

Peer Stromme

Church History



Church History for Lutheran Young People

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Church History for Lutheran Young People

By

Peer Olson Stromme

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Foreword

IT HAS SEEMED to me that a Compend of Church History, in handy form and in the English language, would fill a want among our Lutheran young people. For years I have therefore had it in my mind to prepare such a book, hoping that it might be read with interest and profit in the homes, and that it might be found useful in connection with the work done by our Young People's Societies and our Sunday Schools. I may add that while the plan and arrangement of the book are my own, I have, of course, consulted other Church Histories, and made use of that which seemed best.

PEER O. STROMME.

Madison, Wis., 1902.

Introduction

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH is in reality as old as the world itself. It has existed ever since the creation of man; for there always have been true believers, who have done God's will on earth, and who have gone to heaven when they died. And all these have been saved through faith in Christ. The church history of the time before the coming of Christ is the history of the Jews, God's chosen people, as recorded in the Old Testament. The true believers of that day were saved by faith in the Savior whom God had promised to send when he said: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." They truly believed in Christ, and were members of his church; for it was true then, as now, that "there is no salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

This earliest church history is, however, usually called Bible history, since we have an account of it in the Bible. By church history we now therefore mean the history of the Christian church after the time of Christ. It is generally counted as beginning with the first Pentecost after the Ascension; the day on which the Holy Ghost was poured out on the apostles, as recorded in the second chapter of The Acts. This is called the birthday of the Christian church.

In the New Testament we learn something of the history of this early church. It was founded at Jerusalem, where the apostle Peter began preaching to the people, urging them to repent of their sins and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

"Then they," – says the Bible account – "that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

"And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

“Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved.”

Even while the apostles yet lived wicked men found their way into the churches, and tried to lead people astray from the truth; and the Epistles warn the Christians against founders of sects and teachers of false doctrines. The history of the church since that time repeats this warning; and it also strengthens and comforts the believers by furnishing proof that the truth of God is victorious, and that the gates of hell can not prevail against his church.

Part I. The Early Church

1. The Apostles

IN REGARD to the personal history of the apostles we know little more than that which is told us in the New Testament. It is supposed that all, with the exception of John, became “blood-witnesses,” or martyrs; that is, suffered death for their faith. The first among them to lose his life in this way was James, the brother of John. He was executed at Jerusalem by King Herod Agrippa about ten years after the death of Christ. The other James, who is called the brother of the Lord, died as a martyr in the same city about twenty-five years later. Peter is believed to have preached the gospel to the Jews in Syria and Asia Minor, after which he went to Rome, where he was crucified in the year 66 or 67, during the time of the persecutions under Emperor Nero. The apostle of whose life we have the most full account in the Bible is Paul; but of his old age little is known. It is probable, however, that he also, like Peter, suffered death as a martyr in Rome, and at about the same time. The last survivor of the apostles was John, who after his exile on the Island Patmos made his home in the city of Ephesus. There he died at a ripe old age near the end of the first century. Of the other apostles we know only that they spent their lives in preaching the gospel of Christ, and at last sealed their faith with their blood, and thus went to their reward.

The apostles began their work among their own people; for it was the will of Christ that salvation was to be offered first to the Jews, and then to the gentiles. Of these latter the first to become members of the Christian church were the Centurion Cornelius of Caesarea and his kinsmen and near friends. In the 10th chapter of The Acts we read that Peter preached Christ to these gentiles, and taught them that “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. – And he commanded them to be baptized in the

name of the Lord.” And thus “the gentiles also had received the word of God.”

Paul became the principal apostle of the gentiles. He made the city of Antioch the center of his mission work, and from this place he traveled through Asia Minor, Macedon, and Greece, and established many churches. After the death of Paul the home of John in Ephesus became the headquarters of the mission work among the gentiles; and before John died there were Christian churches in all the larger and in many of the smaller cities around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

2. The Early Christian Martyrs

The first of the Christian martyrs was Stephen, an account of whose death is found in the 7th chapter of The Acts. He had preached Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem. For this reason they stoned him; and he died “calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

After the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Romans, in the year 70, the Jews were scattered, and became powerless to persecute the Christians. The gentiles, or pagans, however, became all the more zealous in their attempts to stamp out the gospel of Christ, which was “unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” In the beginning the wise men of Rome and Greece regarded Christianity with contempt as being nothing but a Jewish sect. The ignorant masses, on the other hand, looked upon the Christians as being wicked blasphemers, and charged them with all sorts of infamous crimes. The Roman emperors soon began to fear that the new religion might become dangerous to the peace of the state; and so they set about to persecute and kill the Christians.

The members of the church in Rome were the first to suffer. In the year 64, A. D., nearly the whole city was destroyed by fire; and the emperor, Nero, was suspected of having himself caused this fire to be started. In order to clear himself of this suspicion he declared that the destruction had been brought about by the Christians; and thus he had a pretext for persecuting them. Some were crucified, others were torn in pieces by wild

beasts in the arena for the amusement of the populace, and still others were covered with tar and set on fire to serve as torches in the emperor's gardens.

The second persecution occurred under Emperor Trajan in the beginning of the second century. The most notable of the martyrs at this time was Ignatius, the bishop of the church in Antioch. He was, in the year 114, thrown before wild beasts and torn in pieces. There were other persecutions under the Emperors Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus Pius, Decius, and Diocletian. The one begun by Decius was the first general persecution; that is, the first which was directed against all the Christian churches. It lasted about ten years, 249-259, during which time Decius and his successor, Gallus, made determined efforts to destroy all Christians within the Roman empire. A large number of the bishops and teachers were put to death; the plan being to kill the shepherds, that the sheep might be scattered.

The second and last of the general persecutions occurred under the Emperor Diocletian in the beginning of the fourth century. In the year 303 this emperor gave orders that all Christian churches were to be destroyed, and their books burned; and large numbers of Christians were killed because they refused to deliver up the sacred writings in their possession.

Some there were, of course, who were frightened and tortured into denying their faith; but many more remained steadfast, and praised God in the midst of their sufferings, and joyfully accepted the martyr's crown. There were even many who became their own accusers, in order that they might suffer and die for their faith.

In the midst of these persecutions, and as a result of them, the Christian church gained in strength and numbers. At the close of the third century the gospel of Christ had been preached and was believed in all parts of the Roman empire, in northern Africa, in India, in Gaul, and in the Roman provinces in the countries now called Germany and England.

The most noted of all the martyrs was Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, who was burned at the stake in the year 155, during the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Like Ignatius he had in his youth been a disciple of the apostle John. When brought before the Roman judge in Smyrna and urged to deny Christ, he said: "Eighty-six years have I served him, and he has done me good only, and no evil. How, then, could I now curse him, my Lord and my Savior?" When his executioners were about to nail him to the stake he objected, saying, that the God in whom he believed would certainly give him strength to remain standing in the midst of the flames

while life endured. He was then heard to pray and to thank God for the crown soon to be given him. The legend says that the flames refused to touch his body, and that it became necessary for one of the executioners to pierce his breast with a spear.

The example of Polycarp and of many others bore testimony to the truth that the gospel of Christ was the power of God unto salvation; and thus it came to be said that “the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.”

3. Constantine The Great And Julian The Apostate

In the year 323 Constantine, surnamed the Great, became the ruler of the Roman empire. He had for some years been waging war against his rival emperors, and on one of his warlike expeditions he is said to have had a vision. He saw on the heavens a shining cross with the inscription: “In this sign thou shalt conquer.” He placed a cross in his banner, and soon succeeded in subduing all his rival claimants to the throne. He then formally declared Christianity the official state religion of the empire.

He built many fine churches and provided for their support, and granted many privileges to the clergy. The Christians were given great honor, and received positions of profit. This state of affairs was not, however, an unmixed good; for there were many who now joined the church because of the worldly advantages which this offered.

As for Constantine himself, he seems at first to have, regarded Christianity as nothing more than a means of advancing his own political schemes. He called himself a Christian, and was friendly to those of the faith; but he had no clear knowledge of the truth. It was not until shortly before his death that he was baptized; his idea being that it must be a wise thing to wait until the last moment, and then let the church wash his sins away.

After the death of Constantine the old pagan religion made one last effort to raise its head. The Emperor Julian, a nephew of Constantine, made it his aim to undo the work of his uncle. Julian had been brought up as a Christian, but became a bitter enemy of the faith; and during the two years of his reign, 361 – 363, he did everything possible to reestablish paganism. Among other things he encouraged the Jews in an attempt to rebuild the

temple at Jerusalem for the purpose of disproving that which Jesus had said concerning this temple. But while the work was being carried on there occurred a fire and explosion which utterly destroyed the last ruins of the building.

Julian did not persecute the Christians, but treated them with contempt. He encouraged all manner of false doctrines, and sought to make the Christian church divided against itself. He appointed enemies of Christianity to all positions of trust and profit in the state, and he himself worshipped the old heathen gods. However, all his efforts against the truth were vain. During a warlike expedition into Persia he was mortally wounded, and it is said that his last words were:

“Thou hast conquered, Galilean.”

And he was right; before the end of the century all manner of idolatry had been prohibited by law throughout the Roman empire.

4. The Religious Services And Customs Of The Early Church

In the earliest Christian church the religious services were held in the houses of the members; but as their numbers rapidly increased it soon became necessary to build meeting-houses, or churches. During the persecutions the Christians often held their meetings in cellars, caves, or in the thick forests, in order not to attract attention. The services consisted in singing, prayer, reading of the scriptures, and sermons by one or more of the elders. Then the adult Christians partook of the Lord's Supper, and the celebration of this sacrament closed and crowned the services. New converts and infants were baptized; the first after having been instructed in the most important articles of the faith. But in the beginning it was the custom to celebrate this sacrament in private. Later it became the rule to bring the infants to the church to be baptized. The early Christians observed the beautiful custom of holding frequent love feasts for rich and poor alike; and these always closed with the Lord's Supper. Important events in the life of Christ were commemorated by special services; and Sunday, the day of

his resurrection from the dead, soon came to be generally accepted as the one day of the week most appropriate to be set aside for the public church services. The great festival of the year was at first Easter; then Pentecost was added; and finally, Christmas came to be generally celebrated as the third of the great church festivals.

From the very first there were within the church heretics, who refused to abide unconditionally by the truth as set forth in the word of God. Against such the church waged continual war; and in order that it might have a symbol, or flag, around which the defenders of the truth could be rallied, the church has from time to time formulated its doctrine in definite confessions. The first and most important of these is The Apostolic Creed, or the three Articles of Faith, which still are the common confession of all branches of the Christian church. The authorship of this Creed is unknown; but we know that it has come down to us from the first or second century, and that it is a short but correct epitome of the apostolic doctrine.

5. The Church Fathers

Those Christian teachers who during the first five centuries wrote in defense of the faith, and whose writings we still have, in whole or in part, are called the Church Fathers. The first of these are known as the Apostolic Fathers, because they were the immediate disciples of the apostles. They are:

1. Joses, surnamed Barnabas, the co-worker and assistant of Paul.
2. Clemens Romanus, one of the first bishops in Rome, whose letter to the church at Corinth was at one time regarded by some as being of equal authority with the Epistles of the Bible.
3. Hermas, the author of a religious story, "The Shepherd," which was for a long time read publicly in the churches, and which by Origen and other teachers was held to be one of the inspired writings.
4. Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch.
5. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.
6. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia; a disciple of the apostle John and a friend of Polycarp and, like him and Ignatius, one of the early martyrs.

