

Stephen Etches

# **CHURCH HISTORY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Christianity began as a Jewish sect, which rapidly spread throughout the Roman Empire and, to a lesser extent, eastwards. After the break with its parent body in the first century, it began to develop within the framework of Graeco-Roman culture. This civilisation, in its Christianised form, did not come to an end until the Arab invasions. It was when Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Spain fell to Islam that the ancient world was torn apart and its culture destroyed. Rome and Constantinople continued much as before, but Antioch, Alexandria and Carthage sank into an oblivion from which they have never recovered.

After the eighth century Christianity moved northwards leaving its southern frontier more or less where the Arabs had fixed it. The Muslim Turks would later take Asia Minor and Christians would regain the Iberian peninsular but those minor changes merely confirmed that the Church's destiny was henceforth to be linked with the rise of Europe as a cultural entity. The seat of gravity moved away from the Mediterranean to the northern plains, where cities like Paris and Kiev eventually replaced Antioch and Alexandria as the intellectual centres of the Faith.

In the West, cultural and religious preeminence passed to the French. The intellectual revival spearheaded by Charlemagne eventually made possible the rise of the great cathedral schools like Paris. The Middle Ages was the age of France more than of any other country and it was there that the achievements of

medieval civilisation reached its peak. French hegemony was not seriously challenged until the 16th cent when it faced a two-pronged attack – from the Italian Renaissance and from the German reformation.

France met the challenge by producing its greatest theologian, Jean Calvin, who blended the warm passion of Luther with the cool logic of a Machiavelli to produce the seed of a new civilisation, which is the third age of Christianity in the West. Rejected by his own nation, Calvin and his theology went to the Dutch and English-speaking peoples, whose society and world influence still rest on ideas first propounded in Calvin's theocratic city state of Geneva.

In Russia, a very different form of Christianity took root. The theology of the Russian church was mystical, and found its greatest outlet in the spiritual experiences of the "elders" (*starci*) whose influence over the lives of the people was hypnotic. Apocalyptic visions and mad dreams of utopia have dominated the Russian tradition in a way that seems strange to the more rational faith of the West. Peter the Great was attracted to a secularised form of Western rationalism and introduced it into Russia where it eventually triumphed in the October Revolution of 1917. Communism, that great opponent of the Church, subsequently fell, and in the countries over which it held sway, Christianity gained a new lease of life. Today its main enemies are materialism in the West and Islam in the East. Large numbers of Jews have been won to the Faith in recent years. One consequence of the fall of communism in Russia, has been the mass exodus of Russian Jews to Israel. Today, increasing attention is being focussed on Israel which is an outpost of Western values surrounded by a sea of increasingly militant islam. In the West, the rise of New Age ideas has resurrected

the old heresy of gnosticism. It seems that the Church has almost come full circle.

A study of Church History enables us to see ourselves in proper historical and philosophical perspective, to avoid the past mistakes of the Church, to correctly analyse new movements within Christianity and to recognise heresies when they appear in new guises. In Church History God is revealed as the shepherd of his people: He is never outmanoevered. Wherever zeal has flagged, he has sent reforms or new waves of revival. As in the OT revelation, he has never allowed the light to go out. Today it is shining as brightly as ever before, as the Church anticipates His return.

## THE EARLY CHURCH PERIOD

### THE JEWISH BACKGROUND

We have to realise that the first Christians were Jews and that most of the Epistles were written to converted Jews or people who were familiar with Jewish concepts, through having attended the synagogue or having been exposed to the OT Scriptures. To understand the first phase of early christianity, which was essentially Jewish, it is important to consider this society and the problems that preoccupied them.

The first thing we must realise is that Jews (and their sympathisers) were numerous and spread not only all over the Roman Empire but also Mesopotamia (today: Syria, Iraq and Iran).

**The Jewish community:** According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, during the time of Herod there were some 8 million Jews in the world of which some 2.5

million lived in Palestine. They constituted about 10% of the total population of the Roman Empire which did not, of course, include Babylonia where there was a very large community. In Galilee Jews were outnumbered by Gentiles. By comparison in 2001, the total Jewish population was 13.9 million with 5.2 million living in Israel. Before World War II, it had been 18 million. Six million or 30% of the Jewish race perished in the holocaust. In the first century, more Jews lived in Syria than in Palestine and more in Alexandria than in Jerusalem.

Over a million lived in Egypt alone.

The chief link between these two populations were the merchants who collected enormous sums of money to send for the upkeep of the Temple (i.e. it was heavily dependent on outside financial support). This was called the Temple tax. The Jews of the Dispersion (*Diaspora*) were distinguished by their religion and their attachment to Jerusalem.

The religious life of the Jews in Palestine centred round the Temple and, to a lesser extent, around the synagogues. The Romans granted them favoured nation status (involving exemption from military service and from participation in the emperor cult) because they had originally been a Roman Protectorate. This changed in AD 4 when Archelaus was sacked for cruelty and Judaea came under direct Roman control. However, all Jews had to pay Roman taxes which came to 30-40% of people's income + a poll tax. No wonder there was much discontent among the Jews!

**Jewish writings:** Central to Jewish belief were the Old Testament Scriptures, but these existed in several translations. The Massoretic text was declared to be the only accepted Hebrew text at the Council of Jamnia (AD 90) and all other Hebrew texts were outlawed. The

traditional Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint) was also outlawed. This was because it had come to be the favourite version of the Christians. They kept quoting texts from it to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. In the end the Jewish authorities found this so embarrassing that they authorised a new Greek translation. First came the Aquila version, but this was so literal that it was difficult to read. Accordingly, two further translations were made (by Symmachus and Theodotion respectively). In addition the Jews deliberately excluded Isaiah 53 from the synagogue lectionary, because of the well-known interpretation that Christians were putting on this passage. To this day, it is still missing!

The Palestinian canon of Scripture was the only one recognised by orthodox Judaism. There is no evidence for a second (Alexandrian) canon which contained the apocrypha. The order of books in the Palestinian canon was: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Septuagint had a different order of books that are arranged chronologically and according to literary genres (e.g. poetic books). It was this order that was adopted by the Christians, for the very inadequate reason that they used the Septuagint. This was to set a precedent for future translations which is only today being reversed.

The Talmud (meaning Teaching) came next in importance to the Scriptures. It consists of the Mishna and Gemara, and of the Midrashim (official interpretation of the OT books). The Mishnah was compiled by Rabbi Judah-ha-Nasi (135-220). The Palestinian Talmud dates from 450 AD and the much larger Babylonian Talmud from 500 AD. It is basically a commentary on Scripture and an elaboration on it. The Talmud was divided into six sections:

1. Agricultural laws,
2. Laws on how to keep the various Jewish festivals,

3. Laws on women and divorce,

4. civic legislation and laws on commercial transactions,

5. laws on how to offer the various sacrifices in the Temple. Temple regulations and rules on what was clean and what was unclean (that is: what made a person fit to go into God's presence – the Temple – and what made him unfit to do so).

6. Rules for priests in the Temple.

Not content with what the Old Testament had to say about the above questions, they decided to make further elaborations of these laws, just to be on the safe side. In fact, the central thesis of the *Talmud* (a book which very much reflected the way of thinking of the Pharisees), was that the law of Moses had to be adapted to the changing conditions of the life of the Israelite nation.

Later, between 200-500 AD the Jews added a further section to the Talmud which they called the *Gemara* (lit: completion) which consisted of comments on the *Mishna* (central section of the Talmud which contains an exposition of the Tora).

**The Diaspora:** Most Jews, some 6 million, lived outside Israel. They were called the Dispersion (*Diaspora*) and were chiefly centred in Babylonia (in Roman times: a city in Parthia) and in Egypt. In Israel, the Jewish religious community was ruled by the *nasi* or head rabbi (misleadingly translated 'prince' in some translations of the Bible) and in Babylon it was ruled over by the *exilarch* who claimed Davidic descent from the kings of Juda.

The Diaspora were also numerous in Cyrene and Berenice, in Pergamum, Miletus, Sardis, in Phrygian Apamea, Cyprus, Antioch, Damascus and Ephesus, and on both shores of the Black Sea. At the time of Christ,

the Jews had been in Rome for 200 years and formed a substantial colony there: and from Rome the Jews had spread all over urban Italy and then into Gaul and Spain and across the sea into north-west Africa. Many were strict Jews, but some felt that they could safely abandon the observance of circumcision and of ancient Mosaic laws, which made life in modern society so difficult. There were also many interested Gentiles for whom these customs were a hindrance to identifying themselves fully with the Jewish community.

The language of the Diaspora was Greek (in the West) and Aramaic (in the East) both of which had a translation of the Bible (Septuagint and Targums).

The life of the Diaspora centred round the synagogue which served as a cultural centre, school and place of worship. The administrative board of the synagogue was to set the pattern for the administration of the early church – a board of elders presided over by the president of the synagogue. The worship itself consisted essentially of prayers, readings from the Tora and an exposition of it (the *Mishna*). This was to influence early patterns of Christian worship.

The Jews of the Diaspora were known for their chastity and stable family life, and among themselves they practiced works of charity visiting the sick, caring for the dead, showing hospitality to strangers and giving alms for the poor. But they were also misunderstood by ignorant people, much as the early Christians were. In particular:

1. They refused to have anything to do with pagan worship, which seemed to be antisocial.
2. They refused to eat meat offered to idols and to eat pork, which seemed stupid.
3. They circumcised their male children, which many people found repugnant.



Around many synagogues of the Dispersion there gathered devout Gentiles called 'God-fearers', though this term was applied to any good synagogue member. To join the synagogue a Gentile might have to undergo circumcision or more commonly, baptism. However the Jews of the Dispersion did not insist on circumcision for such proselytes. The stricter Jewish authorities in Israel did not agree with this lax attitude. This same clash was to repeat itself in discussions between Paul (as a Diaspora Jew) and the Church of Jerusalem (representing the Palestinian authorities). These proselytes were very open to the Gospel as they had already a good knowledge of the Scriptures and had less to lose than the Jews if they became Christians.

**Palestine:** Within Jewish society in Palestine were several important groups of people.

**The Scribes** (*soferim*) were those who were the custodians, copiers and expounders of the Law (*Tora*). They were divided into brotherhoods (*haverim*). They had an oral tradition (the Tradition of the Elders) which was eventually put into writing in the 3rd cent. AD and called the *Mishna* (lit: repetition: commentary on the Law) which came to be incorporated into the *Talmud* (Teaching). These scribes tended to be antagonistic to the priests and Sadducees.

**The Sadducees** (*Cadukim* = descendants of Cadok the priest) were drawn from the high-priestly families and who were happy to get their stipends from whoever was in power. Because they were regarded as collaborators, they tended to be despised by the population whose allegiance was rather to the Pharisees. The Sadducees did not of course survive the events of AD 70 which saw

the ruin of the Temple and the destruction of the whole priestly system. They were massacred by the rebels who regarded them as collaborators with the Romans. Theologically they were essentially the conservatives (in so far as they only accepted the Tora) and espoused an arminian theology.

Herod appointed high priests from the Diaspora (from Babylonia and Egypt), so that he could better control them.

**The Pharisees** (hebr. *perushim*, aram. *perisayya* = separationists) were considered faithful to the Law and to their country. They were descended from the *Hasidim* of the Hashmonean era who broke with John Hyrcanus when he took on the dual office of king and high priest.

They tried to adapt judaism to the modern world – they were a product of the Exile, where there had been no Temple and no theocracy. They were theologically the progressive believers. They held to predestination, resurrection, angels and spirits.

It must be born in mind that there were strict and liberal Pharisees. They were divided into the school of Shammai (strict) and the school of Hillel (a moderate from the Babylonian diaspora). Gamaliel was a follower of Hillel. For Shammai, the essence of the Tora lay in its detail: unless you got the detail exactly right, the system became meaningless and could not stand. For Hillel, the essence of the Tora was its spirit: if you got the spirit right, the detail could take care of itself. Hillel's dream was to make obedience to the Law possible for all Jews and for converts to judaism. Jesus therefore was much closer to the school of Hillel than to Shammai.

Besides these two main parties, there were two main sects:

**The Zealots** (aram: *qananayya* = zealous ones) appear to have been the extreme wing of the Pharisees. They were prepared to resort to violence to reestablish Jewish independence based on obedience to the Law. Some, like Barabbas, were religious terrorists. Jesus even had one among his disciples (Simon). They were prepared to assassinate anyone who was a collaborator with the Romans. Later, during the time of the Jewish wars, other Jews became hostages to their policy of violence.

**The Essenes** (from aram: *hasya* = pious, holy) date from the time of the Maccabees. Most of them were monks who lived outside their main monastery at Qumran, teaching the people. Although they were very strict Jews, they had nevertheless absorbed some teachings which were foreign to Judaism (especially zoroastrian dualism). They owed their origin to Maccabean times when the priesthood collaborated with Antiochus Epiphanes and his hellenisation programme which was like a modern-day cultural revolution! But when the Maccabean dynasty (the Hashmoneans) started to combine the office of king and high priest, they chose to retire to their monastery under their leader who was called the Teacher of Righteousness.

However, the **Qumran** community was only one of many Essene-like communities who lived in the desert. All were affected by apocalyptic, but some were pacifists and some were not. John the Baptist may have spent at least some time with one of these Essene groups. It is very probable that one of these communities had a community house in Jerusalem. As Jesus was on good terms with them, he may have used this house as the place where he ate the last Passover meal with his disciples. The man who was carrying the pitcher of water was

obviously a member of this community, as women (who would otherwise have done this work) were not allowed to be members.

The monks of Qumran had strict rules and there were severe punishments for misconduct: undermining the leadership's authority or blaspheming resulted in banishment; sleeping during a community meal carried a penalty of ten days of confinement, or laughing inappropriately 30 days.

The leader of the Qumran community called himself the Teacher of Righteousness. His deadly enemy was the High Priest in Jerusalem who was reckoned by him to be an apostate, almost the Anti-Christ himself. They were in fact hyper-Pharisees who reckoned that they were going to be used as instruments of judgement when God judged these apostates, from whom they would then take over. They thought that they could gain divine favour for themselves and expiate the sins of their erring brothers by studying and practising the Law. The Teacher of Righteousness was supposed to have divine powers at expounding Scripture, which he tended to apply to people and circumstances of his time. They were the new, purified priesthood that was going to take over when the new age came.

According to them, the end of the age was to be characterised by the appearance of three key figures: the Prophet (like Moses), the Davidic Messiah and a high priest of the Aaronic line. The Priest was to have been the head of State (as in Ezekiel) in the new age and even more important than the Davidic Messiah. The Messiah was to have been a warrior prince who would lead the faithful armies of Israel to win a decisive victory over the sons of darkness (amongst whom the Romans figured

prominently). The Prophet was to communicate the will of God to his people at the end of the present age, just as Moses had done at the beginning of it.

**Jesus and Judaism:** It is useful to step back a bit and view Jesus against his Jewish background. At the outset, it must be said that Jesus as Son of God was unique. His ideas cannot be attributed to a series of influences from other quarters. It is also one thing to have ideas, but quite another to make them a practical reality by an atoning death of infinite value and by the sending of the Holy Spirit – none but the Son of God can do that! However, his teaching was closest to that of the *Hakamim* (lit: the wise ones), the pious Jews who moved in the world. He was closer to the Pharisees than to any other group, although he often criticised them for their hypocrisy. The *Hakamim* had followers among the Pharisees. The aim of the Hakamic movement was to promote holiness in general. They used the elementary schools and synagogues to promote and spread their ideas.

Jesus took Hillel's teaching to its logical conclusion, that of Jewish universalism, and therefore created a new religion called Christianity. Into his ethical judaism he incorporated a clear perspective of death, judgement and the after-life. He offered this new theology to anyone within reach of his mission: pious Jews, the common people (*am ha-arets*), the Samaritans, the unclean, even the Gentiles. But like many religious innovators, he had a public doctrine for the masses and a confidential one for his immediate followers. This latter teaching centred on what would happen to him as a person, in life and in death, and therein lay his claim to be not just the Suffering Servant, but also the Messiah.

His teaching put him on a collision course with the Jewish authorities. His hostility to the Temple when it impeded true religion, was unacceptable to even liberal Pharisees, who thought that Temple worship provided an essential centrality to the practice of Judaism. His attitude to the Law was another stumbling block for the Pharisees: he had stripped the Law of all but its moral and ethical elements. He also denied that keeping the Law could win salvation. He asserted that man could have a direct relationship with God, even if he were poor, ignorant and sinful. He taught that it was not man's obedience to the Tora that created God's response, but the grace of God to men which enables those born again by the Spirit by faith in him as Messiah to keep His commandments.

If Jesus had remained in the provinces, he might not have been killed, but he chose to go to Jerusalem itself and directly challenge the authorities there. When brought before the Sanhedrin, he was considered to be a rebellious elder. By refusing to plead, he put himself in contempt of court and so convicted himself of the crime by his silence. No doubt it was the Temple priests and those amongst the Pharisees who were followers of Shammai (Bet Shammai), as well as the Sadducees who felt most threatened by Jesus' doctrine and wanted to put him to death. He did not die by stoning because he was handed over to the Roman authorities as a Messianic pretender.

When, after his death, Jesus was widely reported to have risen from the dead, this vindicated not only his ethical teaching, but also his claims to be the Suffering Servant and the Messiah.

A major break-through in evangelism among the diaspora and the gentiles occurred with the conversion of **Paul**, a diaspora Jew from Cilicia, whose family came

from Galilee, and who had returned to Palestine and studied under Gamaliel the Elder. He possessed the Pharisaic training to understand Jesus' theology, and he began to explain it, once he was convinced that the resurrection was a fact and that Jesus' claims to be the Messiah were true.

Both Jesus (humanly speaking) and Paul had their roots in Palestinian Judaism. Neither was introducing concepts from the Hellenistic Diaspora. Both were preaching a new theology, but it was essentially the same theology.

**Jewish rejection of Christianity** The Jewish establishment and a large proportion of the people were not attracted to Christianity, for the following reasons:

1. They rejected the concept of a crucified Messiah (as does Islam).
2. Christianity was not a Jewish nationalist movement capable of attracting extremists (zealots) who wanted to revolt against Rome. It was precisely these people who dictated national policy during the Jewish revolt and intimidated everyone who did agree with them.
3. On the other hand, the movement was far too revolutionary for most Jewish leaders who pursued a policy of compromise with the Roman authorities. The conservatives thus saw their situation threatened. In any case they lost control of the nation as preparations for the revolt increased.
4. They disliked the attitude of Christians towards the Gentiles whom they thought of as beyond redemption.
5. Orthodox Jews thought Christianity to be unacceptable because Christians claimed to have superseded the Chosen People. The Jews rejected their allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament to suit a Christian exegesis. As far as they were concerned,

Christians were dangerous trimmers who were adapting the unchangeable religion of the fathers (revealed to Moses) to make it more acceptable to pagan prejudices.

In Jerusalem relations between the Jews and the conservative Christians like James (as opposed to the Hellenists of the Dispersion) were good, but this came to an end when James was murdered in 62 after having refused to publicly deny that Jesus is the Son of God. Thereafter relations deteriorated, especially as the Jewish Revolt got underway.

In the years leading up to the outbreak of the First Jewish War against the Romans in 66, the attitude of the Jews (as a nation) to the Gospel, hardened increasingly. The Romans also began to doubt the status of Christianity as a Jewish sect, which led to the exodus of many Jewish Christians to Pella and Asia Minor. Christians sought to distance themselves from Jewish nationalism. The Jewish revolt culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, then of the whole nation in 135, resulting in the dispersion of the Jewish nation, just as Jesus had predicted.

The First Jewish War lasted from 66-73, but in spite of the lurid descriptions of Josephus, there was no permanent damage to the material infrastructure of Jewish life, either in Judaea or Galilee, apart from Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity and a few other scattered towns which had been centres of resistance. The Jews reconstructed their centre at Jamnia where the Sanhedrin regrouped. Josephus was at this time the Jewish general in charge of the defence of Galilee, but he surrendered early in the campaign and went to live in Rome where he wrote his most famous work, *The Jewish Wars*.

In 130 Hadrian did a tour of Israel in order to boost his image and decided to refound Jerusalem under a new



name: *Colonia Aelia Capitolina*. He built a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the site of the Temple. It was this insult that led to the outbreak of the Second Jewish revolt

The Second Jewish War against the Romans broke out in 132 when Simon Ben-Kosiba (in Aramaic: Simon Bar-Kochba) led a revolt against the Romans. This time the revolt was much better prepared and there were no divisions among the rebels. But this time destruction was on a vast scale: during the fighting some 50 fortresses and nearly 1,000 villages were destroyed. The ten leaders of the revolt were executed in the amphitheatre at Caesarea. The harbours of the Mediterranean were crowded with refugees from the slaughter. Huge auctions were held at Mamre and at Gaza, where Jewish captives were sold into slavery: their numbers were such that the price of slaves slumped in the Empire. In Judaea itself, Jews were forbidden to assemble for prayer, to circumcise their sons, or to ordain rabbis. No Jew was allowed to visit Jerusalem under pain of death. This edict was so strictly enforced that the Christian community in Jerusalem was obliged to change its bishop of Jewish origin for one of Gentile birth. What was left of Jewish life transferred itself to a little village in Galilee called Usha. Israel had ceased to exist as a nation.

One outcome of the Bar-Kochba war was the almost total severance of links between Judaism and Christianity. Bar Kochba himself had ordered that the Christians be sentenced to terrible punishments if they did not deny Jesus Christ and curse him. A few dwindling groups of Hebrew Christians (Ebionites) were left but historical development had passed them by. The main Jewish congregation that was left was in Caesarea (along with other coastal towns) where an institution of learning had been founded by the great scholar Origen, and a large library established, to be added to by his

successors, Pamphilus and Eusebius. Jewish Christianity also flourished in Arabia beyond the Jordan where an early Church council was held at Bostra in the third century.

Conservative Christian Jews continued to observe sabbaths, circumcision and other Jewish festivals, which gave the Gentile Christians cause for concern. After the fall of Jerusalem a new development took place. The survivors of Qumran joined the Christian Church, which resulted in a split. One wing remained orthodox but retained Jewish practices. The other wing became frankly heretical. It was this heretical wing that became known as the Ebionites (an expression taken from Paul's mention of the 'poor Christians' of Jerusalem). The Ebionites in the 2nd century no longer held to the divinity of Christ, and never held to the virgin birth. In the fourth century and later there were still small Jewish churches in Syria. Jerome translated into Latin their 'Gospel of the Hebrews' which preserved traditions slightly different to those of the canonical Greek Gospels, and giving special prominence to James, the Lord's brother, whom they almost regarded as the Messiah's deputy.

In fact the roots of the Syriac church are Jewish: descendants of the original Jewish families still survive in Syria today.

