, meaning that one bishop (pastor) governs each local church. This arrangement was not universal, although we have noted evidence for it in the New Testament. By the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian, it was the uniform practice.

At the time of Ignatius, there was no formal hierarchy beyond the local church, and the local church government was essentially congregational. Nevertheless, the post-apostolic writings show that the churches sought to maintain unity of doctrine and action. They recognized and submitted to the spiritual leaders among them, particularly the bishops of leading churches. Ignatius was the first to speak of the church as "catholic," or universal.

According to Clement of Rome, the *Didache*, and Cyprian, initially the people of a congregation elected both bishops and deacons. Later, fellow bishops began to play a decisive role in the selection of a new bishop. When the state and church merged under Constantine, the state (emperor or other officials) appointed or ratified bishops. After the Western Roman Empire fell, the pope began to step into the power vacuum. Kings and popes contested the issue for centuries, but ultimately the pope won the right to appoint all bishops.

Gradually, there developed a hierarchy beyond the local church or individual city. The churches in the towns and villages surrounding a city began to submit to the pastor or bishop of that city. At first this deference was voluntary and the leading bishop exercised moral authority only, but eventually power was consolidated and the authority became ecclesiastical. The title of bishop came to mean the leader not just of one church or one city, but of a whole region.

The clergy became sharply distinguished from the laity, and three orders of clergy emerged: bishop (hierarchical ruler over pastors), presbyter (local pastor or priest), and deacon (local church official). Presbyters assisted the bishop and served as pastors in towns and villages. Deacons were subordinate to presbyters but could preach and baptize. Ultimately the bishops of major cities became known as metropolitans or archbishops—leaders of the other bishops.

In the fourth century, five churches were recognized as great mother churches: Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople. Jerusalem was the mother of all churches, Antioch had been the first center of missionary activity to the Gentile world, and Rome was the seat of the empire. Alexandria and Constantinople were great political, cultural, and economic centers. Alexandria was a focal point of Hellenistic (Greek-based) scholarship, for Jews and then for Christians. Constantinople was Constantine's new capital, and after the fall of Rome, the remaining seat of imperial power.

The bishops of these five cities became the recognized church leaders. In the Eastern church they became known as patriarchs, from words meaning "father" and

"ruler." There was only one such bishop in the West—at Rome—and he became known as the pope, meaning "father."

This developing hierarchy paralleled the Roman government. The bishops were like prefects, the archbishops like provincial governors, the synod of bishops like the provincial assembly, and eventually the pope ruled like the emperor. As the Roman Empire collapsed, the Roman Catholic Church began to take its place.

Novatian versus Callistus

One important development was the bishop of Rome gaining preeminence. In the third century, many already regarded Rome as the leading mother church. In addition to its being the imperial capital, tradition held that Peter and Paul taught in Rome and were martyred there. Moreover, the Roman church was known for zealously resisting heretics and guarding doctrinal purity.

In the early third century, Bishop Callistus of Rome proclaimed himself to be the "bishop of bishops" and "supreme pontiff" (*pontifex maximus*), a title given to the emperor as ceremonial head of Roman paganism. By contrast, Tertullian and others asserted the equality of various mother churches. In fact, Tertullian and Hippolytus opposed several Roman bishops of this time, including Callistus, for promoting or sympathizing with modalism. The Novatian controversy, however, gave Callistus an opportunity to advance his authority.

The controversy arose in the third century over the possibility of repentance after baptism. The church taught that converts were to repent before water baptism, at which time all their sins were washed away. After bap-

tism, they were supposed to live a holy life. The question soon arose, What if a person returns to a life of sin after water baptism? Can he be forgiven again and restored to the church? The question was raised particularly in reference to major, public sins such as apostasy, adultery, and fornication.

This question assumed considerable urgency as a result of the severe persecutions of the third century. When a wave of persecution came, some believers stood firm, maintained their faith, and were imprisoned or martyred. The church honored the memory of its martyrs. It also honored those who survived torture and imprisonment without denying the faith and gave them the title of confessor.

Other people were not so strong, however. When threats and persecution came they recanted the faith. Under duress, they apostasized, publicly renouncing Christianity and offering pagan sacrifices. When the current wave of persecution subsided, many of these people felt remorse, came back to the church, and sought repentance. They acknowledged their failure in a moment of weakness but professed their sincerity and their desire to be a Christian and be saved.

What was the church to do with these people? Naturally, those who had faithfully endured persecution tended to doubt the sincerity of the backsliders. They were prone to reject them, saying they could not be forgiven. There were also practical considerations: Would accepting these backsliders undermine the church's witness and its ability to withstand future persecutions?

Novatian, an early champion of trinitarianism, took the strict view that a person cannot repent of or be

forgiven for certain major sins after baptism. The sin of apostasy is a prime example. When the institutional church began to accept lapsed believers back into fellowship, Novatian broke from the main body and formed a schismatic church in Rome. He rebaptized those who joined him and appointed opposition bishops in various places.

Most bishops and churches believed that the Bible offers a more compassionate response of forgiveness and reconciliation. (See James 5:19-20; I John 1:9.) They concluded that, even though these lapsed people were weak, they should be allowed to repent and should be accepted back into the church.

Callistus opposed Novatian, invoking his authority as the Roman bishop. He claimed that the council of bishops had authority over the granting of repentance, citing the keys that the Lord gave to Peter (Matthew 16:19). He pronounced that these people could be forgiven and accepted back in the church.

At this time Callistus had no recognized authority beyond his own area, but for several reasons people throughout the church began citing his decision as authoritative: his conclusion was sound, it expressed majority opinion, he was the bishop in the imperial capital, and he was the bishop who had jurisdiction over the foremost dissident. The actions of Callistus in the Novatian controversy therefore enhanced the authority of the Roman bishop and established a precedent for future doctrinal disputes.

The Teaching of Cyprian

The North African bishop Cyprian greatly influenced

the development of hierchical ecclesiology. He contested the views of Stephen, bishop of Rome, on the baptism of heretics, so he did not consider the bishop of Rome to be the supreme doctrinal authority, but his teaching was conducive to the establishment of centralized authority.

Cyprian became involved in the controversy over repentance after baptism. Teaching that repentance should be allowed for major sins upon repentance and public confession, he lent his support to the bishops of Rome in his day, who were strong advocates of that position.

He buttressed his position by the following argument: The church alone is the guarantor of salvation. No one can be saved outside the church. Even if a person has orthodox belief, if he is not in fellowship with a true church he cannot be saved. People such as Novatian and other schismatics cannot be saved. Even though they may have separated from the church out of lofty motives, such as a sincere desire to defend holiness, and even though their belief may be orthodox in every way, if they break away from the true church, they cannot be saved. Salvation is available only in the visible, recognized, organized church.

Under this doctrine, it becomes essential to know what is the true church. How can someone know whether a local church is part of the true church or an unsanctioned schism? Cyprian answered that the legitimacy of a local congregation is determined by the bishops. If the bishops of the universal church endorse a local body, then it is a legitimate church.

As a bishop himself, Cyprian had a personal interest in this arrangement. In essence, he taught that the college

of bishops controls the church. The authority of the church resides in the collective body of bishops.

While Cyprian did not concede supreme authority to any one bishop, not even the bishop of Rome, he did acknowledge that someone needs to preside over the bishops and preserve the unity of the church. He identified the bishop of Rome as the appropriate leader. He did not teach that the bishop of Rome has sole authority or is infallible, but he described him as preeminent, the first among equals. Thus Cyprian took a major step in establishing the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Donatus versus Augustine

The next step in the development of Roman Catholic ecclesiology was the Donatist controversy, which was similar to the earlier Novatian controversy. It arose in North Africa in 312 over the restoration of believers who had recanted during the last great persecution, under Emperor Diocletian. The Donatists particularly opposed allowing a lapsed believer to become a bishop.

Donatus, bishop of Carthage in the fourth century, had a zeal for holiness. The Donatists were quite concerned because it appeared that many bishops were living lax or immoral lives. Some bishops had recanted in times of persecution, later repented, and then were reinstated to their positions.

The Donatists were appalled at this lack of discipline in the church. They emphasized that every believer must live a holy life and especially that the bishops must live a holy life. They contended that if a bishop was living an immoral life, the sacraments he performed could not be valid.

This stance created a powerful incentive to discipline immoral bishops, for it tied the salvation of the people to the morality of their bishop. If the bishop was living an immoral life, then he was not qualified to be a bishop, and all the sacraments he performed, including water baptism, were not valid. Since water baptism was regarded as essential to salvation, this would mean that the people baptized by such a bishop were not saved.

The views of Donatus understandably stirred up quite a controversy. Donatus started rival churches and ordained bishops whom he considered to be truly holy.

Augustine rose to the challenge of Donatism. Building upon the earlier views of Cyprian, he taught that the validity of the sacraments does not depend upon the bishop's life; it depends upon whether he is part of the catholic (universal) church. If a sacrament is performed within the recognized church, it is valid, regardless of the life of the bishop. Augustine's followers further maintained that a sacrament performed outside the church by a schismatic is not valid. Thus both sides of the Donatist controversy denied salvation to the other.

Like Cyprian, Augustine emphasized that salvation must come through the hierarchy and the visible structure of the one catholic church. Augustine was partly right in recognizing that a person's salvation does not depend on the secret life of the administrator of baptism but on the baptized person's faith in God and obedience to the gospel. (See Acts 2:38-39; 5:32; 16:31; Romans 10:8-11.) If the person being baptized truly repents and has faith in Jesus Christ, then God will remit his sins regardless of the condition of the preacher.

Instead of relying upon the doctrine of salvation by

grace through faith to assure the baptized convert of salvation, however, Augustine relied on the authority of the church. Church authority became more important than personal faith. Separation from the catholic church was sinful, regardless of the spiritual condition or doctrinal position of the local church, pastor, or bishop. Thus all sacraments performed outside the institutional church were invalid.

Augustine also taught that there are two cities, or structures of authority, in life: the city of God, which is the church; and the city of the world, which is the state. Each city has authority in its own sphere. The church has supreme authority in religious matters, while the state has supreme authority in secular matters. The state should support the church in its efforts to establish God's kingdom on earth. The Millennium of Revelation 20 is the victorious church on earth in this age (the doctrine of amillennialism).

This teaching helped consolidate the hierarchical structure of the church. It also helped consolidate the power of the state, and it provided a theological justification for the intermarriage of state and church that had begun with Emperor Constantine.

Pope Leo I

The next step in the development of the hierarchy came with Leo I (the Great), bishop of Rome from 440 to 461. Leo was the first bishop of Rome to be an important theologian. His views were decisive in shaping the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon. Historically, he is often considered the first pope because he was the first Roman bishop to claim to be the primate of all the bish-

ops and receive significant acceptance of that claim.

Before this time, the bishop of Rome was highly respected and had been influential in deciding certain controversies. In Cyprian's view, the bishop of Rome was the presiding bishop, but the real authority of the church rested with all the bishops. Leo asserted supreme authority, however, on the ground that Peter and Paul founded the church of Rome and the bishop of Rome was their direct successor.

Significantly, Leo obtained imperial recognition of this claim from Valentinian III. Beginning with Constantine, the Roman emperor had actually controlled the church in many ways. The convening of councils and the appointment of bishops were under his control. The emperor's endorsement thus carried great weight.

At this time, however, the Roman Empire was disintegrating, particularly in the West. Rome had already been sacked by the Visigoths in 410. Leo turned Attila the Hun away from Rome in 451, but during Leo's tenure it was sacked by the Vandals in 455. Rome and all Italy came under barbarian rule in 476, not long after Leo's death. As a practical matter, then, the emperor no longer exercised absolute power during this time. Many churches successfully ignored the imperial proclamation and refused to submit to Leo. While most Western bishops gave general assent to Leo's claim, the Eastern bishops did not.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church adopted the position of Leo. Therefore it holds today that Jesus made Peter His vicar (deputy) on earth and the prince of the universal church, basing this teaching on Jesus' words in Matthew 16:18-19: "Thou art Peter, and

upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Contrary to the Roman Church's interpretation of this passage, Jesus did not promise to build His church upon Peter but upon the revelation and confession of His true identity (Matthew 16:15-18). The keys He gave Peter represented the power to open the kingdom of God to people through the preaching of the gospel. Indeed, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter was the first to preach the gospel of the New Testament to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Acts 2; 10). Moreover, Jesus gave all His disciples power to bind and loose (Matthew 18:18), granting them authority to proclaim the Word and will of God and assuring them of divine backing when they did so.

The Roman Catholic Church maintains, on the basis on tradition, that Peter founded the church in Rome. It further maintains that he passed his authority to all subsequent bishops of Rome. Thus, in their view, Peter and all Roman bishops are popes—absolute rulers of the universal church—and their official pronouncements upon faith and morals are infallible (without error).

Leo's attempt to establish the papacy won a measure of acceptance in his day, and it ultimately prevailed in subsequent centuries. The first Roman bishop who successfully exercised full papal powers in the West, however, was Gregory I in 590.
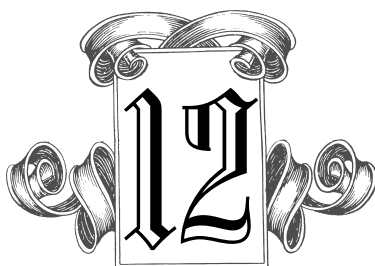
The Early Sacraments

Our discussion of the doctrines of salvation and the church in chapters 10-11 would be incomplete without an analysis of the sacraments. The sacraments portray the message of salvation, and they are administered by the church.

To investigate the meaning of the sacraments in the Ecumenical Catholic Age, we will use a nontechnical, functional definition of a sacrament as a sacred ceremony or rite of the church. Some people view the sacraments as symbols of God's grace, while others view them as means of grace. Augustine defined them as visible signs of invisible grace. At a minimum, we can say that the sacraments represent a spiritual work or the grace of God at work.

The medieval church identified seven sacraments, but

this number was not definitely established in earlier times. Let us examine how the early sacraments and the interpretations of them came into being.

Baptism

All major branches of Christendom recognize water baptism as a sacrament even though there are differing views about its significance. As we have already seen, in the first five centuries after the New Testament there was a general consensus that baptism is part of salvation, part of the new birth, and the means for receiving the forgiveness, remission, or washing away of sins. The medieval church and the earliest Protestants, including Martin Luther, affirmed this view, as does the Roman Catholic Church today. Most Protestants today, however, see baptism as symbolic only.

In early post-apostolic times, Christians did not view baptism as a magical ceremony that automatically brought forgiveness of sins, but they believed its efficacy depended upon faith and repentance. The early post-apostolic writings instruct people to repent of their sins and confess faith in Jesus Christ before they are baptized. If they will do so, then God will wash away their sins at baptism. Baptism is not merely a ceremony or a symbol, but God actually performs a spiritual work when someone is baptized. This view accords with the teaching of the New Testament itself. (See Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11-12; I Peter 3:21.)

As time went on, various other views became associated with water baptism. For some, water baptism was the means of receiving the Holy Spirit as well as remission of sins. As long as people continued to receive the

Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues, it was not difficult to distinguish water baptism from Spirit baptism. As the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit began to fade from the professing church, however, and as many people joined the church without seemingly any real experience with God, it became easy to say that they automatically received the Holy Spirit when they were baptized.

This idea clearly contradicts Scripture. In Acts 8, the Samaritans believed and were baptized, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until later. In Acts 10, Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water. Nevertheless, as people in the institutional church no longer received a definite experience of the Holy Spirit, theologians began to conclude that when the bishop laid hands on them at water baptism they received the Spirit without any miraculous sign. According to Roman Catholic theology today, when people are baptized, including infants, they are born again and filled with the Spirit.

Some theologians began to make a distinction between inner and outer baptism. The inward work is the washing away of sins, while the outward work is the ceremony itself. The standard view was that the two works occur simultaneously, but some theologians held that they could be separated, at least in theory. Many Protestants today have extended this reasoning, concluding that the outward ceremony is simply a symbol of an inward work that has already taken place.

The Bible reveals no such separation, however. Of course, it is the blood of Jesus that washes away sin, not physical water. Nevertheless, God has chosen the moment of water baptism as a necessary expression of obedient

faith and as the occasion when He responds to that obedient faith by washing away sins.

Another interesting doctrine regarding baptism is the "baptism of blood," which arose out of the severe persecutions of the early centuries. In some cases, the Roman authorities would arrest people who were in the process of becoming Christians or who were sympathetic to Christianity. They had to make a swift decision to identify with Christ and be executed or to reject Christ and offer pagan sacrifices. In addition, it was reported that at some public executions bystanders were so moved by the faith and joy of Christian martyrs that they immediately confessed Christ and were in turn arrested and executed.

Were such people saved or lost? Theologians wanted to affirm their salvation yet did not wish to compromise the necessity of baptism. The solution, which became part of Roman Catholic theology, was to teach the baptism of blood, as follows: A person must be baptized to be saved, and under normal circumstances the baptism must be in water. If a person is martyred for his faith in Christ before he can be baptized in water, however, then his martyrdom serves as a baptism in blood.

Closely related to this doctrine is the "baptism of desire," a later development. If a person sincerely desires to be baptized but is physically prevented from doing so before his death, then God counts his desire as if it were actually fulfilled.

The baptism of blood and the baptism of desire sound plausible to the human mind, but the Bible does not explicitly teach them. Rather than undermining the authority of Scripture by creating nonbiblical doctrines for exceptional circumstances, it is preferable to leave unusu-

al situations in the hands of the merciful God. While we may have personal speculations, hopes, and opinions, we can only affirm as doctrine what the Bible plainly states.

Another development was infant baptism. Scripturally, the prerequisites for water baptism are personal repentance and faith (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 18:8). Consequently, baptism is not suitable for infants, and there is no record of the apostolic or early post-apostolic church baptizing infants.

In the early third century Tertullian recommended delaying the baptism of small children until they could truly repent. Shortly afterward Origen and Cyprian advocated infant baptism, the first known writers to do so. Origen appealed to tradition, however, and some scholars believe Irenaeus alluded to the practice earlier.[1] As the concept of original sin received general acceptance, particularly Augustine's idea that infants are guilty of the sin of Adam, infant baptism became the norm.

Infant baptism helped popularize another innovation: sprinkling (aspersion) or pouring (effusion) instead of full immersion. In the New Testament water baptism was by immersion (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39). Indeed, only immersion preserves the signficance of baptism as a burial with Jesus Christ (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). The very word *baptize* is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*, which means to dip, plunge, or immerse. In early post-apostolic times, baptism was by immersion, and to this day the Eastern Orthodox Church practices baptism by immersion, even for infants.

In the West, however, sprinkling was gradually allowed for exceptional circumstances, and eventually it became the norm. In the second century, the *Didache* described immersion as standard but also

allowed pouring if sufficient water was not available to immerse. In the early third century Tertullian insisted on immersion, but by the middle of the century Cyprian allowed sprinkling for the sick. In the early Middle Ages immersion was still common, and it is still acceptable in the Roman Catholic Church, but today Roman Catholics are typically sprinkled.

Many Protestant churches that emerged from Catholicism continue the practice of sprinkling. The Lutherans, Reformed, and Methodists do, even though their founders—Luther, Calvin, and Wesley—acknowledged that the original method was immersion and expressed a preference for it. In most cases, tradition has prevailed over biblical precedent.

As the *Didache* and Cyprian indicated, it appears that the alternative of pouring or sprinkling arose out of convenience. Three practices that helped make sprinkling the first choice were deathbed baptism, infant baptism, and triple baptism.

First, as in the case of Constantine, many people deferred baptism until shortly before death so that they could live a worldly life but have assurance of forgiveness in the end. The debates over whether Christians could be forgiven for certain sins committed after baptism contributed to this delaying tactic. It was difficult to immerse people who were dying, so sprinkling became common in those cases.

Second, as infant baptism replaced believers baptism and the whole society became Christian in name, almost everyone who was baptized was an infant. Again, since it was awkward to baptize infants by full immersion, sprinkling became common.

Finally, the formula for baptism gradually shifted from the name of Jesus to the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As chapter 4 discusses, the first documented compromise came with Justin in the mid second century, when he taught baptism in the name of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Apparently he modified the baptismal formula to reflect his view that Jesus is not the supreme God but a second person subordinate to the Father. Later Irenaeus echoed the same formula.

In the third century, early trinitarians such as Tertullian and Origen baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They used the baptismal formula to promote their doctrine of the trinity, and to drive the point home they typically immersed the candidate three times, once for each member of the trinity. Triple immersion was somewhat cumbersome and inconvenient, providing yet another incentive to switch to sprinkling. Triple sprinkling into the trinity became standard procedure in the West.

Confirmation

A second sacrament developed out of baptism, called confirmation. The purpose of this ceremony is to confirm the faith of a baptized person and impart the Holy Spirit in a special way to enable the person to live a Christian life.

As long as baptism was restricted to believers there was no need for this sacrament, but when baptism was relegated primarily to infants it became important to have some ceremony in which a person announced his own desire to be a member of the church. According to Augustine's theology, when an infant is baptized he receives an infusion of grace, including the washing away of sins and

the new birth, but obviously the infant has no knowledge or experience of the event. People felt a need for some kind of ceremony to emphasize the impartation of the Holy Spirit when a person is capable of understanding what is taking place.