Of the other Church Fathers some few only need be mentioned:

- Justin the Martyr is the author of several books in defense of the faith.
- Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, and became bishop of the church in Lyons, where he suffered death at the stake, in the year 202.
- Tertullian of Carthage is the first of the Fathers who wrote in the Latin tongue. He was a learned and zealous man, but held some opinions for which there is no warrant in the Bible. He believed, for instance, in the coming of a Millennium, in which the Savior and his saints were to rule the world.
- Cyprian was, like Tertullian, born in Carthage of heathen parents. After his conversion he became the bishop of his native city. After having spent some years in exile he returned to his home and remained at his post of duty until, as he himself said, “it pleased God to give him the martyr’s crown,” in the year 258.

In Alexandria was established a school for the education of Christian teachers and ministers. Of the teachers in this school the most important are Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen. The latter became famous throughout all Christendom for his learning and piety. After having taught for 25 years in Alexandria he was, owing to a controversy with his bishop, removed from his position. He then went to Cesarea in Palestine, where he founded a theological seminary. In 254, during the persecution under the Emperor Decius, he was put on the rack and tortured, as a result of which he died after some days of suffering. Origen has written a surprisingly large number of books, some of which contain doctrines that are condemned by the word of God, and have given rise to much controversy in the church.

Next to Alexandria the great seat of Christian learning was Antioch. The most important of the later Fathers in this city is Chrysostome, whose sermons are still regarded as masterpieces of pulpit oratory. In 397 he became the patriarch in Constantinople. He preached against the sins of high and low, and the empress, Eudoxia, became incensed against him. He died in exile, in the year 407. Thirty years later his body was brought back to Constantinople, and the emperor, Theodosius, kneeled at its feet and did penance for the wrongs done by his predecessors to this holy man.

Of the later Church Fathers should be mentioned Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who is the author of the famous hymn, Te Deum, still in use by all

Christendom; and Jerome of Dalmatia, who made the Latin translation of the Bible, generally known as the Vulgate.

6. Arianism And Athanasius

In the beginning of the fourth century there lived in Alexandria a priest named Arius, who has been the cause of much trouble to the church. Although he called himself a Christian, he denied the central article of the Christian faith. He declared that Jesus was not one with the Father; but, like the other creatures, had been created, and was different from them only in being the first and best. Before the time of Arius other heretics had taught that Christ and the Holy Ghost were not distinct persons of the Godhead. This heresy brought on the first of the so-called Trinitarian controversies. Now Arius tried to explain the mystery of the Trinity by denying the divinity of the Second and Third persons of the Godhead. Arius was promptly expelled from the church by his bishop, and his doctrine condemned; but still he gained many adherents. His principal opponent was Athanasius, afterward bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius proved that the heresy of Arius denied Christ as the Savior of the world. The controversy on this point divided nearly all Christendom into two hostile parties. This led the Emperor Constantine to convene a general Church Council at Nice, in the year 325. The meeting was attended by 318 bishops, and lasted two months. Arius was condemned as a heretic and sent into exile, and his writings were ordered to be burned. The council adopted a confession in which the divinity of Christ is especially emphasized.

The controversy was not ended, however. Some of the friends of Arius tried to effect a compromise by teaching that Christ, to be sure, was true God, but still not of equal dignity with the Father, nor essentially one with him. Athanasius never wavered in his staunch defense of the true doctrine. He was several times exiled, and as often recalled. He died in 373. The church has honored him by calling him the “Father of Orthodoxy.”

In 381 a new church council at Constantinople made some changes in the confession which had been adopted at Nice. These consist principally in additions defining the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost as being also one with the Father and the Son. This amended confession is the one which we now have under the name of the Nicene Symbol. The third of the so-called

ecumenical, or common, symbols of the church, the Athanasian Symbol, was not written by Athanasius, but is called after him, because it embodies his teachings and the general results of the Trinitarian controversies. The authorship, as well as the time when it was written, is unknown. The most probable view is that it dates from the sixth century, and that the author is Vigilus, bishop of Tapsus, who published several treatises under the name of Athanasius.

7. Augustine And The Pelagian Controversy

In the early part of the fourth century the orthodox church under the leadership of Aurelius Augustine waged war against Pelagianism. This heresy derives its name from Pelagius, a British monk, who had settled in Rome. He denied the doctrine of the Bible concerning original sin. Man did not, said he, fall in Adam; many became sinners of their own free choice, but all could of their own will and strength do that which is good, and thus earn salvation; Christ was not the Redeemer, but only a teacher and a model of virtue.— After some time spent in Rome Pelagius carried himself and his doctrine over to Africa; and there he was met and defeated by Augustine, the then bishop at Hippo; who in his defense of the true faith against Pelagius and other heretics, more especially the so-called Donatists, — became for all time the great teacher of the western church.

Augustine was born at Tagaste, near Carthage in Africa, Nov. 13, 353. He was the son of a pagan father, who was converted shortly before his death; and a Christian mother, Monica; a most excellent and devout woman. She did not, however, bring her infant son to baptism, as she, like Emperor Constantine, had the superstitious notion that one would do best to postpone this rite until near the hour of death. Augustine himself, in his old age, wrote: “Had I been baptized as a child, I would have escaped the commission of many of my sins.” At the age of seventeen he went to Carthage to study grammar and rhetoric. Here he fell in with wicked companions, and led a life of sensual pleasure. At the same time he studied diligently and gave lectures on the art of oratory. In 383 he removed to Rome, and then to Milan, where he the following year was appointed teacher of rhetoric. His mother, who in the mean time had become a widow, followed him to Milan, and continued to weep and pray for his conversion.

Augustine now began to study the Bible, and he was diligent in attending church in order to hear the eloquent sermons of bishop Ambrose. These made a deep impression on him; and after many spiritual conflicts he became a Christian, and was baptized on Easter Eve., 387. A year later he went back to Tagaste; and in 396 he was ordained bishop of Hippo, an office which he continued to hold until his death in 430. Here it was that he fought in defense of the truth against Donatists and Pelagians.

The Donatists taught that the church could not be a holy institution, if it did not succeed in ridding itself of all hypocrites; and that the sacraments were of no force, if the person who administered them were not a true believer. Against these, as well as against the Pelagians, Augustine triumphantly vindicated the true faith. In doing this over against the Pelagians he himself went wrong on one point. In his zeal for the biblical doctrine that man is saved by the grace of God alone through faith, he taught not only that some are predestinated to salvation according to the gracious will of God, but also that grace is irresistible, and that some men have from eternity been elected to eternal perdition.

A hundred years after the death of Augustine the church councils at Orange and Valencia formally condemned every manner of Pelagianism, and endorsed the teaching of Augustine in regard to original sin and salvation by grace alone. At the same time they rejected his doctrine of predestination, in so far as it implied the election of some men to reprobation and perdition. Among the works written by Augustine are his Confessions, a large work in thirteen books; and a great number of treatises, sermons, and letters. His last work is a book "On the City of God," which is regarded as the greatest of all his writings.

8. Monachism And Asceticism

Even in the very earliest Christian churches there were men who practiced what is called asceticism. They imagined that they could increase their holiness by living alone in out-of-the-way places, fasting, and renouncing all earthly enjoyments. They were called Anchorites, or Hermits. They gave all their property to the poor, renounced marriage, and often inflicted awful tortures on themselves. One of these anchorites was Antonius of Egypt, who has been called "the Father of Monachism." He is said to have spent 86

years in the desert or among the mountains. Twice in all this time he visited the haunts of men. In the year 311 he went to Alexandria in order to strengthen the many Christians who were being executed, and in hopes of sharing their fate. Some years later he again visited the same city in order to testify against the heresy of Arius. He died in 356 at the age of 105 years. His reputation for piety induced many others to become anchorites. His disciple Pachomius was the first to gather several of these into a community under one roof. The building was called a cloister or monastery, and the man at the head of the community was called the prior. This is the origin of what is known as Christian Monachism. Women, also, soon followed the example; and these were called nuns.

Monachism and asceticism at first flourished especially in Egypt and Syria. As one of the most famous of these fanatics may be mentioned Simeon of Syria, called Stylites. He built a high column, on the top of which he spent many years in order to raise himself above earthly things and be nearer heaven.

Monachism was brought into Europe by Benedict of Nursia, who in the beginning of the sixth century established a monastery at Montecassino, and gave the rules which afterward came to govern all similar religious orders.

Candidates for admission into these homes were, after a preliminary trial, called the novitiate, required to make the three monastic vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience. In the beginning the monks did much good, no doubt. Many of them became zealous and successful missionaries. Later on, in the middle ages, but too many of the numerous monasteries became the home of debauchery; but still it should be remembered that they were also, during the dark ages of ignorance, the principal preservers of literature and learning.

Part II. The Church During The Middle Ages

1. The False Prophet Mohammed

IN THE SIXTH CENTURY there existed a sad state of affairs in the churches throughout the Roman empire. There were many sects causing divisions and offenses contrary to the sound doctrine. But in the following century the situation became even still worse. There was established a new religion, and this captured whole countries and threatened all Christendom. The inventor of this new and impious religion was Mohammed. He was born at Mecca, in Arabia, in the year 570. When a young man he traveled far and wide as a merchant, and became acquainted with Judaism and Christianity; and being himself an enthusiast, he set about the task of inventing a new religion. According to his own account he was one day in the cave of Hira, when he saw in a dream the angel Gabriel and heard himself saluted as the prophet of God. Afterward he had repeated visions, in which the angel revealed to him the successive chapters of the Mohammedan bible, the Koran. These he committed to memory, as he had not acquired the art of writing. The Mohammedan religion is called Islam, and its adherents are called Musselmans, or Moslems. The doctrine of Islam is: There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Moses and Christ were great prophets, but inferior to Mohammed. Man can, by his own works, earn salvation; especially by praying, fasting, giving alms, and making pilgrimages to Mecca and other holy places; and above all by fighting for the extension of Islam. This religion prohibits the use of wine and other intoxicants, but permits polygamy. The paradise which it promises is a place of unbridled license and sensual enjoyment. Mohammed died in the year 632.

Within a few years after the first appearance of Mohammed as a prophet his religion had become the prevailing one in all parts of Arabia. It was

extended by the aid of fire and sword, and conquered all the old Christian lands in Asia and Africa. In these, as well as in European Turkey, it is to this day the ruling religion.

A hundred years after the death of Mohammed a large army of the Saracens, who had embraced his religion, invaded Europe. Near Poitiers in France they were met and defeated by Charles Martel, king of the Franks. This is known as the battle of Tours, 732, and is regarded as one of the decisive battles in the world's history.

2. Christianity Victorious Throughout Europe

While the Christian religion was replaced by Mohammedanism in Asia and Africa, it was making steady and rapid progress in Europe, where the light of the gospel gradually dispelled the darkness of paganism.