It seems from archeological evidence that the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem fled the city in 68 before the arrival of the Romans. They fled to Pella, a town in Decapolis, beyond the Jordan and into the mountains of Gilead and Bashan, wandering around in expectation of the return of their Messiah, Jesus. After the fall of Jerusalem they returned to the town in 73/74, which they found in ruins. As they now became

convinced that the return of Jesus had been delayed, they built a Christian synagogue. The building no longer pointed towards the Temple (which had been destroyed) but towards the place of the resurrection (Church of the Holy Sepulchre). This synagogue is still visible today and surrounds the pseudo-tomb of David which was erected by the Crusaders.

Since the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem did not attend the council of Nicaea in 325 but maintained their own autonomy, they were ostracized and soon considered heretics. From the 4th century onwards they gradually lost their identity.

## THE PAGAN WORLD

The Early Christians found themselves in a political and religious system called the Roman Empire. This had inherited the following traits from the Greek Empire:

1. The same administration
2. The same civilisation
3. The same language.

When the early Christians used the word 'world' (*oikumene*), they normally meant the Roman world, though in some contexts the expression can mean the Land of Israel. The Roman Empire was engaged in making its own territorial possessions more Roman, as well as in opposing barbarian incursions.

Because this empire was the result of conquest and annexation, it consisted of regions which had varying administrative structures: Egypt, for instance, was the personal property of the emperor and had a prefectorial viceroy assigned to it. Then there were protectorates that had been ancient kingdoms that had kept their traditional institutions. There were provinces which were divided

into senatorial provinces (for instance, Asia), and imperial provinces where Roman troops were still stationed and where authority was exercised by governors that were directly responsible to the emperor (for example, Syria). Procurators administered regions that had particular characteristics (e.g. Judaea). Pontius Pilate, for instance, was the Roman governor (procurator or deputy governor) responsible to the Roman legate in Antioch, Syria.

This administration did not offer much independence (in spite of provincial assemblies), but it did offer peace, which led to trade and wealth (especially the cities of Asia Minor). Towns did have a certain independence, as they were governed by an assembly (*ekklesia*) of which all citizens were members, and by a council (*boulé*) of prominent men. Corporations (guilds) also played an important part in local life.

A man could be a citizen of his native town but also a Roman citizen: this privilege could either be hereditary (as in the case of Paul), or purchased or conferred by the emperor as a reward. A Roman citizen was spared the indignity of degrading corporal punishment, and could appeal to the emperor.

Religion in the Roman Empire was divided into two main categories:

1. *Religia Licita*, which virtually meant the State Cult involving worship of the Roman gods and sometimes of the emperor (more often of the dead emperor), though Caligula, Nero and Domitian all claimed divine honours while they were still alive. This involved sprinkling incense on a flame burning on a small altar as a sign of worship of the genius of the emperor (i.e. the divine power that stood behind him). Every citizen of the empire was expected to participate in this cult as a basic sign of allegiance to the emperor. The Jewish nation, however, was granted a special dispensation whereby they were

made exempt – their own religion counted as their '*religia licita*'. As Christians were, until 64, regarded as a Jewish sect, they too were excused this worship. Jews were also excused military service.

The magistrates in each town were the priests in charge of the imperial cult. The Romans reckoned that they owed their military success and their economic prosperity to the gods of the Empire, so military defeat or such things as famine were thought to be due to disloyalty (someone somewhere was insulting the gods). All other religions were classed by the Romans as:

2. *Superstitiones*: These included the worship of local divinities or oriental cults which were heavily mixed up in philosophy. The worship of local divinities consisted in the performing of certain ritual acts: honoring them and offering sacrifice to them, which involved in reality the placation of demonic powers. No *moral* demand was made on the worshipper. This is why Judaism and Christianity were so different. To this end, there were services in temples consisting of invocation, invitation of the god to attend the sacrifice, and the asking of favours. The sacrifices were conceived of as presents offered to the god. One part of the sacrifice was burned, and the rest was either eaten by the local priests and worshippers, or sold on the meat market (cf. 1 Cor 8). In addition, dinners were often held in temples at which the god was reckoned to be the unseen host. In some cults sacred prostitution was involved. This is no doubt why the Corinthians took time to appreciate that the practice is wrong. This was particularly the case in mystery cults. These religions were part of the very fabric of the society of the time. To espouse Christianity meant a clean break with all this.

Then there were the oriental mystery cults, all of which offered the worshipper, after an initiation ceremony (gr.

*musterion*), "rebirth" and "eternal life" Worship of these gods involved song, dance, musical instruments, public processions, religious feasting, ritualistic animal sacrifices and (especially in the Isis cult) group acts of sexual immorality. The most important of these was the cult of Isis (the Egyptian mother goddess and her son Horus – which bore a remarkable resemblance to the cult of the Madonna and child).

There was also the cult of **Mithras**, the Persian god of light which was a religion of asceticism mainly for men, especially Roman soldiers. It had sacred meals not unlike the Christian eucharist and offered souls a way through the seven planetary spirits which bar the ascent of the soul to the Milky Way after death. The symbol of Mithraism was that of a bull being slaughtered by Mithras, which symbolised that the old era of Taurus had been superceded by that of Aries, in which Mithras was the god who could bring salvation to its initiates. New Age is founded on the same astrological presuppositions (the constellation in which the spring equinox occurs determines the nature of the historical age in which we live, the stars are gods who influence what occurs on earth and can bar the way upward to the seeker after redemption) and states that the old age of Pisces (the Christian era) is now being superceded by that of Aquarius.

Then there was the grim Anatolian cult of **Attis and Cybele** which had priests which lived by begging and ascetic practices. They were well known because of a public ceremony which lasted from 15-17 March, when after fasting and the Day of Blood (22nd March) on which Attis was mourned, sorrow was turned into joy when the Hilaria celebrated his resurrection on March 25th. All this was a striking parallel to the Christian Holy Week and Easter, which were no doubt designed to replace it on the calendar.

**Zoroastrianism:** Zoroaster or Zarathustra was a reformer of mazdeism (zervanism) in Persia. This was a dualistic religion: the world is the theatre of a struggle between the principle of Evil (Ahriman or Angra-Mainyul) and the principle of Good (Ormuzd or Ahura-Mazda), but in the end Good will triumph. When this happens, the final judgement will occur. This will involve the resurrection of the dead and the confinement of the wicked to the regions of torment.

The sacred book of mazdeism is the Avesta. This became the basis for a cult that was administered by the Magi. A major part of the worship was centred around the fire altar. In fact, they seem to have had an obsession for fire and this was to later influence much medieval thought.

Zoroastrianism gave rise to Mithraism and Manicheism, but it came to a sudden end at the time of the Muslim invasions.

Zarathustra's reform consisted in the rejection of the gods of popular religion and the promotion of the worship of one God, the Spirit of Good, Ahura Mazda.

## **THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND**

Philosophy in the Roman empire was almost entirely Greek. The Romans were soldiers and administrators, but it was the Greeks who were the thinkers. People at the time of the Early Church were not just interested as an academic discipline, but also as a "faith" to live by.

Early Greek philosophers: Thales of Miletus (about 600 BC) is reckoned to be the first philosopher in the classic sense. He believed that all that existed arose from water. One of his disciples, Anaximander, believed that not water but the boundless atmosphere was the source of everything.

Heraclitus, who lived about 100 years later in Ephesus, believed that the basic element of the universe was fire. Out of it all things arise and to it all things eventually return. The process of change was a sort of dialectic. Out of fire comes air, out of air water, out of water earth. Then the process is reversed and you end up with fire again. The constantly changing world is controlled by a mind, a reason which he called the Logos. Aristotle and later Hegel were to incorporate these same ideas into his philosophy.

Parmenides, in Southern Italy, believed that there was no change at all, and that the only thing that really exists is being itself. All the change that we observe is in appearance only.

Subsequent philosophers tried to relate permanence to change.

**SOCRATES**: lived in Athens about 450 BC. He was more interested in human conduct than in the nature of the world. He taught that we can only know one thing with certainty: man himself. True knowledge is to know what we ought to be and what the purpose of life is. This knowledge can be gained by proper education: man has the power to make himself morally good.

**PLATO** (425-345 BC) was a disciple of Socrates. Aristotle was a disciple of Plato but later came to reject almost all of his teachings. Plato believed (like Parmenides) that the real world was not what you see, but the unseen world, the world of ideas or spiritual realities existing outside the mind of man. The most important of these ideas is the idea of the Good. These ideas give formless matter form and meaning. It is this union of perfect ideas with disordered matter that we see and experience in the world around us. Matter is the source of all evil. It is only the ideas which it reflects that are of any value. Everything that is good comes from



ideas; everything that is bad comes from matter. The world of ideas and the world of matter are interlocked and equally eternal. Man is a union of spirit and matter. Death is a happy release of the soul from the bondage of the body (matter).

**ARISTOTLE:** (384-322 BC) at one stage was a tutor to Alexander the Great when he was a boy. At the end of his life, he founded a philosophical school called the Lyceum. His teachings were not very influential amongst Christians until halfway through the Middle Ages (1080-1100). He rejected Plato's concept of an eternal world of ideas. He said that there was only one world and that was this one. It has neither beginning nor end and has its explanation within itself. According to him, what made the world evolve (only to recommence the same cycle again later) was an impersonal principle built into the system (not existing outside it). His philosophy is thus essentially empiricist and materialistic.

**STOICISM:** This is basically the philosophy of Zeno and two other philosophers (Cleantes and Chrysippus) who taught about 300 BC. Like Socrates, he was more concerned with human conduct than with the nature of the universe. He taught that only matter (deriving from fire) exists. There is no pure spirit: mind and body are both material. Even God is material; the universe is his body and he is its soul. This is a form of pantheism. Man is related to God as a drop of water is related to the ocean. God as the world soul, governs all things, loves men and desires what is good for them. Since man is related to God, he should follow where the divine reason (logos) leads. The truly human person surrenders himself to God's will, however painful it may be, for God loves him. Stoicism showed men what was right but did not give them the power to live such a life. Paul in some of

his sermons to a pagan audience, is obviously appealing to people who were sympathetic to these ideas.

**EPICURIANISM**: was named after its founder (Epicurus – 342-270 BC) who founded a school of philosophy in Athens. He taught that pleasure was a supremely desirable quality, but by this he did not mean physical self-indulgence. He meant that true happiness could only be achieved by a life of quietness, retirement, peace and self-control. In order to achieve this, one must eliminate one principle source of anxiety: the religious preoccupation with the after-life. In fact, the gods are not interested in human affairs and there is no life after death. Therefore, live this life to the full, in a positive sense.

**PHILO**: was a Jew from Alexandria (20 BC – 40 AD) who attempted to combine OT Scriptures with Greek philosophy. He taught that whatever was true in Greek philosophy had been said earlier by the Jewish Scriptures, thus pointing to God's revelation even to Greek minds. Philo's greatest problem was to combine biblical and Greek ideas regarding creation, as Greek philosophy said that matter was evil and that God could never have had any contact with it. To solve the problem, like the Greeks, he posited a mediator between God and the world – the Logos. He is the greatest of the powers with which God is surrounded, but he is less than God. Through him God created all things. Many of these ideas left their mark on Christian intellectuals in Alexandria.

All Greek philosophers believed in a supreme creator God. This was only challenged by a minority of materialist philosophers such as Anaximander and Epicurus. Both platonists and stoics (like Cicero who opposed the poet Lucretius who maintained that we cannot trust our senses and so must remain agnostic)

believed in one god. The stoics even championed the argument from design.

**MIDDLE PLATONISM AND NEOPLATONISM:** aimed to synthesis the main ideas in Greek philosophy but using as a basis a *religious* interpretation of Plato's philosophy. Neoplatonism represents the third stage in the development of platonism: 1) Platonism proper, 2) Middle Platonism (1st-2nd centuries), 3) Neo-platonism (3rd-6th centuries).

**Middle Platonism** placed great emphasis on God's transcendence (he could only be defined negatively – the absence of various qualities). He was only seen as active in creation through intermediaries (the Logos, planetary powers, world soul). Plato's forms have developed into thoughts in the divine mind, evil is related to matter closer than ever before.

It also aimed to combine platonism with some of the ideas of Aristotle. Rather than *being*, everything in this world is in the process of *becoming*. Only the eternal word of God's ideas is unchanging.

**Neoplatonism** Its main characteristics were idealism, mysticism and asceticism. The roots of the philosophy lie in the prolific platonic culture of Alexandria which had displaced Athens as the intellectual centre of the world. The founder of this philosophy was Plotinus (204-269). According to him, total reality comes from the ultimate divine principle, the One. We cannot have an idea of this One, nor can it be expressed in words: it is beyond all definition. It is the endless One, as both good and highest power. As an emanation (offshoot) from the One comes the Mind, a principle which in its uniqueness already contains the idea of multiplicity and this multiplicity includes platonic ideas of every conceivable thing. With them is revealed a *duality* of matter and spirit,

object and conscience. By means of a fresh *emanation* Mind gives birth to Spirit which includes ideas as 'forms' (models, ideals) and which creates the world of perceivable things. The One, the Mind and the Spirit are three *hupostaseis* or the three divine principles of the neoplatonist. For the neo-platonist, matter is non-being, empty space (cf. hinduism. an illusion – *maya*). Furthermore it is dark and evil. The perceivable universe (nature) is a mixture of struggle and non-struggle: nature is real to the extent that it is spiritualised (mixed with spirit). According to the neoplatonist, however, everything that has come from God has a tendency to work its way back to him and to be reabsorbed by him who is the embodiment of supreme good. Man cannot obtain this goal through knowledge or reason, because the One is above the Mind and ideas, but only by direct union with the divinity through ecstatic vision. By isolating oneself from the things of the world and by sheer mystical illumination (a form of transcendental meditation), the mind can overcome the hindrances of the psyche to experience the sublime. In this sense, neoplatonist thought can be said to be the source of later mysticism, especially Christian mysticism.

Whereas Middle Platonism most directly affected early Christian thinkers like Justin and Clement of Alexandria), Neoplatonism affected many Christian thinkers from Origen onwards: the Cappadocian fathers, Ambrose, Augustine. Through Dionysius, it became perhaps the most formative factor in Christian mystical theology (and therefore in monastic thought) in both East and West. Through Augustine it coloured virtually the whole medieval tradition in the West.

**Summary:** all these philosophies were characterised by the following:

1. They did not believe in a personal God, if they believed in one at all. He was at most an idea or principle. You cannot have a relationship with a non-personal God.

2. Pantheistic tendencies. No clear distinction is made between God and material or spiritual creation.

3. Matter was evil: only the non-material (spiritual) is pure. The way of salvation is therefore to escape from matter. It is not seen in terms of a reconciliation between two personal beings.

4. All had a closed system and a cyclical idea of history.

5. Neoplatonism added the following:

a) The creation of spirits is by emanation, whereby one entity gives birth to another, like the planets were thrown off from the sun.

b) The aim of man is to be reabsorbed in the deity (mystical way of salvation). Man has a divine spark in him and therefore he is a part of the deity.

## **CENTRES OF CHRISTIANITY**

During this time, Christianity began to acquire certain centres, each of which had its own particular stamp, or even brand of Christianity.

**THE SYRIAC CHURCH** There was the Syriac Church, which centred around Antioch but then spread eastwards. The Greeks regarded them as being tainted by gnosticism and viewed its extreme rigour with distaste and suspicion. There were two factions which developed in it: the younger and more orthodox led by Palut of Edessa, initiated from Antioch, and the older and probably indigenous faction led by Tatian (Adai) in 160 who had been a pupil of Justin. It seems that the rigorous

spirit of James lived on in the Syriac church. In the fifth century they were branded as heretics because they supported Nestorius, and had to retreat beyond the reach of the Byzantine persecutors.

Their main centres of learning were first Edessa and later Nisibis, further east. Their missionaries went south to India and had spread across mainland Asia to China by the 6th century. The rise of Islam cut them off from other Christians, for whom, they survived as Prester John, the Christian priest king of the Far East who would one day come to crush the hordes of Islam. The latter-day Syriac church contributed monasticism to Tibet and left monuments in China before their network of churches collapsed under the hammering of Ghengiz Khan and Tamberlane in the 12th and 14th centuries. One branch survived as the Mar Toma church in South India (using a Syriac liturgy). Other scattered congregations remained in the hills around Mosul in North Iraq, enduring continual harassment and persecution from the Turks until recent times when they were rediscovered.

**NORTH AFRICA:** North Africa was about the only place where the Latin language had survived intact and it was from there that the language made a comeback to Rome where Greek had gained the upper hand. It is also in North Africa that we have the first Christian writings in Latin. While the North African church did have its great theologians (such as Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyconius and Augustine), the rank and file were not very literate theologically. The Bible was never translated into the native vernacular of Numidia and Tunisia, as had been the case in Egypt. The great strength of North African Christianity (especially its Donatist section) was among the Punic-speaking inhabitants. But these people never had the Bible in their own language. This factor as well

as the later Vandal invasion explains why the Muslim invasion in the 7th century devastated the Christian church. The fact that there were two populations had a great deal to do with the Donatist division.

Christianity finally came to an end in north-west Africa in the wake of a Muslim fundamentalist movement in the Atlas Mountains in the 12th century.

**EGYPT** In Egypt there was a similar division of population. There had always been a rift between the Greek-speaking élite and the Coptic-speaking substratum of peasantry. This was eventually to divide the churches of Egypt, when in the fourth and fifth centuries, doctrinal debates came to the fore. The bishops of Alexandria drew much of their support against the official theology of the Byzantine patriarchs from among the slow but intransigent Copts (actually the descendants of the ancient Egyptians). Along with certain other churches, Coptic Christianity supported the Monophysite movement.

**ROME** In the church at Rome, most of the members were Greek-speaking until the beginning of the third century when the proportion of Latin-speaking Christians began to outweigh the Greeks, as more and more people from the upper classes were won to the Faith. The church was very big: by 251 its resources had grown so much that it was supporting from its funds not only the bishop, but also 64 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 subdeacons, 42 acolytes (couriers and later candle-bearers at the eucharist), and 52 exorcists, readers and doorkeepers but also more than 1,500 widows and needy persons. The persecution under Decius in 250 brought many refugee bishops to Rome where they could hide in a big city but the church had to support them.

The Roman church however was not without its splits: in 217 a major quarrel broke out between **Hippolytus and Callistus** over succession to the post of bishop of Rome. Callistus, who became bishop, had accused Hypolytus of being a ditheist (the Son referred to the body of Jesus and his spirit referred to the Father in him). What is more Callistus was accused of being lax on the question of post-baptismal sin: he allowed even the gravest sins to be forgiven after penance, even immorality, homicide and apostasy. This set in motion a process which was to lead to the toleration of flagrant immorality on the payment of a small indemnity. Hippolytus broke with Callistus and founded his own congregation. This split the Roman Church for a generation. By this time, another quarrel flared up between **Cornelius and Novatian** on the same question. Cornelius held that the bishop could remit even grave sins. Novatian separated and formed his own congregation.

## MISSIONARY EXPANSION TO 700

During the initial stages of this expansion, the following factors were important in the evangelisation of the pagan world:

1. A relatively stable political situation (the *Pax Romana*). cf. 1 Tim 2,1-2.
2. A common language: popular Greek (*koiné*) inherited from the empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander had encouraged the Jews to emigrate and settle all over his empire, which accounts for their great numbers in the Roman empire.



3. Good communication via Roman roads or by ship. The Romans almost succeeded in abolishing piracy on the high seas.
4. The influence of the Jews of the Dispersion, plus knowledge of the Septuagint (the OT in Greek)
5. Popular dissatisfaction with philosophy and religion.

The First Christians without exception gave themselves to evangelism. However, there was a systematic approach to it. There was a team of apostles, prophets and teachers who were involved in church planting. This means that they were very careful about their follow-up and consolidation. When elders were appointed, they continued to organise evangelism from the local church, although their main ministry was to the church itself, for which they obviously had the necessary gifts. Deacons were usually in charge of daughter churches in outlying villages.

There were also theologians and apologists of the Church who not only gave lectures to people outside to win them to Christ but who organised Bible schools to train evangelists and other apologists. The first apologists addressed themselves to the Jews. Paul, for instance emphasizes the importance of the prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ, as well as the typological fulfillment of Christ. Later apologists abused this method and applied everything to the Church when they had no business to do so.

Christian apologists later came to specialize. Some writers concentrated on a particular audience like the Jews, or the Roman Authorities. Others attacked heretical groups. The Scriptures were also translated into various languages. There was also apocryphal fiction like the Acts of Paul and Thekla which were perhaps pro-

duced to compete in the market of light, romantic fiction and to commend Christian way of life.

Besides the professionals, there was the remarkable phenomenon of everyone communicating the Gospel to their neighbours and acquaintances, in house, places where people met, everywhere. Such was the impact of their changed lives that people listened to what they had to say and took them seriously, especially amongst the lower classes or society. amongst slaves.

Several things struck their listeners and gave a cutting edge to their message:

a) The quality of their changed lives: their life matched up to what they said, unlike the pagan propagandists.

b) The quality of their fellowship in which all barriers of class, cast, sex and race were abolished. The atmosphere of brotherly love and mutual aid was revolutionary and unique. All evangelisation was based on this fellowship. The Christians helped each other, especially the less privileged among them – orphans, old people, prisoners and convicts for Christ.

c) They had an infectious joy which overflowed to others and which was the consequence of their fellowship with Christ. This joy was especially apparent during persecutions and even at executions.

d) Their power – very often the presentation of the Gospel was accompanied by healings or exorcisms. Then people would gather round to hear. People of that time knew that demons submitted to Christians, who had the power to drive them out and to deliver all those who were enslaved by them.

However, although the apostles performed many miracles during the course of evangelism, miracles did

not subsequently play a major role in evangelism. Eusebius mentions only very few miracles in his *History of the Church* during this period.

### **Evangelistic Methods**

For the first 150 years of the Church's history there were no church buildings. Preaching in the synagogues was first of all possible until the Jews solidly opposed Christianity. It was in the synagogues that the Christians were at least assured of having an interested audience who would listen to a reasonable exposition of the Good News. This early preaching had 3 important elements:

- 1) The OT leads up to the Messiah.
- 2) It is in Jesus that the prophecies of the OT and the blessing promised to the line of David are fulfilled. The burial and resurrection of Jesus are seen as fulfillments relative to the Messiah and the Suffering Servant.
- 3) It is emphasized that forgiveness is offered on the basis of a the sacrificial death of the Messiah. The importance of making a decision is stressed. Finally those listening are warned of the fatal consequences of rejecting the offer. God's mercy is not to be trifled with. However, it is to be noticed that these early preachers made great effort to identify themselves with their hearers and that they were tactful in their approach.