The pattern of conversion in the Book of Acts is repentance, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When people prayed for the Holy Spirit, typically hands were laid upon them (Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6). The laying on of hands did not replace the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was the object of the prayer, but symbolized God's grace working through the church and focused people's faith to receive at that moment.

The post-apostolic church continued the practice of laying on of hands. At baptism, the pastor (bishop or presbyter) would lay hands on the candidate so that he would receive the Holy Spirit as in the Book of Acts. Eventually, anointing with oil, first mentioned by Tertullian, was added to the ceremony. As time went on, the presbyter, or local church pastor, became distinguished from the bishop, or leader of presbyters in an area. As church tradition developed, any presbyter could baptize someone, but only the bishop of the area could anoint people with oil and lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

By this time, few people actually received the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues, and the laying on of hands became merely a ritual. Having the bishop perform the ceremony gave greater confidence that a spiritual work genuinely took place; his prestige and authority helped substitute for the lack of miraculous, scriptural evidence.

The bishop was not always available when a baby was

born or an adult converted. The local presbyter would baptize such a person immediately. At a later date, when the bishop visited the local church, he would lay hands upon everyone who had been baptized, anointing them with oil. As a result, confirmation became a sacrament distinct from water baptism.

Today, in Eastern Orthodoxy, confirmation is still associated with water baptism and administered by the local priest. In Roman Catholicism, the bishop typically administers confirmation later in childhood, signifying the communication of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and perfect the Christian. In theory, the candidate has already been born again and filled with the Holy Spirit at baptism, but at confirmation there is an additional work of the Holy Spirit. Some Protestants who practice infant baptism, such as the Lutherans, also practice confirmation. After a child completes a course of doctrinal study, called the catechism, he is confirmed.

Penance

The sacrament of penance also evolved out of water baptism, and the practice of infant baptism was also crucial to its development. Originally, the baptismal candidate first repented of his sins, and then he was baptized. Thereafter he was to live a holy life.

When infant baptism became the norm, obviously there was no personal repentance at the time. All repentance had to come after baptism; thus repentance was transformed into penance, an ongoing sacrament subsequent to baptism. Indeed, the Rheims-Douay (Roman Catholic) Bible translates Acts 2:38 as, "Do penance. . ." instead of, "Repent. . . ."

As we have seen, the original insistence on living a holy life after baptism led to serious disputes over how much forgiveness was available after baptism. These disputes caused people to classify sins as lesser or greater, anticipating the later distinction between venial and mortal sins. Novatian said there was no forgiveness for a great sin committed after baptism, while Callistus said the bishops had the power to offer forgiveness in this situation. Tertullian allowed forgiveness in such a case if the sinner rendered "satisfaction" (payment) to God by works of repentance. Augustine held that one could pay for lesser sins by almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but grave sins required confession to the bishop and performance of the satisfaction he specified.

From these thoughts, the sacrament of penance developed to take care of the sins that a person commits in the course of his life after baptism. He does so by confessing his sins to a priest, performing whatever work is necessary to remit the temporal punishment for those sins, and receiving absolution (release) from the eternal punishment for those sins. (In chapters 14 and 16 we will discuss the further development of this sacrament in the Middle Ages.)

The Eucharist

In addition to water baptism, Jesus Christ Himself instituted another sacrament: the Lord's Supper, also called the Communion (I Corinthians 10:16) or Eucharist. The latter name comes from the Greek word *eucharisteo*, used in Luke 22:17-19, which means "to give thanks." In obedience to the Lord's command, from the beginning the early church celebrated this sacrament as a thanksgiving for His atoning sacrifice (Luke 22:19). At first, it seems

that believers celebrated the Eucharist itself and then held a fellowship meal, called an *agape* ("love") feast. (See Jude 12.) Paul warned the Corinthians against banqueting, drunkenness, and other abuses associated with their observance of the Eucharist, probably at the fellowship meal that followed it. (See I Corinthians 11:20-22.)

Historically, the most important doctrinal issue regarding the Eucharist is its significance. Two basic views emerged, with some variations.

First we have the realistic view, or doctrine of the "real presence," according to which Christ's blood and body are physically present in the Eucharist. Under this view, the Eucharist becomes an incarnation. Christ actually comes in the Eucharist.

The end result of this thinking became the doctrine of transubstantiation ("change of substance"). The fruit of the vine literally turns into Christ's blood even though it does not change its outward appearance, and the bread literally turns into His body. Roman Catholicism formulated this position, and Eastern Orthodoxy adopted it. The Lutherans modified it to say that the elements do not change but Christ's blood and body join them (consubstantiation).

Eventually, the realistic view led to the idea that the Eucharist is a sacrifice for sin. Christ is killed anew and offered up for the sins of the people. The presbyter is more than a preacher; he becomes a priest who offers up the sacrifice of Christ just as effectively as when Christ was crucified. The Eucharist is a continuing sacrifice for the living; later it was applied to the dead also.

Here we have the origin of the Roman Catholic mass. The Eucharist is no longer simply a part of a worship

service centered around the preaching of the Word, but it becomes the focal point of every service, the mass.

The alternative position is the spiritualistic or symbolic view. According to this view, the fruit of the vine and bread remain exactly that and nothing more, but they represent the blood and body of Christ. The Eucharist is therefore a sign of Christ's blood and body and a sign of His spiritual presence. When believers celebrate the Eucharist, Christ meets with them through their faith. He is spiritually present, but He is not attached to the physical elements, and the physical elements do not change into the physical Christ.

The Eucharist reminds people of Christ's sacrifice and encourages them to apply it to their lives. It has great value and benefit insofar as it builds up their faith. It is not an empty ritual, for Christ does meet with His people and bestows His grace. The work does not take place by virtue of the elements themselves but by faith. Most Protestants today hold this view, some emphasizing Christ's spiritual presence more than others.

The Scriptures support the symbolic rather than the realistic position. At the Last Supper, Jesus offered bread and the fruit of the vine to His disciples, saying, "This is my body. . . . This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:22-24). They could see His physical body before them; it had not yet been broken. His blood was still coursing in His veins; it had not yet been shed. In that setting, the disciples surely distinguished His physical body and blood from the elements of the Eucharist, understanding that the latter symbolically pointed to His future sacrifice. Jesus underscored the symbolic nature of the ceremony by saying, "This do in

remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). When we partake today, we look back to His one sacrifice.

When Christ died on the cross, His sacrifice was complete (John 19:30). Unlike the priests of the Old Testament, who offered sacrifices daily, "this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:27). He "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:12-14). We have no need of additional sacrifices, nor do we have any priest other than Jesus Christ. He is the "one mediator," our "high priest," and we can approach God directly in prayer based on Christ's atoning sacrifice. (See I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:15, 28.)

It is difficult to classify the earliest writers on one side or the other of this subject because they wrote before the great controversy in the Middle Ages. Their language was not always precise, nor did they write with the intent of taking a position. Sometimes expressions that sound realistic may simply be figurative or allegorical. Pelikan concluded:

No orthodox father of the second or third century of whom we have record either declared the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist to be no more than symbolic (although Clement and Origen came close to doing so) or specified a process of substantial change by which the presence was effected (although Ignatius and Justin came close to doing so.)[2]

Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Theodoret all used realistic language, while Clement of Alexandria,

Origen, Athanasius, Eusebius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, and Augustine used symbolic or spiritualizing language. Some writers used both realistic and symbolic expressions, including John Chrysostom, Hilary, and Ambrose. Scholars still debate the intention and meaning of these various writers.

Cyprian and Cyril of Jerusalem spoke of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Cyril of Alexandria said that the Eucharist is the body born of Mary, and Gregory of Nyssa said the elements are transformed into Christ's blood and body. By the fifth century, theologians commonly spoke of a transformation both of the elements and the partakers. In the eighth century, John of Damascus clearly stated the realistic view, describing the Eucharist as an incarnation and an unbloody sacrifice offered by the priest for the dead and the living.

Interestingly, in 496, Pope Gelasius I emphatically rejected the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. His action poses a problem for Catholicism because of the later doctrine of papal infallibility. How could a supposedly infallible pope contradict a central tenet of Catholicism? Catholic apologists usually reply that infallibility attaches only to official pronouncements and Gelasius merely offered his personal opinion.

Summary

In summary, from the earliest times the church practiced water baptism and the Eucharist, two sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. In each case, various nonbiblical rituals became attached to these sacraments, and the church developed liturgies for services.

In the Ecumenical Catholic Age, Christianity accepted

two additional rites as sacraments, confirmation and penance. Although they do not appear in Scripture, they evolved out of water baptism as baptismal practices began to change in unscriptural ways. In particular, the replacement of believers baptism by infant baptism left a huge gap in the experience of salvation, which the institutional church sought to fill by making confirmation and penance sacraments in their own right.

Throughout the Old Catholic Age and Ecumenical Catholic Age, the church proclaimed that water baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of past sins. Following the teaching of Augustine, it also came to see baptism as washing away guilt inherited from Adam. Eventually, it equated water baptism with the new birth itself, teaching that baptism is the first application of God's grace and is necessary for sanctification in the years ahead.

It is instructive to see how one nonbiblical doctrine or practice typically leads to another. What begins as a single deviation from the Bible can eventually lead to a gross distortion in many areas, almost totally obscuring the original meaning and purpose of Scripture.

As chapter 16 describes, the medieval church ultimately identified three additional ceremonies as sacraments: extreme unction, marriage, and ordination. Although they were practiced in one form or another in the early centuries, the dogmatic elaboration of them as means of grace belongs to medieval times. In chapter 13 we will discuss how pagan concepts influenced Christian sacraments, and in chapters 14 and 16 we will trace the evolution of the sacraments through the Middle Ages to shape Roman Catholicism.

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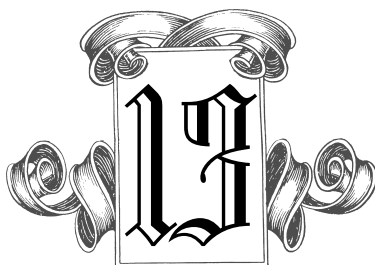
Pagan Influences

In discussing the development of doctrine, particularly the emergence of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, it is helpful to examine pagan influences. Originally, there was a sharp conflict between Christianity and all forms of paganism. The primary reason was the exclusive claims of Christianity. Christians said they served the only true God. They proclaimed that Jesus is the true God manifest in the flesh, the only Lord, the only Savior, and that salvation comes only through Him.

By contrast, the other major religions of the Roman Empire—Greek paganism, Roman paganism, and various Middle Eastern religions—were based on polytheism, the belief in many gods.

The Romans allowed each nation in the empire to

worship its own gods as long as no one interfered with the worship of others. As a matter of civic duty and loyalty to the empire, everybody had to participate in the worship of the Roman deities. Eventually the Romans promoted worship of the emperor as a means of pledging allegiance to the empire.

Except for Jews and Christians, most people had no problem adding the Roman deities to their pantheon, for they already believed in many gods and accepted that different nations had different gods.

Since Christians refused to cooperate with this system, they were seen not only as religious heretics but, more importantly, as political subversives. Society considered them intolerant because they refused to accept everyone else's religion as valid, and the state viewed them as rebellious for refusing to participate in the civic religion. They were supposed to confess Caesar as Lord, but the Christians reserved the title of Lord for Christ alone.

In the first three centuries, Christians also refused to participate in warfare, holding that the killing of humans was contrary to the teaching of Jesus. Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, and others affirmed their patriotism but said they could not in good conscience kill other people at the behest of the state.

Christianity was thus opposed to the fundamental religious, philosophical, and political structure of the Roman Empire and the ancient world. The empire persecuted Christians because they refused to practice the state religion and because they insisted on following a moral law higher than the laws of the state. The early Christians did not seek to overthrow the government, but they held dif-

ferent values and lived a different lifestyle from their pagan neighbors. Their world views were incompatible.

This situation changed completely with Emperor Constantine. As discussed in chapter 6, he and Licinius announced an edict of toleration that ended the persecution of Christianity. Then he himself publicly embraced Christianity and began to promote it as the preferred religion. His successors in the fourth century established Christianity as the official state religion and banned paganism.

In short order, thousands of pagans who were prominent citizens now found their status called into question. They stood to lose governmental positions, influence, and standing in the community. When the government began opposing paganism vigorously, their fortunes, their freedom, and even their lives were potentially at risk.

For most pagans, the solution was simple: they changed their religion. Most did not see it as a crisis of conscience to abandon their former religion, for they never thought of their religion as the only way or their gods as the only gods. For many, the very triumph of Christianity was sufficient proof that the God of the Christians was superior to their old gods.

The problem was that in most cases they did not undergo a genuine spiritual conversion. Instead of recognizing the error of their ways and renouncing their old beliefs and lifestyle, they merely added Christianity to their beliefs or translated their pagan ideas and practices into the new Christian context.

In the fourth century, multitudes of people converted to Christianity overnight, and in subsequent centuries barbarian tribes converted en masse. Most of these

converts did not truly repent of sin, and few people received the Holy Spirit. The way to convert was to change one's opinion, make a verbal profession, and submit to water baptism.

Not only did people convert en masse, but temples, idols, and priests were instantly converted into the Christian community. The government demolished most papan temples, but for a few it conducted ceremonies to purge them and consecrate them as Christian churches. (The Pantheon in Rome is a notable example.) Statues of pagan gods received the names of Christian saints and were consecrated into the church.[1] Many pagan priests converted and were immediately pressed into service as Christian priests. In many ways and places, this flood tide of paganism overwhelmed the structure of the church.

Before this time, the church had experienced many schisms and had begun to stray doctrinally, but the core was composed of people who were dedicated to Christian values. It took character, fortitude, and spiritual strength to survive the times of persecution. Suddenly this band of core believers was overwhelmed by an influx of pagans who came primarily out of personal motives. Probably many were convinced of the truth of Christianity, but few were regenerated and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The empire became Christian, but in name only.

Therefore, while Christianity was seemingly victorious, it actually suffered a most serious defeat. As secular historian Will Durant expressed, "While Christianity converted the world, the world converted Christianity, and displayed the natural paganism of mankind."[2] Church historian Walter Nigg concurred: "As soon as Emperor Con-

stantine opened the floodgates and the masses of the people poured into the church out of sheer opportunism, the loftiness of the Christian ethos was done for."[3] Philip Schaff similarly observed, "By taking in the whole population of the Roman Empire the church became . . . more or less a church of the world. . . . Many heathen customs and usages, under alleged names, crept into the worship."[4]

Thus paganism dramatically influenced Christianity, particularly from the fourth century onward. Let us look at some important areas of pagan influence.

Polytheism

After the church became predominantly Gentile, polytheistic ideas from the pagan culture began to affect Christian thought about God. We see the influence of Greek philosophy and polytheism in the Apologists' doctrine of the Logos (mid second century), in the trinitarianism of Tertullian and Origen (early third century), in the views of Arius, and in the trinitarianism of Athanasius and the Cappadocians (fourth century). It is inconceivable that such ideas of plurality in God could have arisen directly from Jewish monotheism; even to this day the Jews recoil from any suggestion that God is a plurality of persons.

From the second century onward, however, converts from Christianity came almost exclusively from polytheistic backgrounds, and they were already accustomed to thinking of a plurality of gods. Polytheistic thought contributed to the emerging doctrine of trinity, made it easy for converts to accept trinitarianism after it became the norm, and influenced its interpretation in a tritheistic direction. Even when theologians tried to draw back from

outright tritheism, it was natural for the average pagan convert to think of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three gods.

Polytheism also contributed to the cult of saints that began to develop. The ancient Greeks had prayed to the dead; now many Christians began to pray to departed saints and martyrs. The Romans were fond of deifying men and then offering prayers and sacrifices to them; they had done so to dead Caesars and then to living ones. The church adopted essentially the same process by canonizing saints and then praying to them for help. Indeed, the Eastern church honors Constantine as a saint, calling him Isapostolos, "equal of the apostles." Many people also began to pray to angels.

In theory, true worship went to God alone while mere reverence was paid to saints, martyrs, and angels, but in practice the common people made little or no distinction. People who used to pray to a Greek or Roman deity who supposedly had charge of their city, occupation, or activity, now prayed to the patron saint of that city, occupation, or activity. Legends about gods or demigods became legends about Christian saints.[5] Even the halos depicted around medieval saints have their origin in sun worship.

Along with prayer to saints and martyrs came worship of their statues, pictures, and relics—body parts, bones, clothing, and other items associated with the saints. Essentially people embraced pagan idolatry, which was based on the idea that the spirit of a god inhabits its statue. People who formerly prayed to the statue of a pagan deity now bowed before the same statue, only now it was the statue of a Christian saint. They also attributed magical powers to statues and especially to relics. Leading

theologians such as the Cappadocians, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Leo endorsed the worship of relics.

Constantine's mother, Helena, supposedly discovered by miraculous means the cross of Christ, which became an object of worship. She built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem on the spot where she found it, allegedly the site of Christ's crucifixion and burial. Many other people boasted "splinters of the True Cross"—so many, in fact, that theologians claimed the cross had the miraculous ability to multiply itself without diminishing.

Goddess Worship

Another significant pagan influence was the worship of fertility goddesses, which figured prominently in the ancient religions of the Middle East. Ancient agricultural societies felt a need to invoke divine aid to ensure that they would have bountiful crops, growing flocks and herds, and many sons to work in the fields. Their solution was to worship goddesses of fertility.

The ancient Babylonians worshiped Ishtar as their principal goddess. To the Phoenicians and Philistines, she was known as Astarte (Greek) or Ashtoreth. The plural form of this name, Ashtaroth, appears in the Old Testament, where it refers to the many local fertility goddesses of the Canaanites. (See Judges 2:13; I Samuel 7:3-4.) Similarly, the Egyptians had Isis, the Greeks had Aphrodite, and the Romans had Venus.

In the Middle Eastern religions, the fertility goddess was associated with a consort or lover, emphasizing her fertility. In Babylonian mythology, Tammuz was the consort of Ishtar. He died, but Ishtar rescued him from the

underworld, and he came back to life again. This story supposedly explained the change of seasons, with the death of Tammuz causing winter and his rebirth bringing spring. Annually the Babylonians mourned the death of Tammuz and then celebrated his resurrection. Ezekiel 8:14 describes "women weeping for Tammuz." Similar consort gods were Osiris in Egypt, Baal in Canaan, and Adonis in Syria and Greece.

The goddesses were often associated with divine sons also. Some myths identified Tammuz as the son of Ishtar as well as her consort. Other divine mother-son combinations were Isis and Horus (Egypt), Cybele and Attis (Phyrgia), and Aphrodite and Adonis (Greece). Devotees worshiped pictures and statues of the mother holding or nursing her son. When Nestorian and Catholic missionaries first went to China they were amazed to find people worshiping statues of mother and child.

The Greek goddess Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana, was originally the virgin goddess of nature, and yet she helped women in childbirth. The Ephesians worshiped her as the goddess of motherhood and fertility.[6] (See Acts 19:24-35.) They honored her as both a virgin and a mother.

The goddesses were given extravagant titles of devotion. For example, the Egyptians called Isis the "great mother, mother of God, queen of heaven," and the Babylonians called Ishtar the "holy virgin, virgin mother, mother of God, queen of heaven."[7] Similarly, Cybele was the "great mother" and "our lady." According to the mythology, these goddesses were quite promiscuous; the adjective of "virgin" simply meant that they were not married and that they were considered sacred. The Old Testament

alludes to the worship of the mother goddess as the "queen of heaven" (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:18-19, 25).

In the Ecumenical Catholic Age, many people began to worship Mary the mother of Jesus just as they had formerly worshiped goddesses. They applied many of the same titles to her, such as mother of God, queen of heaven, and our lady. They made statues and pictures of mother and child much like earlier pagan representations. As chapter 16 discusses, the worship of Mary eventually become one of the dominant features of the medieval church.

Festivals

Many pagan festivals were also incorporated into Christianity. The early Christians celebrated Easter in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, but over the years it was combined with pagan fertility rites. Eggs and rabbits became associated with Easter because they are symbols of fertility: the egg signifies new life, and the rabbit signifies great fertility. The very name of Easter in English comes from the old Germanic goddess of the spring and the dawn.

May Day was another festival taken from fertility rituals. The May pole was a symbol of fertility, and pagans danced around it on May Day to ensure fertility. By the sixth century, the August harvest festival of Artemis became the Feast of the Assumption of Mary.[8]

The celebration of Christmas also owes much to pagan rituals. Nothing in Scripture indicates that Jesus was born on December 25, but under the Julian calendar, December 25 was the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. People celebrated that event as the birthday of

Mithras, the unconquerable sun, because the days started getting longer after this point. This date was also shortly after the Saturnalia, a seven-day Roman festival in honor of the god Saturn, which was characterized by unrestrained immorality.[9]

On pagan festivals such as these, nominal Christians felt a powerful temptation to revert back to their old heathen customs and immoral celebrations. The church decided to Christianize this celebration by removing the immoral elements and honoring the birth of Christ.