The Goths were Christianized in the fourth century, especially through the efforts of Bishop Ulfilas. He was, however, a disciple of Arius, and the Christianity which he taught was tainted with Arianism. At the same time he did the people a great service, as he translated the Bible into their tongue. From the Goths Christianity found its way to their allied tribes, the Vandals, Burgundians, Lombards, and others. Arianism was soon stamped out among them. This result was brought about largely through Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks. In the year 496 he was baptized, and then he set about to introduce Christianity among his people. He accepted the orthodox catholic religion from Rome, and made the Arianism of the other Germanic tribes a pretext for attacking them and making himself their master.

The Christian religion had been brought to England as early as the second century. But when the Anglo-Saxons, in 449, invaded and conquered the country they killed or exiled the older inhabitants, and re-established paganism. It was a Benedictine monk, Augustine, who became the "Apostle of the Anglo-Saxons." In 597 he, with forty other monks, was sent to England by Pope Gregory the Great, and they were remarkably successful in their mission. The Anglo-Saxon clergy became famous for their learning and piety, and were above all others active in the work of carrying the gospel to other lands.

Ireland had been Christianized by Saint Patrick in the middle of the fifth century. This remarkable man was a Scotchman by birth. In his youth he had been sold as a slave in Ireland. After some years he escaped and made his way to Gaul, or France, and here he was soon ordained a priest. Then he returned to Ireland, where for 33 years he labored zealously as a missionary. He died March 17, 465, at the age of 93 years. Ireland became “the Island of the Saints,” and from its monasteries there went forth many missionaries. Scotland was Christianized by the disciples of Saint Patrick in the latter part of the fifth century.

The most famous of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries is Saint Winfrid Boniface, who became the “Apostle of the Germans.” He was born near Exeter, England, 680. In 716 he went to Germany. Christianity had been preached in the southern and western provinces, but had not made much headway, and Boniface labored to bring order out of disorder in these districts, as well as to introduce the gospel into the northern and eastern provinces, where it was as yet unknown. He placed himself under the direction of the Roman pope, and was by him appointed archbishop of Mayence. From this place Boniface led the work of organizing the German church. When he was 74 years old he resigned his position as archbishop in order to go as a missionary to Friesland, in the country now known as Holland. After laboring there one year with great success he was attacked by a company of barbarians, and killed, in the year 755.

The most powerful of the German tribes, and the last to become Christians, were the Saxons. They were still pagans at the time when Boniface suffered martyrdom. In the beginning of the following century they were Christianized by the emperor Charlemagne. Much blood was spilled, however, in the thirty years’ war which he was obliged to wage against the Saxons in order to accomplish this result. But from that time to this day Saxony has led the world in Christian learning and in deeds of Christian charity. From Saxony have come the greatest of the champions of the true faith.

The “Apostle, of the North” is Saint Ansgar, born in Picardy, in France, 801. Harald Klak, king of Denmark, was baptized in 826, while on a visit to Germany for the purpose of securing assistance in his wars against his rival kings in Jutland. In return for this assistance he promised to introduce Christianity into his country. Ansgar was chosen to lead the work of conversion among the Danes. He was zealous and tireless, and

accomplished much in a short time. He founded a Christian school in Heidaby, and built churches, and preached, and endured many hardships. When King Harald was driven out of the country Ansgar was compelled to follow him, but soon found another field for his mission work. He went to Sigtuna in Sweden, and there he labored for two years with great success. He was then made archbishop of Hamburg and afterward of Bremen, and from these places he directed the work in the countries of the North. He died in 865. – Shortly after this time Gorm the Old became king of all Denmark. He was a pagan and persecuted the Christians. However, the German king, Henry the Fowler, soon forced him to desist. Still it was not until during the reign of Canute the Great, in the beginning of the eleventh century, that the Christian religion became firmly established in Denmark.

In Sweden there was a long struggle between Christianity and paganism, and the conversion of the Swedes cannot be said to have been completed until the middle of the twelfth century, under King Inge Stenkilsson.

Norway was Christianized by its own kings with the assistance of the church in England. The first Christian king was Haakon the Good (936-961). He had been baptized in England, and made some efforts to introduce the new religion into Norway; but they were not successful. King Olaf Trygvason, who reigned from 995 to 1000, persuaded and forced the greater part of the people to accept Christianity; and his work was continued and concluded by King Olaf Haraldson, also called Saint Olaf, who died in 1030. Iceland, Greenland, the Faeroe, and the Orkney Islands had been colonized from Norway, and were Christianized at the same time with the mother country.

The Slavs of eastern Europe were Christianized during this same period – the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The two brothers Cyrillus and Methodius have been called the “Apostles of the Slavs.” Most of the Slavonic tribes were converted by missionaries from the Eastern, or Greek, church, with its headquarters at Constantinople, and have never acknowledged the supremacy of the pope of Rome. The Russians were Christianized in the early part of the eleventh century by Grand-duke Vladimir and his son and successor Jaroslav.

3. Popery

We read in the Bible that as the disciples of the Christian faith increased in numbers, the apostles ordained presbyters, or elders, in the several churches, who were to be overseers and teachers in the congregations committed to their charge. They were also called bishops. In order that these might devote their whole time to their work as teachers, there were appointed deacons, whose duty it was to minister to the wants of the sick and the poor. (Acts 6:1-6). In the course of time there came to be a more and more sharp distinction between the clergy and the laity. Little by little the number of offices in the church increased. There were assistant deacons; and lectors, whose duty it was to preserve the sacred writings and read them in the meetings; and cantors, who were to lead in the singing of the psalms. Then, again, there came to be a difference of rank among the presbyters, or elders. In the larger churches there usually were several of these; and it naturally became necessary to select one as chief among them; and this one was distinguished from the others by being called the bishop. Later on the bishops in the capitals or largest cities of the several provinces came to be regarded as of higher rank than the others, and were styled archbishops. Then the archbishops in the five most important centers, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were regarded as of greater dignity than the rest, and assumed the title of patriarchs. Finally, the patriarch in Rome claimed to rank higher than all the others, and insisted on being called pope, (papa, i. e. the father of the whole church). The only one of the patriarchs who disputed the title of the Roman bishop to the highest rank was the one at Constantinople. This dispute at last led to the division of the church into two great bodies, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic.

There were many circumstances in favor of the claim made by the Roman bishop. Rome was the capital of the world, "the Eternal City," from which people in all lands had been accustomed to receive orders. In Rome Peter and Paul were believed to have labored and suffered martyrdom. Furthermore, the bishops in Rome had, as a rule, been men distinguished for their talents and piety. As a result of these circumstances there had been a general disposition to accord them the highest dignity in the church councils. After a time, however, the Roman bishops were not satisfied with this honor, but began to claim a primacy over the church as a divine right. Leo, called the Great, who was bishop in Rome in the middle of the fifth century, is the first who is known to have made this claim in express words

and supported it with argument. He declared, as do the popes to this day, that the Lord himself had appointed the apostle Peter ruler of the church; and that the bishops of Rome were the heirs and legitimate successors of Peter, as this apostle had founded the church in Rome and been its first bishop.

The real founder of the papacy was Gregory the Great, 590-604. He not only put forward his claim to be the Vicar of Christ and the ruler of the church, but he succeeded in having his claim generally allowed by all Christian lands. Gregory was in several respects a remarkable man. He had inherited a large estate. This he sold, and devoted the money to building monasteries, in one of which he himself became a monk. Then, after serving for some years as a priest, he was, against his own protest, elected bishop of Rome. He called himself "the servant of the servants of Christ," and wanted no honors for himself personally; but insisted on and defended the divine right of the Roman pope to be obeyed as the supreme ruler of the whole Christian church.

The next man of importance in the long list of popes is Nicholas I., in the middle of the ninth century. He wrote and spoke much in defense of the fiction that the pope is the direct successor of Saint Peter. He compelled kings and archbishops to humble themselves before him and obey him. A disagreement between him and the patriarch at Constantinople eventually caused the schism between the Roman and Greek churches, which was formally declared in the year 1054.

The first half of the tenth century witnessed the lowest degradation of the papacy. During this time two infamous women ruled in Rome; and they placed many of the partners of their infamy on "the throne of Saint Peter." These popes led scandalously wicked lives, and all sorts of vices flourished in the papal palace. When the German king, Otto the Great, was crowned Roman emperor, in 962, he put an end to this state of affairs, and insisted that no pope should be elected without the emperor's approval. Emperor Henry III., 1039-1056, went still farther, and himself appointed the pope without consulting the Roman clergy.

The most remarkable man among all the Roman popes is Gregory VII. His name before he became pope was Hildebrand. He was born in Tuscany about the year 1020; became a monk at Cluny; was called to Rome, and was the chief adviser of Pope Leo IX., by whom he was made a cardinal. From this time on Hildebrand virtually directed the affairs of Italy and the church.

Under five successive popes he maintained control, until 1073, when he allowed himself to be elected the successor of Pope Alexander II. Before this time, in 1058, he had changed the manner of holding the papal elections, placing them in the hands of the cardinals. These were at that time the seven bishops in the Roman province and the twenty-eight priests and deacons of the principal churches in Rome. In the year 1074 Hildebrand, who now called himself Gregory VII., published an order forbidding priests to marry, and threatening with the ban of the church all persons who received the sacrament at the hands of a married member of the clergy. Even Pope Gregory, however, was not able to enforce this rule everywhere. In the following year he called a council at Rome which prohibited the interference of the laity with the appointment of bishops or other church officials. He thus freed the church from the domination of the German emperors, which a few years before had been almost unquestioned. Emperor Henry IV. thereupon called a diet at Worms, and declared the pope deposed. For this the pope punished him by excommunication and by giving assistance to his enemies, who were at the time waging war against him. The emperor was compelled to humble himself and sue for pardon. He went to Italy; and for three days in the dead of winter he stood outside of the door of the papal palace in Canossa, before the pope finally admitted him and gave him absolution. However, when the emperor had recovered sufficient strength he marched an army against Rome; and Pope Gregory fled to Salerno, where he died in 1085. Pope Gregory maintained that as head of the church and as the vicar of Christ he had absolute power and the right to demand blind obedience from kings and emperors as well as from all others. Those who would not obey him were excommunicated, he claiming the right to exclude them from the church on earth and to shut them out from heaven.

Though it can not be said that Pope Gregory VII. was a wicked and profligate man in his private life, as many of the other Roman bishops have been, yet none has demonstrated more clearly than he that the pope is the antichrist, of whom the Bible speaks as “that man of sin, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

The successors of Pope Gregory VII. continued to fight for his idea, that all earthly rulers derive their power from the church. The climax seemed to

have been reached under Pope Innocence III., 1198-1216, who exalted himself above church and state. All kings and rulers were his servants. If they disobeyed him, as did the English king, John Lackland, he placed not only them but all their subjects under the ban. This was called the interdict; and while it lasted the priests in the country under the ban were not allowed to hold religious services or administer the sacraments to others than such as were at the point of death. Pope Innocence was not even satisfied with being the spiritual ruler of all Christendom, but also made himself the sovereign of the States of the Church in Italy.