Then there was open-air preaching where people came together, at markets, on squares etc. At the time these were places where any new ideas were aired. Even the Jews used this method. In this context, the gift of prophecy was often used. Evangelism was also done through giving lectures in public halls, or explaining the Scriptures in private homes or in flats. Such preaching was frequently accompanied by personal testimonies that no one could contest. There were many meetings in ho-

mes, both for those who wanted to know more and those who were already Christians. Access was often gained to homes through a converted slave or a converted woman. It is clear from Paul's letters that houses were the main base for evangelism.

In personal evangelism, Christians often used designs in architecture (such as a fish, a cross, a lamb, an anchor) in order to attract initial interest and use this as a springboard for announcing the Gospel. But such symbols and badges were used with discretion. They did not go plastering Gospel stickers all over people's chariots! Their advertising was discreet. They used symbols to communicate with one another: a peacock represented eternity, a picture of a whale regurgitating Jonah after 3 days represented the resurrection, the Rota wheel was code for A-pasternoster-O. Then there was the kai-ro symbol representing the first two letters of Hristos, and the fish which represented ICHTHUS (Iesous Hristos Theou Huios Soter – Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour). Jesus was not represented in very early Christian art, but when Christianity became legal, he was portrayed in the guise of Apollo, without a beard but complete with divine halo, just like Apollo. Later he was portrayed as Jupiter/Jupiter, the head of the gods, with a beard and grave countenance in Byzantine art. Similarly the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus was a direct copy of the goddess Isis with baby Horus sitting on her lap. The birthday of Horus, the Egyptian sun god was 25<sup>th</sup> December. Prayer was very prominent in evangelism, so that people could be liberated from the grip of Satan as they came under the impact of the Gospel. The zeal and the love of the early Christians was remarkable in view of the fact that their doctrine was often imprecise and heresy abounded.

The missionary expansion can be divided into several stages:

**STAGE ONE: THE EVANGELISATION OF THE JEWS** in Palestine and in the Diaspora. The Book of Acts tells the story. The first to be converted were those who heard Peter's first sermon. Besides Jews from Judaea, Peter's audience included Jews from the Dispersion (2:5-13). Presumably these people went back and led others to Christ. The Book of Acts then goes on to list important breakthroughs: 1. The Samaritans, 2. the Gentiles, 3. The disciples of John. Each of these groups received the Holy Spirit in the same way as the apostles had done: there is a conscious repetition of some of the phenomena of Pentecost thus pointing to a continuity with the mother church in Jerusalem.

The faith was first of all consolidated in Jerusalem where it took root. James ultimately became the bishop of this Church.

After the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip went to the capital of Samaria (Neapolis, now Nablus, previously Shehem) and preached to the Samaritans there, and afterwards to many other towns and villages in Samaria (Acts 8:5,25).

Then the Gospel was preached in the region to the south and west of Jerusalem as far as Caesarea and the coast. The faith spread to Damascus, at which stage the Jewish establishment counter-attacked and sent Saul after the Christians. Acts 9,31 tells us in passing of the preaching of the Gospel in Galilee which was where Gentile territory began. After this the Gospel spread to Antioch,.

**STAGE TWO: THE EVANGELISATION OF THE GENTILES** The first Gentile mission was launched from

Antioch which was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. Before this 'god-fearing gentiles' had been among those who had heard the Gospel on the day of Pentecost. Indeed it was the 'god-fearers' who were to be the first to respond to the Gospel as Paul preached it in Gentile areas. We learn from Acts 2 that god-fearers from the following provinces were present at Pentecost: Parthians (i.e. Persians), people from Media and Elam (ancient provinces of the Persian Empire), Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia (Asia Minor), Pontus (on the Black Sea), Asia (Asia Minor), Phrygia and Pamphylia (ancient provinces of Asia Minor) and part of Libya near to Cyrene (Roman colony), Rome and people from Crete and Arabia. So all these areas must have received some Gospel witness.

It was not long before the question arose in the Early Church as to whether the pagans who were converted to Christ should be forced to conform to Jewish customs and virtually become Jews. The difference of opinion on this question between the conservatives in Jerusalem like James and the universalists like Paul and those of the Diaspora, led to the holding of the Council of Jerusalem in 49 (Acts 15). The outcome of this controversy was in certain respects a compromise, but a compromise that favoured the universalists of which Paul was the spokesman. It was then Paul who championed the mission to the Gentiles and won its acceptance by the rest of the Church. It was Paul who developed the theological defence of the Gentile Mission which is clearly set out in Romans 1-11. He worked very hard to keep Jewish and Gentile Christians united.

Paul undertook further journeys, still using Antioch as a springboard: Asia Minor, Greece, Rome and probably Spain.

Paul refers to other people at work in Asia Minor whose work he was anxious not to reduplicate (possibly that of Peter?). Certain traditions speak of a voyage of Bartholomew (Nathanael Bar-Tolmai) to Armenia, others of a stay of Mark in Egypt (probably operating from Rome), of Andrew reaching the Scythians and also Albania, of Thomas founding a church in India where there was a large Jewish community. Lower Moesia was visited by the apostle Andrew and his disciples shortly before his martyrdom but well before the Dacian wars broke out.

There is nothing improbable about these perhaps rather garbled accounts in view of the fact that Jesus had commanded his disciples to take the Gospel 'to the ends of the earth'. Christian tradition records that Andrew died on an X-shaped cross in Patras (Achaia), Bartholomew (Nathaniel) was flayed alive in Armenia, Jude (Thaddeus) was shot through with arrows in Armenia, Matthew was slain by the sword in Parthia, Philip was hanged on a pillar in Hierapolis in Phrygia, Simon the zealot was crucified in Persia but also is reported to have visited Britain, Thomas was slain with a spear in India and Matthias was stoned and beheaded. All this shows that many of the apostles were engaged in evangelism to the East of the Roman empire, but even they are associated with various places in West and East, testifying to their extraordinary mobility.

It seems that these apostles made it a priority to visit just about every major Jewish community in the Roman Empire and beyond. Most of them were martyred and their body parts preserved as relics that were moved from place to place. As the Parthians and later, the Muslims invaded these areas, their body parts were moved westward, most ending up in Constantinople

where the emperor Constantine put them in his newly built cathedral. Later many were moved further westwards to Rome and western Europe.

A little later, the beginning of the Jewish war probably led to the move of John (together with Mary the mother of Jesus) to Ephesus, and the move of Philip to Phrygia. We are told by Eusebius how this happened. Some time after the murder of James (62) and 66 when the First Revolt broke out, the Church in Jerusalem received a word from the Lord (a prophecy?) instructing them to flee before it was too late. Some Christians went to Transjordan, some to Egypt and some to Asia Minor, while others remained in Judaea. Two things strike us during this period:

1. The extraordinary mobility of the Christians.
2. The fact that many churches were founded by anonymous missionaries.

**STAGE THREE: THE SECOND GENERATION OF MISSIONARIES** As we have seen, Christianity spread very rapidly to Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. But towards the north east the expansion of the Syriac church was met with the frontier of the Roman Empire and a language barrier. The kingdom of the **Osroene** with its capital at Edessa lay outside the empire until 216 and its inhabitants spoke Syriac (western form of aramaic), though educated people spoke Greek as well. During the second century a Christian community was established at Edessa, of which one of the members was an intimate friend of the king, Abgar IX. Bardesanes (Bar-Daisan) led the king to an acceptance of the Christian faith and the province subsequently became the first Christian kingdom. He was the first to mint a coin with the cross on it.



By the beginning of the 2nd century the **Adiabene** was also reached (the upper reaches of the Tigris), of which the capital was Arbela (ancient sacred city of the Assyrians). The main reason for this success seems to have been the presence of large numbers who had previously been converted to Judaism. The Gospel also reached North Africa from Rome and Egypt. This is where the first Latin-speaking churches were founded and also where the first Latin translations of the Scriptures were made.

By 150 Christian communities had been established in Egypt, Spain and perhaps also India. At the same time a Christian community is known to have existed in the valley of the Rhone (in Gaul) founded by Crescens (2 Tim 4,10) with a bishopric at Lyon and a daughter church at Vienne. It would seem from this that it was the Galatians who first brought the Gospel to their Celtic cousins. Alternatively, Crescens may have gone directly to Gaul (Galatia could mean Gaul). Irenaeus who lived at the same time is known to have preached in Celtic as well as Greek, which shows that the evangelisation of the Celts had begun.

By 180 it appears that the Christians were to be found in all provinces of the Roman Empire and in Mesopotamia. It has been calculated that out of a population of 50 million, 10% of them were Christians by the year 180. But it must be said that the distribution of the churches was very uneven. Concentrations of believers were to be found in Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Rome, Antioch, Lyon, Armenia and Ethiopia.

**Armenia** was the second kingdom to become Christian. Gregory Thaumaturgos from Caesarea in Cappadocia brought the Gospel there, and later through the work of Gregory the Illuminator (240-332), the king

Tiridates III (Trdat) was won to the faith, which meant that Christianity became adopted as the State religion.

Legend has it that the apostle Andrew was a missionary to **Georgia** (Gruzja). Be that as it may, king Mirian was converted to Christianity through the ministry of Saint Nino (a woman) in 326. Georgia became a Christian state in the 5th century.

Christianity spread into Persia but there it encountered zoroastrianism and was also suspect because it was linked in the minds of the Persians with Roman civilisation. It remained tied to the Syriac culture which was in a minority (unlike the Graeco-Roman culture in the West with which Christianity was associated). Nevertheless, many merchants in Persia and Mesopotamia, and even among the Turks, were won to it, and through their travels it reached Central Asia.

Although Armenia and Georgia became Christian, there was never any great missionary movement from these countries. Indeed, many Armenians were martyred because, being Christians, they were associated with the Romans. Nevertheless, by 225, twenty bishoprics stretched from the Caspian to Bahrain. By 250 there were 100 bishoprics in Italy.

As far as expansion southwards was concerned, this came from the Egyptian church which spread up the Nile to Nubia and then to Northern **Ethiopia** (the state of Axum). This linked up with an earlier missionary work that had introduced the Ethiopians to the Gospel through Ethiopian trade contacts with Arabia and ultimately Syria. It was a semitic language, Geez, which became the liturgical language of the Ethiopian church. It was thanks to the Syrian church that the Ethiopian church acquired certain Jewish characteristics. Two Christians from Tyre had been wrecked on the Red Sea coast and had later been allowed by the king to preach Christianity to the

Ethiopians. South Yemen (Saba or Sheba) was invaded by Ethiopia in 350 and occupied until 375, during which time the whole area was effectively christianised. When in 523 a Jewish king (Du Nuwas) began to persecute Christians, Ethiopia invaded again and this time the occupation lasted until 628 when South Yemen was conquered by Muhammed. Syrian monophysites spread southwards and eastwards into Arabia where Muhammad was to encounter them later when Islam emerged in 622.

In **France** by 300 several important bishoprics had been established: at Arles, Vaison-la-Romaine, Autun, Rouen, Paris, Bordeaux, Trèves (Trier) and Rheims. Martin of Tours (d. 397) ministered in country areas.

Christianity first came to **England** probably through the Roman soldiers of the Second Legion who had served in Palestine before being posted to Britain. Some of the members of the church in Rome were not only Roman aristocrats (eg. Rufus, a rich senator) but also members of the British royal family (Claudia – her husband and Linus – her brother – were the children of Caractacus, who was kept in Rome as a hostage).

Tradition speaks of Joseph of Arimathea coming there in the first century and founding a Christian centre at Glastonbury, but would seem a garbled version of a tradition recording the transfer of the shroud (not the Holy Grail) from Jerusalem to the fortress (Britio not Britania) of Edessa. According to a Georgian manuscript, Joseph of Arimathea collected Christ's blood on a shroud when he took him down from the cross. This probably accounts for subsequent confusion.

The first churches were probably founded at Glastonbury and at St Pancras (in London). Both towns were connected with the Roman Second Legion which had been stationed there after their spell of duty in Palestine

at the time of Christ. This is probably how Christianity first came to Britain. The earliest martyrs were Alban, Aaron and Julius – possibly all Roman soldiers connected with the Second Legion.

But no solid ecclesiastical structure is recorded there before 250. In 314 at the Council of Arles we read of some English bishops attending: from London, York and Colchester. These Romano-Britons, as part of their defence policy, probably evangelised Scotland and Ireland.

By 370 we must conclude (from the case of Pelagius) that they had evangelised colonies of Irish in Wales and possibly Cornwall. By 400, on the eve of the barbarian invasions, Britain was a christianised Roman province. From 407-9 Christian Britain was cut off from Europe by barbarian invasions. The English at the mercy of the invading Picts and Scots, sent for help to the Saxons. The Saxon invasion had begun when Patrick launched his mission to Ireland in 432. As a result of these invasions, the Christians found themselves isolated from Europe in the North and West of Britain. It was in Wales that there was a blossoming of Christian scholarship and the sending out of missionaries to Ireland and Scotland. This isolation was only overcome when Augustine won the pagans in Eastern England to Christianity.

In the late third century came the first deliberate attempts by Christian missionaries to 'baptise' features of pagan religions and thus overcome them by absorbing them into Christianity. Churches took over from temples, martyrs replaced the old gods in popular devotion, and the festivals of the Christian year took the place of the high days and holy days of paganism. In Armenia the conversion of the royal family was followed by a national acceptance of Christianity. Such superficial methods of

christianisation became common in later centuries throughout Europe, especially at the time of Charlemagne.

## **STAGE FOUR: THE 'CONVERSION' OF THE BARBARIANS**

**Introduction:** The conversion of the barbarians was often undertaken for political as well as for religious reasons. If the barbarians on Rome's borders became Christians, this also meant that they became stable and trustworthy. For instance, Charlemagne could never hope to hold the Rhine (his western boundary) until the Frisians at the lower end of it and across it were tamed and christianised.

At first a few individual converts were won by either merchants, captives or monks. These were small scattered minorities and usually persecuted. Then after a longer or shorter period, the entire nation would come into the church, much as they did in Constantine's day. Mass movements were led by the rulers. Conversion was often a matter of the group doing what they were told to do, because religion was often thought of as a tribal or national affair – the individual did not have the right to reject it. To depart from the cult of one's group was to be guilty of disloyalty. Often baptism was a sign of submission to a foreign conqueror (like Charlemagne): a people or tribe automatically adopted the religion of its conqueror. Thus the individual in the average tribe who had to make such a decision had little idea of what he was doing. Monks taught them more of Christianity but it took years to sink in. Their Christianity tended to be conditioned by monasticism. There was a double standard:

1. The standard of the ordinary people, (christianised paganism), who were just required to recite the right

prayers and creeds and to come to church on the right days (in other words to perform a ritual, thereby substituting a pagan ritual for another)

2. The serious Christians (monks and clergy). The highest clergy were appointed by the local prince, much more as administrators than as clerics.

3. The church was often willing to seriously compromise with paganism, in order to gain the allegiance of pagan tribes. In this connection, pope Gregory I's directive to abbot Mellitus on his departure to preach in Britain in 601 is most revealing: he advises that the temples should not be destroyed: 'The idols should be broken up, but the temples should be sprinkled with holy water, altars set up, and relics enclosed. The practice of sacrificing many oxen to devils should be replaced by a Christian celebration such as the Festival of the Holy Martyrs. They are no longer to sacrifice beasts to the devil, but may kill them for food to the praise of God. In one church near Vienna, hen coops are still to be seen behind the altar. Chickens were kept there as recently as the end of the 19th century to be sacrificed to Saint Vitus in order to produce healing among the people!

Many miracles are recorded as happening during the ministries of these pioneer missionaries. Christianity had to be seen to be more powerful than paganism (i.e. occultism). As Bede puts it: "The church was nourished with miracles in order that she might grow firm in the faith. When we plant bushes, we water them until they stand firm, but once they have taken root, the watering ceases." After the conversion of tribes, paganism was never far from the surface, especially during times of plague which could be occasions for apostasy or the revival of magic. For this reason, many of these pioneer missionaries had to go out on preaching tours again.

In France where Roman culture broke up under the onslaught of the barbarians, the Gallo-Roman population looked to the Church for protection. For the ordinary 'believer', Christianity seems to have been largely a matter of outward observance and something of the aspect of magic, more powerful than that of the older faiths but not different in kind. It was also a way to escape the pains of hell and attain the blessings of heaven.

**Ulfila and the mission to the Goths:** The first person to be associated with any sort of mission to the barbarians was **Ulfila** (311-383). He was amongst certain Cappadocian Christians kidnapped by the Goths during one of their raids. Later, however, he returned as the Gothic ambassador to the court of Constantius. In 341 he was consecrated bishop of the Goths north of the Danube. He then launched his mission to the Visigoths, chiefly in the area now occupied by Romania. He translated the Bible into Gothic, but he was an Arian.

During the first Gothic persecution of Christians in 348, Ulfilas was expelled to Moesia where he continued to preach Greek, Latin, and Gothic languages. During the second persecution between 369 and 372, many believers were martyred, including Sabbas the Goth. The remains of twenty-six Gothic martyrs were transferred to the Roman Empire after the invasion of the Huns in 376

In about 381 there was a Gothic church (consisting of Gothic soldiers serving in the Roman army) in Constantinople where John Chrysostom preached. He sent missionaries to the Goths in the Crimea and to the north of the Black Sea. These missionaries penetrated the Caucases and even established churches among the Huns. The Goths, in their turn, became 'missionaries' to other barbarian tribes. As these tribes established

themselves in the Roman Empire, they automatically adopted Christianity: these were the Visigoths, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruls and Ostrogoths. But it was only in the 6th century that these Arian Christians accepted the Catholic faith. This came about through the conversion of Clovis (in 506), king of the Franks, who accepted Christianity under the influence of his Christian wife Clothilda. This is the first time that a barbarian tribe accepted Catholic Christianity. They were followed by the Visigoths in Spain.

But the main missionary movement among the barbarians after that of Ulfila was launched by **Celtic monks** first from Ireland and then from England. These operated in teams of 13 missionaries. In the 7th cent. the chief centre of missionary activity was Ireland, and in the 8th century it was England. Because Ireland was bypassed by barbarian invasions, it became a base for evangelising the barbarians in Europe.

The first preacher in Scotland appears to have been **Ninian** (360-432) among the southern Picts. The Picts were the original inhabitants of Scotland (more properly: Pict-land!) before the Scots emigrated there from Ireland in the 5th century. Ninian's master was Martin of Tours who died in 397. He started this ministry shortly after the Romans had withdrawn and had left matters in the hands of several prominent Romano-British families.

The main missionary expansion after 500 was carried out by the monks of the Western Church acting under the bishop of Rome. This was because in the West, Rome had no serious rivals – they were all dwindling minority groups: Donatists, Marcionites, Montanists and Gnostics. It also had the advantage of coming in the wake of the Roman Empire and of being the religion of the Roman emperor. In the East, the Orthodox church had to face Islam and zoroastrianism, and the State restricted any



missionary initiatives (as church and state went together). In the West the barbarians had no sophisticated system to present in opposition to Christianity, but in the East, they had to face sophisticated religions and their association with Rome was a disadvantage. They had no local State to support them, but depended on their home base. Nestorians were the only ones with any sort of missionary urge, but they eventually lost most of their gains to Islam and Buddhism.

The next great preacher was **Columba** of Donegal. He established himself on the island of Iona in 583 which became a centre of learning and evangelisation. In 633 the king of Northumbria asked for preachers. The second preacher, **Aidan**, met with success and established a monastery on Holy Island, just off the Northumbrian coast, which he called Lindisfarne.

**Columbanus** (550-615) from Bangor in Northern Ireland evangelised the East of France (the Western half having been covered by Martin of Tours and the northern part by St. Amand) where he founded the monastery of Luxeuil. He also brought the Gospel to the region of Lake Constance where one of his companions, Gall, became the apostle to Eastern Switzerland. From Luxeuil Valéry, Eustace and Omer went out to North West Gaul.

**The English monks** continued this missionary activity. **Wilfrid** (d. 709) preached in Frisia and also evangelised the Saxons of Sussex. In 597 the Jutes and Anglo-Saxons had been evangelised by Augustine from Rome (sent by pope Gregory). Augustine tried to incorporate the Celtic church within the Roman orbit. This led to clashes, but the question was eventually resolved at the Synod of Whitby in 664. The issue was whether the Celtic church should submit to the Roman Church. Unfortunately, the casting vote was held by gullible king Oswy of Northumberland who was only a recent

convert from paganism. He maintained that if Peter has the keys of heaven, as the Romans claimed, he would not like to be locked out. It was on this basis that he cast the decisive vote. Bishop Coleman and his celtic entourage left in disgust and went back to Ireland. Up till that time Rome regarded the Celtic Church as schismatic, but not heretical.

Thanks to the cooperation between the papacy and the Frankish kings, English missionaries were used by both to extend their influence and pacify their enemies.

**Willibrord** (658-739) became the apostle of Holland and Belgium by evangelising the Frisians. He founded four monasteries there: Utrecht, Antwerp, Echternach and Susteren. **Boniface** (680-754) whose real name was Wynfrith of Crediton, became the apostle to the Germans: Friesians, Hessians and Thuringians. After establishing the bishoprics of Freising, Passau, Regensburg and Salzburg, in 744 he founded the monastery of Fulda. To this he added the bishoprics of Eichstätt and Würzburg, before going on to preach the Gospel to the Saxons of East Germany. He died as a martyr preaching to the Frisians and is buried at Fulda.

**OTHER MISSIONS:** In the 7th century, **Nestorian missionaries** entered Central Asia, preaching to the Turkmen and went further into China in 635 at the time of the T'ang dynasty (618-907).

In Yugoslavia the conversion of many of the Croats and Serbs was achieved by **Italian missionaries**. At the port of Spolato (Split) a Latin see was established.

In the East and the South, orthodox Christianity was on the retreat: in 406 the Vandals invaded Spain and in 429 they poured into North Africa. In 632 Muhammad died and in 636 the Arabs took Palestine. In 642 they

conquered North Africa and Egypt. In 709 they conquered Spain, but in 732 their advance northwards was checked at the battle of Poitiers by Charles Martel. His son, Pépin le Bref, founded the Carolingian dynasty in 751.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC ERA**

After the fall of Jerusalem, it seems that the centre of influence in Christianity moved to the coastal cities of Asia Minor where the apostle John had his ministry. In this area Papias was a church elder at Hierapolis. By the end of the first century, Christians were scattered in little groups, probably meeting in homes and drawn mainly from the lower social strata. They had their Scriptures, lived under threat of persecution breaking out and had a vital message to pass on to a seedy and corrupt society. Their main problems were, besides persecution, internal strife and heresy.