The Eating of the God

In many preliterary societies, people would eat an animal in order to gain its qualities, such as strength or courage. They would worship a sacred animal and establish a taboo against touching it, except to eat it in a sacred ritual. They believed this "eating of the god" ceremony caused the spirit of the god to work within them.

The widespread worship of the Greek god Dionysius contained a similar element. For two days the worshipers would drink and dance themselves into a frenzy.

> The height and center of their ceremony was to seize upon a goat, a bull, sometimes a man (seeing in them incarnations of the god), to tear the live victim to pieces . . . then to drink the blood and eat the flesh in a sacred communion whereby, they thought, the god would enter them and possess their souls.[10]

In the ancient Middle East there were a number of "mystery religions," each dedicated to the worship of a certain god. The devotees depended upon this god for sal-

vation and took part in secret rites open only to initiates. They were known as mysteries because outsiders could not participate or even be told what took place. Some of the mystery religions involved animal sacrifices and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of sacred animals. There were a number of similarities to Christian ceremonies, but it is not clear who borrowed from whom. Justin acknowledged that the worshipers of Mithras had a ceremony much like the Eucharist but claimed they took the idea from Christianity.[11]

With their pagan background, it is understandable that many converts would view the Eucharist as an eating of Christ in order to receive His power. This idea ultimately developed into the doctrine of the real presence. Biblically, however, the Lord's Supper arose out of the Jewish Passover, a symbolic commemoration of God's deliverance of His people. From this perspective, the symbolic understanding of the Lord's Supper is more appropriate.

The Priesthood

The development of the priesthood also owed much to pagan influences. People began to view Christian ministers much like priests in pagan religions. As worship became ritualized and as the sacrifice of the mass became the central feature of each service, preachers became priests.

The New Testament describes all Christians as saints, kings, priests, and servants of God. (See I Corinthians 1:2; I Peter 2:9, 16; Revelation 1:6.) Everyone in the body of Christ has gifts and a vital role to play. (See Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:12-31.)

In the Ecumenical Catholic Age, however, a sharp distinction arose between clergy and laity. The clergy were considered more holy, and they were responsible for the functioning of the church. Like pagan priests, they set themselves apart visually by adopting special vestments and tonsure (partial or complete shaving of the head).

Celibacy

To further set themselves apart in holiness, many priests took vows of celibacy (abstaining from sexual relations and marriage). While this practice was foreign to the Old Testament priesthood, it existed in many pagan religions. The Cynics of Greece were an example. In addition, the gross immorality of the pagan world caused many Christians to go to the opposite extreme, concluding that celibacy was more holy than married life.

From early times we find a high respect for celibacy among Christians. In the second century the Marcionites and ultimately the Montantists advocated celibacy for all Christians. Theologians appealed to Paul's advocacy of the single life in I Corinthians 7. While Paul noted that a single person such as he could serve God with fewer distractions, he made clear that this was his personal opinion and not a commandment from the Lord. He recognized marriage as the norm (I Corinthians 7:2). Moreover, he gave his advice because of "the present distress" and because "the time is short" (I Corinthians 7:26, 29). His advice is particularly relevant in times of severe persecution and its logic is obvious in Paul's case, considering that his ministry was full of travel, deprivation, and hardship.

At first celibacy was respected, but then it was pre-

ferred on the ground that the celibate person was more holy. Finally it became mandatory. In the West, all priests had to take a vow of celibacy. Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome endorsed this rule. In the East, priests could marry, but the bishops could not. At the Council of Nicea in 325, some bishops proposed a rule that no presbyters could marry. The decision at that time was that men who were already married before ordination could live with their wives, but no ordained man could marry.

Some priests and nuns went to great lengths to prove how strong they were in maintaining celibacy. They would sleep together and supposedly maintain purity to demonstrate that they could endure the most rigorous temptations. Unfortunately, many of them succumbed to temptation, for it is not God's will for Christians to subject themselves deliberately to temptation as a test of faith. This practice became a matter of spiritual pride, yet so many failures occurred that it was eventually banned.

In an effort to become more holy, some Christians withdrew into the desert as anchorites, or hermits. Others joined together in celibate monastic communities as monks or nuns. There is no Old or New Testament precedent for this practice, but again, it was a prominent feature of pagan religions. For example, the Romans had their Vestal Virgins, and from ancient times to the present, Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism have had priests, monasteries, and hermits.

Hermits

The first Christian hermits arose in the late third century in Egypt, where the climate and temperament of the people seemed particularly suited to this lifestyle. The

leading figure in this movement was Anthony, around 270. Becoming a hermit—going off to live alone in a desert cave, hole in the ground, or cell—grew common, particularly in the East. In some cases, a hermit would erect a pillar and live on top of it for years.

Monks and Nuns

Monasticism arose and became widespread in the fourth and fifth centuries, particularly in the West. A group of people would form a monastic community in which they would live together as celibates, raise their own crops and generally become self-sufficient, conduct group prayers, and pledge themselves to strict disciplines. Basil founded a monastery in 358 that became a prototype for the future.

Jerome was one of the most zealous advocates of monasticism. He lived an ascetic life and practically denounced marriage. Unfortunately, his writings are filled with harsh, hateful words against his theological opponents.

Around 540, Benedict founded a monastery at Monte Cassino and the Benedictine order of monks. His *Rule* for monastic life became the standard in the West. It set forth a threefold vow: perpetual adherence to the monastic order, poverty and chastity, and absolute obedience to the abbot (head of the monastery). Among other things, it prescribed seven hours a day of prayer, singing, and meditation; two or three hours of religious reading; and six to seven hours of manual labor or instruction of children.

Asceticism

The hermits, monks, nuns, and even some of the laity

placed a great premium on asceticism—rigid self-denial, severe discipline, or punishment of the body. As with celibacy, they thought such extreme disciplines would make them more holy and would secure forgiveness of sins and merits with God. The New Testament does speak of denying selfish, worldly lusts and advocates disciplines such as prayer and fasting, but the goal is not to punish the flesh or to earn merits. It teaches that we are saved by faith, not works, and it warns against asceticism. (See Romans 3:26-27; Colossians 2:16-23.) I Timothy 4:1-3 issues a particularly strong condemnation of those who insist on celibacy and asceticism.

Christian ascetics carried their punishment of the body to extremes, not only praying repetitive prayers for hours and fasting for extended periods but also whipping themselves (self-flagellation), wounding themselves (self-mutilation), wearing hair shirts, and so on. Some, like Origen, even castrated themselves to ensure celibacy.

The living conditions in the monasteries were usually quite primitive and severe. The monastic lifestyle consisted of celibacy, hard labor, frequent fastings, many prayer times during the day, deprivation of sleep, coarse clothing, and plain meals. The monks would typically arise very early to pray, and in some monasteries they were awakened in the middle of the night to pray. Some had strict rules of silence that they observed most of the day.

The hermits generally lived by begging. The following practices were common among them: exposing themselves to the elements, wearing minimal clothing, eating only bread and water, living with vermin (bringing rats or

insects into their caves and exposing their bodies to them), living in silence for years, refusing to look upon a woman's face, refusing to lie down to sleep for years, chaining themselves to immovable rocks, carrying heavy weights, binding themselves with great chains, and never bathing.[12]

The most famous of the so-called pillar saints was Simeon Stylites, who lived for thirty-six years, without coming down, on a pillar sixty feet high with a circumference of a little more than three feet. A railing prevented him from falling while asleep, and a ladder enabled followers to bring food and take away waste. He preached to the crowds who gathered to see him, and hermits imitated him for centuries.

Despite these efforts, many ascetics testified that they continually strugged with erotic thoughts and demonic attacks. More than a few went completely insane.

Holiness of Life

The effect of these practices was to distort the true biblical meaning of holiness, undermine justification by faith, and substitute human works for the work of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this way of thinking relegated holiness to an elite, leaving the average person to have little hope of, and therefore little concern for, living a holy life.

A few writers, such as Chrysostom and Jerome, warned against worldly attitudes and conduct, immodesty of dress, makeup, and the like. Overall, however, the church in the Ecumenical Catholic Age abandoned most inward and outward standards of biblical holiness, substituting legalism and superstition for the masses and asceticism for the spiritual elite.

Summary

Christianity in the Ecumenical Catholic Age adopted a host of other pagan elements in addition to those we have mentioned, including candles, holy water, and prayer for the dead. The practices we have discussed had precedents in pre-Christian religions as well as parallels in Hinduism, Buddhism, and other major religions of the East. It seems that they descended from an ancient common source, which some authors identify as Babylon. When the massive influx of pagans came into the church, along with them came the baggage of pagan ideas. Many of these doctrines and practices are what distinguish Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy from earlier Christianity.*

Some theologians explained certain parallels, such as the mother and child statues in pagan lands, as a divine preparation for the truth of Christianity. Others explained them as demonic counterfeits or imitations, such as pagan eating of the god rituals. While the devil certainly does pervert truth and devise imitations of the genuine, in the cases we have cited it seems clear that the practices originated in paganism, not the mind of God, and were later incorporated into Christendom.

Sometimes a truth God originally gave to humanity has been distorted in pagan religions but transmitted properly through Old Testament Judaism and New Testament Christianity. Examples are the offering of sacrifices to atone for sins and the anticipation of a Savior or Messiah. We should also acknowledge that some practices

*See Appendix G for a list of distinctive doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism, along with approximate dates of development or official endorsement.

which originated in paganism have been divorced from their original connotations or transformed by Christian meaning so that their use is unobjectionable or at least a matter of Christian liberty. Examples are the celebration of Christmas, the names of the planets, and the names of the days of the week.

14

The Early Middle Ages
A.D. 600–1100

The past few chapters have traced various strands of doctrine and practice that led to what we know today as Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Now we will examine the product and extension of this development, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church—the institutional church of the Middle Ages in Western Europe.

For all practical purposes, the Western Roman Empire disintegrated in the fifth century, leaving a great power vacuum. Various barbarian tribes took over pieces of the empire, and Europe began to splinter. To a great extent, the Roman Catholic Church stepped into the vacuum as the remaining source of unity and authority across Western Europe. As we have already seen, the basic doctrines, practices, and structure of Roman Catholicism emerged in the fourth and fifth centuries, but

in the Early Middle Ages they jelled into the Roman Catholic Church much as we know it today.

From 100 to 600 most theologians were bishops. Through the ecumenical councils, particularly those in the 300s to 500s, they formulated doctrine. From 600 to 1500 most theologians in the West were monks, and by and large, they devoted themselves to preserving the doctrine of earlier centuries. Theology as a discipline suffered a decline, and superstitious elements came to the forefront.

Gregory I

In 590 Gregory I (the Great) was elected as pope. Although Leo I had earlier claimed universal authority as pope and received imperial endorsement of that claim, Gregory was the first bishop of Rome who actually exercised that authority successfully. As far as power and authority are concerned, we may regard him as the first true pope.

Gregory is also highly signficant for theology, for he systematized contemporary thought and established the pattern for the Roman Catholic Church over the next five hundred years. In a theological sense, he was the first medieval pope.

Gregory's theology was not a radical break with the past. What he did was emphasize, legitimize, and popularize many doctrines and practices that had already developed or were then developing.

The common people already believed and practiced many things that theologians and councils had not yet addressed, including the pagan, superstitious elements discussed in chapter 13. Gregory put the official stamp of approval on many of them. While not an innovator, he

used the papal authority to integrate these elements into the theology of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass, and the worship of saints, angels, relics, and images.

First, Gregory stated that tradition was equal in authority with the Scriptures. Therefore, the official pronouncements of the church were just as valid as those of the Bible. Just as the Holy Spirit had inspired the writers of Scripture, so the Holy Spirit inspired the church fathers (ancient writers), councils, and popes collectively to proclaim truth and to develop new understandings of truth. In particular, the decisions of the ecumenical councils are authoritative. For both doctrine and practice, one could appeal to the Bible, the councils, the creeds, and the consensus of the church fathers.

Gregory acknowledged the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, penance, and the Eucharist. He placed great emphasis on penance, explaining that it consists of four elements. First comes contrition, or sorrow for the sin that a person has committed. Second is confession of that sin to a priest. Third is absolution, in which the priest pronounces that the person is absolved, or forgiven, of his sin. Finally, the person has to render satisfaction, that is, perform works to remit the temporal penalty for his sin.

In short, all sin has a penalty. Even though God forgives a person, he still must pay the price for those sins by good works or suffering. If he does not completely pay for his sins by appropriate works in this life, he will do so after death in a temporary abode called purgatory, before he can go to heaven.

Technically, a person does not work to receive forgiveness, which is a gift of God for eternity, but he works

to pay the temporal price for sin. When the priest pronounces that God has forgiven him, he has assurance of salvation, namely that he will not go to the lake of fire when he dies. Nevertheless, he still has to pay a penalty that the blood of Jesus did not.

The priesthood controls the system of penance. The individual does not go to God in prayer and ask for forgiveness directly, but he goes to the priest. The priest pronounces God's forgiveness but then requires the penitent to offer a certain number of repeated prayers or do certain works to provide the necessary satisfaction. If someone does not go through the priest, he cannot obtain forgiveness.

Penance became a system whereby the church controlled the forgiveness of sins in the life of a Christian. The individual had to perform the satisfaction meted out by the priest to whom he confessed his sins.

Purgatory had become a popular concept by this time, and Gregory gave official endorsement to it. Purgatory is a temporary place of purging for souls who are ultimately destined for heaven. This concept originated in Greek philosophy; centuries before Christ, Plato taught that after the death of the body, the soul goes to a place of purging. Origen likewise held that all souls would be purged and ultimately be saved. Augustine tentatively raised the possibility of purgatory.

In medieval theology, purgatory is not for everyone. If a baptized person commits a great sin, does not confess it, and then dies, he will go to the lake of fire for eternity. On the other hand, if he confesses his sins, receives absolution from the priest, but does not render the proper satisfaction before he dies, upon death he will go to

purgatory to pay that penalty. After a time of suffering proportionate to his sins, he will go to heaven.

Under this scheme, sins are divided into two categories: mortal and venial. This classification was prefigured in the debates over repentance after baptism, going back to Hermas and Tertullian, and in the theology of Augustine. Mortal sins are those that cause a person to go to hell if he dies without confessing them. Venial sins are daily transgressions and imperfections. Even if a person does not confess them, he will be saved after spending time in purgatory to pay for them. The purpose of purgatory is to purge Christians from all their venial sins and to complete the payment for their mortal sins that they confess but do not finish paying for in earthly life.

Thus a person faces one of three destinies upon death. Hell, or the lake of fire, awaits the pagan as well as the baptized Christian who does not undergo the sacrament of penance for his mortal sins. Purgatory is the temporary destiny of the vast majority of Christians, who live a sinful life but submit to the sacramental system of the church; heaven is their ultimate destiny. Finally, a very few saintly people will enter directly into heaven upon death. This third alternative is available primarily to those who live celibate, ascetic lives.

Regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist, or the mass, Gregory taught that it is a sacrifice for our redemption. In the mass, the priest offers up the blood and body of Christ for the sins of the people. The benefits include forgiveness of sins, blessings for the body, and assistance to dead loved ones in purgatory.

Turning to church government, Gregory taught that the pope is the head of the church, and the church is a

temporal state similar to a secular state. It rightfully exercises power in the political, economic, and military realms. Under the hierarchy, the priests control the church and rule over the people. They exercise authority over body and soul through the sacraments.

Salvation comes through the sacraments. Baptism washes away original sin; it is absolutely necessary, should be administered to infants, and can only be done by the priest. Penance and the Eucharist take care of the sins in the daily life of Christians, and only the priest can conduct them. If a person refuses to cooperate with the priest and refuses the sacraments, he cannot be saved.

The sacraments are effective by the authority of the church and the priest; personal faith is not a factor. In practice, it does not matter whether the individual truly has a relationship with God; as long as he submits to the church and receives the sacraments, the sacraments will be effective by the power of the church. This theology divorces the sacraments from the biblical concept of obedient faith and makes them magical ceremonies.

Gregory promoted the worship of saints, angels, relics, and images, which was quite popular at this time. Although true worship belongs only to God, a person can venerate the saints, meditate upon them, call upon them for assistance, and ask them to present petitions to God for him. In this way, the saints become mediators between living Christians and God. As part of venerating the saints, an individual can pray to them, bow to their statues or pictures, kiss the feet of the statues, and so on. In practice, the technical distinction between veneration and worship seems to have escaped the common people.

Invoking the saints' aid is effective because of their

personal holiness. They not only paid for all their sins, but they did many extra good works. Their holiness far outweighs their sins, leaving them with a superabundance of good works and merits. No only did they enter heaven directly upon their death, but they have treasuries of extra merit that they can use to benefit others. When someone prays to them, they can perform miracles or transfer merits to that person's account. In a way, then, they become almost like co-redeemers with Christ.

In summary, Gregory was traditional in doctrine, accepting the ecumenical councils, the doctrine of the trinity, the Chalcedonian doctrine of Christology, and most of the teaching of Augustine. He did not seek innovation in any of these areas. He offered nothing new except that he accentuated popular beliefs and practices of the time and elevated them to the status of church doctrine. Most significantly, he explicitly placed church tradition on an equal basis with Scripture.

In practice, Gregory's system of the sacraments, particularly penance and the Eucharist, was Semi-Pelagian. Man becomes a co-worker with God in salvation. Salvation is not purely by God's grace, but man's works play a role in earning salvation.

We should also note that Gregory's view of the church and the priesthood was quite hierarchical. This was the standard view of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Middle Ages and, to a great extent, even to this day.

The Carolingian Renaissance

In the eighth and ninth centuries a significant political development occurred in Western Europe. The king of the Franks, Charlemagne ("Charles the Great"), established a

great empire and a dynasty. His empire extended over modern France, much of modern Germany, and other lands. In a sense, it was a partial revival of the Western Roman Empire, and indeed it later became known as the Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne's dynasty was known as the Carolingian Dynasty, since the Latin form of Charles is Carol.

Like the Roman emperors, Charlemagne exerted quite a bit of control over the church. He established a close church-state relationship similar to earlier times. As long as Charlemagne was alive, he dominated both church and state.

The reign of Charlemagne brought political stability and peace after years of chaos under barbarian invasions and fragmented government. With it came a renewal of culture, education, and theology. Historians often call the era of Charlemagne and his immediate successors the Carolingian Renaissance.

A number of doctrinal controversies occurred during this period of renewed theological activity. Charlemagne took an active role in many of them, issuing decisions and enforcing his views.

Doctrinal Controversies

The first important controversy of Carolingian times was the *adoptionistic controversy*. Some Spanish theologians began teaching the doctrine of adoptionism, which is somewhat reminiscent of Nestorianism. According to this view, Christ is the eternal Son according to His deity, but as a human He is an adopted Son. His human Sonship was the result of an adoptive act by God, perhaps at His conception, birth, or baptism. Charlemagne reject-

ed this doctrine in favor of traditional Christology, and the church followed his leadership.

A second dispute was the *iconoclastic controversy*, which literally means the "breaking of images." Image worship had grown more and more common. Some people opposed this practice as idolatry and the making of graven images contrary to the Ten Commandments. They felt that the church should destroy all images used in worship.

In 787, the Second Council of Nicea, held in the East beyond Charlemagne's empire and without consulting him, approved the salutation and reverence of images of saints, angels, and Christ. It distinguished the veneration of them from the true worship that belongs to God alone.

Charlemagne rejected Nicea II, holding that the veneration and adoration of images was in error. As a compromise, however, he prohibited the destruction of images, saying they were useful as works of art, illustrations of biblical stories, and objects to motivate piety.

After the demise of the Carolingian dynasty, the Eastern position of venerating images took full hold in the West also. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy today both promote the veneration of images, treating Nicea II as the seventh and final ecumenical council.

Eastern Orthodoxy, however, allows only the use of flat pictures, called icons, and denounces the use of statues. Roman Catholicisim typically prefers to use three-dimensional statues. Protestants reject the veneration of either icons or statues.

Next we have the *filioque controversy*, which chapter 8 has already mentioned in connection with the trinity.

The dispute was whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only or from the Father and "from the Son" (*filioque*).

According to orthodox trinitarianism as taught in the East, the Son is begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, so that the second and third members of the trinity have an individual relation with the first member. The members are coequal and coeternal, yet there is still a hint of subordination. The Father is the head of the trinity—the first among equals, so to speak. The Son and Spirit are somehow eternally dependent upon Him.

In the West theologians concluded that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, based on John 14:26; 15:26. The Synod of Toledo in 589 endorsed this teaching, and so did Charlemagne. Although in theory the members of the trinity are coequal and coeternal, in a sense the Father is first, the Son comes from Him, and the Spirit comes from the other two.

The East vigorously opposed the idea that the Spirit proceeds from the Son, denouncing it as an innovation that detracted from the dignity of the Spirit. Westerners saw it as necessary to create a proper balance in the trinity, establishing a one-to-one relationship between each member.

In 1054 a formal split occurred between the Eastern and Western churches over this issue, with the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople issuing mutual anathemas. Even today, Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism are separate entities, although they are similar in many ways.

Actually, there was much more to the split than the

filioque doctrine. Many cultural and political factors were involved, including the separate political allegiances of the East and West as well as the struggle for power within the church. Chapter 15 discusses in brief the subsequent development in the East.