However, pope Boniface VIII., 1294-1303, went even still farther. He announced, as an article of faith, that belief in the supreme power and infallibility of the pope was necessary to salvation. He published an order forbidding the clergy to pay any tax on church property, and thus became involved in a quarrel with King Philip the Fair of France; and this finally resulted in the decline of the papal power. Philip besieged and imprisoned Pope Boniface and forced his successor, Pope Clemens V., to remove from Rome to Avignon in France, which city remained the residence of the popes for the next seventy years. This period of humiliation for the popes is known as their Babylonian Captivity. At the end of this period there was a division in the church itself; and there were elected two popes, one in Avignon and one in Rome, who excommunicated each other.

From this time on for more than a hundred years the popes were, as a rule, men who were notorious by reason of their crimes and wickedness. The worst among them, probably, was Alexander VI., the father of the infamous Caesar and Lucretia Borgia. According to an impartial historian the character of this "holy Father" was a "compound of cruelty, treachery, licentiousness and other vices."

4. Superstitions And Heresies Of The Roman Church

During the dark ages, while popery flourished, an ever increasing number of superstitions and heresies gained a foothold in the Roman church. The so called traditions of the church were made the rule of faith, and were supposed to be of at least equal authority with the Bible. To the members of the laity, and to many of the clergy as well, the Bible was a sealed book.

The greatest stress was laid on doctrines of human invention, which were intended to enhance the power of the pope and of the priesthood. Instead of the two sacraments instituted by the Savior, the church counted seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Order, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. In connection with the Eucharist, or Sacrament of the Altar, the Roman church had introduced the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass. It taught and teaches that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, and remain his body and blood as long as the form remains unchanged; that is, as long as they to the touch, taste, etc., seem to be bread and wine. From the beginning of the thirteenth century it became the rule that the lay people did not receive the wine at all. The excuse offered for this was and is that the body of Christ is received entire under the form of the bread, and that hence the cup of wine is not really necessary.

Purgatory is another invention of the Roman church, which teaches that there is a place in which the souls of those who die in the state of grace suffer for a time, either on account of venial sin, or on account of the temporal punishment due to mortal sins which have been forgiven. The souls detained in purgatory may be helped out of this place of torment by the prayers of the faithful and especially by those of the priest. The saying of the mass for the souls supposed to be in purgatory has been an important part of the business of the Roman priests, and furnished them with a large part of their income. The Roman church gradually left the old truth in regard to the relation between faith and works, and began to teach that man can himself expiate for his sins by penances and good deeds, especially by fasting, giving alms, and making pilgrimages to the Holy Land or to Rome. It also became common to offer worship and prayer to the saints, the chief of whom was and is the Virgin Mary. She holds a peculiar position in the Roman Catholic church, which has invented the fictions that she did not have upon her even the stain of original sin; and that her body was not allowed to decay in the grave, but was taken to heaven immediately after her death.

In connection with the worship of the saints the church had a superstitious veneration for relics brought back by pilgrims from the Holy Land. In the dark days of ignorance an enormous number and variety of such relics were imposed on the people. There were splints of the true cross, pieces of clothing supposed to have been worn by the Virgin Mary, hairs

from the beard of Saint Peter, and even a bottle of the darkness which overspread Egypt at the time of Moses.

Of the many other heresies or abuses of the Roman church only one need be mentioned. It is especially important for the reason that it is the one against which the Reformation directed its first attack. This was the sale of indulgences. Strictly speaking the church did not claim to be able to sell forgiveness of sins, but only exemption from certain penalties. Many priests did, however, actually pretend to sell forgiveness; and people generally understood that this was what they were buying, and paid great sums into the treasury of the church in order to secure forgiveness of their sins without the trouble of repenting and renouncing their wickedness.

5. The Crusades

By the crusades are meant the wars carried on by the Christians of the Middle Ages for the recovery of Palestine from the Mohammedans. These wars have a close connection with the superstitions of the Roman church. From a very early period pilgrimages to the Holy Land had been made. In the year 1065 Palestine was conquered by the Turks, and these inflicted all sorts of indignities on the Christian pilgrims. Peter the Hermit, a French monk, who visited Palestine and saw the cruelties practiced by the Turks, reported what he had seen to Pope Urban II., and was by him encouraged to travel through France and Italy and induce Christians to begin a crusade. All classes were stirred with fanatic enthusiasm. At a council held at Clermont, where the pope himself was present, a crusade was resolved on. This was in the year 1095. At this time four armies, or rather disorderly mobs, had already set out for the Holy Land. The first, consisting of 20,000 men, was almost entirely destroyed during the march through Bulgaria. The second consisted of 40,000 men, women, and children under Peter the Hermit. They succeeded in crossing over into Asia Minor, where they were utterly routed by the Turks at Nice. The two other bands, one of 15,000 Germans and one of no less than 200,000 persons from England, France, and other countries, were destroyed by the way, in Hungary. Then it was that a crusade began which promised success. Six armies under the command of trained soldiers set out for the Holy Land. At Constantinople they united and then crossed over into Asia Minor. Here they captured Nice

and other places, and marched into Syria; and after a siege lasting seven months they took the city of Antioch, and were in their turn besieged by an army of 200,000 Mohammedans. These were finally defeated, and the way opened to Jerusalem. In the meantime the army of 600,000 crusaders had dwindled to not more than 40,000.

In the summer of 1099 they laid siege to Jerusalem. The city was captured, and the leader of the crusaders, Godfrey of Bouillon, was elected King of Jerusalem.

This Christian kingdom maintained itself against the attacks of the Mohammedans for almost fifty years, when the Turks again began to gain the upper hand. This brought on the second great crusade, which was instigated by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Two armies, numbering more than a million men, started for Jerusalem under the command of King Louis VII. of France and Emperor Conrad III. of Germany. Neither of these armies succeeded in reaching their destination.

The third crusade was begun in 1187, when the Sultan of Egypt had captured Jerusalem. This crusade was led by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, King Philippe Auguste of France, and King Richard the Lionhearted of England. The emperor died on the way, and the two kings had a serious quarrel among themselves, and finally ended the crusade by a treaty with the Sultan, who agreed to impose no taxes on Christian pilgrims.

The fourth crusade was ordered by Pope Innocence III., in 1203. It set out, but never reached Palestine at all.

In 1228 emperor Frederick II. of Germany commanded a fifth crusade, and was successful in making himself master of Palestine and being crowned king of Jerusalem.

Eleven years later the Turks again captured Jerusalem, and a sixth crusade was undertaken, under the Count of Champagne. This, also, was successful; the Mohammedans again surrendered the Holy Land.

In 1244 Jerusalem was pillaged and burned by a new band of Turks, and a seventh crusade was organized, and set out in 1249 under the command of King Louis IX. of France. He was defeated and taken prisoner by the Sultan of Egypt. King Louis obtained his freedom by the payment of a large ransom; and then, in 1270, he undertook the eighth and last of the crusades. He himself died of the plague before reaching the Holy Land, and Prince Edward, afterward King Edward I. of England, took command of the army, but accomplished nothing of importance. In the summer of 1272 he

returned to Europe with the last of the crusaders, since which time the Mohammedans have remained in undisturbed possession of the Holy Land. In connection with these crusades should be mentioned what has been called the Children's Crusade, one of the most pathetic events in all history. In the year 1212 religious fanaticism had reached such a height that three armies of young children from France and Germany, numbering altogether not less than 70,000, were allowed to set out for the Holy Land. It was expected that the Mediterranean would open a path for them, as did the Red Sea for the Israelites, and that they would capture Jerusalem without striking a blow. The expedition was utterly destroyed; many of the children died on the march, others were lost at sea, and the rest were captured and sold into slavery among the tribes in Northern Africa.

6. The Monastic Orders

In the history of the church, as well as of the world in general, during the Middle Ages the monastic orders play an important part. The cloisters, or monasteries, had little by little acquired large estates and great wealth, and all Christian lands fairly swarmed with monks, with black friars and gray friars and other friars of every description. Many of the monasteries, which had been, and were supposed to be, schools of piety and self-denial, entirely lost this character, and the monks in but too many cases were well-fed and lazy persons who led a life of ease and pleasure.

The first monastic order, or congregation, was that of the Cluniacs, founded in Clugny, Burgundy, in 910, by Duke William of Aquitaine. This convent at Clugny became very rich, but afterward fell into decay. It was finally closed at the time of the French Revolution, toward the close of the eighteenth century. Many of its rare and valuable books are now in the National Library at Paris, and in the British Museum at London. The second, and more celebrated, of the monastic orders is that of the Cistercians, or Bernardines. Their first monastery, or abbey, was at Citeaux in France, and was founded in 1098. But the order did not flourish until some fifteen years later, when it was joined by St. Bernard of Clairveaux, a Burgundian nobleman, famous for his learning and piety. The members of this order were long celebrated for religious zeal and asceticism. They slept little and worked hard, and fasted much of the time. After a hundred years

they had nearly two thousand monasteries and nunneries. There were a hundred of these in England when they were closed by King Henry VIII. at the time of the Reformation.

The number of monastic orders became so great, and the troubles and rivalries between them so notorious and scandalous, that Pope Innocence III., in 1215, forbade the establishment of any new orders. However, there were at about this time founded two new orders which shortly became more powerful than all the others together. These two were the congregations of the so-called Mendicant Friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The first of these orders is named after Dominicus, a Spaniard, whose idea it was that the members were to travel about and hold religious revivals and stamp out all manner of “heresies.” These monks were usually known as the black friars. The order of Franciscans was founded by an Italian named Franciscus. It laid special stress on the poverty of its members, who dressed in cloaks of coarse gray cloth, and traveled barefoot from place to place, begging their way, and preaching repentance. They were called gray friars.

In the course of time the Dominicans and Franciscans became “the wheels under the chariot in which the church rode on to victory.” They were the teachers of the people and of the priesthood, the confessors of the princes and nobles, and the principal props of popery with all its heresies and abuses.

7. The General Church Councils

In the fifteenth century there were held three great general church councils which may be said to have prepared the way for the downfall of popery. The popes of Rome had assumed absolute control of the church, and claimed to stand above all authority. Now the old idea again began to prevail that the pope, while being the chief bishop of the whole church, still owed obedience and was responsible to the general councils, or meetings of the church by its bishops and other representatives. The man who first made himself especially famous by advocating this view was John Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris. As a result of his work a general church council was called to meet at Pisa, in the year 1409, to reform the church “in its head and its members.” There were at that time two men, each of whom claimed to be the duly elected pope, and the first business of

the council was to settle this troublesome affair. In order to do this the council deposed the two popes and elected a new one, Alexander V. The others, however, refused to yield, and so the only result was that the church had three popes instead of two.

Alexander soon died, and was replaced by Pope John XXIII., a man most infamous by reason of his many vices and crimes. Through the efforts of Gerson this pope was compelled to call a new general council, which met in the city of Constance and lasted four years. After much trouble the breach was healed; Pope John and one of the other two were deposed; and the third resigned in order to avoid sharing their fate. Then some members of the council urged the importance of reforming certain notorious abuses in the church, while other members insisted that a new pope must first be elected. These latter carried their point. Martin V. was elected, and then he made haste to dissolve the council before any of the proposed reforms could be discussed.