**APOSTOLIC FATHERS** These are the earliest Christian writers outside of the NT, belonging to what is called the sub-apostolic age. Their writings form a bridge between the NT and the Apologists who wrote later on in the 2nd cent (the first of whom was Justin Martyr). Here is a list of them: Clement I, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp (account of his martyrdom) and the Didache. The Apologists were Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

After the apostles had died, we find ourselves in the sub- apostolic age. Literature of this period is represented by:

a) **The Didache** which possibly reflects a judaeo-christian community in Syria (i.e. the Syriac Church). It

contains the Two Ways, details regarding church order and a closing section about the imminent end – the appearance of deceivers, false prophets and a fiery trial centering around a pseudo-Messiah. All these were expected before the end.

b) **The writings of Ignatius of Antioch**. He wrote seven letters on his way to Rome to be thrown to the lions. He had been the leader of the church at Antioch. The aims of his letters were to combat dissention and heresy. He is credited with the invention of the monarchical episcopate (the arrangement of one bishop to rule each congregation – what we today would call a pastor). These were men chosen from the congregation by election. They remained in one place for life. They were unpaid and their work was usually limited to looking after one small community. There they would preside at worship each Sunday. The reasons why Ignatius was in favour of this arrangement were practical:

i) to avoid battles for leadership (as had been the case in Corinth where the church had even sacked all their elders and replaced them by younger ones),

ii) to avoid small cliques splitting off from the main congregation. He was in favour of making the eucharist the focus of worship (presided over by the bishop) and also used it as a proof against Docetism (it was the real body and the real blood of Christ).

So already we can see that the Early Church was going off the rails. In his letter, Ignatius also asked Polycarp, pastor of the church at Smyrna, to appoint a new leader for the church at Antioch. Polycarp had been a disciple of John.

The early second century saw the spread of several non-canonical books:-

**2 Clement** reminds his audience of what God has done for them, and shows what sort of conduct is therefore suitable. He reminds them of the coming judgement as a deterrent against sin. He delivers a sharp rebuke towards those Christians who lives hardly differ from those of their non-Christian neighbours.

**The Epistle of Barnabas** resembles the Didache in that the author repeats the Two Ways, but the main theme is a spiritualisation of the Mosaic law. He maintains that the Jews were wrong to take the Law literally: it had a spiritual meaning that pointed to Jesus. He therefore sets out to allegorise everything, even to extent of saying that the mosaic food laws mean the prohibition of various vices.

**The Shepherd of Hermas** is a series of parables and visions with the underlying purpose of tackling the problem of Christian living. The author is chiefly concerned with post-baptismal sin. According to a revelation he claims to have received, there is only one further chance offered, after public confession and penance.

This all comes from a faulty interpretation of Hebrews 6 and 10. Hermas' view of baptism arose out of the belief that sins committed before baptism were done in ignorance. Therefore they could be forgiven. After baptism, the believer himself had to keep his salvation by obedience to God's law. Here we have one of the first statements of the Catholic doctrine of salvation by faith (as manifested in baptism) and works.

The reason for the remarkable influence of Hermas' book seems to have been because he was the brother of Pius, who was the bishop of Rome at that time.

In the works of the apostolic fathers, we thus see several disquieting tendencies:

1. An unhealthy desire for martyrdom (Ignatius).
2. A belief in transubstantiation (Ignatius)
3. Salvation by baptism and works (Hermas).
4. Excessive allegorisation (Barnabas).
5. An unhealthy legalism (Didache).

In Smyrna there was a young man called Leucius who was reprimanded for writing "romances" such as the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter, the Acts of John.

In Syriac-speaking churches, the same problem occurred where the Acts of Judas Thomas started to circulate, claiming that Thomas had visited India. What is probably nearer the truth is that Thomas brought Christianity to parts of the Syriac Church and then was claimed as their patron saint.

**THE APOLOGISTS:** After this, the apologists had to face the pagans, but they differed as to their methods.

(a) **The Latin apologists** refused to have anything to do with philosophy or any sort of compromise with pagan ways of thought. These were: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius in N. Africa, Tatian (pupil of Justin) in the Osrhoene, and Quadratus and Aristides at Athens. As far as they were concerned, it was a question of the authority of the Bible over against philosophy (gnostic, platonic or aristotelian). They made not attempt to accommodate themselves to the other side – it is an attitude of take it or leave it.

(b) **The Greek apologists** tended to compromise with philosophy, to present philosophical arguments (there is some truth in what you say but....). In attempting a

synthesis of classical learning and Christian theology, two means were used:

1. Allegory, 2. the Logos (the link between God and a material creation). They sought to establish common ground with their hearers by appealing to them against crass paganism and seeking to establish a parallel between Christianity and sophisticated paganism (philosophy). Their attitude was that philosophy had prepared the nations to receive the Gospel. They were always very respectful of their protagonists, while pointing out the limits of the latter's position. As far as ethics were concerned, they were ready to side with the Stoics or platonists in condemning immorality. They were: Justin (who originally came from Ephesus), Clement and Origen from Alexandria. Clement usually addressed his defence of Christianity to wealthy people. Origen refuted the pagan propagandist Celsus paragraph by paragraph. However, both emphasized the importance of prophecies and analogy and typology. These apologies were first of all defences of the Christian religion and then appeals to the people. The Roman State for its part also used professional philosophers to attack christianity and to back up any new official offensive to revive paganism in the Empire. The two most famous names in this connection are: Celsus at the time of Marcus Aurelius, and Porphyry at the time of Decius.

The motives of the Greek apologists were commendable but the result was disastrous. They set out to explain the Gospel to the pagans in terms which they could understand – that is, in terms of the philosophies with which they were familiar, but in so doing they let into Christianity all sorts of ideas that were foreign to it: autonomy of thought, dualist opposition of form and

matter, dualist conception of man (consisting of immaterial soul and material body), hierarchy of beings, etc etc.

## COUNTERATTACKS

### 1) PERSECUTIONS

The persecutions took place in three main stages:

#### The First stage: 30-64 Persecutions by the Jews

Initially the Jews and Romans thought of Christianity as a Jewish sect. The Jewish establishment concentrated their attacks on the Jewish Christians of the Diaspora, whom they perceived to be the ringleaders of this pernicious heresy. It is significant that they initially left the apostles alone, but killed Stephen and later other Diaspora Jews residing in Palestine, who were scattered to the four winds. By the time we come to events described in Acts 11,1, it appears that all Christian Diaspora Jews had left Israel altogether.

However, it is a matter of time before feeling turns against them also, especially when pressure is put on them to join the Jewish revolt. The Acts of the Apostles records a progressive hardening of the Jewish nation as a whole against the Gospel. Paul in particular is continually harassed by agents from Jerusalem who are trying to ruin his work.

So much so that Paul can say in 1 Thess 2,14-16: "It is they (the Jews) who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, who persecuted us, who are not pleasing to God, and who are enemies of all men. They prevent us from speaking to the pagans so that they might be saved. In this way they have completed the full total of the sins



that they have always committed. And now God's anger has at last come down on them.'

## RESULTS

34 Stephen is martyred.

44 James the brother of John is killed (cf. Acts 12:1...Herod, seeing that this pleased the Jews...)

50 There are riots following the preaching of the Gospel among the Jewish community in Rome (referred to in Acts 18:2 and by Suetonius. The result was that all the Jews were expelled (including Aquila and Priscilla).

51 I Thessalonians was written (hence Paul's reference to God's wrath on the Jews).

62 James the brother of Jesus, and bishop of the church in Jerusalem, is stoned in that city.

66-73 The Jewish Revolt, during which time there is pressure exerted upon the Christians to combat the Romans. Christian Jews leave Jerusalem.

The change of tone in the last chapters of I Peter perhaps indicates that the letter was being written at the time when hostility towards Christianity was being made official policy. I Peter 4:16 refers to the role of the Jews as informers and slanderers of Christians. All this indicates that persecution did not start suddenly at the time of the the Great Fire of Rome, but that it had been building up gradually previous to this, no doubt as Jews sought to make life difficult for Christians by drawing the attention of the Roman authorities to the fact that Christianity was not just a Jewish sect.

64 The Great Fire of Rome. Nero had a mistress who was a Jewish proselyte. According to one account it was she who encouraged Nero to blame the Christians for it.

It seems that an edict was made whereby Christians were henceforth classified as being "enemies of the State": it was henceforth an illegal organisation and no longer to be considered as a Jewish sect. Suetonius in his "Life of Nero" ch. 16 mentions that the persecution of Christians was found among various miscellaneous edicts.

At around this time, many Christians of Jewish origin were tempted (especially in Rome) to go back to the safety of Judaism (Hebr. 10:32-39).

85 There is a formal anathema against Christians included in the synagogue liturgy: "May the Nazarenes (i.e. Christians) and heretics be instantly destroyed and blotted out of the Book of Life". In the light of this, a passage in Revelation acquires new meaning (2:9,3:5): "I know the slanderous things said against you by those who say they are Jews but are not, but a synagogue of Satan...Those who win the victory (those who persevere to the end – 2:26) will be clothed in white garments and I will NOT remove their names from the Book of Life. In the presence of my Father and of His angels, I will declare openly that they belong to me."

133-135 During the Second Jewish Revolt under Bar-Kochba, Christians in Judea are harried as traitors because they refused to recognise him as the Messiah or to take up arms against the Romans.

**The Second Stage:** 64-250 Sporadic persecutions by the Roman authorities

The turning point in the fate of the Christians come in July 64 (Great Fire of Rome). Why this change in attitude?

a) Christians no longer considered to be members of a Jewish sect.

b) Nero accuses them of having started the Great Fire of Rome and thus creates a precedent in Roman Law (a Christian is ipso facto an anarchist out to destroy the Roman empire and its civilisation). They are thus guilty of high treason and deserving of death. If they are successfully denounced to the police, they can be put to death. A small persecution takes place, limited to Rome and its immediate environs.

From now on:

a) The legal precedent set by Nero is in force. To suffer "for the name" means to suffer just because one is a Christian.

b) Christians are now at the mercy of informers (e.g. their neighbours). All they have to do is to complain to the authorities and the precedent is invoked.

c) However, persecutions depend on the initiative of the local governor, who could start a round-up of Christians and their execution whenever he wanted to. Christians were often executed for reasons of expediency: simply to calm the local populace down. But as yet there is no systematic persecution by the State on an imperial scale. In fact the emperors Hadrian and Trajan discouraged this. During the period from 64-250, Christians were not so much considered as a national danger as people that were annoying and stubborn. However, there was still the precedent that had been set by Nero that had to be respected whenever there was a successful informing of the police.

d) People were suspicious of Christians. The man in the street considered them to be odd. They were suspected of practising cannibalism (allusion to the Eucharist) and immorality (they called each other brother and sister before they had even been introduced). The authorities for their part could not stand Christians because

i) They were not like other citizens: they claimed to have a higher allegiance to that of the State. They were liable to upset public order,

ii) they were self-righteous people that claimed to know better than everyone else, iii) they refused to submit to the cult of Caesar (to pay their respects), which was not only unreasonable but treasonable. They were a secret society and thus suspect,

iv) they were atheists because they refused to recognise the Roman gods. Because they were atheists, they were guilty of offending the gods of the empire and so liable to be the cause of disasters (famine, plagues and military defeats).

## RESULTS

**64 Nero**, accused of starting the fire of Rome, attempts to shift the blame elsewhere. The accusation seemed to be confirmed by the fact that two out of the four districts of Rome which survived the fire intact, contained large Jewish and Christian populations.

64 Peter is martyred.

65 or 68 Paul is martyred (after having been previously acquitted in 61-63). This latter verdict is due to a different situation and reflected in I Peter 4:7,12,17 and II Tim 4: 6-20.

81 Domitian comes to power (81-96) and takes his divine titles very seriously. This situation is reflected in

Revelation where Domitian is depicted as a type of the Beast. John is exiled to the Isle of Patmos. John was subject to a lenient form of banishment called *relegatio in insulam* which involved loss of neither property nor rights. It could be pronounced by provincial governor, such as the one in Ephesus. Tertullian tells us that *Ioannes...in insulam relegatur*.

There had been sporadic persecutions, especially of Church leaders (cf. Revelation 2:13).

Early Christians believed that you had to be called to martyrdom and that those who were not and yet offered themselves, ran the risk of denying Christ.

In the year 96 Nerva became emperor. One of the first things that he did was to order the release of John from Patmos.

By the time of the emperor Domitian, Christianity was no longer confined to the lower strata of the Roman population, as it had been in Nero's time, a single generation before. The earliest probable reference to a Roman aristocrat becoming a Christian is in 57 (the year in which Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans) when Pomponia Graecina, wife of the conqueror of Britain, was charged with having embraced a 'foreign superstition'. She was acquitted. Christianity had survived the initial attempts to suppress it, and was beginning to infiltrate into the most noble families, even into the imperial family itself. Some of the consuls condemned for 'judaism and atheism', or some of the nobles who owned burial grounds containing catacombs used by Christians, were quite clearly Christians.

156 Polycarp is martyred.

161-180 A new wave of persecutions breaks out under Marcus Aurelius.

165 Justin is martyred during this time.

The year 166 was a year of calamities when havoc was wrought by plague, flood, famine and barbarian invasion from beyond the Danube frontier. Many people blamed the Christians for this.

177 Massacre of Lyon. Ignatius is martyred at Antioch and Telesphorus at Rome. The anti-christian propagandist Celsus is employed against the Christians.

191-211 Another wave of persecutions breaks out under Septimus Severus.

In 202 Septimus Severus issued a decree forbidding people to become Jews or Christians. He introduced syncretism under the worship of the Sol Invictus and imposed the death penalty on those who were either new converts or teachers. Origen's father was killed in Alexandria.

There were barbarian forces on two widely separated frontiers – the Goths on the north and the Persians on the east, under the new and aggressive dynasty of the Sassanids. Christians in the army were suspected of disloyalty. It was also suspected that Christians in the eastern provinces favoured the Persians. The emperor Decius adopted as a measure of state security the policy of one empire one religion. Since Christianity obviously stood in the way of the success of this policy, Christianity must be abolished.

202 Martyrdoms in North Africa and Egypt.

208 Irenaeus martyred.

**The Third stage:** 250-313 Systematic and wide-scale persecutions

For the first time, the attitude of the emperor is determinative.

These are some of the factors which led to this empire-wide persecution:

a) In 248 the first invasions of the Goths (barbarians) took place and public opinion was turning against the Christians.

b) From 232-305 Porphyry is active as an anti-christian propagandist.

250 Edict of persecution under Decius which results in a systematic persecution. Everyone had to sign a certificate (*libellus*) stating that he had offered a sacrifice to the Roman gods in the presence of the special commissioners. Bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome are martyred. This persecution saw the emergence of a new category of martyr, the confessor. A confessor was one who had been tortured (but not killed) and had refused to deny the faith. This was because Decius was not so interested in producing martyrs as getting Christians to deny their faith.

In 1971 the remains of four martyrs who perished in the Decian persecution in Romania (then lower Sythia) were unearthed whose names were Attalos, Kamasis, Filippus și Zoticos.

In 258 a further edict codified the penalties for Christianity. The clergy were to suffer the death penalty; senators and knights were to be degraded from their rank; ladies of rank were to be punished by confiscation of goods and exile; employees of the imperial household were to be sent to forced labour camps on the imperial estates.

Maximin II, successor to Galerius, promoted another form of anti-Christian activity. In schools all the children had to read a book called *The Acts of Pilate* which was a

propaganda booklet written against Christianity, but full of historical inaccuracies.

In the beginning, pagans suspected that Christians were guilty of all sorts of dark deeds and willingly denounced them to the authorities. Later, however, when they discovered that Christians were nice people, they tended to protect their Christian neighbours against persecution.

258 Edict of persecution under Valerian: Meetings are forbidden. Bishops and other Christian leaders are executed.

The result of the Decian persecution is a schism between the Christians in Rome and Carthage following many cases of apostasy and compromise with the Roman authorities. In Carthage, Christians who had been in prison oppose Cyprian their bishop, who had gone into hiding and elect a rival bishop. Cyprian's view of the church demanded that the penitents be readmitted. According to the donatists, no one had the right to forgive apostasy – it was the sin against the Holy Spirit. The donatists promoted their "confessors" (those who had suffered but not been martyred) as those whose merits could be transferred to needy sinners. Cyprian rejected the idea, but it later re-appeared in the RC doctrine of the treasury of merits and the practice of indulgencies. In these also, the church transferred the merits of the unusually spiritual (saints) to needy sinners.

In Rome, Novatian and those who had been put in prison with him because of their faith oppose Cornelius whom they consider as a traitor. According to them, no one had the right to forgive sins of murder, adultery and apostasy.



260-262 Edict of Toleration of Galienus. The Church is allowed to come out into the open and build churches.

284 Reorganisation of the Roman Empire introduced by **Diocletian** in order to counter the effects of collapse and anarchy caused by the barbarian invasions. There were to be 4 emperors, two in each half of the empire: in the West were Maximin and Constantius (father of Constantine) and in the East, Diocletian and Galerius. It was agreed that after 20 years, the elder would abdicate in favour of the younger.

A number of events led up to the persecution that broke out in 303. At first Diocletian was a moderate with little interest in persecuting Christians, but he was influenced by Galerius to reverse his policy. When the empire prospered the Christians were reluctantly tolerated, but when a crisis came, they were blamed for it as they refused to worship the Roman gods, who were now angry. So the Christians were persecuted. In the face of barbarian invasions, the question of loyalty in the army became acute and Christian soldiers were threatened. Diocletian insisted that all Christians be expelled from the army, then from positions of responsibility in the administration. In order to try and keep the best, some were pressurised into denying their faith but when they resisted, they were executed. In one incident in 303 the sacrifices and auguries went wrong before a battle because certain Christians present had crossed themselves. There was also the pernicious influence of Hierocles on the emperor. He was governor of Bythinia and a neo-platonist and hostile to the Gospel.

303 Diocletian issues altogether four edicts of persecution, so it was a much longer persecution (10

years) than the one under Decius. The cathedral in Nicomedia (the eastern imperial capital) is dismantled and other churches are destroyed. Bibles and religious books are confiscated. No Christian meetings are allowed.

304 All the citizens of the empire are ordered to sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor or face death. This order only applied to the East where most of the believers were. In the West, Constantius (the father of Constantine) only destroyed a few churches in Spain, England and Gaul. In the Romanian port of Constanța (then called Tomis) bishop Ephrem was killed. He was followed by a large number of martyrs.

305 Constantine is proclaimed emperor at York (in England). He had a half-sister called Anastasia (*anastasis* = resurrection) who was probably a Christian.

307 Diocletian retires to Split but those who took over from him in the East (Galerius and Maximin Daia) continue the blood-bath for Christians.

311 Galerius on his deathbed conceded to the Christians an edict of toleration and the right to meet, and admitted that he had failed to convince the Christians to return to the gods of their fathers. In return for this "favour" he asked them to pray for him and for the defense of the empire.

After the death of Galerius, there was a reshuffle among the emperors and a new situation emerged: Maximin and Licinius ruled in the East while Constantine controlled most of the West except Italy which was under Maxentius, a rival emperor.

311-12 there are civil wars in the empire from which Licinius emerges victorious in the East, and Constantine in the West.

313 Both Licinius and Constantine agree on a policy of freedom of religion for both pagans and Christians (Edict of Milan). However, paganism still remained the religion of the majority of Roman citizens. Later, however, Licinius started to persecute Christians in the East, probably because he suspected them of loyalty to his rival, Constantine. Constantine invaded the east and defeated Licinius, whom he afterwards had executed.

### **Controversy between the Donatists and the Catholics (orthodox christians).**

The result of the last persecution was once again a schism among the Christians, especially those in Egypt and at Cathage (Tunisia). The divisive questions was: How far can one go with the authorities? At what point does treason or apostasy begin? In the East they said: 'only if a person offered a sacrifice, but not for just handing over to the authorities religious books or church plate.' In the West, opinions were divided, especially at Carthage. Should the bishop Caecilian be deprived of his office because he had gone underground, in order to escape the persecution? According to the followers of Donatus, Caecilian, by running away during the persecution had lost the gift of the Spirit and so was no longer able to impart the gifts of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. This controversy went on for centuries and it is referred to as the Donatist movement.

**DONATISM** Amongst the Punic-speaking inhabitants of the little villages, there was widespread devotion to their own 'church of the martyrs' and they fanatically

opposed the 'Catholic church' of the Latin-speaking city dwellers. The prophet of this rural resistance church was Donatus.

Their first test came when Constantine wanted to restore property that had been confiscated to the church, meaning Caecilian's church. The Donatists protested that they, and not Caecilian, were the true church and so the rightful claimants to the property. Constantine ordered an enquiry to be made, but in the end the Donatists made such a nuisance of themselves that the emperor banned them and exiled Donatus..

Donatus took charge of the anti-Caecilian party in the church at Carthage after the death of the rival bishop Majorinus. He was a strong personality and welded the anti-Caecilian movement into a schismatic church which bore his name. He claimed that his movement was the only true Church. His was the church of the martyrs whereas the others were collaborators. Donatists rebaptised any who joined them from the official church. In 347 he resisted attempts to reintegrate his movement into the mainstream of the universal church and continued to organise the cause from exile until his death in 355.

The importance of the controversy was that it raised the question: which was the true Church? Was it a group of holy people who qualified for the title by their holy lives, or was it the Catholic Church regardless of how it behaved? Should the Church be dominated by the State or should it be totally separate?

Another result of the persecutions was the evolution of church discipline: out of the problem of lapsed Christians in time of persecution the entire penitential system of the Middle Ages evolved.

In the 6th century the emperor Justinian reconquered N.Africa from the Vandals who had invaded the country in 429.

7th century both Donatists and Catholics were swept away in the Islamic invasion. The Catholics did persist in the Mahreb until the 12th century, but the Donatists disappeared well before this.

In Egypt the question turned around the cessation of church meetings. The bishops, Peter of Alexandria, had fled the country at the time of the persecution. When the metropolitan of the Thebaid turned up afterwards he was scandalised to find that there are no church meetings. Therefore he consecrated two men to carry on the pastoral oversight of the church, of which one, Arius, was to be a future heretic (a classic case of laying hands on someone hastily).

## **COUNTERATTACKS II**

### **HERESIES**

A) **GNOSTICISM** The expression "gnosticism" or "gnosis" was used in two ways in the 1st century.

i) It refers to a philosophy and religious cosmology originating in the eastern world (i.e. hinduism), which existed before Christianity and independently of it. The ideas associated with this system came to the West via platonism. In fact gnosticism can be seen as an extreme form of platonism. Added to this were hellenised zoroastrianism and apostate judaism. Gnosticism was nothing less than pagan syncretism, mixed with magic and astrology (very like the theosophy of our day).

ii) The second sense in which it was used was to refer to theosophical adaptations of Christianity propagated by a dozen or more rival sects which broke with the early church between 80 and 150. Paul and other apostles had to combat these ideas in the first churches, because gnosticism (which comes essentially from hindu philosophy) was at complete variance to Christian thought: its conception of salvation was radically different: to escape from the body and return to a state of non-creation, no reference to reconciliation to God, to be resurrected and live in a renewed (created) universe with Him.