There was also a *controversy over the miraculous birth of Jesus*. By this time, the glorification of celibacy and the worship of Mary had converged to the point that almost everyone believed Mary was a perpetual virgin. So Augustine had taught. Even after she married Joseph, she remained celibate. The brothers of Jesus that Scripture mentions were not the children of Mary but cousins of Jesus or sons of Joseph by a previous marriage. The question that arose was how the birth of Jesus affected Mary's physical virginity.

In other words, did the birth of Jesus physically open the womb of Mary, or did the baby miraculously pass through the closed womb? In an extraordinary zeal to maintain not only Mary's celibacy but also her technical physical virginity, a monk named Radbertus asserted that Christ's birth process was miraculous. Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory I had propounded this view. Another monk named Ratramnus said Jesus was born just like any other baby. Ultimately the church accepted the doctrine of the miraculous birth of Jesus. This controversy exemplifies two characteristics of medieval theology: (1) a distorted view of holiness by an emphasis on celibacy and asceticism and (2) a preoccupation with abstract, nonbiblical, trivial, and even absurd issues.

Then there was a *controversy over predestination*. A monk named Gottschalk emphasized the Augustinian

theory of predestination. He proclaimed double predestination, bringing Augustinianism to its logical conclusion, and he attacked the prevalent Semi-Pelagian interpretation of the sacraments. To his opponents his position seemed to make the sacraments unnecessary. If God has already determined who will be saved and who will be lost, without regard to human choice or action, then it would seem pointless to participate in the sacraments. Why do penance when one's eternal destiny is already predetermined?

The church condemned Gottschalk's teaching and affirmed the essentiality of the sacraments. In theory, most of his opponents embraced a Semi-Augustinian position like that of the Synod of Orange, speaking only of a predestination to salvation and that based on foreknowledge. So held Gottschalk's bitter enemy Hincmar, archbishop of Reims. The theologian John Scotus Erigena affirmed single predestination. In practice the church did not follow the logical consequences of predestination but embraced a form of Semi-Pelagianism.

Finally, there was a *controversy over the Eucharist*. Radbertus taught the doctrine of the real presence of Christ, and in doing so he became the first theologian to teach clearly the concept of transubstantiation. At the priest's words, God changes the consecrated elements into the historical body and blood of Christ. Ratramnus opposed this view, but again the Roman Church ultimately supported Radbertus.

The controversy broke out again around 1050, when Berengar, an archdeacon, taught that the elements are emblems of Christ's spiritual presence. Against him, Lanfranc, an abbot, contended for the realistic view, and Berengar was forced to retract his teaching. In 1215 Pope

Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council made transubstantiation the official doctrine.

Papal Supremacy

The secular power of the papacy received tremendous impetus from the Donation of Pepin in 754. Pepin, king of France and father of Charlemagne, conquered much of Italy and gave it to the pope. This act established the pope as a significant temporal sovereign.

Under Charlemagne and his successors, the state had exerted control over the church so that it amounted to an imperial theocracy. Nevertheless, the long-term trend was to increase power of the papacy, including papal supremacy over the state as well as the church. When the Carolingian dynasty declined, the papacy again assumed control over both church and state. Instead of the state directing the church, the pope began to direct kings and princes, not only with regard to church matters but state matters as well.

The *Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals*, a collection of forgeries that mysteriously appeared in the ninth century, promoted papal theocracy and the rights of bishops and clergy against secular government. It consisted primarily of ecclesiastical laws supposedly written by early Roman bishops. The most significant document recorded the Donation of Constantine, by which he allegedly gave the pope sovereignty over Rome and Italy. Universally accepted as genuine in the Middle Ages, it bolstered papal claims until proven a forgery by Catholic humanists in the fifteenth century.

The Nadir of the Papacy

The secular power of the papacy led to great corruption, as individuals and families jockeyed for this position

of unparalleled influence and wealth. During the period from 867 to 1049—around two hundred years—the papacy sank to the depths of degeneracy, a time often called the nadir (low point) of the papacy. Secular and religious historians, including Catholics, acknowledge this sad fact.[1]

During the late ninth, tenth, and early eleventh centuries, the papal office was typically secured by politics, bribery, and even violence. The popes were elected by the consent of the Roman clergy, nobles, and populace, who were swayed by bribes, threats, family ties, and promises of favor and influence by papal candidates. Matters of theology and church government were settled by warfare, murder, bribery, and raw politics. Many popes of this time led lives of utter debauchery and scandal. Most of their reigns were short; many died violent deaths.

In 897, Pope Stephen VI so hated a predecessor, Formosus, that he had his corpse dug up, condemned by a trial, stripped, mutilated, and cast into the Tiber River. Stephen himself was overthrown by political revolution in Rome and strangled in jail that same year. Marozia, the daughter of a chief official in the papal palace, had her lover enthroned as Pope Sergius III in 904. For many years, a period known as the pornocracy, she was the power behind the throne. Her illegitimate son, reputedly by Sergius III, was elected as Pope John XI in 931, and in 955 her grandson became Pope John XII at age eighteen.

John XII was one of the most immoral of all the popes. He conducted orgies in the Lateran Palace. An ecclesiastical council accused him of bribery, murder, adultery, incest, making the papal palace a brothel, and making a boy of ten a bishop. He refused to answer the

charges and instead went hunting. The council convicted and deposed him, but John was able to organize an army and restore himself to power by force.

Boniface VII murdered Benedict VI and John XIV in order to become pope and expropriate the papal treasury. In 1012 Benedict VIII bought the papacy by bribery and made it hereditary for a time. When he died in 1024, his brother, John XIX likewise bought the papacy. A layman, he passed through all the clerical degrees in one day. Upon his death in 1033 his nephew, Benedict IX, became pope at age twelve, again by the family's money. He and his cohorts repeatedly committed murder, adultery, and robbery in public, until finally the people of Rome drove him out of the city. He later returned, and after emptying the papal treasury, sold the office to Gregory VI in 1045. The price was one or two thousand pounds of gold or silver.

Gregory VII (Hildebrand)

Fortunately for the Roman Catholic Church, eventually a powerful reformer came on the scene—Hildebrand. Upon the election of Leo IX in 1049, Hildebrand became the leading papal advisor and power behind the throne. He reigned as pope in his own right from 1073 to 1085, taking the name of Gregory VII. First as advisor and then as pope, he instituted a great moral reform of the papacy, clergy, and church structure.

As one might expect, the lower clergy had also degenerated during the nadir of the papacy. Many priests were married, contrary to the ideals of the church; even Pope Hadrian II (867-72) had formerly been married and his wife still lived when he became pope. Much worse, many other priests lived openly with concubines. Some

brought mistresses into their household under the pretext of their being sisters or housekeepers. Priests and even bishops promoted their illegitimate children, often under the guise of calling them nephews and nieces. Bribery and simony (the sale of church offices) was common at all levels.

Gregory outlawed clerical marriage. He reformed ecclesiastical law to penalize such abuses as simony, concubinage, and lay investiture (appointing laymen to church offices). He also arranged for the election of the pope by the college of cardinals (leading bishops).

Gregory VII firmly reestablished papal supremacy and authority. In the years preceding his reign, the popes had lost much respect and were treated as one among many secular rulers. They were subject to all the political and military intrigues that other monarchs endured. By bringing a high moral tone back to the papacy, Gregory was able to establish papal supremacy once again. He did not depend on moral persuasion alone, however, but he organized papal armies and dominions, reestablishing control by military and political force.

Gregory VII strongly affirmed that the pope is the head of the universal church and that he has power over all earthly rulers. He demanded that all Catholic kings acknowledge his authority over them as well as over the church. He maintained that no ruler could be crowned except by consent of the pope, and that no ruler could have any say over the appointment of bishops.

His unyielding position led to a dramatic conflict with the German (Holy Roman) emperor, Henry IV. Gregory deposed five of Henry's counselors for simony and threatened him with excommunication; Henry in turn convened

a council to depose Gregory. Gregory then excommunicated Henry, deposed him, and marshalled against him all the political, military, and religious power at his disposal.

Henry's allies deserted him, forcing him to submit to Gregory. He made a pilgrimage to Gregory's castle, waiting barefoot in the snow for three days as penance for his rebellion against the pope. The emperor acknowledged the pope's supremacy and right to depose him, and thereupon regained his throne.

The reconciliation was only temporary, however. Henry was able to muster allies, win military victories, and appoint an antipope. Italy and Germany were engulfed by civil war as pope fought antipope. Gregory's armies suffered reversals, and he died in exile, but Henry was ultimately defeated and also died in exile.

This conflict highlights two powerful weapons of the pope in the Middle Ages, excommunication and interdict. Excommunication means a person is expelled from the church and cannot receive the sacraments. Today an excommunicated person can simply join another church, but in those days there was only one state church, which taught that salvation came only through its sacraments. A sentence of excommunication was therefore tantamount to eternal damnation unless the person repented and came back on the church's terms.

If a king rebelled against the pope, he was subject to excommunication. For a king who believed in the doctrine of the church, excommunication was a powerful and effective threat. Even if the king was not concerned about his soul, excommunication released his subjects and vassals from their oath of loyalty to him. Thus the pope had great ability to undermine a king in his own country.

The ultimate weapon against a rebellious king was interdict, a sentence imposed on an entire country. The pope would forbid all the priests in that country to conduct any sacraments whatsoever. They could not baptize babies as they were born, solemnize marriages, offer mass, hear confession, grant penance, or say last rites over the dead. The dead could not be buried in consecrated graves. The whole country was at risk of eternal damnation. Even if the leaders cared nothing about the pope or religion, there was great potential for a massive revolt of the populace.

By his moral reforms and furtherance of supreme papal authority, Gregory VII set the stage for the Roman Catholic Church throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. In particular, in the next century, the papacy would reach the zenith of its power.

The Later Middle Ages
A.D. 1100–1500

The Crusades

Shortly after the reign of Pope Gregory VII, the Crusades began. They were military expeditions from 1095 to 1291 in which Catholic Europeans attempted to conquer the Holy Land from the Muslims. Their effects were primarily military, political, and economic, but they had a religious motivation, and they did much to shape the later Middle Ages.

In 622 Muhammad had founded Islam in Arabia as a monotheistic religion. Its adherents, called Muslims, worship Allah as God, honor Muhammad as the greatest prophet, and consider his book, the Qur'an (Koran), to be the supreme scriptures. The early Muslims spread their religion by force, quickly conquering Arabia, the Middle East, and North Africa. The Byzantine Empire held them

at bay in Eastern Europe until 1453. From 711 to 715 the Muslims conquered Spain, and they threatened Western Europe until Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne, defeated them at the Battle of Tours (France) in 732. They controlled Spain until their defeat in 1212, but they were not totally expelled until the 1400s.

In 1070 the Seljuk Turks took Jerusalem from the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt and began to mistreat Christian pilgrims and holy places. They also threatened the Byzantine Empire and the commercial activities of Italian cities. The Catholics of the Middle Ages felt it was their God-given duty to take away the Holy Land from the "infidel," reestablish Christian control, and protect the Holy Sepulcher. Beginning with Urban II in 1095, a series of popes called for Western European kings, nobles, and knights to invade Palestine, promising that God would grant them victory. Traveling priests made the Crusades their sermon topic, urging the people to respond to the call to arms. Peter the Hermit helped instigate the First Crusade, which attracted many peasants, while Bernard of Clairvaux's preaching helped bring about the Second. In all, there were nine crusades.[1]

Urban II and later popes offered a plenary (full) indulgence for anyone who went on a crusade. An indulgence was a payment for the temporal penalty of sins; it fulfilled the part of penance called satisfaction. A plenary indulgence covered one's whole life. A person who received such an indulgence would still need to confess his sins, but he would not have to perform any further works of penance for the rest of his life. The reason was that he had already done the ultimate holy work of fighting for the Holy Land.

This arrangement was attractive to many people because after the crusade they could live a sinful life without having to worry about paying the penalty for their sins. Moreover, they had license to plunder and expropriate territory, and they hoped to become rich, famous, and powerful by their exploits. By going on a crusade they seemingly could obtain the best of this world and the best of the world to come at the same time.

Many Crusaders did not wait till they reached the Holy Land to begin their plunder and massacre. As they traveled through Eastern Europe, they began pillaging, raping, killing, and particularly persecuting Jews. They needed provisions for their long journey, and they were eager to begin accumulating spoils of war. In fact, the Fourth Crusade never reached the Holy Land but conquered Constantinople, the seat of the Byzantine Empire, and established a Latin kingdom there for a time. Although the Byzantines were Eastern Orthodox Christians, the Crusaders considered them enemies because they did not pay allegiance to the pope.

When warriors did reach Palestine, they began a campaign of looting and killing there. Initially they killed many Christian Arabs, assuming from their appearance that they were Muslims. They eventually engaged the Muslims in great battles and seiges. The First Crusade conquered Jerusalem; they slaughtered seventy thousand Muslim men, woman, and children in the city and herded Jews into their synagogue to burn them alive. The Crusaders established a Catholic kingdom in Palestine, but ultimately the Muslims were able to defeat and expel them. The last Latin kingdom in Palestine fell in 1291.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of these campaigns was

the Children's Crusade. Preachers whipped up children into a religious frenzy, saying that children were of the essence of the kingdom of God and that God would be with them. They urged the children to march toward Palestine, trusting God to give them provisions and transportation across the Mediterranean.

On one occasion thirty thousand children set out for the Holy Land; another time twenty thousand children went. They believed they were doing the will of God and that God would miraculously grant them victory. One group marched to the seaside expecting God to part the waters for them, but He did not. Sadly, none of the children ever made it to Palestine. Many were kidnapped and sold as slaves, and many died of disease, starvation, and perils along the way.

One positive result of the Crusades is that they opened up contact and trade with the Middle East. At that time the Muslim civilization was more advanced than Western Europe. The Muslims had goods from the East that were rare or unavailable in the West, including silk, sugar, spices, and various fruits. They also had greater scholarship. Muslim scholars preserved many ancient Greek classics that were mostly forgotten or destroyed in the West. The exposure to the Muslim world brought a revival of education, philosophy, and culture to Catholic Europe.

Innocent III

The power of the papacy reached its highest point under Pope Innocent III, who reigned from 1198 to 1216. He is generally considered the most powerful pope in history, exerting greater authority over secular as well as reli-

gious matters than any other. He backed the Fourth and Fifth Crusades and authorized the formation of two important religious orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

In the early thirteenth century, Innocent announced a crusade, complete with the promise of a plenary indulgence, against the Albigenses, a large separatist group in southern France that rejected papal authority. Catholic armies attacked town after town, executing everyone who refused to pledge allegiance to the papacy. When the town of Beziers in southern France refused to surrender its heretics, the crusaders conquered it and massacred twenty thousand men, women, and children.

The Inquisition

The campaign against the Albigenses led to the establishment of the Papal Inquisition. The Inquisition was a tribunal of the church from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries that sought to regulate doctrine. In the twelfth century, the church proclaimed the death penalty for heresy and began establishing procedures to investigate heretics. The Papal Inquisition was fully established by the Council of Toulouse in 1229, which also forbade the laity to possess a copy of the Bible.

Relatively mild at first, it judged certain books and doctrines as acceptable or unacceptable. It soon received a well-deserved reputation for terror, becoming deeply involved in the persecution, torture, and killing of so-called heretics.

The zenith of the Inquisition came in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Many people were accused falsely by political opponents, greedy officials, or jealous neighbors. Since a convicted person often forfeited his possessions

to the church, state, or his accuser, many people had a financial interest in the investigations.

In 1252 Pope Innocent IV authorized the use of torture for suspected heretics, and later popes condoned it also. In 1280, Pope Nicholas III threatened to excommunicate all laymen who "discuss[ed] matters of the Catholic faith" or who failed to report a heretic to the authorities.[2]

The Inquisition operated under the authority of the pope and was not accountable to civil authorities. An accused person had no guaranteed rights; he was at the mercy of the inquisitor. A common method of determining whether a person was guilty or innocent was to torture him. If the person was innocent, it was commonly believed that God would protect him from pain or harm. If he confessed under torture, which most people did, then he was guilty. If he refused to confess, perhaps he was innocent, but even then it was often said that he was able to resist only because of demonic influence.

Methods of torture included flogging, putting people on the rack to stretch their body and break their bones, throwing them in a dungeon, roasting their feet, and much more. Punishments included severe penance, fines, banishment, imprisonment, and execution. The church historically refused to shed blood, but it now devised a method of technically abiding by the rule yet exterminating heretics: it burned them at the stake.

The Spanish Inquisition, established in 1478 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, was modeled after the earlier Papal Inquisition, but it was under the control of the royal government. It too was responsible for widespread atrocities and executions. The most notorious inquisitor was

Tomas de Torquemada, a Dominican priest appointed as grand inquisitor in 1483. He issued harsh punishments and instigated the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. The Spanish Inquisition did not officially end until 1834.

Boniface VIII

Pope Boniface VIII declared 1300 to be a year of jubilee and offered a plenary indulgence to everyone who made a pilgrimage to Rome that year. The resulting offerings at St. Peter's were staggering. In 1302 he stated, "It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."[3] This was the official Catholic doctrine of the later Middle Ages.

The authority of the papacy continued to advance theologically. Ultimately the First Vatican Council proclaimed the doctrine of papal infallibility: when the pope speaks *ex cathedra* (officially) on matters of faith and morals, he is authoritative and without error.

Although the papacy reached the peak of its power in both religious theory and political reality, before long it came under increasing attack from secular and religious sources. In fact, shortly after the absolute statement of Boniface, the papacy was severely crippled.

The "Babylonian Captivity" and Papal Schism

From about 1309 to 1377, the papacy fell almost totally under French control, and this period is often called the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy. France dominated much of Western Europe at this time, and the French kings were able to influence the selection of the popes.

Some of the popes so elected were French, and they

naturally promoted French interests and paid heed to the French government. French influence grew so strong that the papal residence was moved to Avignon in southern France. For almost seventy years the popes ruled from there instead of Rome.

The papal court in Avignon became noted for luxury, venality, and immorality. John XXII and other popes of this time openly sold ecclesiastical offices.

The move to Avignon brought the papacy under the military and political control of the French kings. The pope no longer had his own power base or army to compete with secular monarchs. Instead, he became more or less a pawn in the hands of the French.

Naturally this arrangement stirred up great resistance and resentment in the rest of Europe and particularly in Rome. In 1377, Gregory XI returned to Rome but soon died. Under the murderous threats of a Roman mob, the cardinals elected an Italian pope. The French cardinals revolted at this shift of power and declared the election invalid because of duress, whereupon the college of cardinals elected a French pope, who took up residence in Avignon again.

The period from 1378 to 1417 is called the Papal Schism. There were two sets of rival popes, in Avignon and Rome. Each claimed to be the only pope, the sole head of the church and of all Catholic states. Each pronounced eternal damnation on all who followed the other.

This schism posed an acute dilemma for each Catholic country, city, and individual. Everyone's eternal destiny supposedly depended upon which pope he acknowledged, but how were people to discern the true pope? The situation was confusing for sincere people and

quite disillusioning. Influential archbishops, bishops, kings, nobles, and future saints were lined up on both sides. There was no certain way to tell which pope would be legitimate in the eyes of history.

Many people decided that both popes were motivated primarily by political, economic, and selfish interests. They concluded that neither was entitled to the supremacy that both demanded, that God's judgment would not fall upon those who rejected such self-serving and corrupt claims, and that their eternal salvation did not depend on the vagarities of secular politics. The papacy, and Catholicism as a whole, lost much respect and influence because of the Babylonian Captivity and the Papal Schism.

The Council of Pisa in 1409 attempted to resolve the schism by deposing both rivals and electing a new pope, but it only complicated matters: now there were three popes. Finally, the Council of Constance (1415-17) successfully ended the schism with the election of Martin V.

The Renaissance Popes

Perhaps a strong figure like Hildebrand could have reversed much of the damage caused by the Papal Schism, but before long the papacy degenerated further into moral corruption equaled only by the two hundred years before him. This new low point came during the Renaissance.

The Renaissance (literally, "rebirth") was a cultural renewal in Europe from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, particularly in Italy. It was a period of great revival and restoration of Greco-Roman culture. Many famous Italian artists, architects, sculptors, writers, and

composers emerged during this time, deriving inspiration from ancient Greece and Rome. They included such men as Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, Raphael, Tintoretto, Botticelli, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

The popes of this time were worldly minded, and they participated fully in the Renaissance. On the positive side they became great patrons of the arts, but on the negative side they grew extremely corrupt, immoral, and pagan. Many of them had mistresses and children before their ascension to the papacy. Some consulted astrologers. They openly practiced simony and nepotism (appointing relatives, sometimes children, to high office). They were deceitful, treacherous, and politically motivated.

Sixtus IV and Julius II were warrior popes who fought to restore and increase papal territory. Innocent VIII celebrated the marriages of his children and grandchildren in the Vatican. Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) had numerous children and mistresses, apparently some while he was pope. His son and right-hand man, Cesare, committed several murders to advance the family's interests. Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici), the pope at the time of the Reformation, was made an abbot at eight and a cardinal at fourteen. His court was luxurious, immoral, and thoroughly secular.