In 1431 a general council was convened at Basel, and met from time to time, and was not finally dissolved until 1443. This council began well, trying to reform the pope by limiting his power. Naturally, the pope did not like this, and so he ordered the removal of the council to Florence, where he would be the better able to control it. Some members refused to obey this order, and continued their meetings in Basel. The pope then excommunicated them; and they deposed him, and elected a new pope. But the church did not again want two popes; and so the one chosen at Basel never gained any foothold. The council at last adjourned without having accomplished anything.

All these councils were marked failures. The popes in the latter half of the fifteenth century were more notorious than any of their predecessors for their wickedness; and the abuses in the church became worse than ever before. The trouble was that the councils wished only to correct some of the abuses in the government of the church, and made no attempt to reach the root of the evil – the many false doctrines which were taught in defiance of the Word of God.

8. The Reformers Before The Reformation

From time to time there appeared men who tried to lead the church back to the truths of the gospel. In the twelfth century *Peter Waldes* of Lyons, in France, had the four Gospels and other books of the Bible translated into French, and then formed a society for the spread of the biblical truths. The pope refused him and his friends permission to preach; but they declared that they “ought to obey God rather than men;” for which reason they were excommunicated and persecuted. They gained many adherents; and the Waldenses exist to this day as a protestant sect in the southern districts of France.

To deal with these persons and others who defied his authority, the pope in 1232 established the infamous Inquisition; that is, church courts for the trial of persons accused or suspected of “heresy.” Thousands upon thousands of the Waldenses, and later on of other “heretics,” were murdered. The Inquisition, which was under the control of the Dominican monks, became the bloodiest chapter in the history of the world.

Another who, in a sense, may be called one of the forerunners of the Reformation is *Thomas A. Kempis*, who was born in 1380 near Cologne. His book on “The Imitation of Christ” has been translated into all languages in which books are printed, and is said to have been more widely circulated than any other book, excepting only the Bible.

John Wyclif, born in Yorkshire, England, about the year 1320, has been called “the morning-star of the Reformation.” He was for some years a professor in Oxford University, and was afterward appointed chaplain to King Edward III. He wrote many books and tracts attacking the heresies of the Roman church, and declared that the pope was the antichrist. Wyclif had many supporters, who were called the Lollards. He was excommunicated as a dangerous heretic by Pope Gregory XI., but owing to the number and strength of his friends he escaped death at the stake. He died in 1384. Thirty years later the Council at Constance ordered his bones removed from consecrated ground; but the order was not obeyed until in 1428, when at the command of Pope Clement VIII. they were exhumed and burned, and the ashes thrown into a river near Oxford. The most important work of Wyclif was that of translating the Bible into English.

John Huss, who was born in or about the year 1369, and became a preacher and a professor in the University of Prague, is even still more important than is Wyclif as one of the Reformers before the Reformation.

He had read the writings of the English reformer, and preached the gospel to large audiences at Prague in the Bohemian language.

He denounced the abuses and false doctrines in the Roman church, and especially attacked the sale of indulgences. For this he was condemned and excommunicated by the pope, and a ban placed on the city which received him within its walls. He himself appealed to the council at Constance. Provided with a safeguard from Emperor Sigismund he went to this city and was present when the council opened. But shortly afterward he was thrown into prison and put in chains. On June 5, 1415, he was brought before the council and urged to deny the truths which he had preached. This he refused to do. On July 6 he was sentenced, and on the same day burned at the stake, and his ashes thrown into the Rhine. The following year his friend and disciple, *Jerome of Prague*, who had been a student at Oxford, and had brought the writings of Wyclif over to Bohemia, was also sentenced and burned at the stake on the spot where Huss had suffered death. The Hussites, as they were called, became numerous in Bohemia, and the attempts to destroy them brought on a bloody war, 1419-1436, Later they formed a church society, which now has its headquarters in Hernhut, Saxony, and is known as the society of United Brethren.

Girolamo Savonarola is another, and the last of the Reformers before the Reformation. He was a Dominican monk and became, about the year 1490, a popular preacher in Florence, Italy. He attacked tyranny and vice in the church and in the state, and especially denounced the shameful wickedness of Pope Alexander VI. He wrote letters to foreign kings urging them to dethrone this monster and elect a new pope. In 1498 he was arrested, with two of his brethren, and tortured until almost dead; but he could not be induced to make any confession of guilt. The pope ordered his execution, and on May 23, 1498, Savonarola and the other two monks were hanged and then burned, and their ashes thrown into the Arno.

The invention of the art of printing with movable type, and the new birth of learning, following upon the dark night of the Middle Ages, should also be remembered as circumstances which, in the providence of God, paved the way for the Lutheran Reformation, with which Modern History begins.

Part III. The Reformation and After

1. The Church Reformation By Martin Luther

IN THIS COMPEND OF CHURCH HISTORY the life of *Martin Luther* can be given only in briefest outline. But every student of history, and especially every Lutheran, should read at least one of the many biographies which have been written of this man of God, who was chosen as the instrument for the reformation of the church, and who turned the current of the world's history into a new channel. Martin Luther was born November 10, 1483, at Eisleben, Saxony. His parents were Hans and Margaret Luther, who had their home in the town of Mansfeld. At the time when Martin Luther was born, and during the years of his childhood, his parents were poor; but later on their circumstances were bettered, and his father was a member of the town council. They were severe in their discipline, and their son was at an early age taught to read and to work. When fourteen years old, he was sent to a high school in Magdeburg, and the following year to Eisenach. After the custom of other poor students he here in part supported himself by singing at the doors of citizens. He had much musical talent and a pleasing voice, and the pious wife of Conrad Cotta became interested in the boy and gave him a home in her house. In 1591 Luther became a student in the University of Erfurt. His father wanted him to become a lawyer; but this was not to be. He had begun to be a diligent reader of the Bible, which he had found in the university library, and this gave his mind a strong bent toward the study of theology. A deep conviction of sin was forced upon him, and in hopes of finding peace he, in 1505, entered the Augustinian monastery. Here he spent two years, rigidly observing all the severe rules. His spare time he devoted to the study of the Bible and the Church Fathers; but he was not able to find rest for his soul. He was afraid of God, until a

pious old monk gave him courage and comfort by calling his attention to the Bible passage which declares that “the just by faith shall live.”

In 1507 Luther was ordained a priest and began to preach in Wittenberg, and in the following year he was called to a professorship in philosophy at the Wittenberg University. After a year in this work he was called to the University of Erfurt, but soon returned to Wittenberg and became Professor of Theology. His study of the Bible and of the writings of St. Augustine showed its influence in his lectures and sermons. He laid great stress on the central truth, that a sinner is justified before God for Christ’s sake by faith alone.

In 1511 he made a journey to Rome on business connected with the Augustinian order, and his eyes were opened to some of the wickedness of “the holy city.” On his way home he was taken ill; then it was that he, according to his own statement, at last found peace in the truth that the righteous by faith shall live. Shortly after his return to Wittenberg he became Doctor of Theology, after which he also was made one of the vicars of the Augustinian order, and as such visited and supervised the eleven convents under his charge.

The Reformation by Luther began October 31, 1517. Pope Leo X. needed money for the completion of the great church of St. Peter in Rome. For this purpose he arranged the sale of indulgences on a large scale. His agent for Germany was Archbishop Albert of Mayence, who was himself in need of money and was to have a share of the proceeds. Among the district agents appointed by the archbishop was John Tetzel, a Dominican monk. This man had a more than shady reputation, but was a master of his business. He established a booth for the sale of indulgences near the border of Saxony, the Elector having issued an order forbidding him to enter his territory. Tetzel made much money; and when the great chests of coin were brought to Rome, the Romans laughed and said:

“Here come the sins of the Germans.”

Among the persons who confessed to Luther as their priest were many who had visited Tetzel and bought forgiveness, and who therefore thought that they had no need of repentance. Luther preached against this wickedness and protested to the bishops, but in vain. For the purpose of having a public discussion of the matter he then, October 31, 1517, nailed to the door of the

castle church in Wittenberg his ninety-five theses against the sale of indulgences, and offered to defend his position publicly against any person or persons whomsoever. The theses were moderate in tone, and Luther had no thought of attacking the pope and church. But in less than two weeks his theses were known throughout all Germany. Everywhere they found advocates of the doctrine which they contained, that forgiveness and salvation are not to be had without repentance and faith. Tetzel and his friends complained to the pope, and Luther was ordered to appear in Rome within sixty days. But his staunch friend and supporter, the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, demanded that he be tried in Germany; and so Luther, in October, 1518, appeared before the papal legate Cajetan at Augsburg. No agreement was reached. Luther refused to deny the truth; but later on he was persuaded to promise that he would hold his peace, if his opponents would do likewise.

The breach widened, however, in 1519, when Luther held a public disputation at Leipzig against Dr. Eck and attacked many of the abuses of the Roman church. The following year he was excommunicated by the pope and his writings ordered to be burned. Luther replied to this by burning the papal letter in the presence of his students near one of the gates of Wittenberg.

Emperor Charles V. of Germany was a bitter enemy of the Reformation. He cited Luther to appear before him at the Diet of Worms, in 1521. Many of Luther's friends tried to dissuade him from going, and reminded him of the fate of John Huss at Constance; but he declared that nothing should keep him from going to Worms and giving an account of his faith. His journey created intense excitement. In the villages through which he passed people gathered from far and near to see the brave monk who had defied the pope and all the world. He was accompanied by his friends Justus Jonas, Nickolas Amsdorf, and Jerome Schurf. On April 17 and 18 he appeared before the Diet of Worms, in which sat the emperor, the papal legates, a large number of dukes and other nobles, archbishops, and delegates from nearly all countries of Europe. He was urged to recant (that is, take back) that which he had written against the church, and he asked and received permission to give his final answer on the following day. When he again appeared before the Diet he admitted that he had in his books made use of some rather strong expressions, but in all things essential he had spoken and

written nothing but the truth. The emperor demanded of Luther a direct answer to the question whether or not he would recant. Luther then said:

“Since you want a plain answer I will give one which has neither horns nor teeth. Except I be convinced by the holy scripture or by clear arguments, I neither can nor will recant; for it is not wise to do anything contrary to one’s conscience. Here I stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

Luther was outlawed, but was permitted to leave Worms. On his way home, however, he was seized by friends in disguise and carried to the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach for security. Here he spent nearly a year, employing himself in preparing various works for publication and beginning his translation of the Bible into German. In the meantime there occurred a fanatical outbreak at Wittenberg. Professor Carlstadt and certain other revolutionary zealots known as the Prophets from Zwickau had gone beyond all bounds in their attacks on the established order of things in the church, and Luther felt that his presence was necessary. He reached Wittenberg March 5, 1522, and preached every day against these fanatics and succeeded in quelling the disorder in that city. But in other places it became worse than ever. Thomas Muenzer, who was the head and front of the Zwickau Prophets, traveled from place to place and urged the peasants to rise in rebellion and rid themselves of their oppressors in the church and the state. The result was the Peasants’ War, which began in Swabia and spread to many parts of the German empire. For a year the peasants pillaged and burned castles and churches, while Luther denounced them as persons who “under pretense of zeal for the gospel were serving the devil.” In 1525 they were defeated in a bloody battle at Frankenhausen, and peace was restored. Luther had resumed his duties in the university, besides which he wrote and published treatises and sermons and hymns, and completed his translation of the Bible. In 1523 he began his work for the reformation of the public church services and for the better education of the people. During the plague at Wittenberg, in 1527, when the university was removed for a time to Jena, he published new volumes of sermons and began work on his two Catechisms, both of which were published in 1529. The “large” catechism was written first, and then the short catechism for children. The amount of work which Luther accomplished between the years 1520 and 1530 is astounding. He labored all the time with tireless energy. Among his able and faithful assistants *Philip Melancthon* occupies first place.