There are several streams to gnosticism:

a. Zoroastrianism (the Babylonian religion) saw the world as a great cosmic battery: God was the positive pole and the devil was the negative pole, with everything else stretched in between. From this came the concept of dualism.

b. Eastern mysticism (essentially hinduism)

c. Judaism: legalistic element

d. Greek mystery religion: The 2<sup>nd</sup> century saw the appearance of mystery religions, each offering its devotees eternal life. The priests of these religions functioned as both intermediaries and pastors. Each of these religions had a central initiation rite, referred to as a *mysterion*.

All of these ideas filtered down into the Church: anything made of matter is bad; a good God could not have made a bad world; Therefore it was made by the demiurge. The body is evil but the pure spirit of man is good – break down the body and it will release the pure spirit, because that is where man's only hope and destiny lies. Christianity was thought to be too simple and too naive – it needs to have added to it a more philosophical content.

Gnostics believed the following:

a) Creation: The Supreme Being generated (not created) a series of spirit beings, but subsequently one of these (the demiurge = craftsman or gnostic equivalent of the Logos), far removed from the Supreme Being, fell into error and created the material world. Creation was thus the result of sinful independence (an attempt to break away from the spiritual oneness of the universe). The serpent was seen by many gnostics as a symbol of opposition to the evil god of creation. So the devil is seen as essentially good: he is working to reverse the work of the demiurge and offers man salvation in the form of a return to their previous disembodied, spiritual state.

b) Man: although at present imprisoned in a body, has a spark of deity in him. The aim of salvation is to release this spark so that it can be reunited with its origin (God). Men were divided into 3 categories: *pneumatikoi* (spiritual men), *psychikoi* (psychic men), and *sarkikoi* (carnal men). The first group were predestined to salvation (i.e. to escape re-incarnation); the second group might or might not be saved, but the third group were predestined to damnation.

c) Salvation: The world was in the grip of evil powers that inhabited the 7 planets (the *Demiurge* and his accomplices, the *Archons*). After death the soul had to undertake a dangerous voyage through the 7 planets back to the heavenly home. But this route was guarded by these powers and so people had to learn to correct magic passwords to outwit them. If you failed, you were turned back and had to be reincarnated again.

The gnostic Gospel was that you could be liberated from your body in this life (by a series of techniques like yoga) and in the life to come avoid reincarnation by being reabsorbed in the Great World Spirit. Gnostics believed

that they could have a mystical experience in this world, a direct knowing of the Supreme God. As they believed they had already gained access to the world where God is, both the resurrection and the Second Coming had lost their point. Gnosis (knowledge) was essentially the knowledge of one's origin and destiny and of the passwords.

d) Jesus: Because a good God is above this bad world, between them there are a host of intermediary beings, who are called *aeons*. There were reckoned to be 365 such aeons (spirit beings). Wisdom (Jesus) is probably the very top *aeon* – not God, but the one very next to God. He is divine but he is not God. As matter was foreign to the supreme God, any idea of incarnation was out the question. Hence docetism: the divine Spirit came down upon Jesus at his baptism but left him on the cross. True incarnation did not take place: the Divine Christ only seemed (*doceo*) to be an incarnate man, but this was a optical allusion. What was there was merely a man with a Divine Spirit resting upon him. For some, Jesus was only the Redeemer of this age sent to deliver the imprisoned spirits). He was seen as one of a series of messengers sent by God in this particular age (of the Fish) to remind us of our heavenly origin, and to give us the secret knowledge without which we cannot return to the spiritual mansions.

e) They had a tendency to depreciate the natural order (creation) as well as the Old Testament. Creation is seen to be the consequence of the sinful independence of one of the aeons (the demiurge). They opposed the God of the OT and the God of the NT. Hence the doctrine of Marcion, the heretic of the 2nd century.

When people from a gnostic background came into the Church, they tended to interpret Christian teaching in



gnostic terms. In this way, heresies arose. We can see examples of this in the New Testament itself. Such people were dualists who believed that the spirit was everything and the body (and soul) not important, or even evil. This attitude manifested itself in one of two possible ways:

a) Immorality. What a person does with his body is not important because the body (and soul) is evil. As it is the spirit that counts and as we are above the law, everything is allowed.

b) Asceticism. As the body is evil, we must do our best to escape from it and deny it.

1) At Corinth, for example, there was a spiritual aristocracy that thought itself superior even to the apostle Paul. They claimed to have acquired a wisdom and knowledge that was more profound than the others. They claimed to have had deeper mystical experiences than those which their brothers in the faith had had, and deeper even than those which the apostle Paul had had.

They thought they were already perfect, that they had already "arrived" spiritually, and they considered other Christians as inferior beings who had not reached the spiritual heights that they had reached.

They were charismatics who were above the law. They believed that the possession of certain gifts dispensed them from following the way of the Cross (suffering, humiliation), from submitting to those whom the Lord had placed at the head of the church (the elders), from living a holy life and loving the other brothers and sisters who did not have such spectacular gifts as they themselves. They considered the other brothers as "carnal" Christians (*psychikoi* – second class), and yet Paul calls them carnal (unspiritual because of their conduct – they had certain gifts but they lacked the fruit). According to these superior Christians: they were already "reigning" – no

need for a physical resurrection. They exalted celibacy above marriage, and so Paul has to put the record straight (I Cor 7). Husbands and wives had abstained from having sexual relations because they believed the body was evil. For this reason also, they rejected the biblical doctrine of the resurrection and instead believed in the doctrine of the survival of the soul. They also thought nothing of eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols, because anyway everyone knew that idols did not exist (so they said).

They were hungry for spiritual power – they always wanted "more" and so they had difficulty in grasping the fact that they already had everything in Christ.

2) At Colossae Paul met an amalgam of Christianity and other theosophical elements taken partly from mystery cults and partly from apostate Judaism. They were trying to persuade the Christians in Colossae to worship the angelic intermediary powers (that were identified with the stars that were supposed to possess the power to determine human destiny, but which were in reality demons). They encouraged special ceremonies linked to strict ascetic practices. There were also feast days taken from the Jewish calendar that they felt obliged to observe.

Paul counters this by affirming that 'in him (Jesus) dwells the Godhead bodily'. You have everything of God when you have him (Christ). This explains why Paul says in Col 1,9. I want you to have a '*pleroma*' of the '*gnosis*' of his will in all '*sophia*' (knowledge of the deep things of God) and '*syneisis*' (practical common sense). The word *pleroma* (fullness) meant all intermediaries between the Supreme God and his creation; When Paul says that they have this in Christ, he means that Christ is the one

and only, sufficient divine mediator between God and man.

3) In the Epistles of John we witness the controversy between the apostle John and the disciples of **Cerinthus** and his **docetism** (a variation of gnosticism which claimed that the divine Christ was a pure spirit that never became a human being). Cerinthus claimed that the divine spirit came upon the man Jesus at his baptism but left him before the crucifixion. There was never any real incarnation, so only the man Jesus suffered and died on the cross. This is why John says that anyone who denies that Christ actually became a man is of the anti-christ (1 John 4:2). Cerinthus' argument was based on the gnostic presupposition that the flesh is inherently evil – therefore no perfect being (like the divine Christ) could ever have become a man (taken on flesh). Therefore the incarnation of the Son of God was impossible.

John also writes against gnostics who said they had already become perfect and so "had no sin". John replies that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves...."

The gnostic Christians also felt no obligation to love their "lesser brethren", hence the emphasis on loving one another.

Gnostics also denied that the incarnation could have taken place, since matter is evil. John counters this by saying that this is the spirit of antichrist, because if the incarnation did not take place, this robs the Cross of any idea of it being a *substitutionary* atonement. Jesus could not be a substitute unless he became a man.

John also counters the gnostic claim that they could have immediate vision of God through special meditation: 'no man has ever seen God at any time'...

His reference to "mortal sin" at the end of the Epistle probably has gnostics in mind. Although they had become members of the congregation, they had never really been Christians at all. Their departure merely confirms this fact. There is no use praying for them because they have rejected the truth and have thus committed the sin against the Holy Spirit.

4) In the Epistle of Jude we find immoral gnostics who exploited the fellowship meal in order to transform it into an orgy.

5) In Revelation we encounter a gnostic sect (the Nicolaitans) who taught moral licence and who went in for speculations (Rev. 2,6.15). The woman Jezabel (Rev. 2,20) was doubtless a prophetess of this sect.

After the apostolic period a number of Gnostic sects developed within Christianity. They all professed to have some secret revelation or knowledge. In many cases it was little better than pagan mysticism garnished with a few Christian ideas and phrases. Some gnostic sects had secret writings in addition to the Bible (cf. Mormonism). Others had special and very strange interpretations of Scripture (cf. J.W.s). Others used Christianity as merely one of several revelations (cf. Theosophy). The common factor with all of them was the imposing of a foreign system on the biblical data. Marcion was the one exception because he trimmed down the Biblical data to a minimum.

**Valentinus** came from Alexandria, but settled in Rome. He was soon noted for his learning and apparently very nearly became bishop. It was only after this hope was disappointed that he formed his own sect.

He maintained that the root of the human predicament is ignorance, not sin. His writings are characterised by vagueness, word-spinning and tedium. He developed a complex hierarchy of spirit-beings. The Gospel of John in particular was used a quarry for speculation. One of his followers, Theodotion, tried to harmonise Christianity and Aristotelianism.

**Basilides** was a Syrian gnostic. Docetism was particularly strong in his theology. He said that Jesus was not crucified but that Simon of Cyrene was mistaken for Jesus and crucified in his stead. This is what Muhammad believed. The same heresy cropped up in a slightly different form later on near Antioch where a small church had been allowing the public reading of the Gospel of Peter. It suggested that a spirit power had come down upon the man Jesus but had left him when he was crucified. The cry from the cross was rewritten as: "My power, my power, why have you left me?".

Among the most feared gnostics which the Early Church had to face in the 2nd cent. was **Marcion**, who was excommunicated in 144. He was the son of a bishop and a wealthy ship-owner from Sinope. His book "*Antitheses*" opposed the Old Testament to the New Testament. To him, the God of the Jews was completely different from the Father of Jesus Christ who is described in the NT. In fact, he had a grudge against the God of the OT and against the Jews in general. According to him, the God of the NT, is good, requires nothing of us, but rather gives us everything freely, including salvation.

Marcion drew up his own canon from which he excluded all books that seemed to contradict his point of view. His hero was Paul. In the NT he only kept the Gospel of Luke and a few of the Epistles of Paul (those

that were the least Jewish). He also rejected the allegorical interpretation of the OT that was current among the apostolic fathers. He rejected the accounts of the incarnation – according to him it was impossible that the Son of God could ever have become incarnate, as matter was evil. According to him, the first Christians (the Jewish apostles) had incorrectly interpreted the spirit of Jesus (in other words, he rejected apostolic authority).

Still faithful to gnosticism, he rejected marriage, sex and the body in general. He also rejected the Virgin Birth as well as the resurrection of the body. Marcion's canon caused and accelerated the formation of the official canon. After he had formed a schismatic church in Rome, he was excommunicated by the pope. He then retired to his native Pontus in Asia Minor and his schismatic church expanded throughout the empire at breakneck speed.

Many gnostic teachers claimed that Christ, the heavenly messenger, had entrusted his secret knowledge to a particular disciple who alone was the true interpreter of the message. The Church sought to counter this by placing four Gospels in the canon (four parallel accounts) to show that all four agreed over against Marcion's interpretation of the life of Christ. The Apostles Creed was also put together (at around 150) to refute Marcion. This explains the emphasis that we find in it on the reality of the incarnation. It also emphasises bodily resurrection and judgement, both of which ideas were abhorrent to gnostics like Marcion. The Catholic (as opposed to schismatic one) Church is thus based on the united testimony of all twelve apostles, and not on the testimony of some special apostle (like Thomas). The bishops (especially of Rome, Antioch and Ephesus) were also seen as the successors to the apostles and so the

possessors of apostolic truth handed down to them. Not one of them has handed down any secret tradition.

Valentinus went to the other extreme by alluding to a hidden, mystical oral tradition of the teaching of Jesus, only accessible to the "initiated" (cf. the Gospel of Thomas). In view of these developments, it was high time for the church to take action on this question which was in danger of shaking the faith of many.

The following is an anti-gnostic creed quoted by bishop Irenaeus of Lyon:

"God the Father, beyond grasp, invisible, one God the Maker of all; this is the first and foremost article of our faith. But the second article is the Word of God, the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was shown forth by the prophets according to the design of their prophecy and according to the manner in which the Father purposed; and through Him were made all things whatsoever...He also, at the end of the ages...became a man among men, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and bring to light and life, and bring about the communion of God and man. And the third article is the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied and the patriarchs were taught about God, and who at the end of the ages has been poured forth in a new manner upon humanity over all the earth, renewing man to God."

B) **MONTANISM** Phrygia was known for its wild, prophetic, pagan type of religion, in which the priest could fast, suffer pain, dance, see visions and prophesy. Montanus had been a pagan Phrygian priest, so when he became a Christian he gave up paganism, but expressed his new religion in the old religious manner. It was thus natural for him to emphasise the work of the Holy Spirit.

There were occasional prophets in Syria and Asia Minor until well into the second century. Origen says: "...

after the apostolic age, there were not so many (miraculous) signs of the Holy Spirit. Still even now there are traces of them among a few (Christians)." Eusebius referring back to the early years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century says; "Even at that date, many miraculous powers of the divine spirit worked through the evangelists of the church." Irenaeus, writing towards the end of the second century says: "We hear of many members of the church who have prophetic gifts, speak by the Spirit in all kinds of tongues, bring men's secret thoughts to light for their own good, and expound the mysteries of God" However, Montanus and his followers served to discredit further practice of the gift of prophecy. It is also interesting to reflect that the impact of the movement shows that miraculous signs and revelations had become rare if not disappeared.

A man called Montanus went into a frenzy and began to prophesy. The believers thought that it was a case of demon possession and even tried to exorcise the demon. But Montanus claimed that the Holy Spirit was speaking through him and two ladies Priscilla and Maximilla, and that this was the real fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Paraclete. Visions, revelatory dreams, speaking in tongues, prophetic utterances of prediction and of divine comfort and rebuke, and other extraordinary religious experiences became characteristic of the movement. They renamed their town, Pepuza, the New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the Paraclete.

The main emphasis of the movement was the imminence of Christ's return (which did not transpire) in the light of which they taught a severe moral code (fasting, no second marriage, no forgiveness for serious



sins, a deliberate embracing of martyrdom). They did not produce any new doctrine.

The church in the East and in the West reacted by excommunicating montanists.

In its mad Phrygian form, Montanism soon burnt itself out but it left behind several important questions of principle which the church had to think out. It also left behind a sober and ethically strict form which survived in places and Tertullian was later to join them. When Montanism lost strength in Asia Minor, it found a welcome in North Africa. There its special appeal was not its emphasis on the Holy Spirit and on prophecy but on its practices of self-discipline and asceticism. This was what attracted Tertullian to Montanism.

In retrospect the movement can be seen as an important injection of life for a church that was becoming luke-warm and watered down by Greek philosophy. But the trouble was that they went too far.

First, the positive points of the movement:

- a) It emphasised the resurrection of the body (as against the survival of the soul).
- b) The Millenium.
- c) A spiritual revival and a surrender of all to Christ.

Secondly, the problematic sides of the movement:

- a) The question of authority, was posed by that of the spiritual gifts which they claimed to have. Those who rejected what was said in prophecy were accused of blaspheming the Spirit. Maximilla predicted that, "After me there will be no prophecy, but the End." The question was: could one accept their claim to direct inspiration even if this contradicted apostolic authority as contained in the Gospels and Epistles. This question made the

formation of the canon of Scripture imperative, for it was undermining the church and causing widespread division.

b) The second question was that of church discipline. The Montanists called all Christians to a demanding asceticism. Marital relations were to be abandoned in favour of chastity, virgins had to be veiled, fasts multiplied and food eaten dry. When Tertullian became a convert of the Montanists he believed, on the strength of their inspired teaching, that forgiveness should be refused for certain sins after baptism, remarriage should be banned and so should flight from persecution. It was the maintaining of this extreme stand as binding on everyone that led to the Donatist heresy which split the church in North Africa. All this tended to lead to a new legalism.

c) The third problem was that of women in ministry. Whereas in orthodox churches, women were not allowed to be in church leadership, they were allowed in Montanism, in which women played a very prominent role. This was of course a case of flagrant disobedience to the instructions of the apostle Paul. As the Spirit never contradicts Scripture, many of the claims of the Montanist movement have to be treated with considerable reserve.

C) **MONARCHIANISM** This heresy denies the concept of the Trinity. It marks the outworking of an earlier heresy: gnosticism and in particular docetism.

Justin Martyr had said in one of his controversies that "there is God and His Logos (Jesus)" – a phrase which seemed to suggest that there were two gods. But his opponents went too far in the other direction by saying that there is only one "*monarchia*" (i.e. one indivisible God). The truth is somewhere between the two.

Since this heresy denied that there is such a thing as the Trinity, this raises questions regarding the identity of

Jesus. Some concluded that he cannot be God (therefore he must be a man who was granted divine status as a reward) others that he was the Father in a different form (a sort of avatar – not a real incarnation).

a) **Dynamic monarchianism**: (also called adoptionism).

i) The word **dynamic** refers to the idea that Jesus was dynamised by the Spirit to a unique extent. Theodotius of Byzantium resurrected the docetic heresy by saying that Jesus was a unique man who was divinely energised by the Holy Spirit (which came upon him at his baptism and left him before the cross).

ii) The word **adoptionism** comes from the idea that he had such a close walk with God that he was "adopted" into the divine substance at his baptism. This was the view propounded by Paul of Samosata. Adoptionism is thus a precursor of the 19th cent liberal idea that Jesus was a person whose religion (example) we must seek to imitate.

b) **Modalism**, so called because of the idea that the expressions Father/Son/Holy Spirit designate different modes of activity of the same person (not the activities of 3 persons). The title patripassianism comes from the inevitable conclusion of this point of view – that the Father suffered on the cross. The expressions, Father, Son and Holy Spirit really refer to successive roles played by the same being. The heresy is also called sabellianism because it was held by Sabellius. It was also held by Praxeas and Noetus.

This heresy sought to avoid any taint of subordinationism or emanation but did not give an adequate account of the incarnation.

It was the Council of Constantinople in 381 that finally condemned this heresy in both its forms. The heresy lasted for a long time and became the seed-bed for subsequent heresies.

D) **ARIANISM** is the heresy which denies the divinity of Jesus. If gnosticism was the classic heresy of the 2nd century, and monarchianism that of the 3rd century, arianism was that of the 4th century. Arian sympathizers ruled the Christian empire for 43 of the 56 years that separated the Council of Nicaea from the Council of Constantinople in 381. This was initially made possible because of the influence of arianism on the sister of Constantine I and then on his son and successor Constans I and finally on the emperor Valens.

Arius, as we have seen, was very hastily appointed presbyter by the Metropolitan of Upper Egypt, (i.e. Southern Egypt) of the influential Baucalis church, after a wave of persecution in Alexandria had brought church life to a halt. In 318 he was consecrated to the post. Not long afterwards he clashed with bishop Alexander. Arius had studied (under Lucian) in Antioch and did not share the philosophical presuppositions of those in Alexandria. Arius claimed that the Father alone was really God (He did not believe that God was a Trinity); the Son was essentially different from his Father (influence of Antioch and Aristotelian philosophy which said that a different name meant a different person/thing). The question turned around the meaning of the word "begotten". Arius took it to mean that it implied a beginning and therefore a creation. Because of his philosophical background (non platonic) he could not accept the idea of an emanation existing outside time. Origen, whose influence was very powerful in Alexandria, had said that the Son was the result of an emanation which made him a secondary

species of divinity (a god but not the God) and that the Spirit is a creation of the Son (which makes him even more inferior). Alexander, Arius's opponent, had no doubt rejected the worst of Origen but retained the idea of an emanation. Arius, coming from an Aristotelian background, rejected the idea of an emanation, which would somehow maintain the idea of Christ's divinity

Unfortunately, neither of these schools of thought bothered to go back to what the Hebrew really meant: "appointed". The second person of the Trinity, Jesus, was appointed by the Father, before any sort of creation began, to be the Messiah. Arius quoted the Septuagint version of Proverbs 8,22-25 to support his point of view. He thought of Jesus as being an intermediary who was neither God nor man, but a sort of demi-God. Only in this way was an incarnation (contact with a material and imperfect body) possible and God's impassibility be safeguarded. This contradicts Scripture which says that God himself became man. He was not created as an intermediary but came down from heaven to us from beside the Father.

A council at Alexandria of Egyptian and Libyan bishops soon excommunicated Arius and a dozen other clergy including two bishops in 321. But that was not to be the end of the question, because he had friends in high places (Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia). These were all part of the old boys club with whom Arius had studied under Lucian of Antioch. The importance of the affair, which threatened to split the Greek Church, caused Constantine to call the First Council of Nicea in 325, over which he personally presided, as he felt personally responsible for the unity of Christianity.

Clerics from Scythia Minor were involved in the theological controversies debated at the first four Ecumenical Councils.<sup>[38]</sup> Saint Bretanion defended the Orthodox faith against Arianism in the 360s.<sup>[38]</sup>  
<sup>[43]</sup> The metropolitans of the province who supervised fourteen bishops by the end of the 5th century had their See in Tomis (modernly Constanța).<sup>[38]</sup> The last metropolitan was mentioned in the 6th century, before Scythia Minor fell to the Avars and Sclavenes who destroyed the forts on the Lower Danube.<sup>[44][45]</sup>

However, only a few Western bishops turned up. The battle started between Arius and Alexander (supported by Athanasius) but it was Alexander and his followers who won. Arius was condemned but the three bishops were cleared, and the council issued (in 325) the famous creed of Nicaea: "Christ is the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, from the substance (*ousia*) of the Father: God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten, not made, of one substance (*homo-ousios*) with the Father...". This quite clearly reflects the theology of Alexandria.

Arius was banished to Illyria. But the controversy still continued, especially over the word "*homo-ousios*" which had been a compromise in that it was the lowest common factor, too low for some and too high for others. It papered over what was a basic disagreement. The problem was that the settlement had been imposed on the church by the emperor: the opponents of this view had not been intellectually convinced.