In order to raise money for their grand architectural and artistic projects, as well as their personal support, these popes sold indulgences, sending traveling emissaries among the populace. Leo X sold indulgences to finance the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

Eastern Orthodoxy

For centuries, the Eastern (Greek) and Western

(Latin) churches had gone their separate ways, with the Great Schism occurring in 1054. The result was Orthodoxy in the East and Catholicism in the West. While Roman Catholicism was consolidated as one church under the pope, Eastern Orthodoxy developed into different churches in each land, such as the Greek Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, and so on.

These national churches conducted their own internal affairs but maintained fellowship with one another and submitted to the overall leadership of the patriarchs (highest bishops). The patriarch of Constantinople became the first among equals in this oligarchy, but he never acquired supreme powers like the pope.

Leading Orthodox theologians in the Middle Ages were *Simeon the New Theologian*, a mystical writer, and *Gregory Palamas*, a systematic theologian.

The major differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism were as follows: (1) The East refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope and, when it was later proclaimed, the doctrine of papal infallibility. (2) As discussed in chapters 8 and 14, the West accepted the procession of the Spirit from both the Father and the Son, while the East held that the Spirit proceeded from the Father only. (3) The East never fully accepted the doctrine of purgatory. (4) Although the East venerated Mary, they did not fully embrace later Western doctrinal developments regarding her, such as her immaculate conception. (See chapter 16.) (5) The East allowed the veneration of icons but not statues, while the West used statues. (6) The Eastern church practiced baptism only by immersion whereas the standard practice in the West

became sprinkling. (7) A married man could become a priest in the East, but not in the West after Gregory VII. (8) There were also differences of liturgy and church administration.

As far as fundamental doctrine, the differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism were relatively minor. Both accepted the same seven sacraments as means of grace, the necessity of water baptism for the remission of sins, and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The most important differences related to culture, church politics, and secular politics. Today, the mutual anathemas have been removed, but the division remains.

For most of its separate history, the Eastern church has lived under the shadow of Islam. For centuries the Byzantine Empire slowly declined as it fought off the Turks. In 1453, the Turks finally conquered Constantinople; today the city is known as Istanbul, the capital of Turkey. From that point on Eastern Orthodoxy lost most of its political power, and its theological development was stunted as it struggled for survival against Muslim overlords.

Today, the Orthodox are a minority in the Middle East, the location of their most ancient and once most powerful churches. Orthodoxy wields its greatest political influence in Greece, which was liberated from Muslim rule in the 1820s. The Orthodox Church is also quite prominent in Russia and several other countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European communist bloc, including Ukraine, Belarus, Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia.

Historically, it has worked closely with the state, often being subservient to it after the pattern set under the

Roman and Byzantine Empires. The Russian Orthodox Church, for example, was largely under the control of the czars and then the communists.

Under Vladimir I, Russia formally converted to Christianity in 988, and it followed the Orthodox tradition. After the fall of Constantinople, the Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed that Moscow was the new seat of Christendom. Originally, it said, central authority was in Rome, but when Rome deviated doctrinally and the Western Roman Empire fell that authority was transferred to Constantinople. Upon the fall of that city, the locus of church authority and the depository of pure apostolic truth became Moscow.

Eastern Orthodoxy remained in relative theological isolation for centuries. The Protestant Reformation did not have a major impact in Orthodox lands, but it did provoke some theological reflection and response. Most of the criticisms that Protestants directed against Roman Catholicism also applied to Eastern Orthodoxy. For the most part, Eastern Orthodoxy condemned Protestantism, particularly Calvinism.

Monasticism and Religious Orders

Monasticism was an important feature throughout the Middle Ages. The Abbey of Cluny, a Benedictine monastery in France founded in 910, led a great revival of monasticism. The monasteries were important repositories of culture and learning. Monks were prominent theologians and teachers, and monks produced most manuscripts of the Bible, as well as other literature.

For the common people in feudal society, life was a struggle for survival, consisting mostly of hard work with

little leisure time. Nobles and knights had a more privi-
leged lifestyle, but they were often poorly educated and
were preoccupied with politics and warfare. By contrast,
many monks were dedicated, secluded, and deeply pious;
they had the opportunity to study and access to literature
that was generally unavailable.

Over time, monasteries became important centers of
political and economic power as well as education and
culture. Some monasteries became enormously rich
through gifts, bequests, and annual income. Often a
nobleman would endow a monastery in order to earn
merits and to ensure that the monks would say prayers
and masses for his soul after death. The abbots of large
monasteries became every bit as influential as nobles and
bishops. Some monks lived quite corrupt, luxurious, and
immoral lives, contrary to their original purpose.

In reaction to this worldly trend, in 1209 a rich young
nobleman named Francis of Assisi renounced his wealth
and founded a religious order called the Franciscans.
They took vows of poverty and, partially emulating the
Waldenses (a separatist group), they traveled from place
to place preaching.

Shortly thereafter, Dominic, a Spanish churchman,
founded another important order, the Dominicans, whose
primary purpose was preaching and study. Many of them
became influential theologians, notably Thomas Aquinas
and Albertus Magnus. The Dominicans were later placed
in charge of the Inquisition.

These two orders were established as mendicant
(dependent upon alms), and their members were called
friars. They became powerful missionary organizations,
and they brought a renewal of preaching, which had been

restricted to the bishops but now became standard for all clergy. Both Francis and Dominic were later made saints.

Some of the mendicant friars sounded almost like Protestants in their emphasis on preaching the gospel, and some had spiritual experiences with God. There are even reports of speaking in tongues among medieval mendicant orders. Some of them, notably Bernardino (a Franciscan) and Savonarola (a Dominican), preached against worldliness, persuading people to give up gambling, dancing, immodest dress, false hair, jewelry, makeup, worldly music, and worldly sports and amusements.[4]

Other religious orders established in the Middle Ages were the Augustinians, Premonstrants, Carthusians, and Carmelites. Three military orders, who took monastic vows and bore arms, arose out of the Crusades but were later disbanded: the Knights of St. John (Hospitalers), Knights Templar, and Teutonic Knights.

Scholasticism

Medieval theologians felt a keen responsibility to uphold the authority of Scripture and church tradition. Dissent was strictly controlled. While various controversies arose, particularly over matters in which the church had no official position, there was not the independence of thought and questioning of authority that occurred after the Reformation.

The theologians of the later Middle Ages (c. 1100-1500) sought to systematize the doctrines that had been handed down to them, resolve unanswered questions, and add technical details. Most of them were monks or friars, and most were associated with teaching positions

or universities. Their movement is called Scholasticism, and they are called the Schoolmen.

The Schoolmen started from the assumption that traditional church doctrine was correct. On the whole, they did not truly investigate or question doctrine. They affirmed the authority of Scripture, the writings of the early church fathers, the church councils, and the papal decrees; they considered these to be expressions of divine law that no one should challenge.

The Early Schoolmen

The early Schoolmen particularly adopted this approach of accepting traditional doctrine. Their theological endeavors consisted mainly of reiterating the accepted teachings, categorizing them, and developing a systematic theology to incorporate all of them. From a Protestant perspective, only rarely did they provide a fresh understanding of important issues.

The theology of this time seems quite sterile, rigid, and repetitious because it was confined by the straitjacket of "orthodoxy"—an orthodoxy that in many cases was far from scriptural. The goal was not to uncover truth but to prove what was already decreed to be truth and to systemize this body of truth. While this characterization of the early Schoolmen may be somewhat harsh and oversimplified, to a great extent it is accurate.

Since the great issues of theology were already settled, the Schoolmen were reduced to debating philosophical, abstract, and even meaningless issues. For instance, they seriously discussed questions such as the following:[5] Is the understanding of angels brighter in the morning or evening? Who sinned most, Adam or Eve? What hour of

the day did Adam sin? Can several angels be in one place at the same time? Could God have become incarnate as a female? In the resurrection will man receive back the rib he lost in Eden, and will he recover all the clippings of his fingernails? If a mouse nibbles on the consecrated wafer of the Eucharist, does it partake of the body of Christ? Do the lost sin in hell? The Schoolmen tried to be exhaustive in their theology.

Probably the major debate during this time was over realism versus nominalism, a philosophical question that went back to Plato and Aristotle. Bitter controversies arose over this issue.

Some of the Schoolmen adopted the philosophy of Plato and applied it to Christianity. They embraced Plato's teaching of realism: everything that exists is an imperfect manifestation of an objective, perfect reality in the unseen, eternal world of ideas and spirit. For example, in the world of ideas there are objective, perfect ideals of humanity, beauty, and truth. The humans, beauty, and truth that we encounter in the physical world are only imperfect reflections of the real world of ideas.

The alternative view was nominalism, which stemmed from the philosophy of Aristotle. According to this position, universal concepts such as humanity, beauty, and truth have no objective reality in the spirit world. Rather, they are simply intellectual extractions or generalizations that we derive from common experience and observation. We develop an idea of beauty, for instance, but it is subjective, existing only in our minds; it is not an external standard in eternity.

One of the most prominent of the early Schoolmen was *Anselm*, who served as archbishop of Canterbury

(1093-1109), the highest ecclesiastical office in England. Anselm adopted realism. He is characterized by his statement, "I believe in order to understand." He accepted the doctrines of the church as they were given to him, and he sought to understand and explain them.

Using realism, Anselm formulated the ontological argument for the existence of God: We have the idea of a perfect God in our minds, and a necessary element of perfection is existence. Therefore, God must exist. The idea can only come from an objective reality in the eternal world.

Another prominent Schoolman was *Peter Abelard* (1079-1142), whose teaching led to the founding of the University of Paris. He had a tragic, immoral love affair with a student, Heloise, and later became a monk. In contrast to Anselm, he sought "to understand in order to believe." Unlike most of the Schoolmen, he advocated basing one's beliefs on what a person could rationally comprehend. Interestingly, Abelard was accused of Sabellianism and twice condemned as a heretic. He employed trinitarian terminology, but his definition of the three persons seemed to reduce them to manifestations.

Other prominent theologians during this time were *Alexander of Hales*, a strong proponent of penance; *Hugo of St. Victor*, the first great German theologian; *Albertus Magnus*, the greatest of the German scholars; *Peter the Lombard*, father of medieval systematic theology; and *Bonaventure*, a theologian and mystic. These men adhered to the orthodox Catholic position.

The doctrine of transubstantiation continued to cause some controversy until the Fourth Lateran Council, held in Rome in 1215. Under Pope Innocent III, the council elevated transubstantiation to the status of official church

doctrine on a par with the doctrines of the trinity and Christology. Henceforth there could be no further debate on the issue.

Another significant discussion during this time concerned the Atonement. Probably the most popular view, dating back to Origen and Ambrose, was that Christ atoned for our sins by making payment to the devil. The devil owned us because we were in sin, but Jesus Christ died to pay the devil his price, thereby redeeming us. This position raises many questions, however. Did the devil ever have a right to us? Did he legitimately rule the human race? When Jesus Christ arose from the dead did He take back His payment from the devil? Did He cheat the devil?

In one of the few truly significant contributions of medieval theology, Anselm developed a more biblical view in response to these questions. Using a legal approach, he explained that God's law required punishment for all sins. Christ's death was not a payment to the devil but satisfaction of the demands of God's holy law.

Abelard said that the purpose of Christ's death was to reveal God's love and to awaken a reciprocal love in us. His opponents charged that under this view Christ's death was not strictly necessary, but Abelard responded that it was, for Christ thereby took the punishment of our sins.

This exchange of ideas on the Atonement foreshadowed the twentieth-century debate between fundamentalists and modernists. Fundamentalists and evangelicals teach the substitutionary Atonement, for which Anselm was the first to provide a full explanation. Modernists and liberals reduce the Atonement to a moral influence, employing Abelard's idea.

Thomas Aquinas

The most prominent and brilliant theologian of the Middle Ages was *Thomas Aquinas* (1225-74). He was the official theologian of the Dominicans. The Roman Catholic Church later canonized him and made him an official "doctor of the church," meaning that he is an authoritative theologian for Roman Catholicism. He organized Scholasticism into a comprehensive theology, and he, more than anyone else, epitomizes traditional Roman Catholicism as it emerged from the Middle Ages.

Thomas Aquinas developed his theology along the lines of the philosophy of Aristotle. It is sometimes said that Augustine is the Christian Plato, while Aquinas is the Christian Aristotle. The two of them are the greatest of Catholic theologians, and Aquinas followed Augustine closely on many points.

Aquinas was exhaustive in his approach, and many Catholic and Protestant theologians have drawn from his definitions and explanations. He considered the doctrine of the trinity to be the foundation of theology. The discussion of medieval theology in chapter 16 largely follows the teaching of Aquinas.

The Later Schoolmen

The later Schoolmen, those of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, began to question some traditional teachings and follow new directions, but they had to do so subtly. If they held nonstandard views, they usually paid lip service to the accepted doctrines but then modified them by redefining terms.

An example was *John Duns Scotus*, who toyed with heretical teachings in disguised fashion. He emphasized

the authority of Scripture and the church and so stayed in the good graces of the hierarchy.

William of Occam, a nominalist, was not as subtle. He disagreed with papal supremacy, and he held that the Bible was supreme in authority over tradition. He thus prepared the way for later Protestant thinking. He was able to maintain peace with the church by saying that the doctrines of the church are identical to the doctrines of the Bible. While he accepted traditional doctrine, he theoretically did so based on the Bible rather than tradition. His method marked a shift, and others would later use it to reject traditional doctrines that they did not find in the Bible.

Mysticism

Not everyone approached theology in a dry, rationalistic, philosophical way. A strong component of medieval piety was mysticism, the search for union with the divine through deep meditation or contemplation. In the ninth century *John Scotus Erigena* was an early medieval mystic who taught that salvation consists of unity with the world of ideas.

Another leading mystic was *Bernard of Clairvaux*, founder of an influential French monastery in 1115. Sounding almost like a Protestant, he emphasized a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and he spoke of loving, worshiping, praying to, and experiencing Christ. Many of his statements are quite foreign to modern Protestants and Pentecostals, however, for he described spiritual experiences in extremely mystical, ecstatic, and even sensuous terms, such as kissing Christ on the lips. Bernard was a strong supporter of the papacy and Catholic orthodoxy, and a bitter enemy of Abelard.

Catherine of Siena was another mystical writer. She supposedly received the stigmata, or the wounds of Christ, in her body, and she was later canonized. Influential politically, she helped persuade Pope Gregory XI to return from Avignon to Rome in 1377, ending the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy.

In the later Middle Ages, *Meister Eckhart* was a mystical writer who was condemned as a pantheist. *Thomas à Kempis* wrote one of the most famous religious books of all time, a devotional work entitled *The Imitation of Christ*, which is still sold today.

There was continued emphasis on asceticism. Monks, nuns, and penitents often inflicted severe punishments and deprivations upon their bodies in order to attain holiness. Mystical experiences were often associated with these painful disciplines. Processions of flagellants sometimes appeared: people marched down the streets whipping their bare backs in a form of penance.

Such practices, as well as many of the events discussed in this chapter, are difficult for the modern mind to comprehend. They become somewhat more understandable in the overall context of medieval theology, which we investigate in chapter 16.

16

The Medieval Doctrinal System

In this chapter we examine the theological system of the Schoolmen as well as popular piety of the Middle Ages shortly before the Reformation. While we will describe Roman Catholicism as of that time, we should remember that most of these beliefs and practices still characterize the Roman Catholic Church today.

The Sacraments

In the twelfth century the sacraments were definitely established at seven in number: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, marriage, holy orders, and extreme unction. In Catholic theology the sacraments are the means of grace; salvation is applied to a person through these ceremonies. The grace of God does not

operate primarily through individual prayer and faith but supremely through the church, the hierarchy, and the clergy by means of the sacraments. The sacraments are essential to the saving work of God in a person's life, for they restore man to his original state of righteousness by imparting the redemptive merits of Jesus Christ.

The biblical steps of repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit had long ago faded from the institutional church, yet people still desired some specific assurance of salvation. The sacraments helped meet that need for a tangible religious experience.

From the clergy's point of view, the sacraments served to bind individuals to the church. If they wanted to be saved, they had to submit to the visible church structure.

Water Baptism

Throughout the Middle Ages baptism was administered to infants and to the rare adult convert. Immersion was still common, but eventually the standard method became triple sprinkling "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The later medieval theologians held that the mention of each person of the trinity was essential to the rite and thus to salvation.

Baptism was held to confer regeneration, forgiveness for the original sin inherited from Adam, and in the case of an older baptismal candidate, remission for actual sins committed to that point. It was essential to salvation, although the baptism of desire or the baptism of blood could substitute for water in cases of necessity. Unbaptized infants who died went to limbo.

Confirmation

A child received confirmation when he grew old enough to embrace the faith for himself, typically at age seven but now usually twelve. Only a bishop could administer this rite. Its purpose was the communication of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the church member.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist, or the mass, was the central feature of the weekly church service, and many pious individuals partook of it daily. The mass was considered a sacrifice for the sins of believers. Its purpose was to strengthen sanctifying grace, the grace of God that works in a person's life. Every time someone partook of the mass, he received a fresh infusion of the grace of God. The mass also served to remit venial sins.

Gregory I and later theologians identified "seven deadly sins," or capital sins, as the sources of all evil. They were lust, greed, gluttony, envy, pride, sloth, and anger.

Sins were further classified as mortal or venial. A mortal sin was a willful transgression of the law of God. If a person died with unconfessed mortal sin in his life, he would be eternally damned.

Then there were venial sins—relatively minor deviations from God's law, the general sins of humanity. Since everyone committed venial sins regularly, it was difficult or impossible to confess them, but if a person would submit to the church and its rituals his venial sins would be covered. The Eucharist was particularly helpful in this regard. Simply by going to mass a person received forgiveness for venial sins.

The mass was a sacrifice of the blood and body of Jesus Christ. The same body that hung on the cross was invisibly but materially present. The bread and wine actually changed substance; only the "accidents" (outward impressions to the senses) remained the same. (Aristotle had distinguished substance from accidents.) God allowed this intangible transformation so that people would not be repulsed by the eating of human flesh and drinking of human blood. In short, the Eucharist was a sacrifice for the sins of the participants and their dead loved ones.

In 1220 Pope Honorius III proclaimed that as a consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the consecrated wafer of bread should be worshiped as Christ Himself. After the priest pronounced the words of consecration, he would elevated the host (wafer), and the people would bow in worship. Technically, true worship (adoration) belonged only to God, while mere veneration belonged to Mary, the saints, and statues. In the case of the consecrated host, however, people were to worship it with the worship that is due to God alone.

Medieval priests took great care of the consecrated elements. They could not be casually discarded but were supposed to be entirely consumed. Lest the people accidentally spill the blood of Jesus, in the twelfth century the custom arose of withholding the wine from the laity, reserving it for the priest alone. Christ's blood and body were both present in each element, so the people still received the full benefit of the Eucharist.

Every Catholic was to attend mass once a week. Once a year was absolutely mandatory. The first Communion of a child, taken after confirmation, was a special celebration.

Penance

A person was supposed to have the attitude of repentance at all times, but penance was a distinct sacrament for sins committed after baptism, particularly mortal sins. Penance consisted of four elements: contrition (sorrow for sin), confession (to the priest), absolution (priestly pronouncement of God's forgiveness), and satisfaction (payment for the temporal penalty of sin).

When penance originally emerged in ancient church history, a person had to render satisfaction first, and then the bishop (later the priest) would grant absolution. The penitent would do what was required and report back to the religious authority. But eventually this order was reversed. The priest would pronounce absolution and specify works of penance. If the sinner did not perform them he was still assured of eternal forgiveness and ultimate entrance into heaven, but he would have to suffer in purgatory until he paid complete satisfaction. What originated as an attempt to ascertain that a person's repentance was genuine (reminiscent of John the Baptist's injunction in Luke 3:7-8 to produce fruit of repentance), became part of a merit system that evaded the need for genuine repentance and holiness in this life.

Theoretically, the priest announced God's forgiveness, but in practice it appeared that the priest was the one who forgave the sinner. Thus the priest wielded enormous power over the lives of the people. He could demand confession of the most intimate details of one's sin, and an unscrupulous priest could use this information for personal advantage.

Forgiveness took away the eternal suffering for sin, but works of penance were necessary to meet the temporal

penalty. Either the sinner inflicted sufficient suffering upon himself, or he underwent this suffering in purgatory. For the soul in purgatory, devout loved ones on earth could attend mass, perform penance, and pay the priest to celebrate mass for the dead, thus helping meet the penalty and releasing the soul from purgatory earlier than otherwise.

The fourth element, satisfaction, is usually what we think of when we discuss penance. The priest would prescribe the satisfaction required, consulting penitentials (lists of predetermined penances for specific sins). Penance usually included prayers, such as hundreds of repetitions of the "Hail Mary" or "Our Father" prayers. Other forms of penance were various good works, monetary contributions, fastings, pilgrimages to sacred shrines, and punishments of the body.

People could also perform satisfaction without it being specifically required. In this way they could store extra merits that would be available when they needed them later. A good example was going on a crusade. A life filled with extra good works would enable a person to spend only a short time in purgatory, or in rare cases, skip purgatory altogether.