Melanchthon was fourteen years younger than Luther, and was, like him, a professor in Wittenberg. Melanchthon was famed for his piety and great learning, and has been called “the Teacher of Germany.” He assisted Luther in translating the Bible and was his dear and faithful friend. In natural temperament the two men were very unlike. Luther was a perfectly fearless and energetic man of action, while Melanchthon was a mild-mannered and rather timid man with a retiring disposition.

In 1529 was held at Spires, in Bavaria, the famous diet, in which the friends of the Reformation for the first time were called Protestants.

The Augsburg Confession, which is the principal confession of the Lutheran church, was written by Melanchthon. It was signed by the Lutheran princes of Germany and by others, and delivered to the emperor at the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530. During the diet Luther remained at Coburg, following with close attention the proceedings in Augsburg, giving Melanchthon advice from day to day, and reading the Confession, with which he declared himself fully satisfied, adding that he could not have written it as well as his friend had done it.

The Confession had been written in both German and Latin; and the German copy was, by Dr. Bayer, one of the chancellors of Saxony, read out to the emperor, the members of the diet, and a great throng of other people. It made a profound impression. But the emperor was determined not to yield. He ordered Dr. Eck to write a “confutation” of the protestant Confession; and this was done. The document was read, and was generally admitted to be weak and to “confute” nothing of that which Melanchthon had written. The emperor, however, would listen to no further argument. He declared that the “confutation” expressed the opinion by which he would abide, and demanded that the other princes endorse this opinion. During the progress of the diet Melanchthon wrote his “Apology” in defense of the Confession; but the emperor refused to receive it. The friends of Luther were threatened with the sword; and in self-defense the Protestant princes of Germany formed the so-called Smalcald League.

There had long been some talk of a new general church council; and in preparation for it the Protestants held a consultation in Smalcald in 1536. For this occasion Luther set down in writing those points to which the Protestants must adhere under all circumstances. This is the document known as the Smalcald Articles.

In the year 1525, when he was forty-two years old, Luther married Catharine von Bora, who had been a nun. Himself says of her that she was a pious and faithful wife, in whom the heart of her husband could trust." By her he had three sons and three daughters. His family life was a very happy one. He was fond of seeing his friends about him at his fireside, and of singing and playing innocent games with his children.

In the latter years of his life Luther took part in several discussions with members of different Protestant parties, and was incessantly active in adjusting difficulties and disputes, writing treatises, and revising his translation of the Bible. For some years he was in poor health and suffered much. He prayed that he might not live to see the religious war which was threatening Germany; and his prayer was heard. In January, 1546, he went to his birthplace, Eisleben, to act as arbitrator between the Counts of Mansfeld. On the way he caught a severe cold. Still he continued for some weeks to work and preach. On February 17 his illness took a bad turn; and he realized that death was near. To one of his sons and to his dear friend Justus Jonas, who had accompanied him from Wittenberg, he announced that he hoped and expected to die in Eisleben, where he had been born. Shortly after midnight he had a sinking spell; and his friends heard him say in the Latin tongue: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, thou God of truth." Justus Jonas bent over the dying man and asked him, if he in death still held fast the faith and doctrine which he had preached. Luther answered "Yes." This was his last word. He clasped his hands in prayer, drew his last breath, and fell asleep shortly before three o'clock in the morning of February 18, 1546. His remains are buried in front of the pulpit in the castle church at Wittenberg.

The published works of Luther embrace, in Walch's Edition, 24 large volumes; and in the Erlangen Edition, 100 volumes, 67 in German and 33 in Latin. Of his hymns, which are 36 in number, the best known is his "Battle Hymn of the Reformation," "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

The best biography of Luther is that by Julius Kostlin; of which there are two English translations.

Luther did not establish a new church; he was the instrument by which the church was led back to the old paths marked out by Holy Writ. The leading and distinctive principles of Lutheranism are these:

(1.) Human nature is entirely corrupted by sin; and man has thus brought upon himself divine wrath and condemnation, and has neither the will nor

the strength to save himself.

(2.) God's grace and mercy proceed entirely from his own free will, and not from any merit whatever in sinful man.

(3.) The sufferings and death of Christ were the price of man's redemption, and had infinite efficacy by reason of the fact that Christ was not only true man but true God.

(4.) Justification is not a change in man, but an act of God alone, whereby, for the sake of Christ's merit received by faith, he forgives sin and pronounces sinful man righteous.

(5.) Faith is a gift of God and a work of the Holy Ghost wrought in man through the means of grace, and is neither in whole nor in part a result of man's own endeavors.

(6.) The means of grace are the word and sacraments, through which the Holy Ghost is always active; so that they are never without efficacy, although they do not by force save those who persistently repel the Spirit.

(7.) Baptism is a means of regeneration; and they who, after baptism, fall from grace return by faith to the covenant first made in baptism.

(8.) The body and blood of Christ are truly present with and in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and are given to all who partake of this sacrament; but benefit and bless those only who receive it worthily in faith.

(9.) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the infallible word of God, and are the sole sure rule of faith, doctrine, and life; and in all controversies they are the final judge, from whose decision no appeal can be taken.

(10.) In the New Testament, besides the priesthood of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, there exists only the spiritual priesthood of all believers; and these have access to Christ directly and without the mediation of saints, angels, or any priestly order.

(11.) The office of the ministry belongs to the whole church; but its duties are ordinarily to be exercised only by those who have been duly called and set apart for this office.

2. Ulrich Zwingli And John Calvin

The reformed churches, so-called, have their roots in Switzerland, in the reformation there begun by *Ulrich Zwingli*. He was seven weeks younger

than Luther, having been born January 1, 1484, in a lowly shepherd's cot at Wildhaus, in the canton of St. Gall, Switzerland. He studied at Vienna and Basel, and distinguished himself by his learning and eloquence. In 1506 he entered the priesthood and became very popular as a preacher, and also as a political agitator. In 1516 he was called as pastor to Einsiedeln, and then he began boldly to attack the superstitions of the Roman church. Two years later he was called to the cathedral at Zurich, where he labored until his death. Gradually he broke loose from Romanism, denouncing especially the worship of the saints and the sale of indulgences. He went beyond bounds and wanted to abolish from the public church services everything which was not expressly commanded in the Bible. There were to be in the churches neither pictures, altars, organs, nor bells; everything was to be as in the days of "apostolic simplicity." In September, 1529, Zwingli had a personal conference with Luther and Melancthon in Marburg. The principal question discussed was that of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Luther insisted on the plain and literal meaning of the words of Christ: "This is my body." Zwingli, on the other hand, argued that these words could not in reason be true in their literal sense. He and his followers also denied that baptism is in truth a means of regeneration. To them it was only a ceremony by which one becomes a member of a church society. Luther therefore felt it his duty to refuse the hand of fellowship which Zwingli held out to him at Marburg.

The ideas of Zwingli quickly spread through the German cantons of Switzerland, while the other cantons remained true to the Roman Catholic faith. With the assistance of Austria the Catholics began a persecution of the friends of Zwingli, many of whom suffered death at the stake. Zwingli urged the Protestants to defend themselves, and war was declared. He himself acted as chaplain of the regiment from Zurich, and lost his life in the disastrous battle of Kappel, October 11, 1531. He was pierced by a lance while bending down to comfort a dying soldier. His last words were: "What of it? They can indeed kill the body, but they can not kill the soul." His body was burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds. A granite monument erected four hundred years later marks the spot where he fell.

The work begun by Zwingli was continued by *John Calvin*, born at Noyen, France, in 1509. As a young man he was compelled to flee from Paris on account of a speech, which he had prepared and delivered, on the necessity of reforming the church. In 1536 he settled in Geneva,

Switzerland, where he not only became pastor of the largest church, but made himself the head of the city government as well. After two years he was banished, after which he spent some time in Bern, Strassburg, and other places, until 1541, when he returned in triumph to Geneva, in answer to a general demand on the part of the citizens. For twenty-three years he now ruled this city with an iron hand, keeping up an incessant fight against the abuses in the church and the vices of the people. He was a harsh and stern man, and there is one serious blot upon his memory: Servetus, a Spanish physician, had denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and had been sentenced to death. He made his escape from Spain and came to Geneva. Calvin had him put on trial for blasphemy, and Servetus was condemned and burned at the stake.

The influence of Calvin reached far beyond the borders of Switzerland. From the academy at Geneva teachers were sent to nearly all countries, and Calvinism became the ruling system of religion in many lands. The Synod of Dort, Holland, in 1618, defined the distinctive doctrines of Calvin in five theses, which have therefore been called "the five points of Calvinism." These five points affirm absolute predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

3. The Early Struggles And Triumphs Of The Lutheran Church

The efforts of the German emperor, Charles V., to destroy the church of the Reformation at last resulted in the Smalcald War, which began shortly after the time of Luther's death. The most important German ally of the emperor was Duke Maurice of Saxony. This man was himself a Protestant, but now ranged himself with the enemies of his religion and made war on his father-in-law, Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who with the Elector John Frederick of Saxony was at the head of the Protestant Smalcald League. With the assistance of Duke Maurice the emperor defeated the Protestants in the battle of Muhlberg, 1546. John Frederick was taken prisoner, and Philip of Hesse surrendered himself to the emperor. Duke Maurice was sent against the city of Magdeburg, which was still under arms; and now he saw his chance of setting himself right with his former Protestant friends. Instead of attacking Magdeburg he made a secret alliance with King Henry II. of

France, and then marched against Innsbruck, where the emperor lay ill. By a hasty flight the emperor saved himself from being made a prisoner, but by the Peace of Passau, 1552, he was compelled to grant religious liberty to the Protestants. This agreement was repeated by the treaty of peace adopted at Augsburg in 1555. However, this religious liberty applied only to the princes and nobles; the common people were to obey their masters in matters of faith. In the course of time this arrangement led to new trouble, which finally culminated in the Thirty Years' War.

From Germany the Lutheran Reformation first found its way to the Scandinavian countries, and in a short time the Evangelical faith became the dominant religion in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, their dependencies, Iceland and Finland, and the Baltic provinces of Courland, Livonia, and Esthonia.