The Council had affirmed that Jesus was "of one substance" (*homo-ousios*) with the Father. Certain people agreed with the statement which they took to mean that the Father and the Son were one in a single Godhead. These were: all the Westerners and a few

Easterners (Alexander and Athanasius, his personal assistant, Eustathius of Antioch, Marcellus of Ancyra). Others (the origenists) thought the term had not been well chosen because it was misleading: the sabellians had used the word *ousia* to mean not substance, but person. It seemed to mean that Jesus was the same person as the Father, so they adopted a different term "*homoi-ousios*" (of similar substance with the Father) by which they meant "the highest degree of resemblance short of identity of essence, as a perfect image resembles its archetype. The Son was like the Father in all respects, including his essential being (*ousia*). Others objected to the term "*homo-ousios*" because they said it had been introduced into Christian theology by the gnostics who believed that the heavenly powers shared the same divine fullness. Others did not like it because they said it split the Godhead in two, as if it were a material thing (like two coins made from the same metal). A third group didn't agree that Jesus was fully God and said he was "*heter-ousios*" (of a different nature) or even "*anomoios*" (unlike) the Father. Hence there emerged three groups:

1. The Orthodox, for whom the Son was "*homo-ousios*". They were supported by the Western Church and heavily influenced by the theology of Tertullian.
2. The Semi-Arians, for whom the Son was *homoi-ousios*. These were most of the Eastern Church, many of whom had been influenced by the subordinationist theology of Origen (the Son is a lesser god who is subordinate to a high God).
3. The Extreme Arians, for whom the Son was either "*heter-ousios*" or even "*anomoios*". These were entirely under the influence of Origen.

The Arian controversy essentially marked a clash between two different schools of theology: the Nicenes

(supported by the school of Antioch and Tertullian) versus the Origenists. The Nicenes supported the idea of three persons in one substance. The Antiochenes stressed the unity of the Godhead but were less clear about the distinctiveness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Origenists believed in subordination within the Trinity, but Arius, unlike Origen, did not believe that it was possible to have a hierarchy of divine beings.

The clash at the council of Nicaea highlighted the differences between East and West, as far as theological traditions were concerned and as far as language was concerned. Many Eastern bishops looked upon the Westerners as naive Latins who did not understand the niceties of the Greek language.

The Greek word *hypostasis* = substantial existence = latin: *persona*.

The Greek word *ousia* = substance, essence = latin: *substantia*.

The Arian controversy went through three phases:

Phase 1 under Constantine: Nicene Creed is supreme. Jesus is *homo-ousios*.

Phase 2 under Constantius: Arians get the upper hand. Jesus is *homoios* (like the Father).

Phase 3 under Theodosius: Pro-nicene and semi-arians unite. Trinity is 3 *hypostaseis* in one *ousia*.

The preparations for phase 2 began while Constantine (the defender of the Nicene Creed) was still alive. Eusebius of Nicomedia returned from exile. He had given hospitality to Arius while his case was under review. He managed to engineer the dismissal of the leading members of the pro-nicene party (Eustace of Antioch, Athanasius of Alexandria and Marcellus of Ancyra). The last dismissal occurred in 336 which was about when



Arius also died. In 337 Constantine died. The empire was divided among Constantine's 3 sons: Constantine II (who ruled the western part), Constantius I (the eastern part) and Constans (Italy and North Africa). Athanasius and Marcellus came back from exile and were warmly received in Rome by bishop Julius in 340. The East objected to this as they saw Marcellus as a sabellian, and the West looked upon the East (under the leadership of Eusebius, now of Constantinople) as being a bunch of Arians. In 342 they all met at the Council of Serdica (Sofia) but they could not agree and split into two opposing camps. Afterwards, however, the East agreed to restore Athanasius and the West dropped Marcellus. Then there was a political shake-up and a civil war. Constantius emerged victorious and became sole emperor, but his spiritual advisor was Valens of Mursa (Osijek) who was an Arian. Constantius wanted harmony at any price, even at the expense of Nicene theology. He therefore forced the Western bishops to condemn that "troublesome extremist" Athanasius. Both the sees of Alexandria and Antioch fell into the hands of extreme Arians. At the Councils of Rimini and Seleucia, Constantius persuaded all to confess that the Son was "like the Father" (*homoios*), having dropped the troublesome word "*ousia*". Both councils (which went on at the same time) were dominated by Arian bishops, Valens in the West and Eudoxius (Constantinople) and George (Alexandria) in the East. During all these happenings, Basil of Ancyra was most disturbed. He was a middle of the road nicene who reckoned that George and Eudoxius were irreligious men who were out to wreck the church. He reconciled himself with Athanasius but they had to wait 20 years before they could find an emperor in the East who was sympathetic to them.

Constantius died in 361 and Julian the Apostate succeeded him. His policy was to tolerate everyone, including non-Arians. In 362 Athanasius called a Synod at Alexandria at which progress was made towards restoring the Nicene terminology. He got those assembled to agree that the 3 "*hypostaseis*" did not mean 3 gods nor did 1 "*ousia*" smack of sabellianism. Only when the emperor Theodosius came to power in the East (Gratian was in the West), was any official move made to restore the Nicene formula. Fortunately the intellectual groundwork had been done by this time, through the interaction of the following factors:

a) Basil of Ancyra managed to unite the semi-arians and the orthodox, thus extending to a greater number the agreement to which he had come with Athanasius previously – they were really on the same side; both agreed with the Nicene creed and their choice of different words (*homo-ousios* and *homoï-ousios*) reflected different ways of looking at the same thing.

b) The Arians and the semi-Arians did not agree anyway – this had become painfully clear at the Council of Sirmium in 357.

c) The Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa) stepped into Athanasius' shoes and reformulated his point of view by saying that the Trinity consisted of three divine persons (*hypostaseis*) in one divine essence (*ousia*).

In 381 at the Second Council of Constantinople, Arianism was condemned and Nicene theology upheld.

Next we have the controversies which turned around the Person of Christ. The Nestorian-Monophysite controversy really grew out of the monarchian heresy.

The Nestorians were the heirs to the dynamic monarchians: Arians (Arius had studied in Antioch) maintained that the Logos which combined with the body of Jesus was not God. The Monophysites were the heirs to the modalists who maintained that the Jesus was one of the modes of the Father. They were represented by Apollinarius who refused to acknowledge that Jesus had a separate and distinct personality from the Father.

**E) NESTORIANISM AND MONOPHYSITISM** The Nestorian heresy maintains that there are two persons (not just two natures) that lived in Christ's human body. Nestorius, when he was patriarch of Constantinople in 428, took such care to stress the two natures of Christ that people accused him of teaching the Christ was two persons, and not that he just had two natures. What started the controversy was when Cyril of Alexandria said that Mary was Mother of God, which term Nestorius strongly objected to. According to him, Mary was the mother of the man (his human nature) but not of his divine nature. An exaggerated honouring of Mary, he maintained, led back to the old Mediterranean cult of the Mother goddess. In saying this, Nestorius found himself up against the Monophysites (also known as Miaphysites) who claimed that Jesus had only one nature (divine), of which Mary was the mother. Although Cyril pronounced his orthodox statement concerning hypostatic union in 433 (the two natures of human and divine in Jesus are indivisibly united to form a single reality, just as a body and a human soul come together to form one person), he afterwards admitted in private that he had been under pressure and that he was in reality a monophysite. Cyril was really the heir to Apollinarius who had denied that Jesus had a human spirit (he said it was

replaced by the Logos), as the spirit was seen as the seat of sin.

Another implication of monophysitism was to say that as the flesh of Jesus was divine, then we ought to feed on it (at the eucharist) in order to obtain eternal life (cf. John 6).

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 condemned the monophysites by affirming that Christ had two natures perfectly united in one Person. Nestorianism was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

During the whole of this controversy there were two schools of theology that confronted one another, both of which started out from diametrically opposed presuppositions.

### **The school of Alexandria was characterised by the following:**

1. A strong influence of neoplatonism. They were essentially syncretists who were constantly influenced in reconciling Greek thought with biblical thought.
2. A strong emphasis on the allegorical interpretation of the OT.
3. It represented what is called a Word-Flesh theology, that is a view that tended towards a unity between the pre-existent Word and "flesh". It was a view which tended to stress the divinity of Christ at the expense of his humanity. This view was greatly influenced by platonism and emphasizing the Word conceived of as the intelligence and wisdom of God. But in platonism, this conception was not personified.

The role of Egyptian asceticism in this controversy should also be noted. Monks there believed nestorianism must be wrong as it denied the possibility of the union of the believer with God, which in their view was the aim of

salvation. For this reason they tended to deny Christ's humanity.

Those that held to this theology were: Athanasius (though some people claim that he changed his mind), Apollinarius (extreme version) Gregory of Nazianzus (also known as 'Gregory the Theologian'), Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria. At worst this view claimed that Jesus only had one (divine) nature.

### **The school of Antioch was characterised by the following:**

1. This school was heavily influenced by aristotelianism. They were anxious to safeguard the impassibility of God. They therefore denied the transfer of properties. Only Christ's human nature could suffer.

2. They represented the Word-Man christology and tended towards a dualism. It stressed the humanity of Christ at the expense of his divinity. For instance, Diodore of Tarsus maintained that the man Jesus was indwelt by the Logos in the same way that the Spirit indwells the believer. Nestorians claimed that whereas it was the man Jesus who wept, it was the God Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead.

This point of view was represented by Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia (today the small Turkish village of Yacapinar), the Church of Rome and Nestorius (extreme formulation). At worst this view said that Jesus consisted of two persons (not natures) existing in one body. This view corresponded to the mixture of oil and water, mingling but not mixing, as opposed to the Alexandrian view, which compared the humanity and deity of Jesus to wine which perfectly mixes with water.

3. They insisted on biblical hermeneutics and rejected the allegorisation of the Alexandrian school.

It was a head-on collision between these two parties that produced events which led up to the Council of Chalcedon which was won by the moderate Nestorians. But the controversy still continued. In this controversy the line-up was as follows: Alexandria + Antioch v. Constantinople (which was the new centre of the Antiochene school) + Jerusalem (+ Rome). In the East, it became a nationalist issue: The Greeks (Asia Minor + Greece) v. the natives (Syrian + Egyptians).

Flavian of Constantinople (successor to Nestorius) found himself opposed by Dioscorus of Alexandria (and his agent Eutyches). Both were summoned to a Synod of Ephesus in 449 by the Emperor (Theodosius II), who favoured Dioscorus. Flavian was never given a fair hearing and condemned (along with "nestorianism"). The council refused to listen to what Pope Leo had to say in his Tome. Leo subsequently called this the "Robbers Synod". Flavian and several other leading Antiochene bishops were deposed. However the tables were turned at Chalcedon when monophysitism was condemned (along with Dioscorus). However, the argument still went on between the Monophysites and the Chalcedonians for a long time to come. In the end they parted company with the mother church. In 553 a fanatical monophysite bishop (Jacob Baradaeus) created an underground monophysite episcopate which still survives in the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syrian (Jacobite) churches.

In 482 the emperor Zeno offered the monophysites a sort of spiritual peace-treaty called the Henotikon (Union) which ignored Chalcedon. It appeared to work in the East, but in the West it produced a schism: the pope (whose Tome had been the basis for Chalcedon) felt insulted and excommunicated the Eastern emperor and his patriarch in 484. This split lasted for 35 years.

The emperor Justinian (a supporter of Chalcedon) tried to solve the monophysite controversy during his time in office. His very influential wife Theodora was a monophysite and he tried to push through that line by marginalizing extremists on both sides. In 544 he issued an edict entitled *The Three Chapters*, which the West thought was still too monophysite. Faced with an impasse, the emperor convened the Second Council of Constantinople. This gave an Alexandrine interpretation to Chalcedon and outlawed extremists on both sides (extreme monophysites and extreme nestorians). However the council failed to produce the hoped for reconciliation because 1) the Western church never fully supported it, 2) The monophysites were no longer interested in reconciliation with Constantinople and were virtually functioning as independent churches.

In 638 the emperor Heraclius tried to get both sides to agree to monothelitism (one will in Christ), but even this failed to win back the monophysites. This was a matter of political expediency: he was engaged in a war against the Persians and the monophysites threatened to side with the Persians against him. Heraclius initially proposed that Christ has one energy. This was opposed very vigorously by Sophrinus of Jerusalem who said that if energy belongs to person, the Trinity performed three acts of creation as three distinct creators (this is what Heraclius implied), but if energy belongs to nature, the Trinity performed one act of creation as one single creator. The Pope objected to the whole discussion as using unbiblical language and proposed that Christ might have been said to have one will. Heraclius then changed his proposal to say: Christ had one will.

In 680, the emperor Constantine IV convened the Third Council of Constantinople at which monothelitism

was condemned. Pope Honorius was excommunicated along with the patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius.

Another group that split off during this controversy was the Maronite church (found today in Lebanon), led by John Maron (d. 701) that insisted on remaining monothelite. In the 13th cent. they merged with the Roman church.

F) **PELAGIANISM** Pelagius was a British monk who in 412 reacted to the sort of preaching that he was hearing in Rome, which seemed to smack of cheap grace. He did not believe in original sin, nor that man was incapable of achieving his own salvation. According to him, some men had lived entirely sinless lives (e.g. Abel, John the Baptist, Socrates) but he did not go so far as to claim that this could be achieved in complete independence of God. Adam's sin affected only himself, he claimed, although he set a bad example and brought physical death upon the whole human race. Because every human soul is immediately created by God, it is innocent and as free to choose good or evil as Adam had been. We all need God's grace, but by this he meant the external teaching and example of Christ, and not the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. All need the forgiveness of sins and baptism but it is monstrous to say that unbaptised children go to hell (they go to limbus infantum). When Pelagius came to North Africa after the sack of Rome by the Goths, Augustine opposed him by his teaching on grace which stated that:

a) Both sin and physical death were transmitted to Adam's descendents.

b) Man cannot love God or respond to him unless God takes the initiative.



c) Baptism washes away the stain of original sin and enables us, with the help of Christ, to do what is necessary for salvation, by producing meritorious works through the Spirit.

d) In every good action, the first impulse comes from God.

These ideas became official doctrine at the Council of Orange in 529. Pelagianism was officially condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. However, this was not the end of the matter. The controversy was continued by Julian of Eclanum who regarded Augustine's teaching as Manichaeism because it implied that as sex involved procreation, it was by this means that original sin was handed on, and so sex was evil. He also objected to Augustine's ideas about predestination. Paul says that it is God's will that all men should be saved. In Southern France, monasteries founded by Cassian objected to Augustine. For them, man makes the initial move and God pours in his grace. They rejected predestination.

G) **MANICHAISM** The Manichees were the disciples of a certain Mani (216-76) who came from Babylon originally and wrote in Syriac. He claimed to be the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and founded a dualist religion of a gnostic type based on Iranian Zoroastrianism. He mixed elements of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christian Gnosticism to form a universal religion destined for East and West alike. He taught that matter was evil and that salvation consisted in escaping from its power. World history consisted of 3 epochs:

1. Light and darkness were separate (before creation).
2. They are (now) intermingled.
3. They will be separated after the millennium.

Since any new mingling of the principles is evil, true believers must avoid procreation. According to Mani, this

doctrine had been revealed in various fashions to a long series of prophets, including Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani himself.

Each individual is a mixture of light and darkness. First of all he must be made aware of this. Then he has to set about eliminating the darkness. In this quest he can be helped by the agents of light such as Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus or Mani himself. To purify himself, the individual must abstain from everything that binds him to the physical world: work, property, meat-eating and marriage. Like all gnostics, he saw matter as being evil.

According to Mani, Jesus and other religious leaders came in order to release the souls of light from the prisons of their bodies.

He alleged that there were inconsistencies in the Scriptures and that the text was corrupt and therefore untrustworthy. In particular he denied the virgin birth and Christ's crucifixion, since the flesh was tainted with evil and any association with it was unworthy of God. It is significant that this set of ideas reappear in islam.

It was really classic gnosticism. Ascetic exercises and contemplation had to be performed. Manichees were predominantly vegetarians because they believed that vegetables contained more light particles than meat. The more light particles a man could absorb in his body, the more he could be liberated from the imprisonment of the flesh.

An inferior order of "hearers" had to do more simple exercises, in the hope that they would be reincarnated next time as "elect". Augustine had been a "hearer". The Manichees were suspected of being immoral and dabbling in black magic because of their secret ceremonies. As early as 297 the emperor Diocletian

brought out an edict against them, by which they were to be burned, if caught, thus creating a precedent for burning heretics during the Middle Ages. Valentinian decreed that their wealth should be confiscated and Theodosius imposed additional penalties. They became an underground movement.

The followers of Mani were zealous missionaries who carried their "gospel" to India, Africa and Europe, so much so that it posed a threat to the church in the fourth century but this was overcome by Augustine, Evodius and other church leaders. By the 6th century it was in decline in the West.

The Paulician movement which spread in Armenia from the 7th-12th centuries resembled this heresy in its dualist views, though they strenuously denied it. They came to Bulgaria in the tenth century and helped to develop the Bogumils who flourished in the Balkans in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Bogumils in turn stimulated the Cathars (Albigensiens) who were ruthlessly exterminated by a papal crusade in 1208.

The Paulicians were very similar to Marcion and held, like him, that only Paul's (hence the name paulician) epistles were worth reading. According to the founder, Constantine, Jesus was an angel sent by the true God to reveal the way of salvation by which souls could escape from the evil of matter. Within the Byzantine empire, they were approved when they sided with the iconoclasts but at other times they were persecuted and fought alongside the Muslims. The movement was still to be found in Armenia in the 19th century.

## **CONSOLIDATION OF CHURCH ORDER AND DOCTRINE**

## 1. CHURCH ORDER AND MINISTRY

Even within the Early Church as seen in the NT, there is an evolution of ministry that comes with the disappearance of the apostles.

**The first stage** in this evolution is that of the apostolic age. There were on the one hand charismatic itinerants who founded and built up churches. They consisted of apostles, prophets and teachers (cf. 1 Cor 3,6) and on a local scale, presbyters (elders) and deacons who were under this itinerant authority. Apostles were primarily church founders, albeit not in the restricted sense of the Twelve. Both prophets and teachers were teachers but the second without the gift of prophecy (direct speech from Christ himself).

Towards the end of the apostolic period, we find a board of elders exercising various ministries within the church.

Originally, the bishop was probably the senior presbyter, the most respected elder who presided over his fellow elders as a "first among equals". It is likely that this pattern of leadership was based on the Jewish synagogue, which had a body of elders led by one senior elder, the "president" or "ruler of the synagogue" (Luke 13:14, Acts 18:8 – this was true of the larger synagogues, at any rate). The Christian bishop seems to have begun as the president of the Christian body of elders in each local church. From that position, the status of the "president" gradually increased in importance throughout the 2nd Century. This growth in the president's status was what caused the Church to apply the title "bishop" exclusively to him, in distinction from the other elders who were simply called "presbyters". Justin Martyr, for example, in the mid-2nd Century, clearly taught a pattern of church government with one single

leader at the top, but he called the leader "the president of the brothers" rather than "bishop".

**The second stage** The sub-apostolic age shows a certain evolution with the disappearance of the apostles: the ministry of teacher has become that of one of the elders, the ministries of apostle and prophet become that of the bishop (pastor, president of the Church). Deacons remained deacons.

This was the normal situation in the second century but the transition was geographically uneven.

The difference between elders and deacons was as follows:

1. Normally a person was consecrated deacon for life and only a deacon could become a bishop.
2. Normally there were seven deacons in each church, according to the precedent established in Acts 6.

The archdeacon was simply the head of the deacons and very often appointed bishop. Deacons had three principle functions:

- a. Liturgical – they helped the elder with the distribution of the bread and wine during the eucharist.
- b. They were usually in charge of the daughter church.
- c. They administered material goods (charity) and it was in this area of ministry that deaconesses were allowed to operate. Elders stayed in the towns while the deacons were in charge of the missionary activity in the surrounding countryside. The elders held the power of the keys: that is, they exercised church discipline, such as excommunication.

Deaconesses were involved in the distribution of charity and had special responsibilities for women but they were not involved in the liturgical side of the church.

**The third stage** The importance of the bishop increased considerably. We witness the emergence of the monarchical bishop: that is, a bishop who represented all the (house) churches in one town. This was because:

1. In the church there had to be someone who was the spokesman, who held to the truth, an apostolic successor (one who was faithful to the apostolic doctrine as it had been handed down from the church founder who had been an apostle), and who knew how to defend the church against heretics.

2. They needed a representative of each church at church councils.

3. There had to be someone with the power to ordain elders.

This development was helped by the following historical factors:

- a. James in Jerusalem had created a precedent in that he represented the church and was the chief elder. Certain people regarded him almost as the Messiah's deputy (or representative), as he was related by blood to Jesus. (James was succeeded by the cousin of Jesus, Simon. The grandsons of his brother Juda were leaders of the Galilean Christian community in the reign of Trajan). After the fall of Jerusalem, a vacuum was left in the East.

- b. There was also the influence of North Africa where the bishop was considered to be the magistrate, head of the resistance and *paterfamilias*, because he was usually the only educated and capable man in the community. A reaction against the heretic Marcion created in certain milieux priestly ideas (cf. Cyprian) in an effort to bolster the importance of the bishop.

- c. The doctrine of Irenaeus about the importance of the bishop spread in the West and became deformed.

**The fourth stage** The importance of bishops is seen in the main Roman cities (*metropoli*). This importance grew, especially in the third century because of the special dignity granted to more and more bishops of the capital (*metropolis*) of each imperial province and above all of the great cities of the empire (Rome, Alexandria and Antioch) where the bishops took the title of patriarch. By this time Rome was the only western patriarchate, since Carthage had been sacked by the barbarians and was in ruins. Patriarchs came to be referred to affectionately as "papa" or "pope". After Constantine came to power, patriarchs and later, metropolitans, were directly nominated by the emperor. These ecclesiastical titles are still current in the Greek Orthodox Church today. From the fourth century onwards the bishop's function extended to rural populations also. This opened the way to the concept of the diocese – a territorial area under the authority of a particular bishop. The collapse of the Roman Empire in the fourth century caused an authority vacuum, which the local bishop felt he should fill, which resulted in him intervening increasingly in social and political life.

**Elections:** the election of presbyters was usually decided on the basis of candidates proposed by the existing board of elders and ratified by a congregational vote. There was the additional safeguard that bishops from other churches invited to perform the ordination also had to ratify the choice of elders.

## **2. DOCTRINE**

In order to combat heresy, the church took the following measures:

a. Bishops were now to be the defenders of the apostolic truth against the heretics. Ignatius of Antioch was the first to develop this idea.

b. A creed or confession of faith was drawn up, which each believer had to learn by heart. This was what the Early Church called 'tradition'. In fact, the first creed (the prototype of the Apostles' Creed) was written in 150 specifically to counter Marcion. In it, the "catholic church" means "the church according to the total witness of all the apostles (not just one, like Thomas or Phillip)

c. The reaffirmation of the canon of inspired NT scriptures became necessary to counter all the heretical writings which were in circulation, such as the Gospel of Thomas.