The practice arose of hiring someone else to do one's penance. Once a person confessed his sins and obtained the prescribed satisfaction from the priest, he could pay someone else to perform the satisfaction for him.

A similar practice was the sale of indulgences, from which the church profited directly. An indulgence was a pronouncement that sins had been paid for. Technically, an indulgence did not remit the sin itself, for that still required contrition, confession, and absolution, but it met the requirement of satisfaction.

By purchasing an indulgence or performing some specified deed to obtain one, the sinner could avoid other works of satisfaction. He could buy an indulgence before or after the commission of a sin, and he could buy one for a loved one in purgatory. He could even obtain a plenary indulgence to cover all the sins of his life and so never worry about penance again (except for confession).

Pope Innocent III made confession mandatory at least once a year at Easter. Of course, people were urged to confess more often in the case of mortal sins.

Extreme Unction

Extreme unction, often called last rites, involved an anointing with oil (hence the word "unction") just before a person's death (hence the word "extreme"). Originally it had a basis in James 5:14-16, which instructs the elders of the church to pray for a sick person and anoint him with oil. In Scripture, the object is divine healing, but after the miraculous power of God left the institutional church no one expected such a miracle to take place. Instead, the priest anointed a sick person with oil in anticipation of his death.

In this, as in many other cases, we see traces of the original apostolic pattern preserved in the rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. What was once a living reality became a magical ceremony and an empty form. The words of II Timothy 3:5 apply: "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Water baptism and confirmation are similar examples. Although theologians correctly taught that baptism was for the remission of sins, they divorced it from faith, repentance, and the name of Jesus. Instead of believers

actually experiencing the powerful cleansing of God in their lives, babies were unknowingly sprinkled in a lifeless ritual. Likewise, theologians held that the Holy Spirit was imparted by the laying on of hands at confirmation, but the rite substituted for an overwhelming, supernatural experience with God accompanied by the sign of tongues.

In theory, when the priest administered extreme unction, God would heal the dying person if He so willed. In practice, people ceased expecting that such a miracle would take place. Instead, the ceremony became a last opportunity to confess sins and receive forgiveness for them.

When a person became deathly ill or suffered a deadly injury, he possibly did not have an opportunity for the sacrament of penance before he died. Extreme unction served to cover his sins between his last penance and his death, in effect becoming a substitute for penance. If he was able, the dying person could confess his sins to the priest. He would not have time to perform satisfaction, but he would do so in purgatory. If the person was already unconscious when the priest came, the last rites would still be effective for his soul. Even if he was already dead, the theory arose that his soul would linger at the scene for a time.

Through baptism, the mass, penance, and extreme unction, the Roman Catholic system tried to cover all the sins of a person's life. There was a sacrament for every contingency and every sin.

Once again, we see the form without the power. The New Testament pattern is to be born of water and of the Spirit and then live a holy life by the power of the

indwelling Holy Spirit (John 3:5; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:1-4). Forgiveness is available upon personal confession of sins to God, but the norm is for the Christian to live a victorious, overcoming life (I John 1:9; 2:1). Under the Catholic system, however, a daily life of sin was the expectation, and the sacraments became man-made attempts to compensate for the lack of biblical spirituality and holiness.

Ordination

The remaining two sacraments—ordination and marriage—were mutually exclusive and were unlike the others. The first five were designed for everyone; indeed, they brought salvation. The last two were not essential for everyone, nor even meant for everyone, but it was expected that people would choose one or the other. And if a person chose one, he could not choose the other.

Ordination to ministry has roots in the New Testament and was practiced from the earliest times. (See Acts 6:6; 13:3; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6.) It was not originally considered a sacrament like baptism or the Eucharist, however.

In the Middle Ages, the indispensable role of the clergy in administrating the sacraments, and therefore salvation, prompted theologians to classify ordination itself as a sacrament. When the bishop ordained a priest by the laying on of hands, the priest received grace to rule the church and perform his sacred duties. Without ordination he could not administer valid sacraments, but with it he could baptize, hear confession, celebrate mass, and administer last rites. The efficacy of these sacraments did not depend upon his personal faith or holiness but upon his ordination.

This doctrine was helpful in assuring the people of salvation. Even though they did not feel the grace of God during the administration of sacraments, and even though in many cases their priest was obviously unworthy, immoral, or incompetent, they could pin their hopes on the sacrament of ordination. It carried an almost magical power that validated the power of all the other sacraments, which were essential to salvation.

Those who received ordination could not marry and they had to remain celibate. In practice, however, this rule was widely violated, as discussed in chapter 14. Even the hierarchy and the papacy were not immune from the sins of fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. Clergy at all levels were commonly known to have mistresses and illegitimate children. Some convents were well known as brothels, sometimes serving nearby monasteries.[1] Medieval literature abounds with jokes about immoral clergymen. Celibacy was an idealistic theory, but it did not work in practice.

Marriage

Marriage was instituted by God Himself (Genesis 2:18, 24-25), but the New Testament does not indicate that it should be a distinctly church ceremony. It was a divinely ordained, civil institution that preceded the law of Moses as well as the church.

Medieval theologians concluded that marriage was a sacrament because its primary purpose was spiritual, namely to multiply church membership. Grace was conferred to unite the two people in marriage and to preserve the union until death. Marriage could not be dissolved except by death. Divorce was allowed only for adultery,

but even then remarriage was forbidden. When national laws later allowed secular divorce, a divorced and remarried person was considered to be an adulterer and could not take Communion. Children of such a marriage were illegitimate, with all the social and legal ramifications of such a designation.

This strict stance against divorce did not solve the problem of human immorality and infidelity; people just worked around the prohibition. Prominent citizens frequently acquired mistresses and justified the arrangement by reasoning that they were still married to one wife. Another loophole was the annulment. In theory, an annulment was appropriate if a marriage was never valid from the start—for example, if it never had been consummated physically or if there never had been mutual consent.

Over the centuries an involved ecclesiastical procedure arose for investigating circumstances that could justify an annulment. People with great political clout, or who spent considerable time and money, could often have their marriage declared null and void, even if they had been married for years and had many children. They would try to find some technical impediment that would justify setting the marriage aside. Today, psychological theories are often employed to prove that the couple was somehow incompatible from the start or incapable of giving full, mature consent.

The Doctrine of Mary

The doctrine of Mary continued to develop throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern age. Prayer to Mary and worship ("veneration") of Mary were extremely popular, even exceeding prayer to and worship of Christ Himself.

In essence, Mary was elevated to divine status. Everyone agreed that she was sinless and that because of her superabundant merits she could grant miracles to petitioners. Many people reported seeing visions of Mary and receiving miracles by praying to her.

Bernard of Clairvaux said Mary was so beautiful that God Himself had desire (*concupiscentia*, "lust") for her, and a hymn described God as looking on her with passion. Various writers allegorized the Song of Solomon as a bridal song for the Holy Spirit and Mary. The Schoolmen called her the "mother of God, queen of heaven, queen of angels, empress of the world, mediatrix, door of heaven, and tree of life."[2]

Scripture reveals that Mary was a virtuous and blessed woman, but, unlike the case of Jesus, it does not exempt her from the general statement that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). To the contrary, Jesus explicitly placed her on a par with all other faithful believers. On one occasion, when people informed Him that His mother and brothers were waiting to see Him, He pointed to His disciples and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:47-50). Another time, a woman who was listening to the teaching of Jesus exclaimed that His mother was specially blessed. He responded, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28).

Mary needed salvation just as much as anyone else, and she obeyed the Lord's commands just as the other disciples. She was among the 120 who prayed together in Jerusalem at Christ's command until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14; 2:1).

Nevertheless, following the teaching of Augustine and others, the Roman Catholic Church affirmed that Mary never sinned. Eventually, the church also concluded that, unlike everyone else, she was born without original sin (the guilt of Adam and Eve).

Theologians enunciated this belief as the doctrine of the immaculate conception, which does not refer to the virgin conception of Jesus but to the conception of Mary. This doctrine means that Mary was conceived without sin in the womb of her mother. She did not inherit original sin.

Supposedly this doctrine was necessary to guarantee the sinlessness of Christ, on the theory that if Mary had a sinful nature then He would have inherited it from her. But the only way to maintain this logic is to say that Mary's mother, grandmother, and so on back to Eve were all sinless. At some point, we must realize that God caused a miraculous conception to take place that brought forth a sinless human from a mother who had a sinful nature. In the Bible, this sinless conception occurred in the womb of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, but in Catholic theology it occurred in the womb of Mary's mother.

Pelagius had taught that Mary was sinless and was conceived without original sin, but he did not believe anyone had original sin and he believed anyone could potentially live a sinless life, although few did. In the twelfth century, the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary became popular. Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, and the Dominicans denied it, while Duns Scotus and the Franciscans championed it. The controversy was not finally resolved until 1854, when Pope Pius IX declared the immaculate conception of Mary to be official church doctrine.

Another common belief was that, at the end of her life, Mary was bodily assumed into heaven without seeing corruption. Pope Pius XII made the assumption of Mary an official doctrine in 1950.

One of the best ways to gain insight into medieval thought concerning Mary is to examine stories told by the common people. The accounts we will mention were widely circulated in the Middle Ages as true, and they reveal the mindset of the people.[3]

According to one story, a widow's only son was captured in warfare, so she prayed to Mary for his deliverance. After praying for many weeks without a response, she went to church and stole the sculptured babe from the arms of the statue of Mary. Thereupon Mary appeared to the widow's son, freed him from his captors, and gave him a message for his mother: "Now that I have returned your son to you, return my son to me."

In another case, a monk became ill. Mary appeared to him and gave him milk from her breast. He was thereby healed.

A robber always prayed to Mary before embarking on his thefts, asking for her help in his endeavors. He was finally caught and hanged, but at the hanging he was miraculously supported by the unseen hands of Mary. The people noted this miracle and set him free.

A monk was struggling with temptation but could not seem to get victory. Finally he prayed to Jesus, "Lord, if Thou free me not from this temptation, I will complain of Thee to Thy mother."

In yet another story, Satan persuaded a youth to deny Christ but could not get him to deny Mary. When the youth repented of his sin of denying Christ, Mary interceded on his behalf and persuaded Christ to forgive him.

It was typically said during this time, "If you do not receive an answer to your prayer, go to Mary. If Mary will agree with you, then she will go to Christ and ask on your behalf. Christ will never refuse a request from His mother, so you are sure to get an answer."

As these examples show, Mary became the supreme mediator in popular piety. People prayed to her more than to God or Christ. They were often afraid to approach God directly, but they felt comfortable praying to a mother goddess figure. The Bible, of course, teaches that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man and that we should boldly present our petitions before God's throne of grace (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15-16).

Nevertheless, Mary became the focus of popular devotion and still remains so among Catholics to this day. The personal motto of Pope John Paul II is "Totally yours," referring to Mary.

Merit System

As the doctrine of the sacraments and the worship of Mary show, the medieval church was based on a system of merits. The theory of salvation was as follows: God is the one who effects a person's conversion. His power causes people to be saved, yet people can exercise their own will to prepare for the grace of God. Justification is a gradual process by which the infusion of God's grace gradually improves human nature. Because of this progressive work of God, a person can perform good works, and as a result of these works he can claim eternal life.

Salvation is thus a cooperative effort. God is the one who enables a person, but the person actually produces the good works that God requires for salvation.

This concept is essentially Semi-Pelagian. While salvation is by the grace of God, it is not solely by the grace of God. While justification is by faith, it is not by faith only but by faith and works. God gives the grace of salvation, but the person must use this grace to perform good works that make him deserving of salvation.

By contrast, the Protestant Reformers taught salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. God looks at an unworthy sinner and counts him worthy (justifies him), not on the basis of his works but as an act of pure grace to be received by faith. The early Reformers, such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, eliminated all possibility of salvation by works by embracing Augustine's doctrine of predestination (unconditional election).

Some later Protestants, such as the Anabaptists, Arminius, and Wesley, rejected this doctrine of predestination but still affirmed salvation by grace through faith and not works. They taught that a person must accept God's gracious offer of salvation by an active, living faith. Faith is the condition for receiving salvation, but it does not constitute human works that earn salvation. Saving faith will issue forth in good works, but these works are the result, not the ground, of salvation.

Under the medieval Catholic system, salvation was based on merits, and a person could accumulate more merits than were necessary for his personal salvation. These extra merits could then be used for other purposes. Of course, Jesus Christ had abundant merits because he lived a sinless life, and the saints similarly possessed many extra merits because of their specially holy lives. These additional merits enabled them to grant petitions and perform miracles.

The extra merits of Christ and the saints constituted a heavenly treasury that the pope could dispense as he desired. If he wished to deliver a soul from purgatory, he could designate some of the superabundant merits of the saints for that purpose. He could also issue indulgences based upon these merits. The pope thus claimed power not only in this world but also in the world to come.

A disadvantage of the merit system was the lack of assurance of salvation. Even though a person cooperated with the church, there was always a nagging question: Do I have enough good works? Have I done enough to pay for my sins? Am I truly saved or not? While the church promised eternal life in heaven someday, the common person faced the prospect of countless years in purgatory. He experienced no freedom from guilt and no personal relationship with God.

The church member could not identify a personal experience of the new birth. He had no consciousness of living by faith or by the grace of God. He did not experience an overcoming, holy life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he lived a sinful life, just as everybody else, but he hoped that he was performing enough good works to ease the terrors of the afterlife. He labored under a system of works that placed him under bondage.

Popular Piety

Again, let us examine some popular medieval stories to see what the average people believed and how medieval doctrines affected their lives.[4] As with the stories about Mary, we find them to be full of superstition, magic, and paganism, far removed from the faith and morals of the Bible.

Many stories reflect the doctrine of transubstantiation and the centrality of the mass. According to one account, a priest tried to seduce a woman by keeping a wafer in his mouth after mass. Since the wafer was actually Christ, he felt it would have great power to attract the woman. God refused to cooperate with his evil scheme, however, but miraculously blocked his exit from the church. The priest removed the wafer and buried it; later he dug it up to find that it had turned into the bloody figure of a crucified man.

A woman placed a consecrated wafer in her beehive to reduce death among the bees. The bees built a tiny chapel for their "Guest."

In another tale, a child offered a piece of bread to the baby Jesus in a nativity scene. The babe thanked him and invited him to paradise. Three days later the child died.

Yet another widely circulated legend concerned the alleged duplication of a notable biblical miracle: Pope Leo IX supposedly parted the Aniene River just as Moses had parted the Red Sea.

The worship of saints and relics grew incredibly. By the tenth century twenty-five thousand saints had been canonized. There were patron saints for almost every activity, illness, and domestic animal.

Churches boasted numerous relics. St. Peter's Basilica in Rome claimed to have the bodies of Peter and Paul. Various churches claimed to have the head of John the Baptist (several), the foreskin from Christ's circumcision (five), some of Christ's blood, His umbilical cord, some of His baby teeth, the tears He shed at the tomb of Lazarus, the lance that pierced His side, His coat, hairs from His beard, the corpse of Mary Magdalene (three), a claw from the devil, Noah's beard, pieces of Christ's cross, cradle,

and tomb, bits of manna, pieces of the original tables of the Ten Commandments, and so on.[5]

Conclusions

Several important elements characterized the medieval church: (1) *Tradition* was the most important source of medieval theology. (2) *The system of merits* formed the basis of soteriology and ecclesiology. (3) *Abstract philosophical reasoning* largely replaced biblical exegesis and synthesis. (4) *Mysticism, superstition, and paganism* largely replaced scriptural experiences with God. (5) To a great extent, the clergy and hierarchy were *corrupted by power, money, and sexual immorality*.

We must acknowledge that there were many sincere, honest, and moral people during this time, including common people, priests, bishops, popes, and theologians. Many sincerely believed the doctrines of the church and were genuinely pious.

Nevertheless, doctrinal and moral corruption was widespread, not merely because of the universal sinfulness of humanity but because the theological and ecclesiastical system itself was tragically flawed and far removed from biblical Christianity. The average person did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and did not strive to live according to biblical holiness, but simply cooperated with the sacramental system and hoped for the best.

There were some dissenters, however, and some who sought to return to biblical doctrines and practices. (See chapter 17.) Ultimately, the entire system was challenged by the Protestant Reformation beginning in 1517.

17

The Road to the Reformation

In the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformation caused a dramatic break with medieval theology. This revolution did not erupt in a vacuum; many factors contributed to it. From a Protestant perspective, we can say that it was a revival sent by God, but we must still ask, What made people particularly receptive to God at this time? What made them start questioning traditional Catholic theology? What made them examine the Scriptures with a fresh approach? This chapter will identify a number of contributing factors and discuss certain people and movements that served as forerunners to the Reformation.

Causes of Dissent

As early as the twelfth century, there was some organized opposition to the Roman Catholic structure. For

several reasons, there was the beginning of widespread skepticism.

First, the Crusades raised questions by bringing new *influence from the Muslim world and from ancient Greek philosophy* preserved by the Arabs. This contact made people realize that there were other systems of thought outside the Roman Catholic Church. Other societies were based on different fundamental beliefs and functioned as well as or better than medieval Europe.

Second, *the corruption of the clergy and the papacy* caused great disillusionment and questioning. The conflicts with secular rulers, the political intrigue, the "Babylonian Captivity," the Papal Schism, and the immorality of many popes, including the Renaissance popes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, all contributed to skepticism. With such degeneration, people began to think perhaps something was fundamentally wrong with the system and its claims.

Third, *there were many economic abuses, including ecclesiastical taxation, absenteeism, simony, and the sale of indulgences.* These abuses significantly affected nations, cities, and individuals, and people began to see them as cynical methods designed to raise money for the church and its officials.

The medieval church had the power to impose taxes outside the civil government. Entire countries were threatened with interdict if they did not collect taxes for the papacy.

Absenteeism refers to the practice of appointing a bishop, abbot, or other official solely to provide him with the income associated with the position. The officeholder would not live in the area or perform the functions of the

office. The church would tax the local residents for the income, or the church would dominate the local economy by its income-producing activities, but the beneficiary would be a foreigner who cared nothing for the people under his spiritual charge.

Associated with absenteeism was simony, the rampant practice of buying and selling offices. Many carnal people who had no spiritual qualifications would purchase an office or otherwise obtain it through political influence in order to enjoy the prestige, power, and income of the position.

The rise of nationalism was a fourth factor. The foundation of the Roman Catholic Church had been laid when the Roman Empire ruled Christendom. There was one empire and one church. After the empire fell, political chaos ensued, but the church helped maintain a common European identity. Charlemagne's empire, later known as the Holy Roman Empire, underscored the sense of unity. It eventually became mostly German in character, and distinct nations, such as England and France, emerged on the scene.

People began to identify themselves more as Englishmen or Frenchmen than Europeans. They were concerned more about their own national interests than in the unity of church or empire. The English, for instance, began to resent attempts by Italian popes to control English politics or siphon off English money in order to promote interests that were often contrary to those of England. Many people began to think that the church should not have secular power.

The most important cause of dissent was *theological and spiritual conviction*. Throughout the Middle Ages,

dissenting individuals and groups protested on the basis of their own understanding of the Bible and their own relationship with God. As time went on, these dissenters grew in number and proved to be impossible to suppress completely.

In 1456, *the invention of the printing press* in the West by Johann Gutenberg facilitated the spread of dissent. For the first time, the Bible and other literature could be published cheaply and made available to the masses. The common people were able to compare the teachings of the church with Scripture in a way that few had been able to do before.

Doctrinal tracts, treatises, and books could now be disseminated rapidly all across Europe. Before this time, preaching was the primary means to present ideas to the multitudes, but the opportunity to do so was limited and easily curtailed by persecution. Now, dissenters could present their views to thousands via simple tracts, and it was almost impossible to completely destroy all the literature. Without the printing press, it is doubtful that the Reformation could have succeeded to the extent that it did.

With these factors in mind, let us examine significant dissenters in the Middle Ages.

The Waldenses

The Waldenses emerged as an organized alternative to the Roman Catholic Church in the late twelfth century. Founded by Peter Waldo, the group suffered severe persecution under the Inquisition. Waldo was a preacher who proclaimed a simple message of returning to the Bible. He or his followers rejected as unbiblical much church tradition, including the papacy, the hierarchy, purgatory,

the saints, penance, and most of the sacramental system.

He also insisted upon preaching in the language of the people. Until Vatican II in the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church conducted all its services in Latin, including the preaching. By medieval times, however, Latin was no longer the speech of the people; they spoke French, German, Spanish, English, Italian, and so on. Latin was used only in ecclesiastical and scholarly circles. Most people understood only a little of the church liturgy; services became empty, meaningless rituals for most.

Waldo maintained that the essence of Christianity was not ritual but the preaching of the gospel and faith in the Word of God. Therefore, church services should be conducted in the vernacular.

Taking the Sermon on the Mount seriously, the Waldensians advocated a simple, biblical lifestyle. They rejected warfare, oaths, immodest clothing, ornamental jewelry, dancing, and taverns. They taught chastity, honesty, moderation in eating and drinking, avoidance of anger, and avoidance of great wealth.[1] The Humiliati, a group in Lombardy closely associated with the Waldenses, likewise abstained from ostentatious dress.[2]

In many ways, the Waldenses foreshadowed and anticipated the Protestant Reformation. A few of them survived into the sixteenth century and aligned with the Reformation.