In Denmark the Reformation gained a foothold almost as quickly as in Germany. King Christian II. was for political reasons extremely desirous of destroying the power of the priesthood; and it was this circumstance, rather than any vital interest in the true faith, which caused him to ask his uncle, Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, to send a Lutheran teacher to Denmark. In answer to this request one Martin Reinhard came to Copenhagen; but he did not understand the Danish language, and could do nothing. He was soon replaced by Carlstadt, the man who afterward made so much trouble in Wittenberg by his revolutionary methods. He, also, remained in Denmark but a short time; and in 1523 King Christian himself was driven out of his kingdom. His successor, Frederick I., was compelled to promise that he would permit no disciple of Luther or any other "heretic" to preach against the Roman church. In spite of this promise, however, he encouraged the Evangelical doctrine to the extent of his power. Hans Tausen had been a student in Wittenberg, and now returned to his home in Denmark a zealous Lutheran. He began to preach the gospel in Viborg, and was thrown into prison. But he was soon released, and King Frederick gave him permission to continue his preaching, which he did until his death, in 1561, as bishop of Ribe. A meeting of the nobles in Odense, 1527, declared for full religious liberty, and abolished the rule which prohibited the marriage of the clergy. There were also at this time published two Danish translations of the New Testament, one by Hans Mikkelson and one by Christiern Pederson. At a diet in Copenhagen, in 1530, the Lutherans presented to the king a confession of their faith in 43 articles, while the

Roman Catholics laid before him a formal complaint and a demand that the new "heresy" be suppressed.

After some discussion the king declared that he would protect both parties in their equal rights. King Frederick died in 1533; and his successor, Christian III., called a diet in Copenhagen, 1536, which formally adopted the Evangelical Lutheran faith as the official religion of the country. Luther's friend, Dr. Bugenhagen, was called and came from Wittenberg to superintend the new arrangements; Lutheran pastors were appointed, and Roman Catholicism was thoroughly weeded out. In 1550 was published the first complete translation of the Bible in the Danish tongue.

In Norway, which at this time was united with Denmark, Lutheranism was formally introduced as the established religion, in 1537. Some of the people, however, clung tenaciously to their old faith, and in several parishes the Evangelical preachers received rough treatment. But the Reformation made rapid headway, especially through the efforts of Bishop Jorgen Erikson of Stavanger, who has been called the Luther of Norway. Still, it was not until in the beginning of the seventeenth century, under King Christian IV., that the Lutheran church had taken root in all parts of the country.

From Norway the Evangelical doctrine was carried to Iceland, where it at first met with bitter resistance. The Catholic bishop, Jon Areson, sought by force and violence to destroy the friends of the Reformation, for which reason he was arrested and executed, in 1550. Iceland is said now to be more thoroughly and entirely Lutheran than any other district or country in the world. In Sweden the Evangelical doctrine encountered some resistance, but there was no serious trouble in connection with its introduction. Two brothers, Olaf and Lars Pederson, had been students in Wittenberg and had become warmly attached to the Lutheran faith. On their return to Sweden they began to preach the gospel, and found a staunch supporter in King Gustavus Vasa. One of their first converts was Bishop Lars Anderson, who afterward became the chancellor of the kingdom. King Gustavus had himself been in Germany, where he had learned to know and to love the Lutheran doctrine. He called Olaf Pederson to Stockholm and made Lars Pederson archbishop of Upsala; and a diet in Westeraas, 1544, passed resolutions renouncing all Roman heresies and superstitions, and pledging the king and people of Sweden never to depart from the Lutheran faith. After the death of Gustavus Vasa some Roman emissaries made strenuous

attempts to bring Sweden back into the fold, but they had no success. A general council of the Swedish church at Upsala, in 1593, declared its unshaken devotion to the teachings of the Augsburg Confession. Through their close relations with Sweden the Baltic Provinces, as well as Finland, were won for Lutheranism. In France, the Netherlands, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary the Lutheran Reformation gained foothold for a time, but was, in greater or less measure, gradually supplanted by the Catholic, or by the Reformed church.

4. The Growth Of The Reformed Church

By “the Church of the Reformation” is meant the Lutheran church, while “the Reformed church” is to be understood as embracing all those many protestant sects and denominations which have sprung up out of the movement begun in Switzerland by Zwingli and Calvin, and which, in a general way, may be said to differ from the Lutheran church in having, more or less, disregarded or perverted the sacraments.

The early victories of the Reformed church were won at the cost of much blood, and changed not only the religious, but also the political complexion of England, France, the Netherlands, and other countries.

England had in a way been prepared for the Reformation, especially through the work of John Wyclif and his followers. Many were disposed to lend ear to the Evangelical doctrine which came to them from Germany. But the English king, Henry VIII., of unsavory memory, forbade the introduction of Luther’s writings into the country, and began to persecute the friends of the Reformation. He even had the boldness to write a book against Luther “on the Seven Sacraments,” and was rewarded by the Roman pope with the title, “Defender of the Faith.” In his reply Luther handled the king pretty roughly, and this incensed Henry all the more against the Evangelical doctrine. In 1534, however, he had a falling out with the pope. The king had grown tired of his old queen, Catharine of Arragon, and had divorced her, in order to marry Anne Boleyn. But Catharine was the aunt of Emperor Charles V. of Germany, and the pope could not afford to sanction the doings of the king, and thus give offense to the more powerful emperor. King Henry then declared himself independent of Rome, and proclaimed himself head of the English church. He cared nothing about the matter of

doctrine, but persecuted all alike who would not recognize his supremacy. Still, the situation was such that it gave pious men, notably Archbishop Cranmer of Canterbury, an opportunity to advance the cause of the gospel. King Henry died in 1547, and his son and successor, Edward VI., was but a child. His chief advisers were friendly to the Reformation and allowed Cranmer to continue his work. This was largely carried on by teachers who were under the influence of John Calvin, and thus it came about that the Reformed church gained the upper hand. Queen Mary, 1553-1558, who came to the throne at the death of Edward, was the daughter of King Henry by Catharine, and was by birth and training a zealous Catholic. She caused Archbishop Cranmer and many others to be burned at the stake, and earned her name of "Bloody Mary." Her sister and successor, Queen Elizabeth, was a Protestant, and during her long reign the reformation of the church was completed. The parliament by formal resolution established the English Episcopal church, and the Thirty-nine Articles were adopted and made binding on all ministers and teachers of religion. These Articles were originally forty-two, and had, together with the Book of Common Prayer, been prepared by Cranmer and others during the reign of King Edward VI. Their doctrine in regard to the sacraments is in the main that of Calvin. The two sacraments are declared to be "effectual signs of grace, and of God's good will toward us." Apart from this the Articles are to a great extent taken from the Augsburg Confession.

The reformer of the church in Scotland was *John Knox*, a friend of Calvin. He led a stormy life and was in many dangers, but he had an iron will and tireless energy, and succeeded in establishing the Presbyterian church, which was the embodiment of pure Calvinism.

In Ireland, also, the Protestant church was established, but about three-fourths of the people remained Roman Catholics. On several occasions they have risen in revolt against the religion which had thus been forced upon them; and, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Protestant Episcopal church was at last disestablished.

In the Netherlands, which at that time included both Holland and Belgium, the efforts to reform the church were accompanied by much bloodshed. The first martyrs were two young Lutherans, Henrik Voes and John Esch. It was, however, the Reformed church which eventually came to be established in the Netherlands. The country was a part of the empire of Charles V., and he did everything possible to stop the work of the reformers.

His son Philip II., who had married the Bloody Mary of England, was a most cruel and violent man. By means of the horrible Inquisition he attempted not only to suppress the religious reform movement, but also to destroy all the political liberties of the people. The duke of Alva was appointed governor of the Netherlands, and by his shocking cruelties proved himself a worthy servant of Philip II. In self-defense the northern provinces formed the Utrecht Union; and after a long and bloody struggle they won their independence and organized the Dutch republic, in 1569, and established the Dutch Reformed church.

In France the Protestants were known as Huguenots. They suffered bitter persecutions; and many thousands of them were foully murdered. They were drawn into the long fight between the two great rival families, the Guises and the Bourbons, and in the massacre on the night of St. Bartholomew, August 25, 1572, not less than 35,000 Huguenots were slain. In 1594 Henry of Navarre, the head of the Bourbons, became king of France. He had for political reasons joined the Catholic church, but was friendly to the Protestants; and in 1598 he published the Edict of Nantes, which gave the Huguenots equal religious liberty with the Catholics. Later this Edict was revoked, and the Huguenots suffered further persecutions, especially during the rule of the famous Cardinal Richelieu. The Reformed church has never thrived in France,

5. The Jesuits

While the Lutheran church was making its way in the countries to the north, and the Reformed church in those to the west of Germany, the Roman Catholic church was not idle. It prevented the Reformation from gaining any foothold in Italy and Spain, and it recaptured nearly all of Hungary and France and large districts of Germany, Bohemia, and other countries. One of the measures taken to counteract the Reformation was the calling together of a general church council at Trent. This council was convened by Pope Paul III., in 1545. It lasted, with two long intermissions, until 1563. One of its first acts was to condemn the doctrines of Luther. The council also published a number of books defining the position of the Catholic church. Among them are the Tridentine Confession, the Roman Catechism,

a new edition of the Latin Bible, and an index or list of those books which Catholics were not allowed to read.

In the Council of Trent an important role was played by the Jesuits. This society was a most effective weapon in the hands of the pope, and deserves more than a passing mention.

The founder of the order of Jesuits, or "Society of Jesus," was Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish knight, born 1491. In one of the wars between Spain and France he was seriously wounded and lay for a long time on a sickbed. He read pious legends, and these inflamed him with the desire to win eternal glory in the service of the church. He vowed to be a knight of the holy Virgin, gave all his possessions to the poor, and became a Dominican monk. He prayed and fasted and subjected himself to a course of most severe discipline. Then he went to the Holy Land, purposing to convert the Mohammedans, but soon found that in order to accomplish anything he must have a better school training. He therefore returned to Spain, where he began to study and to preach. He was suspected of disloyalty to the church, and was for a time even imprisoned by one of the courts of the Inquisition. On regaining his liberty he went to Paris, and although he was now near forty years old, he became a regular student in one of the schools. Here he and other Spanish students formed a religious society, and made the vow that they either would work as missionaries in the Holy Land, or would offer their services to the pope of Rome and promise him implicit obedience. Eventually they chose the latter course, and in 1540 Pope Paul III. gave Loyola authority to organize the Society of Jesuits. This religious order soon came to wield tremendous power. Its members were selected with great care and were trained to have no will or opinions of their own, but with blind obedience to do the bidding of their general, who on his part acknowledged no authority but that of the pope. During the fifteen years in which Loyola was the head of the society it made rapid headway, and soon had control of many schools. Jesuits were to be met with everywhere and in all professions. They were lawyers and physicians and bankers and professors, and acquired great wealth. The one aim of the Jesuits was to extend the power of the pope. They sought to bring the New World under the rule of Rome, and in the Protestant countries they exerted themselves, by the Inquisition and other means, to weed out the new ideas. The Jesuits it was who took Austria and Belgium and parts of other countries away from the Protestants, and who induced Philip II., the Bloody Mary and other

Catholic sovereigns to slay thousands upon thousands in order to suppress religious liberty. In Germany the intrigues of the Jesuits finally brought on the horrors of the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648, by which large districts were laid waste. The Protestant hero of the century was King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, who fell in the battle of Lutzen, 1632. After the close of this war the Jesuits began to be regarded with suspicion by many Catholics. They came to be looked upon as dangerous to the state; and the society was, in the middle of the eighteenth century, dissolved and prohibited in France, Spain, and Portugal.

In 1773 Clemence XIV., a pope who distinguished himself by the purity of his life, dissolved the Society of Jesuits for ever. It is generally supposed that he thereby signed his own death warrant. At any rate he died a year later from eating food which had been poisoned. In 1814 the society was established anew by Pope Pius VII., and it is to this day the strongest prop of popery.