Two heresies in particular were current at this time (about 150): Marcionism (which subtracted from the canon) and Montanism (which added to the canon), both of which accelerated the reaffirmation of the canon.

### **3. A REVIEW OF ECUMENICAL CHURCH COUNCILS**

There were 8 ecumenical councils (representing the whole church).

**FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA** (325) The council condemned Arius and produced an anti-Arian creed: the Creed of Nicaea (prototype of the Nicene Creed).

**FIRST COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE** (381). The Nicene Creed was produced and three heresies were condemned: Arianism, Macedonianism (refusal to admit the deity of the Spirit – 36 bishops at the Council held this view) and Apollinarianism (Apollinarius denied that Jesus had a human spirit). The council affirmed that Jesus Christ was both fully God (against Arius) and fully man (against Apollinarius). But how can he be both fully



God and fully man? Two wrong answers came to be given to this question: From the Antiochene school came Nestorius who almost implied that Christ was a double personality. He was opposed by Cyril and condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431. The second wrong answer was given by Eutyches, from the Alexandrine school, who sought to maintain the unity of Jesus Christ by blurring his humanity into his deity (monophysitism). He was opposed by Leo and condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

The Council also laid down that Constantinople was to be second in status to Rome. The Roman Church did not like this because it implied that Rome was nr. 1 only for political reasons. Alexandria did not like it either as it had previously considered itself to be Nr 2, and subsequently conducted a war of spite against Constantinople which is seen in the controversies surrounding John Chrysostom, Cyril v. Nestorius and the struggle preceeding the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

**COUNCIL OF EPHESUS (431)** This council condemned the teaching of Nestorius and accepted the doctrine of the Virgin Mary being the Mother of God (*theotokotos*). It also condemned Pelagianism.

**COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON (451)** marks the condemnation of the monophysitism of Eutyches and the triumph of the Antiochene school. It accepted that Christ has two natures, human and divine (teaching of the school of Antioch). Cyril's letters were used to refute Nestorianism and Leo's Tome to refute Eutyches' monophysitism. The definition of Chalcedon was set out as a safeguard against the four ancient heresies. In Jesus is found true deity (against Arius) and full humanity (against Apollinarius) which is indivisably united in one person (against Nestorius) without being confused (against Eutyches).

But the Alexandrian party refused to accept Chalcedon because they were latent monophysites. Attempts were made to conciliate them at the Second Council of Constantinople.

**SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (553)** condemned three elements of Nestorianism but also Origen's teaching. It gave an Alexandrine interpretation of Chalcedon but even this did not satisfy the rebels.

A further attempt was made to conciliate them by the introduction of the doctrine of Jesus Christ having only one will (monothelitism) but this was rejected at the following council.

The council also proclaimed the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

**THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (680-81)** condemned monothelite teaching according to which Jesus only had one will, and so decreed that Jesus had two wills in his incarnate state.

Monothelitism had grown out of another controversy: that Jesus had two energies – one which proceeded from his divine nature and one from his human nature. Energy here is defined as the distinctive actions, activities, works and operations which a particular nature performs, revealing its identity. This is really a very mystical interpretation of what we would call the fruit of the spirit. To be changed from "glory into glory" really means to increasingly reflect God's character (glory). The orthodox use of the expressions divinisation or glorification really betrays a misunderstanding of the Hebrew expression "glory". This is another example of a Greek interpretation of a Hebrew concept. The Roman pope refused to speculate on this question and said that it was more biblical to say that Jesus had two wills: human and divine.

Shortly afterwards, however, the problem was solved when the monophysite areas were swallowed up by the Muslim invasions.

**SECOND COUNCIL OF NICEA** (787) was convened to solve the icon controversy. The council came down on the side of those who favoured icons, backed up by the platonic theology of John of Damascus.

**FOURTH COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE** (869) The patriarch Ignatius condemned the patriarch Photius for his opposition to the *Filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed. This council marks the beginning of a schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.

However, the Eastern Church does not recognise this council as valid. Instead, it recognises an alternative Fourth Council of Constantinople (879-90) which Photius himself convened and which overturned the previous council and rehabilitated himself. The *Filioque* clause was rejected.

## UNFORTUNATE TENDENCIES

These tendencies can be grouped under two headings:

- a) Judaising tendency
- b) Pagan tendency

Even in the first century we find both of these tendencies at work, but unlike during the following centuries, they are firmly rejected by the apostles and condemned by the Church (cf. Acts 20,29-31). But subsequently it is clear that these same tendencies did come to considerably influence the Church of the second century.

It is no coincidence that the errors of both the Catholic and Orthodox churches can be arranged under exactly the same headings:

## **JUDAISING TENDENCIES**

Rabbinical judaism was the source of many heresies.

- a) System of earning one's salvation through one's own piety and good works.
- b) Importance of certain days, festivals of the Church, pilgrimages.
- c) a priesthood that offers sacrifices
- d) ideas of ritual purity and impurity as found in the OT. A priestly caste.
- e) cult of intermediaries and neglect of the Head (Christ).
- f) acceptance of the apocrypha
- g) concept of transferable merit

## **PAGAN TENDENCIES**

Reconciliation was achieved between pagan (i.e. Greek) and Christian views by the introduction of:

- a) The Logos seen as an intermediary between God and material creation.
- b) Allegorisation - everything in the Scriptures which seemed to call in question God's impassibility, was allegorised.

More, specifically, pagan tendencies are seen in:

- a) Purgatory,
- b) cult of the dead
- c) pagan high-places converted into Christian high places.
- d) original sin linked to sexual desire
- e) a salvation that is prolonged, repeated and watered down in the sacraments, of which the role is to dispense grace in order to make the believer capable of earning a salvation based on merits.

Spasenje koje je preduljeno, oponašano i uvodnjavano u sakramentima, čija uloga je podijeliti

milost kako bi usposobila vjernika da zasluži svoje spasenje.

From the first century onwards we witness a progressive syncretisation of the biblical message, with the introduction of ideas that belong to pagan philosophy, as non-Jews come into the Church, especially those who had had a background of pagan philosophy. This happened as the Church left behind its judaeo-christian roots (the apostolic base) of the first century.

The principal pagan influence that started to infiltrate into Christianity from the beginning of the 2nd century onwards was that of platonism, which was originally a pagan way of salvation, a rival way to the Christian way, a progressive salvation by a process of contemplation and asceticism, whereby the soul is liberated from the body (considered as evil) – a salvation which depends on the acquisition of knowledge and not on repentance and conversion for the forgiveness of sins.

In the 2nd century the **Apostolic Fathers** are more pastors than thinkers. Their language is very biblical but legalism has begun to creep in. The beginning of ecclesiasticism (exaggerated claims for the the church) can also be noted; besides the influence of Greek pagan religion (sacraments/mysteries), this tendency can be explained by the heresies and the rampant montanism that they had to face.

Then came the **Apologists**: Irenaeus, Justin Martyr and Tertullian. It is enough to look at their writings to see that there is an increasing separation between what they say and what the NT says. Their theology begins with the necessity to defend the faith or to explain it to pagans. The unbeliever must be convinced and the heretics refuted. A typical work of this kind is '*Against all heresies*'. The great Church councils are the landmarks where such heresies were condemned.

Their main problems were:

1. The Apologists defended the biblical position (Creation + Incarnation + Resurrection) against the heretics who saw Christianity as just another myth.
2. They had to relate the OT to the NT. The opponents of the OT ridiculed the OT in the name of platonism.
3. They had to explain the incarnation to those who refused to contemplate this idea because for them it was impossible for God to come into contact with a body (matter was evil).
4. They had to try and explain the Trinity to Jews who were strict monotheists.
5. They had to assert their authority. The problem was that they thereby sometimes claimed more than they were entitled to.

## THE CHURCH FATHERS

**IRENÆUS** (130-208) (disciple of Polycarp) represents the link between the East and West. He sees salvation as a process of recapitulation whereby what was lost by Adam is won back by the Incarnate Logos, by living a life of perfect obedience. To counter Marcion, he insisted on the unity of Scripture, but in order to do this he felt obliged to hold an evolutionist view of Scripture. According to him, God reveals himself to man by stages, progressively, so that the end cannot be separated from the beginning. Although there is some truth in this, he started a movement which was to lead to the disparagement of the OT as being merely preparatory and therefore of limited theological value. He laid much stress on the fulfillment of prophecy and thereby unwittingly portrayed the OT in terms of a mere collection of proof texts. He never worked out an Old Testament Theology.

The incarnation is very important in his writings because he sees it as the key in God's design of love, to have eternal fellowship (in the person of Jesus) with His people.

He was the first to use the word "divinisation" by which he meant "conformity to God's perfect image as seen in Jesus". Unfortunately this term was later given a literal and platonic interpretation by the Orthodox Church.

He also gave special prominence to the place of Mary who he saw as the new Eve. "Just as the human race fell into the bondage of sin through a virgin (Eve), so it is rescued by a Virgin (Mary): the disobedience of a virgin had been balanced in the opposite scale by a virgin's obedience"

He also had a sacramental outlook on the Lord's Supper. He, with conscious clearness, first puts forward "bread and wine" as objective gift offerings, but at the same time maintains that these elements become the "body and blood" of the Word through consecration.

**JUSTIN MARTYR** (100-165) Justin was born of a Greek family in Samaria, and initially sought the truth in Platonism. He was principally an apologist (in Rome). His *First Apology* was addressed to the emperor Antonius Pius, the Roman senate and the whole Roman people. His *Second apology* was addressed exclusively to the senate. His longest work is his *Dialogue with Trypho* who was a Jewish rabbi.

Justin preferred a Greek interpretation of the Logos (light = reason), whereas in Hebrew thinking light = revelation. Because of his involvement in polemic with gnostics, he was as an apologist chiefly interested in the incarnation, thereby shifting the emphasis of his theology away from the atonement. This created a dangerous

precedent that was to be taken up later by sacramental theology.

Justin's teaching on the Trinity borders on modalism. According to him, the Trinity has not always existed in its present form: the word 'logos' means divine reason, and the word 'Son' refers only to the role of the Logos in creation and revelation. In his writings, the Holy Spirit is hardly considered as a person.

On the Eucharist, Justin claims that the bread and the cup are transformed by a formula of consecration and have power to infuse the divine life into the souls and bodies of the faithful.

**CLEMENT:** (155-220). Probably emigrated from Athens to Alexandria, where he succeeded Pantaenus as head of the catechetical school in 190. Faced with opposition from a largely Gnostic public, he declared that Christianity was the true gnosis, of which Jesus is the great teacher. The Logos is the centre of his theology whom Clement conceived of as being eternally with the Father and the principal cause of all things. However, he does not seem to have been very interested in the humanity of Jesus. His way of salvation is peculiar: by contemplation of the Logos, man is deified. Thus Clement's soteriology is a mysticism centred around Christ in which His passion and death have little or no redemptive part to play.

He rejected belief in a physical resurrection and millenium. After death, he claimed, the believer has to be purified further through the fire, so that his sins can be burned away as wood, hay or stubble. He is thus one of the first Church Fathers to support the idea of purgatory.

He had to leave Alexandria because of persecution and never returned.



**ORIGEN** (183-254) was the successor to Clement as head of the catechetical school at Alexandria and was even more influenced by platonism. He became an acknowledged expert in theology and travelled all over the ancient world as a sort of consultant. He was constantly at odds with the bishop of Alexandria who wanted to dominate the school, and when he was ordained elder in Caesarea, the bishop would not have him back saying that he was disqualified in view of an earlier castration and he had to remain for the rest of his life in Caesarea (20 years). Although a great scholar, he was much given to speculation. Faced with accusations of heresy, Origen would no doubt have claimed that he was just thinking aloud, and not propounding doctrine.

TRINITY: Origen's idea of the Trinity as a graded hierarchy (a middle platonic idea) was to influence Arius in the following century. Origen said that God the Father was the source of all deity and that the son derived his deity from the Father, and the Spirit from the Son. In other words, Origen believed in degrees of divinity, so the Son was one degree less divine than the Father, and the Spirit even less so. This viewpoint was to dominate Eastern theology.

Origen was the first to use the phrase 'the eternal generation of the Son'. He also believed that all spirits had been "eternally generated." By this he meant that the Father and the Son were eternally related as the one who generates is related to the one who is generated. He came to this conclusion because of the influence of Greek philosophy. He reasoned that the difference between the Creator and the creature is so great that it was not appropriate for the Father to create directly. He needed an intermediary to do this for him. That is why the Son had to be 'generated'. Needless to say, this is a misunderstanding of the Scriptural term which refers to

divine appointment, not to any form of generation or emanation.

He also claimed that the creation of spirit beings took place before time and was "an eternal act" - there never was a time when they did not exist!! Time only begins with a material creation, so any creation done before this, he reasoned, is an "eternal act, i.e. one done outside time. Origen presumes, as a good Platonist that there is no time in the parallel universe where God exists. Time only begins with the material creation, so then any creation done before then is called "an eternal act", i.e. one done outside time. The Bible tells us that there is time, but a different sort of time or time scale ("one day is a thousand years"). The speed of light (where there is no time), is merely the frontier between both of them.

CREATION: Origen's doctrine of creation was also influenced by Greek philosophy but also had an uncommon similarity to the idea of reincarnation. According to him, the world was created because the Father had to have somewhere in which to exercise his omnipotence. Therefore the Son eternally created the world in which the Father could exercise his power. The eternal world which the Son created is a world of spirits. In this world, all spirits were created equal in glory and virtue, and all were created with free will. Some of these spirits used this freedom with virtue and nobility; these became angels. Others wholly abused this freedom and became evil; these are now demons. Yet a third group were not as obedient as the angels, nor as disobedient as the demons; these became men. Their present state therefore was appropriate to what they had done in their previous life in the spirit. This is similar to the doctrine of reincarnation. In fact he interprets Genesis 1 + 2 as referring to two creations, the first spiritual (Gen 1) and the second material (Gen 2). God created the second

only after the first fell. This is similar to Scofield's Gap theory. In Origen's mind the physical world is the result of sin – it is a second best.

We can see here how Hindu ideas had come to the West through gnosticism and how Origen had absorbed some of these ideas.

**INCARNATION:** Origen's view of the incarnation was also peculiar. He reasoned that, in order to become a man, the Son needed the help of a mediating spirit. For this reason the Son associated himself with an unfallen spirit from the previous eternal creation. This spirit, one with the Son, went to live in a human body. It was this spirit in a human body that suffered and died. In this way Origen tried to safeguard the Greek idea that it was impossible for God to suffer.

**THE SOUL:** He said that the soul is related to God but obliged to live in this material world, which is foreign to it and not its true home. Christ is the only soul that did not fall and which unified itself with the Logos (rational principle). Evil only comes from the absence of good and the disorder in the world comes from an abuse of free will by man, not from original sin. Redemption is thought of as progressive and the expiation of sins to be an ongoing process. Because no one is perfect at death, all must pass through the fire of purification (purgatory). In fact he conceived of hell as being what we would call purgatory - a purifying fire cleansing the soul from its sins.

**ATONEMENT:** He had a peculiar view of the atonement. According to him, all mankind was justly in the grip of the devil because of sin. In attacking Christ (at the Cross), the devil overstepped his just claim on sinners (because Christ was perfect) and as a punishment he was deprived even of his rightful prey (mankind). Christ's death was thus a ransom paid to the devil, and the cross a means of defeating and deceiving

him. This argument was later taken up by theologians in the Middle Ages. Origen pioneered the hope that in the end perhaps all would be saved (universalism), and even Satan would cease to do evil, since even the devil has a free will and he might change his mind.

THE BIBLE: In order to combat pagan criticism of the OT (taken at its face value), he embarked upon excessive spiritualisation and allegorisation, thereby unwittingly undervaluing the OT. He claimed that as the Bible was above all the vehicle for *spiritual* truth, there was no need to insist on its historicity, though he did not deny this. In this way, the OT came to be regarded as a mine of proof texts and allegorisation for Christianity and nothing more.

His interpretation of the Biblical text was novel. According to him there were three levels of meaning in any Biblical text:

- a) The literal sense.
- b) The moral application of the text to the soul.
- c) The allegorical or spiritual sense which was hidden from most readers and only revealed to those with a special gift of discernment. Aquinas was later to revive this idea.

**ATHANASIUS** (295-373), although known as a champion of orthodoxy, was also influenced by Greek philosophy. He had such a dark complexion, that his enemies called him the black dwarf. He was in fact a Copt (i.e. a descendant of the ancient Egyptians). He was a close friend of the desert monks and became a hero of the local people.

He believed that the glorification of man meant his deification. This betrays the influence of platonism which tended not to keep the divine and the human separate. According to platonism, man had a divine spark impriso-

ned in a body. Besides this, he was never certain whether Jesus had a human spirit or not. One of Athanasius' pupils, Apollinarius, claimed that in Jesus the divine Logos replaced the human spirit. He saw this as necessary, because he believed that the human spirit (mind) was the seat of sin. Apollinarius was therefore a monophysite, who was to influence Cyril and the theology of the church of Alexandria.

Adam before the Fall was portrayed in his writings as a Greek philosopher: he spent his time contemplating the Word (the image of the Father). His mind had nothing to do with his body. It transcended all bodily desires and senses and contemplated 'intellectual reality'. But Adam turned from intellectual reality and began to consider his body and its senses, thus falling into fleshly desires. What he meant of course was that before the Fall man's mind dominated his body, but after the fall his bodily appetites enslaved his mind, but he said it all in a way that shows the influence of Greek philosophy and of Origen in particular.

Athanasius was the first person to devote serious attention to the status of the Holy Spirit. An obscure Egyptian group called the *Tropici* taught the deity of the Son but not the deity of the Spirit – He was created. Their bishop Serapion wrote to Athanasius for advice on how to combat them and Athanasius replied in a series of *Letters to Serapion*. Athanasius there lays down that the Spirit is divine and proceeds from the Father (but not from the Son).

The Western counterpart of Athanasius was **Hilary of Poitiers** who never to combat arianism in the West, despite being exiled. He was the first person to unequivocally hold to the full deity of the Holy Spirit.

**TERTULLIAN** (160-245) was a lawyer in Cathage in North Africa (although he had come to faith in Italy), and an anti-gnostic par excellence. He is the true Father of Latin theology and created the vocabulary of Christology. His views on the Trinity (in fact, he coined the word) were eventually accepted as orthodoxy itself in the West. Vocabulary like "three distinct beings in one substance" was eventually adopted universally, and yet he seems to have believed that the Logos did not exist as a distinct person until just before creation: before this he was the principle of reason.

On the one hand he was against any sort of marriage between faith and philosophy, but he did not realise to what extent he was influenced by stoicism.

In the end he became a member of the Montanist sect with its puritan and revivalist ethics. Some claim that he finally left the established church and founded his own sect. At any rate, his Montanism made him suspect to the Church in general.

He found it difficult to answer Marcion's objection that the OT was sub-Christian. As result of trying to reconcile the OT and Christianity, his own brand of Christianity became known as 'baptised judaism'. Because he fought shy of allegorisation as a solution, he felt himself obliged to establish literal parallels between Christian and Jewish practice. His follower, Cyprian, mingled Christian ministers with OT priests and Christian ordinances with OT sacrifices. This marks the beginning of **sacramentalism**. To quote the Catholic Encyclopedia, in a passage ([\*On Prayer\*](#) 19) Terullian calls Holy Communion "participation in the sacrifice" (*participatio sacrificii*), which is accomplished "on the altar of God" (*ad aram Dei*); he speaks (De cult fem., II, xi) of a real, not a mere metaphorical, "offering up of sacrifice" (sacrificium

offertur); he dwells still further as a Montanist ([On Pudicity](#) 9) as well on the "nourishing power of the Lord's Body" (*opimitate dominici corporis*) as on the "renewal of the immolation of Christ" (*rursus illi mactabitur Christus*).

But most churchmen (especially those influenced by Origen) found peace on this front by allegorising or spiritualising the OT.

Tertullian's view of the Church also later caused problems. He said that the apostolic church had the right to claim to be God's spokesman (Montanist influence?). He also said that it was the Church that had created the Bible, so heretics had no right to use it. This was later to play into the hands of those (espec. Cyprian) who wanted a Church supreme which was beyond the judgement of Scripture.

He also regarded baptism as a rite of great power: the water had the power to cleanse from sin, thanks to the name that is invoked over it. In time, baptismal superstition would mean that not only babies but even corpses could be baptised (a practice later condemned at the Council of Carthage in 397).

**CYPRIAN** (205-258). Born in Carthage of a noble family, he was converted to Christ in 264 and three years later was ordained a bishop. Like Tertullian, he had been a lawyer, but his logic took him too far theologically. He reasoned that the OT had laid down that sacrifices were to be offered. As the OT was the law of God, it follows that Christians must also have a sacrifice to offer which is in some way tied in with the eucharist. Interpretations of the words of Cyprian vary. Some think that he only implied that the eucharist involved a sacrifice of reconsecration in which Christ reconsecrated himself with the believer, which frankly seems a bit far-fetched. On

the other hand Cyprian did say that the eucharist could in a mystical sense benefit the dead, which Tertullian also believed! If it were only a sacrifice of reconsecration, it is hard to see why it could benefit the dead. Besides, a priest would not be necessary to offer such a sacrifice. So the Catholics are probably right in inferring that Cyprian was orthodox by their standards.

He inferred that ministers are priests who offer a sacrifice. For Cyprian, the Christian bishop (i.e. the presiding elder or pastor) was the equivalent of the OT High Priest. Each church has only one legal bishop who could trace back his legal succession (through the laying on of hands) to the apostles, of which Peter had been the leader. In order to strengthen his position against the Donatists, he insisted on the absolute supremacy of the bishop. For him the Church was the Christian version of the nation of Israel, with clear boundaries beyond which there was no salvation.

On baptism, however, he did not see a parallel to OT circumcision. But he did regard it as a magic rite to be applied to infants, since babies had inherited guilt that needed to be washed away. Cyprian had to deal with extremists – Donatists in Carthage and Novatianists in Rome. They parted company on the question of rebaptism (of a schismatic or a lapsed Christian into the Catholic Church). Stephen tried to enforce his moderate view on Cyprian but Cyprian would have none of it and claimed that each bishop must decide the question for himself. He thus opposed the claim of the bishop of Rome to be supreme and to be submitted to be all the other bishops. In fact, resistance to the beginnings of the papacy was very marked in North Africa and Asia Minor.