The Albigenses

The Albigenses were another dissenting group that originated in the late twelfth century. Their name comes from the town of Albi in southern France, where they were particularly strong. They rejected the hierarcy,

veneration of images, indulgences, and much of the sacramental system. Opponents charged that they denied the trinity, the deity of Christ, and other cardinal doctrines. They too were severely persecuted; ultimately the Inquisition completely wiped them out.

Somewhat like the Waldenses, the Albigenses embraced a simple lifestyle of separation from the world based on the Sermon on the Mount. They were also known as Cathari, from a word meaning "pure," referring to their emphasis on holiness and opposition to the religious corruption of their day.

Unlike the Waldenses, the Albigenses taught a dualism apparently drawn from Persian thought, perhaps via Manicheism: spirit is pure and flesh is evil. Based on this concept they promoted celibacy, vegetarianism, and other ascetic disciplines. As a result, they were not forerunners of Protestantism in the same way as the Waldenses.

Marsilius of Padua

A number of individuals also opposed important doctrines of the Catholic Church. In the fourteenth century, Marsilius of Padua taught that the supreme authority of the church rests in its councils, not in the pope. That view was standard in the Ecumenical Catholic Age, but in the Middle Ages it directly challenged the papal system.

For a while, this view found a significant following, and several church councils sought to exercise supreme authority. The conciliar movement was short-lived, however, for the popes soon reasserted their authority and dominated the councils. They consented to and followed the councils when necessary for political and ecclesiastical reasons, but they never submitted as a matter of

theology. Today the pope enjoys unchallenged authority as head of the church.

John Wyclif and the Lollards

Also in the fourteenth century, John Wyclif of England proposed radical changes, in many ways sounding like Peter Waldo. He openly attacked the papacy, transubstantiation, penance, and the sale of indulgences.

He and his associates completed the first translation of the Bible into English, for like Waldo he wanted the common people to understand the Word of God. Until this time in Western Europe the Bible was available primarily in Latin and therefore accessible only to churchmen and scholars.

Wyclif and his followers, the Lollards, suffered great persecution. He escaped execution, but after his death officials dug up his body and burned it.

John Huss and the Hussites

Another forerunner of the Reformation was John Huss in Bohemia in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Influenced by the views of Wyclif, Huss opposed papal supremacy and other doctrines on the ground that they were not biblical but merely traditional.

The Council of Constance summoned him to defend his beliefs, and he agreed to do so if his king, Sigismund, would guarantee his safety. The king did, but when Huss appeared he was promptly arrested and convicted of heresy. The council explained that an oath made to a heretic was not binding and ordered his execution. Huss was burned at the stake.

Much like the Waldenses, the Hussites advocated a

simple lifestyle, rejecting gambling, dancing, and immodest dress; some of them opposed warfare and oaths.[3] They joined the Protestant Reformation when it came. Known as the Bohemian Brethren, in the eighteenth century many joined with a Pietistic Lutheran group to form the Moravians. A small denomination today known as the Unity of the Brethren traces its descent from Huss.

Savonarola

Another man who sought to reform the church was Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar who preached in northern Italy in the late fifteenth century. He denounced not so much the doctrine of the church but its immorality, including the degeneracy of the popes and the worldliness of the people. He specifically preached against such things as gambling, dancing, obscene books, jewelry, false hair, immodest dress, makeup, worldly music, and worldly amusements, and he inspired a revival of holiness in Florence.[4]

Not surprisingly, Savonarola aroused the ire of the church leadership. Eventually he was arrested and hanged. Like many dissidents and would-be reformers of the Middle Ages, he paid for his convictions with his life.

The Catholic Humanists

Within the Catholic Church, there were some scholars who did not openly attack church doctrines but began to undermine them in subtle ways. A group of such men shortly before the Reformation were known as the Catholic humanists, the most noted of whom was Erasmus. They are so called, not because they resembled modern secular humanists, but because they approached

doctrine from the position of human rationalism. Instead of appealing primarily to tradition (like the Schoolmen) or the Bible (like "heretics" we have discussed), they tried to evaluate beliefs according to human reason. Moreover, they dedicated themselves to serious scholarship in matters that had long been neglected.

Their approach led to a more liberal stance. To a great extent, they were forerunners of Catholic modernists today who remain in the Catholic Church but question or redefine much of the supernatural and mystical in its teachings.

In a manner reminiscent of Pelagius, the Catholic humanists taught that man can improve himself by his own power and grace is a divine stimulus to help him do what he is capable of doing. The supreme value of Jesus is in His example for us. If we live as He lived, then we can have a good and moral life.

The humanists questioned or criticized traditional doctrines such as the full deity of Christ, transubstantiation, and penance. They employed philosophical arguments against traditional doctrine, and they proved some important ecclesiastical documents to be forgeries, notably the Donation of Constantine.

Erasmus provided a significant service to all Christianity by publishing the first Greek New Testament in 1516. Noting that the Latin Vulgate, the authoritative Bible of the Catholic Church, was a translation from Hebrew and Greek, he determined to reconstruct the original text of Scripture and study it directly. The English King James Version was based primarily on the third edition of Erasmus's Greek New Testament.

In many ways, the humanists sowed seeds that later

bore fruit among the Reformers—notably in the thinking of Zwingli. When the Reformation came, however, they refused to join it but drew back into Catholicism and defended the system they had once criticized. Nevertheless, they helped create a climate that was conducive to the Reformation.

Martin Luther

Despite great dissenters such as Waldo, Wyclif, and Huss, the Reformation did not take place with them but with Martin Luther. He is the man who began the Protestant Reformation in 1517. Although he initially sought only to reform the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church from within, the intransigent response of the pope and the logic of Luther's own views rapidly moved him to break away totally and found the Protestant movement.

Historically, he is unique as the man who successfully precipitated the break with Rome. Theologically, he is unique in that he clearly enunciated the doctrine of justification by faith and made it the basis of his entire theology. Other groups and individuals before him had attacked many of the same elements of Roman Catholicism as he did, and some of them operated to a great extent on the basis of justification by faith, but they did not clearly express their opposition to the Catholic Church in those terms. It was left to Luther to proclaim the central principle by which the entire Catholic system was attacked and upon which the entire Reformation was built.

We must credit Luther for his insight, determination, and dedication to the doctrine of justification by faith and not by works. Others rejected various unbiblical aspects

of the medieval church, but he went to the heart of the matter. He laid the axe to the root of the medieval system by denouncing righteousness by works and merits.

Apostolic Doctrines

As we have seen, the medieval church was not a monolith. People in various ages stood against error and sought to return to biblical truth. Due to severe persecution, the need for secrecy, and the destruction of historical records, no doubt many such people have passed from history with little or no trace. The people of whom we have knowledge surely represent only the tip of the iceberg.

What about the apostolic doctrines of repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, holiness of life, and Oneness? The evidence for their existence is sparse, but it is there.

Many factors have limited the available evidence from the Middle Ages: persecution by church and state, censorship, lack of educated people to transmit records, unavailability of printing to preserve records, and lack of understanding of the significance of certain practices. For example, some people probably baptized in Jesus' name simply because they read about it in Acts, and some probably began speaking in tongues as they prayed in faith and repentance. But they may not have had the opportunity or ability to record, preserve, and transmit their experiences. They may not have realized the full biblical significance of their experiences or the importance of proclaiming them publicly and preserving them for posterity. Observers and historians may have overlooked,

ignored, or rejected these practices, or they may not have understood the value of recording, collecting, and transmitting such facts.

As we have already discussed, there were significant efforts to return to biblical repentance and biblical holiness. (See also Appendix F.) Moreover, we find some evidence of people receiving the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues. Some have reported speaking in tongues among the Waldenses and Albigenses, for example.[5] There is also evidence for speaking in tongues among the Franciscans and other mendicant orders.[6] It is no surprise that where there was a hunger for repentance and holiness there was also an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

There were also scattered examples of people who questioned the doctrine of the trinity and expressed a modalistic or Oneness understanding. Some writers find evidence for Oneness concepts in the early Middle Ages among the Priscillianists, Euchites, and Bogomils.[7] Peter Abelard (1079-1142), Gilbert de la Porree (1070-1154), and William of Conches (1080-1154) all described the Godhead in terms of manifestations or modes rather than the orthodox trinitarian persons.[8]

We also find references to baptism in Jesus' name and discussions of its validity. The Venerable Bede in England (673-735), the Council of Frejus (792), and Pope Nicholas I (858-67) all proclaimed that baptism solely in the name of Jesus was valid.[9] Such decisions indicate that the matter was a living issue in their day—some people still baptized in the name of Jesus. Peter the Lombard, Hugo of St. Victor, and Thomas Aquinas all discussed the practice.[10] Bonaventure and Aquinas acknowledged that in earlier times the church had often baptized in Christ's

name alone, but since the Fourth Lateran Council it was necessary to mention each member of the trinity.[11]

While the later Schoolmen ruled against Jesus Name baptism, they were aware of the issue. The witness had not totally died, and where there was a witness, we can presume that at least some people understood and accepted that witness.

After the Protestant Reformation, evidence for all these apostolic doctrines exploded.[12] The renewed emphasis on the Bible and justification by faith led many people to repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and holiness of life. A grand process began of restoring biblical truths to the understanding of Bible believers.

The twentieth century has seen the culmination of this restoration. Today we can reach back beyond the Reformation, the Middle Ages, the Ecumenical and Old Catholic Ages, the Age of the Greek Apologists, and even the Post-Apostolic Age to embrace the doctrine and experience of the New Testament church. History informs us in many ways, but it need not separate us from the message of the apostles.

Appendix A

Dates in the History of Christianity

All dates before A.D. 150 are uncertain, and many dates afterward, particularly dates of birth. A single date for a person refers to an event or a writing during his career. For people identified by an official title, such as emperor, king, bishop, or pope, inclusive dates refer to their term of office. For others, inclusive dates identify their birth and death.

Secular History	Church History
B.C. 27-A.D. 14 Emperor Augustus	B.C. 4 Birth of Christ
14-37 Emperor Tiberius	A.D. 30 Crucifixion; Pentecost
37-41 Emperor Gaius (Caligula)	
41-54 Emperor Claudius	46 Paul's first missionary journey
	48 Council of Jerusalem
54-68 Emperor Nero	64-68 Neronic persecution
	65 Execution of Peter and Paul
69-79 Emperor Vespasian	70 Fall of Jerusalem
79-81 Emperor Titus	
	96 Clement I, bishop of Rome
	?-110 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch
	69-155 Polycarp
	140 Hermas

Secular History	Church History
	140 Marcion
	150 Justin (writes *First Apology*)
	156 Montanus
	170 Melito, bishop of Sardis
	168-81 Theophilus, bishop of Antioch
	178-200 Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons
	? Noetus of Smyrna
	190 Praxeas
	150-215 Clement of Alexandria
	150-225 Tertullian (196, begins writing)
	185-254 Origen (215, begins writing)
	215 Sabellius
	170-235 Hippolytus
	200-58 Novatian
	230 Earliest public church buildings
	248-58 Cyprian, bishop of Carthage
249-51 Emperor Decius	250 Empire-wide persecution
	260-72 Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch
	270 Anthony (becomes a hermit)
284-305 Emperor Diocletian	303-13 Diocletian persecution
312 Battle of Milvian Bridge	312 Donatist Schism
313-24 Co-emperors Constantine and Licinius	313 "Edict" of Milan
	250-336 Arius
324-37 Constantine sole emperor	265-340 Eusebius
	295-373 Athanasius (367, affirms NT)
	325 Council of Nicea
	315-67 Hilary
	329-79 Basil (358, founds monastery)
	330-90 Gregory of Nazianzus
	335-94 Gregory of Nyssa

Secular History	Church History
	310-90 Apollinaris
	381 Christianity becomes state religion of Roman Empire
	381 Council of Constantinople
	387 Ephraem the Syrian (death)
	340-97 Ambrose (390, defies emperor)
	340-420 Jerome (405, completes Vulgate)
	345-407 John Chrysostom
410 Alaric sacks Rome	354-430 Augustine (386, converts)
	412 Pelagius
	428-31 Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople
	429 Theodore of Mopsuestia (death)
	431 Council of Ephesus
	432 Patrick's mission to Ireland
	375-444 Cyril of Alexandria
	448 Eutyches (deposed as abbot)
	390-457 Theodoret
	440-61 Pope Leo I (the Great)
451 Pope Leo turns Attila from Rome	451 Council of Chalcedon
455 Gaiseric sacks Rome	
476 End of Western Roman Empire	480-525 Boethius
	500 "Dionysius the Areopagite"
529 Justinian Code	529 Synod of Orange
	480-549 Benedict (540, writes *Rule)*
	553 Second Council of Constantinople
570-632 Muhammad	590-604 Pope Gregory I (the Great)
622 Birth of Islam	597 Augustine's mission to England
	580-662 Maximus the Confessor

Secular History	**Church History**
	663 Synod of Whitby (England)
	680 Third Council of Constantinople
711-15 Muslims conquer Spain	716 Boniface's mission to Germany
732 Battle of Tours	675-754 John of Damascus
752-987 Carolingian dynasty	754 Donation of Pepin
768-814 Charlemagne, King	787 Second Council of Nicea
of Franks (800, crowned	810-77 John Scotus Erigena
emperor)	865 Radbertus (death)
	868 Gottschalk (death)
	868 Ratramnus (death)
	882 Hincmar (death)
	910 Abbey of Cluny founded
	949-1022 Simeon the New Theologian
	988 Christianization of "Russia"
	1054 East-West Schism
1066 Conquest of England	1059-61 College of cardinals founded
by William	1073-85 Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand)
	1093-1109 Anselm, Archbishop of
	Canterbury
	1097-1141 Hugo of St. Victor
	1079-1142 Peter Abelard
	1100-60 Peter the Lombard
1096-1291 Crusades	1091-1153 Bernard of Clairvaux
(1095, Pope Urban II	(1115, founds monastery)
launches First Crusade)	1150 Universities of Paris and Oxford
1152-90 Frederick I	1176 Peter Waldo and Waldenses
Barbarossa, Holy Roman	1100s Albigenses
Emperor	1198-1216 Pope Innocent III
	1182-1226 Francis of Assisi (1209,
	founds order)
	1170-1221 Dominic (1220, founds
	order)

Secular History	Church History
	1193-1280 Albertus Magnus
1212 Muslim defeat in Spain	1208-29 Albigensian Crusades
1215 Magna Carta	1215 Fourth Lateran Council
	1229-31 Papal Inquisition begins
	1245 Alexander of Hales (death)
	1221-74 Bonaventure
	1225-74 Thomas Aquinas (1272, finishes *Summa Theologiae*)
	1265-1308 John Duns Scotus
	1290-1343 Marsilius of Padua
	1285-1349 William of Occam
	1309-77 Papal "Babylonian Captivity"
	1318-59 Gregory Palamas
	1321 Dante (completes *Divine Comedy*)
	1370 Catherine of Siena (begins *Letters*)
1300s-1500s Italian Renaissance	1378-1417 Papal Schism
	1330-84 John Wyclif
	1369-1415 John Huss
	1418 Thomas à Kempis (writes *Imitation of Christ*)
	1380-1444 Bernardino of Siena
1453 Fall of Constantinople, End of Byzantine Empire	1452-98 Girolamo Savonarola
1456 Gutenberg (first Bible printed)	1478-83 Spanish Inquisition begins
1492 Columbus discovers America	1466-1536 Desiderus Erasmus (1516, first Greek NT printed)
	1483-1546 Martin Luther
	1517 The Reformation begins

Note: The major sources for the foregoing dates are *Christian History* 9, no. 4 (issue 28: "The 100 Most

Important Events in Church History"); Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*; William L. Langer, ed., *An Encyclopedia of World History*; *New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*; and in a few cases, Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church;* and Tony Lane, *Harper's Concise Book of Christian Faith*. In many cases the sources differ by a year or sometimes several years.

Appendix B

Oneness Believers in History

This list consists of people for which we have documented evidence. It is incomplete, and for some groups the evidence is indirect or fragmentary. We do not necessarily know about or endorse all the doctrines of the people included (after the apostles). It appears that the people on this list affirmed the absolute oneness of God and the full deity of Jesus Christ and that they were nontrinitarian (by orthodox trinitarian standards). For documentation, see *The Oneness of God* and *Oneness and Trinity: A.D. 100-300* by David Bernard, as well as this text.

Century	Group or Individual
1	Apostolic church
2	Post-apostolic leaders, including Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp; some Montanists; modalists
3	Modalists, including Noetus, Praxeas, Epigonus, Cleomenes, Sabellius; probably the Roman bishops Victor, Callistus, and Zephyrinus; Commodian, probably a bishop in North Africa; "the majority of believers" in Tertullian's day
4	Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, and followers; believers in Antioch, probably including Eustathius, the bishop there; Priscillian and followers; Sabellians

Century	Group or Individual
5-15	Sabellians, Priscillianists; possibly other heretics such as Euchites and Bogomils; some theologians such as Peter Abelard, William of Conches, and Gilbert de la Porree
16	Michael Servetus, many Antitrinitarians, some Anabaptists
17	Some English Baptists, William Penn and some Quakers
18	Isaac Newton, Emmanuel Swedenborg, Isaac Watts
19	Some New England Congregationalists, John Miller (Presbyterian), John Clowes (Anglican)
20	Oneness (Apostolic) Pentecostals, some Charismatics, some Sabbatarians, some Baptists including Frank Stagg, some Neo-Orthodox theologians

Appendix C

Ancient Creeds

1. The Old Roman Symbol (c. 200). This is the original form of the so-called Apostles' Creed.

> I believe in God the Father almighty;
> And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
> Who was born by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary;
> Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried;
> The third day He rose from the dead;
> He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
> From thence [there] He shall come to judge the quick [living] and the dead;
> And in the Holy Ghost;
> The forgiveness of sins;
> The resurrection of the body [literally, flesh].

2. The Apostles' Creed (500s-600s). Contrary to its name, the apostles did not frame this creed, but it is based on the Old Roman Symbol. Its phrases come from the late second through fifth centuries. It reached its present form in the sixth and seventh centuries and was officially adopted in Rome sometime in the ninth through eleventh centuries.

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born from Mary the virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, and descended to the underworld. On the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and eternal life. Amen.

3. The Original Creed of Nicea (325). The Council of Nicea adopted this statement. The last paragraph, the condemnatory clause, is not actually part of the creed itself.

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten; that is, of the essence [*ousia*] of the Father, God of God, light of light, very [true] God of very [true] God, begotten not made, being of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father; by whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick [living] and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

But those who say, "There was a time when he was

not," and "He was not before he was made," and "He was made out of nothing," or "He is of another substance" [*hypostasis*] or "essence" [*ousia*], or "The Son of God is created" or "changeable" or "alterable"—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic church.

4. The Present Nicene Creed (c. 500). Tradition says the Council of Constantinople (381) modified the original Nicene formula and produced the Nicene Creed in use today, which is therefore sometimes called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Scholars have established, however, that the present Nicene Creed actually stems from a fourth-century baptismal creed used in Jerusalem, which was influenced by the original creed of Nicea. It replaced the original Nicene Creed around 500.

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father. By Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was made flesh from the Holy Spirit and Mary the virgin, and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried. He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens. He sits on the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will not end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father. Together with the Father and

the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. And in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen.

5. The Athanasian Creed (c. 500). Contrary to its popular name, this creed had nothing to do with Athanasius, but it reflects the theology of the West, particularly Augustine. Estimates of its date vary from the 400s to the 700s. It is also called the *Quicunque Vult*, after its first words in Latin.

Whoever wants to be saved must first of all hold the catholic faith. Unless one keeps this faith whole and inviolate, he will without doubt perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith: that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity—neither confusing the persons, nor dividing the substance. For the Father's person is one, the Son's another, and the Holy Spirit's another. But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one. Their glory is equal and their majesty coeternal.

Whatever the Father is, such is the Son and such also the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, and the Holy Spirit infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. Yet there are not three eternals but only one eternal—just as there are not three uncreateds nor three infinites but only one uncreated and only one infinite. Likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty—yet there are not three almighties but only one almighty.

Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—yet there are not three Gods but only one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord—yet there are not three Lords but only one Lord. For just as Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each person by Himself to be God and Lord, so the catholic religion forbids us to speak of three Gods or Lords.

The Father is neither made nor created nor begotten from anything. The Son is from the Father alone—not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son—not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this trinity no one is before or after another; no one is greater or less than another, but all three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other. Thus in all things, as has been said, both trinity in unity and unity in trinity are to be worshiped. This is how to think of the trinity if you want to be saved.

But for eternal salvation it is also necessary to believe faithfully in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For correct faith is believing and confessing that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally God and man. God He is, begotten from the Father's substance before time; man He is, born from His mother's substance in time. He is both perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh. He is equal to the Father, as God; less than the Father, as man.