6. Doctrinal Controversies In The Lutheran Church

Shortly after the death of Luther the Lutheran church became, to some extent, divided against itself. There were two parties, one of which demanded strict adherence to the Evangelical doctrine, while the other was disposed to secure peace by making some concessions to the Roman and the Reformed church. The leader of the first party was *Mathias Flacius* of the University of Jena, and at the head of the other party stood Philip Melancthon, whose natural timidity, now that Luther no longer was at his side, led him to yield where he should have stood firm. He and his adherents were accused of teaching synergism, that is, the doctrine that man can assist God in the work of conversion. They were also charged with making concessions to Calvinism, especially in regard to the doctrine concerning the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. In the midst of these controversies Melancthon died, April 19, 1560.

Professor *Jacob Andrea* of Tubingen took the lead in the attempt which was now made to restore peace in the Lutheran church. Together with *Martin Chemnitz*, *Nicholas Selnecker* and others he, in 1577, compiled and

edited a new Confession, which was to declare in words not to be misunderstood the doctrine of the church on the points in dispute. This Confession is called the Formula of Concord. It is recognized as one of the symbols of the Lutheran church, though it has not been formally adopted as such in all Lutheran lands.

The first half of the seventeenth century is known as the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. The teachers of the church laid great stress on the preservation of the true doctrine; to such an extent, indeed, that they have been accused of forgetting the importance of the Christian life. The most famous of the theologians of this age was *John Gerhard*, professor in the University of Jena. – However, the orthodox spirit of the church in the seventeenth century bore rich fruit in the form of devotional books and the many grand Lutheran hymns. Among them the best known are John Arndt's "The True Christianity," Chr. Scriver's "The Soul's Treasure," and the hymns of Paul Gerhardt and Thomas Kingo.

As a protest against what was called "dead orthodoxism" there appeared, in the latter half of the century, the "Pietistic movement." Philip Jacob Spener, the "Father of Pietism," was a minister in Frankfort am Main, and afterward in Berlin, where he died in 1705. He labored diligently for a religious revival of the church, and had great influence. A new university was founded at Halle, and all its professors were chosen from among the Pietists and were disciples of Spener. The best known of them is August Herman Francke. He built in Halle a great Orphans' Home, and is held in high regard as the founder of this branch of practical Christian charity. While the vital piety of such men as Spener and Francke can not be doubted, it must be admitted that the pietistic movement developed some traits which were not altogether good. There appeared among the later Pietists a certain disregard for the public church services, for the regular office of the ministry, and for the sacraments, together with a fondness for judging others, and some carelessness in regard to preserving the sound doctrine. A striking illustration is furnished by the career of Count Nicholas Zinzendorf, one of the disciples of Francke. He organized, in 1722, a new church, which was to admit to membership Christians of all shades of belief. On one of his estates in Saxony he founded his city of Herrnhut, and there organized his church of the "United Brethren." After some years he was ordered out of Saxony, and he then visited the different countries of Europe, as well as America, and began mission work in many places. When

Zinzendorf died, in 1760, August Spangenberg became the leader of the United Brethren, since which time this church, known as the Moravian, has become more sober. It was and is especially active in sending missionaries to the people sitting in darkness.

Among the men of the eighteenth century to whom the Lutheran church owes a debt of gratitude should be mentioned Dr. Erik Pontoppidan, who was bishop of Bergen, Norway; Bishop Hans Adolph Brorson, who is the author of many excellent Lutheran hymns; and King Christian VI. of Denmark and Norway, who by introducing the rite of confirmation in his kingdom has done incalculably much for the religious education of the people.

7. The Divisions Of The Reformed Church

From time to time there have sprung up out of the Reformed church numerous sects and denominations, which have invented new doctrines almost without number. Only a few of the most important of these divisions need here be mentioned.

In England and Scotland those who did not want the Episcopal church government – that is, government by bishops – first organized themselves as Presbyterians, or such as are governed by the presbyteries. In mistaken zeal they insisted on doing away with even the most appropriate of the time-honored religious ceremonies or features of the church service, which to them seemed to smack of Roman Catholicism; and in their discipline they were strict and austere, for which reason they came to be called Puritans.

From the Presbyterians sprung the Independents, who were the ruling party in England during the protectorate of Cromwell in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Independents wanted no church organization whatever, except the local congregations. For this reason they are now known as Congregationalists.

The Baptists reject infant baptism and insist on the baptism of adults by immersion and in no other way. They have no historical connection with the old Anabaptists and the Mennonites, but have the same doctrine in regard to baptism. They have become one of the strongest of the Reformed denominations, and have done much mission work. They are divided into

many factions, some of which still are Calvinists in the doctrine of predestination, while others are Arminians and reject predestination altogether.

The Society of Friends, commonly called the Quakers, was organized in England by George Fox, in 1649. He was a journeyman shoemaker who thought that he had revelations from heaven, and who therefore left the cobbler's bench and became a preacher. He and his friends were in the habit of making their way into the churches and disturbing the services, for which reason they were for a time the objects of bitter persecution. The great men among them after the death of George Fox were William Penn, who founded the American colony of Pennsylvania; and Robert Barclay, who is the author of their confession of faith. In their meetings the Quakers sit in silence and wait for the spirit to move some man or woman to preach. Should none among them be moved to say anything, they as quietly disperse. They despise the sacraments, and they refuse to take an oath and to do military service. In the United States they have a high reputation for thrift, honesty, and deeds of charity.

The Methodist church was organized in London, in 1739, by John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield. The Methodists may be said to be the Pietists of the Reformed church. The founders of Methodism were zealous young preachers from Oxford, who traveled from place to place holding meetings in the open air and preaching repentance. John Wesley and Whitefield visited America several times and made many converts; and the Methodist Episcopal church is numerically the strongest of the Protestant denominations in the United States. The Methodists agree with the other Reformed churches in their view of the sacraments; besides which they teach that Christian perfection may be reached in this life. Usually their revivals are attended with much excitement; and they expect converts to be able to mention the exact moment in which they were saved. – An outgrowth of Methodism is the Salvation Army, founded in London by William Booth.

8. The Age of Rationalism

The last years of the eighteenth, and the early years of the nineteenth century are aptly called the Age of Rationalism. It was the age in which

men, who thought themselves wise, began to claim for unaided human reason the right to be the supreme judge in all matters, including matters of religious faith.

The first open apostles of infidelity appeared in England. They were called deists, and professed a sort of natural religion, the only articles of their creed being belief in the existence of a Creator and the immortality of the soul. The principal spokesmen of this form of “free thought” were Lord Spencer, Hobbes, and Tindal. The writings of these men and of Spinoza, Descartes, and others were widely read in France and Germany, and had much greater influence in these countries than in England.

In France the apostles of infidelity went further, and denied the truth of all religions. Voltaire was filled with bitter hatred of the Christian faith, and made the vain boast that he would destroy that which “twelve ignorant fishermen had built,” In this attempt he was assisted by Jean Jacques Rousseau.

They seemed to win a victory during the French Revolution of 1789, when God was dethroned in France and replaced for a time by “the Goddess of Reason.”

In Germany “free thought” was especially cultivated and honored at the court of King Frederick the Great. After his time the University of Halle, which had been founded by the Pietists, became the chief hot-bed of infidelity; and Prof. Johann Salomo Semler is the man who is most commonly called the “Father of Rationalism,” while Friedrich Schleiermacher of the same university occupies a sort of middle ground between open infidelity and the evangelical faith, and has come to have a baneful influence on the religious thought of our day.

From Germany rationalism spread to the North and sapped the strength of the church.

In the midst of this age of infidelity there were, however, also many men of talent and piety who held aloft the old banner of faith.

The new spiritual awakening among the Lutherans of the nineteenth century may be counted as having begun in 1817, the third centennial anniversary of the Reformation. On that occasion Claus Harms in Kiel published ninety-five theses against rationalism, and thus caused a discussion which eventually brought to an end the Age of Rationalism in the Lutheran church. In Denmark the light began to come largely through the instrumentality of N. F. S. Grundtvig, the “Seer of the North;” while in

Norway the new day was ushered in by the lay preacher Hans Nilsen Hauge. In 1796 this man began to travel about and call the people to repentance. At that time this was unlawful in Norway, and Hauge was made to spend ten long years in prison in Christiania. In the meantime his work was bearing fruit, and before his death, in 1824, there were “Haugians” in all parts of the country. At the same time there was in Sweden a similar movement, stirring large numbers of the people with an unwonted religious fervor.

The period which has been called the Age of Rationalism had come to an end, but the spirit of unbelief has revealed itself in many new forms. Churches have been established whose members, while calling themselves Christians, reject even the central truths of the Christian faith. Others preach crass materialism, and still others hold that it is the part of true wisdom to eat, drink, and be merry, and to live without restraint according to the lusts of the flesh.

The church of Christ has, however, during the nineteenth century also, been fighting the good fight against the hosts of unbelief. Christians have especially been active in bringing light into the dark places by means of the Bible. One of the hopeful signs of the times is the fact that Bible Societies have been formed in nearly all Christian lands. First place is held by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was organized in London in 1804, and which has caused the Bible to be translated into almost all languages, and has distributed many million copies of the sacred Book. Monuments of practical Christian charity are to be seen on every hand, and zealous Christian missionaries are laboring in all parts of the earth.

In the Roman Catholic church conditions have remained practically unchanged, except in respect to the temporal power of the pope. He is no longer the ruler of the States of the Church, these having, as a result of the revolution of 1859, become a part of the Kingdom of Italy. In the United States the Roman church has developed great strength; so great, indeed, that it has at times seemed a serious menace to political and religious liberty. The main purpose of the Evangelical Alliance of the Reformed churches, which was organized in London in 1846, is to defend religious liberty in all lands against aggressions on the part of the Roman Catholic church.

Our Lutheran church has, during the last century, had a rapid growth, and is by far the largest of the Protestant denominations. It still is dominant in the Scandinavian countries and Finland, in the Baltic Provinces, in some

parts of Hungary, and in large districts of Germany. In this latter country it has, however, had a hard struggle for existence, especially by reason of the so-called Prussian Union, or alliance between the Lutheran and Reformed churches. King Frederick William III. of Prussia conceived the idea that he could do a service to the cause of religion by bringing about such an alliance. The assumption was that there was essential unity of faith between all Protestants, and so they were to be united in one organization. The “old Lutherans,” as they were called, and many others also, protested against this arrangement, and were on that account harassed and molested in different ways, until King Frederick William IV., on his accession to the throne in 1840, gave them permission to secede from the established church and form the independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of Prussia. Before that time, in 1837, a considerable number of the Lutherans had, in order to escape annoyance and persecution, emigrated to the United States. Among these emigrants was the one man who for half a century held first place among the Lutheran teachers of America, Dr. C. F. W. Walther. The membership of the Lutheran church in the United States is increasing more rapidly than is that of any other Protestant church.

The open apostles of unbelief are tirelessly active; and there are sects and parties almost without number. Yet we need have no fear that the true church of Christ may be overthrown, for it is engaged in doing the work of the Master, who has said: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

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