Although He is both God and man, yet He is not two but one Christ. He is one, however, not by the conversion of His deity into flesh, but by the taking up of His humanity

into God. He is one indeed, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For just as rational soul and flesh make one man, so also God and man make one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose from the dead, ascended into the heavens, and sat at the right hand of the Father. He will come from there to judge the living and the dead. When He comes, all men will rise again with their bodies and will render account for their own deeds. Those who have done good will go to eternal life, those who have done evil to eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith. Unless one believes it faithfully and firmly, one cannot be saved.

Sources: The Old Roman Symbol is from Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1:88. The original creed of Nicea is from Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:28-29. The remaining creeds, which are translated into more modern English, come from Tony Lane, *Harper's Concise Book of Christian Faith*, 35, 51, 73-74. For the Greek and Latin originals, see Schaff, *Creeds*, 2:45-71. Punctuation and capitalization have been modified for uniformity.

Appendix D

Baptism in Jesus' Name in History

This list includes only people for which we have documented evidence. It is incomplete, and for some groups the evidence is indirect or fragmentary. We do not necessarily know about or endorse all the doctrines of the people included (after the apostles). For documentation, see *The New Birth* by David K. Bernard.

Century	Group or Individual
1	Apostolic church
2	Early post-apostolic church, Marcionites, some Montanists, Modalists
3	Many in the institutional church; "heretics"; opponents of Cyprian; Sabellians; endorsement by Stephen, bishop of Rome
4	Sabellians, endorsement by Ambrose
5-6	Sabellians
7	Endorsement by Bede
8	Endorsement by Council of Frejus
9	Endorsement by Pope Nicholas I
12	Mention by Peter Lombard and Hugo Victor
13	Mention by Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas
16	Some antitrinitarians, some Anabaptists, people known to Martin Luther

Century	Group or Individual
17	Some English "heretics," some Baptists
19	Some Plymouth Brethren, John Miller (Presbyterian)
20	Some trinitarian Pentecostals, Oneness Pentecostals, some Sabbatarians, some Charismatics

Appendix E

Speaking in Tongues in History

This list includes only people for which we have documented evidence. It is incomplete, and for some groups the evidence is indirect or fragmentary. We do not necessarily know about or endorse all the doctrines of the people included (after the apostles). For documentation, see *The New Birth* by David K. Bernard.

Century	Group or Individual
1	Apostolic church
2	Early post-apostolic church, Justin, Irenaeus, Montanists
3	Tertullian, Novatian, Sabellians
4	Endorsement by Hilary, endorsement by Ambrose
12	Some Waldensians, some Albigensians, some Franciscans, some among other mendicant religious orders
16	Some Anabaptists, including some Mennonites; Prophecy movement in England
17	Camisards; some Quakers; some Jansenists; some Pietists, including some Moravians
18	Some Methodists, some from the 17th-century groups mentioned above

Century	Group or Individual
19	Some in American revivals and camps, Irvingites, some Plymouth Brethren, Readers, some Lutherans, some in the Holiness movement, the "gift people" in New England, other Christians
20	Pentecostals, charismatics from every denomination

Appendix F

Holiness Teaching in History

1. People Who Emphasized Practical Holiness. This list includes only people for which we have documented evidence. It is incomplete, and for some groups the evidence is indirect or fragmentary. We do not necessarily know about or endorse all the doctrines of the people included (after the apostles). For documentation, see *Practical Holiness: A Second Look* by David K. Bernard, as well as this text.

Century	Group or Individual
1	Apostolic church
2	Post-apostolic church, Montanists, Greek Apologists
3	Ante-Nicene writers, including Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria
4	Some post-Nicene writers, such as John Chrysostom
12	Waldenses, Humiliati, Albigenses
14	Hussites
15	Bernardino of Siena and followers, Savonarola and followers
16	Anabaptists, including Mennonites, Hutterites, Amish; Calvinists
17	Puritans; Quakers; Pietists, including Moravians and Brethren; Baptists

Century	**Group or Individual**
18	Methodists
19	Holiness movement
20	Early trinitarian Pentecostals, early Fundamentalists and Evangelicals; Oneness Pentecostals

2. Teachings. Here are examples of various teachers or groups who have taken a position against the following worldly practices. These lists are representative and do not necessarily include everyone who has taken such a stand. Some of the groups originally held the position but no longer do, and in other groups only some of the members held or hold the position. For documentation, see *Practical Holiness: A Second Look* by David K. Bernard.

Worldly theater: Tatian, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, *Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, Calvinists, Puritans, Spener and Pietists, Wesley and Methodists, Holiness movement, Pentecostals.

Movies: H. A. Ironside; R. A. Torrey; Moody Church; Roman Catholic Archbishop George Mudelein; Holiness movement; Pentecostals, including Apostolic Faith, Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), Assemblies of God, United Pentecostal Church International; Baptists, including Baptist Bible Fellowship, John R. Rice, Liberty Baptist College.

Television: Holiness movement; Anabaptists, including Amish, Hutterites; some Evangelicals, including Malcolm Muggeridge and Joe Bayly; some independent Baptists, including Bill Gothard; some trinitarian Pentecostals, including David Wilkerson; United Pentecostals.

Personal ornaments: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Tatian, Commodian, Cyprian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, Waldensians, Humiliati, Hussites, Bernardino, Savonarola, Anabaptists, Calvinists, Puritans, Quakers, Pietists, Wesley and Methodists, Holiness movement, Pentecostals.

Makeup: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Commodian, Cyprian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Savonarola, Holiness movement, Pentecostals.

Immodest dress: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Waldenses, Humiliati, Hussites, Bernardino, Savonarola, Anabaptists, Calvinists, Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, Pietists, Wesley and Methodists, Holiness movement, some independent Baptists, Pentecostals.

Wearing clothes of the opposite sex: Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Holiness movement, some independent Baptists, Pentecostals.

Short hair on women and long hair on men: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, Savonarola, Anabaptists, Holiness movement, some independent Baptists, Pentecostals.

Alcohol: Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Anabaptists, Puritans, Wesley and Methodists, Baptists, Holiness movement, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals.

Tobacco: Anabaptists, Wesley and Methodists, Baptists, Holiness movement, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals.

Abortion: Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Roman Catholic Church, Holiness movement, Evangelicals, Pentecostals.

Warfare: Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Lactantius,

Waldenses, Anabaptists, Quakers, early Pentecostals.

Astrology: *Didache*, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Lactantius, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Evangelicals, Pentecostals.

Worldly sports and amusements: Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Minucius Felix, Lactantius, Tatian, Chrysostom, Bernardino, Savonarola, Puritans, Wesley and Methodists, Holiness movement, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals.

Gambling: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Bernardino, Savonarola, Hussites, Calvin, Puritans, Pietists, Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, Holiness movement, Fundamentalists, Evangelicals, Pentecostals.

Dancing: Clement of Alexandria, Commodian, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Waldenses, Hussites, Bernardino, Savonarola, Anabaptists, Calvin, Puritans, Wesley and Methodists, Baptists, Holiness movement, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals.

Appendix G

Development of Roman Catholicism

Here is a partial list of nonbiblical doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church along with the dates of their official adoption, or in the case of some practices, the date of their widespread acceptance. Where there was a discrepancy between sources, the earlier date was chosen. Most of the dates before 1000 are approximate. Sources are Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*; Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*; and Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*.

Practice or Doctrine	Date of Acceptance
Prayers for the dead (beginning of practice)	300
Making the sign of the cross	300
Use of wax candles in worship	320
Veneration of angels, dead saints, and images (practice)	375
Trinity (Council of Constantinople)	381
The mass as a daily celebration	394
Mary called "Mother of God"	431
Priestly dress	500
Feast of the Assumption of Mary (celebrated by some)	500s
Extreme unction	526

Practice or Doctrine	Date of Acceptance
Purgatory (Pope Gregory I)	593
Latin language for all prayer and worship	600
Prayers to Mary, dead saints, and angels	600
Title of pope as the universal bishop	610
Use of penitentials (lists of penances for each sin)	700s
Kissing the pope's foot (Pope Constantine)	709
Temporal power of the pope (Boniface III)	750
Veneration of the cross, images, and relics (doctrine)	787
Use of indulgences	800s
Baptism by sprinkling replacing immersion	800s
Holy water	850
Veneration of St. Joseph	890
College of cardinals instituted	927
Baptism of bells (John XIV)	965
Canonization of dead saints totaling 25,000 (John XV)	995
Fasting on Fridays and during Lent	998
The mass as a sacrifice, with obligatory attendance	1000s
First plenary indulgence	1040
Prayers for the dead (doctrine)	1070s
Celibacy of the priesthood (Gregory VII)	1079
Rosary (invented by Peter the Hermit)	1090
Sacraments fixed at seven	1100s
Ave Maria (Hail Mary) prayer	1100s
Sale of indulgences	1190
Transubstantiation made an essential doctrine	1215
Confession to a priest made an annual obligation	1215
Adoration (worship) of communion wafer (Honorius III)	1220

Practice or Doctrine	Date of Acceptance
Papal Inquisition	1229
Bible forbidden to laity	
(on Index of Forbidden Books)	1229
Festivals	1264
Feast of Corpus Christi	1311
Communion cup officially forbidden to laity	1414
Seven sacraments officially sanctioned	1439
Tradition declared equal in authority to Scripture	1545
Apocryphal books declared to be Scripture	1546
Immaculate conception of Mary (Pius IX)	1854
Syllabus of Errors (proclaimed by Piux IX and	
Vatican I)	1864

It condemned freedom of religion, speech, conscience, and press; condemned scientific discoveries not approved by the church; and asserted the pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers.

Papal infallibility in faith and morals (Vatican I)	1870
Public schools condemned (Pius XI)	1930
Assumption of Mary (Pius XII)	1950

In addition to these nonbiblical doctrines and practices there are many others, such as monks, nuns, monasteries, convents, Lent, All Saints Day, fish day, incense, holy oil, Christopher medals, charms, novenas, and so on. Vatican II (1962-65) revised some traditional practices. It allowed masses in the vernacular, eating of meat on Fridays, and greater use of the Bible, and it eliminated a number of saints who were deemed legendary.

Notes

Chapter 2. Early Post-Apostolic Writers, A.D. 90-140

[1]M. B. Riddle in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (*ANF*) (1885; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 7:375. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of Ante-Nicene writings are from this ten-volume set. For further discussion and documentation, see David K. Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity, A.D. 100-300* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1991), 48-55.

[2]See, for example, Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 19, 20, 30, 59, 60; Ignatius, *Magnesians* 8; Hermas, *Shepherd*, Commandment 1; *II Clement*, 20. For full discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 29-59.

[3]See Hermas, *Shepherd*, Similitude 9:12; ibid., Vision 2:4; Pseudo-Barnabas, *Epistle*, 5-6. For discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 40-41, 56-57.

[4]Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 16; Ignatius, *Ephesians* 7, 17; Ignatius, *Magnesians* 15; Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans* 1, 15; Polycarp, *Philippians*, 6, 12; *II Clement 1*. For full discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 29-59.

[5]Hermas, *Shepherd*, Commandment 4:3; Pseudo-Barnabas, *Epistle*, 11.

[6]Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965) 1:53, 87; Kirsopp Lake, "Baptism (Early Christian)," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 2:389; J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Introduction to the Early History*

of Christian Doctrine (London: Methuen & Co., 1933), 25, 378. For further discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 41-42, 121-28.

[7]Hermas, *Shepherd*, Vision 3:3-7; ibid., Similitude 8:6, 9:13-16, 28; Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 58-64; Ignatius, *Ephesians*, 1, 3, 7, 20; Ignatius, *Romans*, salutation.

[8]J. V. Bartlett, "Baptism (New Testament)," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 2:378; Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 53-55.

[9]The only manuscript in which the *Didache* appears, copied by one Leo in 1056, also contains *II Clement*, in which an important passage has been changed to reflect trinitarianism. The original text of *II Clement* 9 identifies Christ as "Spirit" before the Incarnation, while the 1056 edition instead says Christ was "Logos" before the Incarnation. See *ANF* 7:517, 519; 10:228, 253.

[10]Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2; Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, superscription, 12; Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp*, 2; *Didache* 1:5, 11:7.

[11]Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 29, 35, 39, 58; Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, superscription.

[12]For a fuller discussion and documentation, see David Bernard, *God's Infallible Word* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1992), 89.

Chapter 3. Early Heresies

[1]Cyprian, *Epistles* 72:4.

[2]Canon 7 of the Council of Constantinople in 381 identified the Montanists as modalists. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d. ser. (Reprint,

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 14:185. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of Nicene and post-Nicene writings are from this set of volumes.

[3]Didymus, *On the Trinity* 2:15, cited in Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963) 3:98-99.

[4]Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 8:12; 10:22; Pseudo-Tertullian, *Against All Heresies* 7:2, cited in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971-89) 1:104.

Chapter 4. The Greek Apologists, A.D. 130-180

[1]For a full discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 61-90.

[2]Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 56, 127.

[3]Justin, *First Apology*, 6, 13, 33, 36, 38.

[4]Ibid., 6, 13.

[5]Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2:15, 18.

[6]Ibid. 2:10, 22.

[7]Ibid. 2:22.

[8]Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 14.

[9]Justin, *First Apology*, 61.

[10]Ibid., 65.

[11]Justin, *Second Apology*, 6; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 85.

[12]Thus one article in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (ERE)* cites Justin for the first use of a threefold formula, and another suggests that the *Didache* originally referred only to baptism in the name of the Lord. Kirsopp Lake, "Baptism (Early Christian)," *ERE* 2:389; J. V. Bartlett, "Baptism (New Testament)," *ERE* 2:378.

[13]Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 82, 88.

[14]Origen, *Against Celsus* 7:9, quoting Celsus, *True Discourse*; Origen, *Commentary on John* 2:6.

Chapter 5. The Old Catholic Age, A.D. 170-325

[1]Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:3:4. In this and subsequent quotations, parentheses represent brackets in the *ANF* edition.

[2]Ibid. 1:10:1, 2:1:1, 2:3:2, 2:28:4-5, 3:10:2, 4:1:1, 4:6:6; 4:17:6; 4:31:2. For a full discussion, see Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 93-104.

[3]Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4:6:5-6.

[4]Ibid. 3:10:12, 4:31:2.

[5]Ibid. 3:16:7, 4:20:1.

[6]Ibid. 5:20:1, 1:10:1.

[7]Heick 1:108-9, 127; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1910) 2:569.

[8]Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1:21:1.

[9]Ibid. 1:21:3.

[10]Irenaeus, *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus*, 34, *ANF* 1:574.

[11]Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 3.

[12]Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5:11:1-2.

[13]Ibid. 5:6:1.

[14]Ibid. 2:32:4-5.

[15]Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ*, 5.

[16]Heick 1:127. See Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2, 4, 12. Earlier, Theophilus, a Greek Apologist, had used a similar Greek word, *triados*, in passing, but his meaning was not clear and he did not use it in a doctrinal way to teach that God is three persons.

[17]Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1937), 65, 83-84.

[18]Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, 3, 18; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 5, 7.

[19]Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, 18; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9, 26.

[20]Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 13.

[21]Ibid., 3-5, 8.

[22]Ibid., 4.

[23]Ibid., 3.

[24]Ibid., 7.

[25]Ibid., 3.

[26]Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 12-13.

[27]Tertullian, *The Chaplet [On the Crown]*, 3-4.

[28]Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5:8.

[29]*Treatise on Re-Baptism by an Anonymous Writer*, *ANF* 5:665-78.

[30]Cyprian, *Epistles* 70:1, 75:12.

[31]Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 2:1-2, 4, 6-7, 11; 3:5, 11.

[32]Ibid. 3:2-3, 11.

[33]Origen, *Commentary on John* 10:16.

[34]Ibid. 2:6.

[35]*On First Principles* 1:3:7 speaks of equality, but *Commentary on John* 2:2, 6 makes the Son dependent upon the Father and the Spirit dependent on both Father and Son.

[36]Origen, *On First Principles* 1:2:2, 4.

[37]Ibid. 1:2:1; Origen, *Commentary on John* 1:23; Origen, *Against Celsus* 5:39, 8:14-15.

[38]*Ibid*. 2:3; Origen, *On First Principles*, preface:3.

Chapter 7. The Canon of Scripture

[1]Bernard, *God's Infallible Word*, 80-81, 191-92.

[2]F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 70-75.

[3]For further discussion, see Bernard, *God's Infallible Word*, 84-86.

[4]See Matthew 10:40; 16:19; 18:18; 28:19-20; Luke 6:13; 9:1-2; 10:16; 24:46-49; John 14:26; 16:13; 15:27; 17:20; 20:23; Acts 1:21-22; I Corinthians 11:2 Ephesians 2:20; II Thessalonians 2:15.

[5]Bruce, *Canon*, 256-63.

[6]See *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vols. 1, 2, and 7.

[7]*Ante-Nicene Fathers* 5:603-4.

[8]Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 231.

[9]Ibid., 298-301.

[10]Ibid., 430-31.

Chapter 8. The Doctrine of God

[1]William Chalfant, *Ancient Champions of Oneness* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1979), 105-13.

[2]Malchion, *Epistle against Paul of Samosata*, 2.

[3]Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1897) 3:51-54; Heick 1:149.

[4]Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 1, 3; Novatian, *The Refutation of All Heresies* 9:2, 5.

[5]Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 128.

[6]Berkhof, 79.

[7]Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 4; Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies* 9:5; Origen, *Commentary on John* 1:23; Origen, *Against Celsus* 5:39.

[8]Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, 3, 18; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2, 9, 26; Origen, *On First Principles*, preface:4, 1:2:1, 3:5:6-7; Origen, *Commentary on John* 2:2-3; Origen, *Against Celsus* 5:39, 8:14-15; Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies* 10:28-29; Hippolytus, *Against the Heresy of One*

Noetus, 14; Novatian, *Treatise concerning the Trinity*, 27, 31.

[9]Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935-75) 4:8.

[10]Pelikan 1:193, 207.

[11]See, for example, Basil, *Letters*, 38.

[12]Reinhold Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publishing Society, 1904) 1:232-33.

[13]Basil, *On the Spirit* 16:38, 47; Basil, *Letters*, 105; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Spirit*; Gregory of Nyssa, *On "Not Three Gods"*; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism*, 43.

[14]See Basil, *On the Spirit* 16:37-38; Basil, *Letters*, 38; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Spirit*; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Trinity*; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Third Theological Oration, On the Son* 29:3; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fifth Theological Oration, On the Holy Spirit*, 8-10.

[15]Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 3.

Chapter 9. The Doctrine of Christ

[1]Schaff 3:944.

[2]Tony Lane, *Harper's Concise Book of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 50, brackets in original.

[3]Pelikan 1:266-67.

Chapter 10. The Doctrines of Humanity and Salvation

[1]See Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity*, 122.

[2]Ambrose, *Of the Holy Spirit* 1:3:43.

[3]Chalfant, 78-80.

[4]Ibid., 133, 135, citing Epiphanius and Pseudo-Athanasius regarding Sabellius; Asterius Urbanus, *Extant Writings*, 10.

[5]Novatian, *Treatise concerning the Trinity*, 29.

[6]Hilary, *On the Trinity* 8:33.

[7]Ambrose, *Of the Holy Spirit* 2:8.

[8]John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, 29.

[9]Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists* 3:16:21.

Chapter 12. The Early Sacraments

[1]In *Against Heresies* 2:22:4 he spoke of people of all ages being born again through Christ, including infants. Elsewhere, he taught that baptism was essential to the new birth.

[2]Pelikan 1:167.

Chapter 13. Pagan Influences

[1]Durant 4:75. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1953, 1975) 1:209.

[2]Durant 3:657.

[3]Walter Nigg, *The Heretics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 102.

[4]Schaff 3:125.

[5]Durant 3:436.

[6]Ibid. 2:183.

[7]Ibid. 1:200, 235.

[8]Ibid. 2:183.

[9]Ibid. 3:66, 524, 558.

[10]Ibid. 2:187.

[11]Justin, *First Apology*, 66.

[12]Durant 4:58-60.

Chapter 14. The Early Middle Ages, A.D. 600-1100

[1]Schaff 4:279-99; Durant 4:537-41.

Chapter 15. The Later Middle Ages, A.D. 1100-1500

[1]Durant 4:585-613.

[2]Ibid. 4:780-1.
[3]Klotsche, 158.
[4]Durant 5:64, 150, 156.
[5]Schaff 5:593-94, 658.

Chapter 16. The Medieval Doctrinal System

[1]Durant 4:806.
[2]Schaff 5:831-2.
[3]Durant 4:746-47.
[4]Ibid. 4:737.
[5]Ibid. 4:743-44; Schaff 5:846-49; Pelikan 3:183.

Chapter 17. The Road to the Reformation

[1]Latourette 1:452-53.
[2]Schaff 5:211.
[3]Ibid. 7:181-82.
[4]Ibid. 7:321; Durant 5:150, 156.
[5]Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), 92.
[6]"Tongues, Gift of," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898) 5:796; "Tongues, Gift of," *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. H. B. Hackett (1870; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971) 4:3310-11.
[7]Thomas Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy* (By the author, 1981), 115.
[8]Durant 4:940, 950-51.
[9]"Baptism," *A Dictionary of the Bible* 1:241.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Schaff 5:709.
[12]David K. Bernard, *The New Birth* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984), 272-77, 288-98.

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