The Eastern Church, with its liking for mysticism and metaphysics, did most of theological thinking until the 4th



cent, by which time it seems to have dried up. During this time, the West had become more interested in the legal and practical side (espec. Tertullian). But, from the 5th cent onwards, the West takes the lead under one man in particular (Augustine). The East tended to overspiritualise but the West to overliteralise.

**AMBROSE** (339-397) was bishop of Milan and very influential because when Theodosius moved his Western capital to Milan, he became his bishop. He had been elected bishop when as provincial governor, he (only a catechumen) tried to hold the peace during elections for a new bishop involving rivalry between arian and catholic candidates. He introduced the allegorical method of interpretation from the East, and also the idea of transubstantiation (the bread and the wine actually changes into the body and blood). This led to the doctrine of transubstantiation as defined by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1415.

He also introduced antiphonal hymn singing for the first time during a sit-in.

Together with the emperor Theodosius he became the architect of the legislation of the Middle Ages. His treatment of the emperor Theodosius foreshadows later attitude of the popes towards the secular power.

**AUGUSTINE** (354-430) was born in Thagaste, in present-day Algeria. His mother, Monica, was a Christian, but he was not converted until later. In Carthage he became involved in various amorous adventures and took a concubine for 15 years. Then he became involved in the Manichee movement. Later he was appointed to the emperor's court in Milan as professor of rhetoric. It was there that he became very impressed with bishop Ambrose who answered his questions on Manicheism.

He had first tried to read the OT but had been put off by its 'crude and unspiritual nature', as he had been brought up on Greek philosophy. Accordingly, he had turned first to Manicheism and then to neo-platonism for answers. What attracted him about Ambrose's preaching was that it was allegorical. He successfully explained the OT difficulties by means of allegory and, as Augustine had been a follower of Plato, this clicked immediately. He was then introduced to a neo-platonist circle but found that philosophy did not give him the power to live a new life. He read the epistles of Paul and underwent a conversion experience. He was attracted towards asceticism and retired to lake Como in Italy. When he returned to North Africa, he sold his possessions and founded a monastery. Later the congregation in Hippo seized him and made him bishop. He immediately established a tradition of asceticism. Soon he became involved in the Donatist controversy. He rejected their idea that their schismatic church was 100% pure – in his view every church consists of genuine and bogus Christians. He saw the donatists as an eyesore that was compromising the unity of the church and put pressure on them to return to the Catholic fold. He eventually decided that the only way of settling the problem was by calling the emperor's troops in to suppress these theological rebels. He thus created an unfortunate precedent which the inquisition was later to take up, though fines and banishment were the only punishments that he ever envisaged.

Augustine lived long enough to see the collapse of Roman rule in North Africa under the onslaught of the Vandals who were of course Arians like the other barbarians, and so attacked all other (catholic) Christians who did not agree with them. A year after Augustine died, Hippo was captured by the Vandals and sacked.

He had an incredible literary output, ranging from his '*Confessions*' to treatises on all sorts of theological questions. His main controversy was with Pelagius. When Rome was sacked, Pelagius who had founded an ascetic community there, fled to Carthage, where he was attacked by Augustine when he tried to become a presbyter in one of his churches. Eventually, Pelagius moved on to the Holy Land.

He also wrote a most important book, *the City of God*, which later became the handbook of Western Christianity in Church/State relations. He wrote the book against the background of the barbarian sack of Rome which prompted the question in many men's minds: why does God permit the capital of a Christian empire to fall? Augustine replies that:

a) The Church is not the State. There is no such thing as a Christian empire.

b) The Church is a mixed body of true and nominal Christians which will only be finally separated at the last judgement (against Donatus).

c) The true Church consists only of the elect (against Pelagius).

Eusebius of Caesarea, who represented the Eastern point of view, disagreed. He maintained that the christianised empire under Constantine is God's kingdom come to earth!

Augustine's main theological contribution was on the question of grace, predestination and original sin. He maintained that:

1. As a result of Adam's sin, sin and death were transmitted to all his descendants.

2. Man is to such an extent under the domination of sin that unless God intervenes, he cannot respond

3. Grace received at baptism produces in all Christians, the fruit of the Spirit which then merits salvation.

4. In every good action, even the first impulse comes from God.

The Western Church accepted all these ideas but not his idea of double predestination (i.e. to hell as well as to heaven). It must be said, however, that Augustine had a strange view of election. He believed that all members of the visible church were elect but some only temporarily so (which explains why they fall away): it is only those who have the additional gift of perseverance that make it to heaven. However, since no one knows that he possesses this gift (until he gets to heaven), no one can be sure of his (ultimate) salvation.

Another view, semi-pelagianism (or rather: semi-augustianism) also became popular: God's choice of us works together with our choice of him. This was also called synergism and was pioneered by John Cassian and became popular among the churches of southern France.

Augustine also wrote on the Trinity and his view became the standard one of the Western Church. He made three points:

1. He defined God's unity in terms of the divine *essence* which is shared fully and equally by the three persons of the Trinity. This was in contrast to the view in the Eastern church which located unity or oneness in the *person* of the Father. For the Easterners the divine essence was first and foremost the Father's essence which he communicates to the other two members of the Trinity, whereas for the Westerners, the divine essence *itself* is the supreme reality in which the three members of the Trinity exist.

2. Augustine taught that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, whereas the Easterners maintained that he proceeds from the Father alone.

3. Augustine tried to find confirmations of the truth of the Trinity (tri-unity) in such things as man's constitution (body, soul, spirit), lover, beloved, love or 3-fold activity of the soul in thinking, remembering and willing.

It has been said that his exceptional experience of the grace of God (and ignorance of Eastern theology) enabled him to break new theological ground. He has been called the father of the Reformation because of his consistent monotheism and his dramatic sense of sin. But he can also be seen as the father of the Roman Church by virtue of his ecclesiastical mysticism which was greatly influenced by his neo-platonic past. It is in him that platonised Christianity reaches its most developed form:

1. Salvation involves getting from the lower world of the flesh to the higher world of the spirit by a system of divine grace and ascetic exercises plus contemplation.

2. God tends to be an idea (the One impassive, immutable being), rather than a dynamic God acting in history.

3. Sin was linked to sexual desire.

4. Salvation is prolonged, repeated and emptied of its essential nature by the sacraments. The cross mirrors an eternal process. Fusion with God is the aim of religious practice.

5. The Cross ceases to be the central preoccupation of the believer and is replaced by the incarnation, redemption provided by a perfect life.

6. A-millennialism was promoted.

**JEROME** (331-420) was another important scholar of the Western (Latin) Church. He was born in Stridon (Dalmatia). After a life of some sexual adventure, he came to faith in Christ and was immediately attracted to the ascetic way of life. He therefore became a hermit in the Syrian desert outside Antioch. He said on one occasion: Having been washed by Christ, he never needed to wash again.

He had a fiery temperament and was much given to controversy: he called his enemies "two-legged asses". He found that the only way to defeat sexual fantasies which pestered him was by learning Hebrew. He eventually became the greatest Hebrew scholar in the West, even superior to Origen. He was later ordained and came to Rome where he became the right-hand man of the pope (Damasus) who asked him to retranslate the OT (the previous Latin version had only been translated from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew original). Eventually he produced an entirely new Latin translation of the whole Bible from the original texts which came to be known as the Vulgate. He also wrote many learned commentaries.

He went on a pilgrimage with the emperor Constantine's mother to Jerusalem, thus creating a precedent. Shrines were set up there. He was so attracted by the area that he settled in Bethlehem where he built a monastery, which was eventually burned down by followers of Pelagius, his theological enemy. He survived to see the break-up of the Roman empire and the fall of Rome.

During his life he had been noted for his fiery temperament and violent invective. He was involved in many controversies: in the Arian controversy he sided with the conservatives; in his pamphlet '*Against Jovinian*' he more or less attacked the institution of marriage; in

'*Against Helvidius*' he argued for the perpetual virginity of Mary; he joined Augustine in a combined attack against Pelagius.

He was criticised in his day on the following points:

1. For daring to re-translate the Bible.
2. For going overboard in his promotion of celibacy.
3. For promoting aspects of the monastic life which were clearly oriental and not Christian.

He contributed to the development of Catholicism in the following ways:

1. He was a great admirer of Origen (a fact which he later attempted to disguise) and a great promoter of celibacy and monasticism. He popularised Pachomius.

2. He was involved in controversy involving Mary. A man called Helvidius, in order to promote marriage and counter Jerome's negative view of it, said that Joseph had normal marital relations with Mary after the birth of Jesus. Jerome was furious and attacked him in a pamphlet entitled '*Against Helvidius*' in which he 'proves' (to his own satisfaction) the 'perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of God'. For him, Jesus' brothers were really his half-brothers from Joseph's previous marriage.

3. He gave his blessing to 'dubious' practices like pilgrimages, the veneration of relics of martyrs and saints, burning candles at their shrines and seeking their intercession prayer. He wrote this in a pamphlet called '*Against Vigilantius*' which was widely read and accepted by the church as a whole.

**GREGORY THE GREAT** (540-604) can be regarded as the last of the four doctors (teachers) of the Latin Church, after Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine. It was he who can be called the father of the medieval Roman Church. He taught a blend of Augustinianism and popular Catholicism which was popular in the early

medieval period. He furthered the doctrine of purgatory, elevating it from a probable opinion to a dogma. He believed that souls in purgatory could be released by the sacrifice of the mass. He encouraged some of the superstitions of the age, such as the veneration of relics. He criticised the bishop of Constantinople for claiming the title of universal patriarch.

## **THE EFFECTS OF HERESY AND ERRONEOUS IDEAS**

### **1) THE ORTHODOX AND ROMAN CHURCHES**

Some aspects of the theology of the Orthodox Church differ from a truly biblical theology mainly because of the influence of platonism. Another important influence was that of the Church in Alexandria which tended to dominate the Eastern Christian scene.

The main reason for this is that after the first century, the Church became cut off from its Jewish roots and came increasingly under the influence of platonism, as intelligent people from that philosophical background came into the church. Furthermore, the Church, cut off from its Hebrew roots, began to misunderstand certain basic terms used in Scripture, such as "The Word" or "Light" or "only-begotten" or "flesh". The list is endless.

The main tenets of platonism are:

1. This world is a reflection of the higher heavenly world of ideas.
2. The created world (especially the body) is inferior if not evil.
3. Therefore salvation consists of escaping from this body to be absorbed in the heavenly world of ideas.



But the Bible says that God has committed himself to a material world which is good (although now distorted and marred by sin). Ultimately heaven is not the uncreated world of ideas but a recreated world of matter. The body in itself is not evil but good. It is the body that is destined to be resurrected because a man without his body is less than a complete personality. Man's problem is not that he has a body but that he is a sinner. Sin has its source, not in the body but in man's sinful nature. Sin is a broken relationship between two persons caused by the rebellion and pride of man. Sin entered into the world through an historic fall and it has been dealt with by the incarnation of the Son of God leading to the space-time expiation of the fault committed. God has achieved what man is incapable of doing. The problem is not metaphysical but one that is historic and personal.

In what way did platonism influence the Early Church?

1. **The once and for all aspect of the work of Jesus** on the Cross is watered down, and the emphasis is put on the "mystery" of the incarnation. According to platonism, every event on earth is a reflection of what is going on in heaven. Therefore the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins which happened once in time, is the reflection of a continual process that is going on outside time in heaven. As what is going on in heaven is more important than what is going on on earth, then salvation from the penalty of sin (hell) is pictured as a continual process. In heaven, Jesus is still being crucified: he is still suffering for our sins. The proof of this is at the eucharist where we gain an insight of what is going on in heaven.

Because salvation is incomplete, therefore we need to complete it by means of a system of intermediaries (who can get merit for us) and the sacraments (seen as a means of salvation). It is also necessary to go through purgatory in order to suffer the punishment due to venial sin. Purgatory is an idea straight from Plato.

The Bible says that sin was committed (man fell) in time and space (not outside time) so God (in the Person of Jesus) came into time and space to reverse the process by one act. Therefore when we accept God's conditions (repent and believe the Good News) we are saved eternally, once and for all (on the basis of the finished work of Jesus). By denying the finished work of Christ, some Church Fathers were (unwittingly no doubt) denying his divinity.

The literature of the second century re. the eucharist is full of a vocabulary which is never found in the New Testament. The Didache calls the Lord's table a 'sacrifice', regarding this term as appropriate in view of Malachi 1, 11, 14. This attribution set a precedent which led eventually to the full-blown doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice in the later Fathers of the Church. Ignatius lays it down, shortly after the turn of the first century, that the Eucharist is not to be celebrated apart from the bishop, and the Church is, in his view, 'a place of sacrifice'. Even more pronounced are the teachings of Justin who gives expression to the notion that the bread and the cup are transmuted by a formula of consecration and have power to infuse the divine life into the souls and bodies of the faithful. The real presence tends, from this point of the development onwards, to be located not in a spiritual reception of Christ by faith, but in the elements themselves.

2. **Ambiguous attitude to the body.** The body is considered to be of questionable value, if not downright evil. Therefore it must be mortified by all sorts of ascetic practices. The soul must be liberated from the body. This is the basis of monasticism, which was heavily influenced by platonism. Furthermore, sexual desire is linked to the body which is linked to sin.

3. **The theology of merit:** The Western Church was much more influenced by apostate judaism than the Eastern Church. One of the areas in which this happened was that of transferable merit: this idea was particularly strong in Carthage where many of the early Latin theologians were lawyers. Tertullian had already said in relation to penitence that God is satisfied by offerings that are pleasing to him, and that merit can be acquired by obeying the Law and by going further than the Law requires (works of supererogation). These ideas greatly appealed to Cyprian who then developed them. Augustine was also later influenced by them. Cyprian said that Jesus, by living a sinless life of obedience, deserved glorification. Gregory the Great took the next step by saying that he also deserved salvation. But he didn't need it (because he is perfect), therefore his 'merits' can be distributed to us, through the channel of the Church, of course. It was also in North Africa that the Donatist church developed the idea that the merits of their confessors could be transferred to others. A later addition to this teaching stated that these merits can be added to by the merits of the saints to constitute a central treasury which is administered by the Church.

4. **The position of Mary** in the Orthodox Church is due to platonised theology and paganism. Cyril of

Alexandria was a very influential theologian who backed the cult of Mary on the basis of his monophysite theology which was in turn based on platonism. Monophysite theology had two platonic presuppositions:

a) The body and this material world are evil.

Therefore they give an inadequate account of the incarnation.

b) It is possible to have a hierarchy of "divine" beings. There is no clear-cut distinction between God and other souls (created) – souls are virtually regarded as being eternal in the sense of uncreated. This opened the door for the idea of a whole host of lesser divinities like the Virgin Mary and the saints.

Monophysites said that Jesus only had one nature (divine), of which Mary was the mother. Since Mary was the mother of his divine nature, she must have been quasi-divine herself but definitely without sin.

Monophysites said that at the incarnation "the Word was clothed with flesh" but by this they didn't really mean that Jesus became a man in which there was a true intermingling of the human and the divine. They thought like this because of the influence of gnosticism (a sort of hinduism) on them. It is not by chance that arianism also began in Alexandria. There is good evidence to suggest that Arius denied that Jesus was divine because he wanted to avoid saying that God became a man (matter is evil so this is impossible). Although Monophysitism was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, it still persisted as a subtle influence. It was ultimately to give birth to a very crass heresy that Muhammed encountered in Arabia: that the Trinity consisted of God the Father, Jesus the Son and Mary the Mother. The fact that they should replace "the Holy Spirit" by Mary the Mother is also significant, because Orthodox theologians

never had an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He was not really regarded as a Person in His own right – the Third Person of the Trinity. The pagan element comes in because in the countries of the Mediterranean the cult of Mother Goddess (originating in Babylon) was very strong. In Egypt it was represented by Isis and Horus (cf. accompanying illustration). After the Gospel arrived in Egypt, it is clear that gradually in the minds of the people, Isis and Horus were transposed into the Virgin Mary and her Son Jesus.

Well before the coming of Christianity, when Rome had been threatened by the invasion of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, they resorted to bringing the Magna Mater/Great Mother), a pagan goddess from Asia Minor, into Rome in an effort to save them. Her statue entered the city on a raft up the river Tiber, which was then paraded through Rome. Hannibal was duly defeated and the Great Mother got the credit for it. To this day a statue of the Virgin Mary is similarly conveyed up the river Tiber every year on a float.

## **2) ISLAM**

Christian heresies also affected Islam which is a strange mixture of biblical and unbiblical ideas. Muhammed was a social and religious reformer who was concerned by new social conditions (i.e. capitalism) which threatened to cause the Arabs to lose their religion. He therefore wanted to start a religion which would streamline their previous paganism and unify them. This religion was therefore to be monotheistic. He therefore borrowed ideas from the two monotheistic religions with which he had contact: Christianity and Judaism. Unfortunately the form in which he encountered them in Arabia was heretical and degenerate. The Jews

in Arabia had come there because of either exile or trade, but they had lost touch with Orthodoxy in Jerusalem. The Christians he encountered were mostly heretics who had been banished from the Byzantine empire. They were mostly gnostics, monophysite monks, Nestorians, and a sect called the Collyridians who worshipped the Virgin Mary. From this group Muhammed must have concluded that the Christian Trinity consisted of God the Father, Mary the Mother and Jesus the Son. Monophysitism also influenced Muhammed, who rejected the divinity of Christ, but retained the monophysite emphasis on the virgin birth and a belief that Jesus did not really suffer and die on the cross – a misunderstanding of the monophysite Logos doctrine.

A reading of the Quran also reveals evident influences from certain Christian heresies.

a) The Quran's version of biblical stories are so garbled and lack the detail of authenticity, that one is forced to the conclusion that Muhammed must have gleaned them from apostate Christians or Jews who had no direct access to the actual Scriptures.

b) The austere use of "we" for the deity and the constant reference to secret histories and interpretation of mysteries is very similar to the tone of Gnostic writings. One gets the impression that Muhammed adopts a gnostic pose in order to convince his contemporaries.

c) The reference to Jesus preaching to men in his cradle, and to breathing into a clay bird to make it a living bird all point to a nodding acquaintance (presumably through hearsay) with the apocryphal Gospels (eg *The Gospel of Thomas*).

d) The denial of Jesus' death on the Cross is the essence of docetism (first and second century heresy

springing from gnosticism), against which John wrote his first epistle.

e) Christians are accused of regarding the jinn (demons) as Allah's equals, though He Himself created them. This seems to smack of Origen's neo-platonism: the pre-existence of souls, of which one became the Word.

f) There is evidence from within the hadith that Muhammad had contact with Nestorian Christians. Particularly of interest are the similarities between Muslim *raka'ah*, or ritual prayer, and the genuflections performed by Nestorians during Lent. Also the Hebrew word for a pilgrim feast (*hag*) is very similar to the word *haj*. Minarets (from which the faithful are called to prayer) resemble the pillars on which Syrian holy men lived. Ramadan is similar period of fasting to that of Lent.

As far as Jewish influence was concerned, it must have been an apostate form which he took as his source. Much of his teaching comes from Talmudic sources. Muhammed makes out that the Jews say that Ezra was the son of Allah.

Muhammad's reception amongst the Jews of Medina ranged from indifference to hostility and, among Jewish scholars, open ridicule. Such indignities Muhammad could not forgive. Within five years he succeeded in having most of Medina's Jews banished or slain.

There is much evidence to suggest that many of the practices which Muhammed introduced into Islam were done so in order to deliberately counter and replace Christian and Jewish practices.

a) The very word Quran means "recitation", or "that which is recited". It apparently comes from the Syriac word *qeryana* – a word that was applied to the Scripture lesson which was read or recited by Christians at public

worship. Thus the command to recite seems to imply that public worship is to be instituted along with lines of the Syriac-speaking Christians, and that instead of their lessons from the Bible, this revelation given to Muhammed was to be recited.

b) The day for going to the Mosque is Friday, not Saturday or Sunday.

**THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM:** The expansion of Islam was favoured by three factors:

1. Mohammed's aptitude to combine elements from the old paganism, Christianity and judaism. He claimed to be rediscovering the 'original' religion of Abraham which judaism and Christianity had corrupted.

2. Byzantines and Persians had been greatly weakened through warring against each other.

3. Many of the schismatics, like the Monophyite churches, who had a raw deal under the Byzantines, welcomed the Muslims as liberators.

By Mohammed's death (632) the Arabian peninsular was united under Islam.. His successor or caliph (= head), Abu Bakr, led the largely bedouin armies against the Byzantine and Sasanian armies. The next caliph, Umar, extended the boundaries still further before his murder. The third Caliph, Uthman, belonged to the Umayyad house, an aristocratic family from Mecca. This family was to become the most prominent in Islamic history. These caliphs ruled from Damascus until 750 and were succeeded by the Abbasids. At the murder of Utman in 656, Ali, the only male descendant of Muhammed, became caliph. A split then developed between those who favoured hereditary succession (the



Shiites) and those who did not and adhered to tradition or Sunna (the Sunnites). This division is perpetuated to this day in two competing theological systems.

Despite internal dissension the Muslim empire, partly religious, partly political and military, expanded until by the time of the Crusades, it was a vast area stretching from the Pyrenees to the Indus river. It was not in its later years ruled by one caliph. In the East the Seljuk Turks had overthrown the caliphs of Baghdad: in the centre, a schismatic group, the Caliphate of Cairo, held sway; and in the west the Almoravids, a Moorish people, governed.

## **THE RISE OF ROME**

The origins of episcopacy in Rome are not altogether clear. Most scholars agree that Peter did visit Rome, and that there is at least a very high probability that he died there. But the various lists of the early bishops of Rome, mostly dating from late in the second century, do not agree among themselves. While some claim that Clement was Peter's successor, others name him as the third bishop after the Apostle's death. This has led some scholars to suggest the possibility that in the beginning Rome did not have a single bishop, but rather a "collegiate episcopacy" – a group of bishops who jointly led the church. While such a theory is open to debate, it is clear that during the early centuries the numerical strength of Christianity was in the Greek-speaking East, and that churches such as Antioch and Alexandria were much more important than the one in Rome. Even in the West, the theological leadership of the church was in North Africa, which produced such figures as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine.

It was the barbarian invasions that brought about the great upsurge in the pope's authority. In the East, the Empire continued existing for another thousand years. But in the West the church became the guardian of what was left of ancient civilization, as well as of order and justice. Thus, the most prestigious bishop in the West, that of Rome, became the focal point for regaining a unity that had been shattered by the invasions.

The Church at Rome was probably founded at least in embryonic form by Jews returning from Jerusalem, having been converted through the preaching of Peter at Pentecost.

43/44 Peter, after his miraculous escape from prison, departs for 'another place' (perhaps Rome). If Peter was in Rome when Acts was written, Luke would have been anxious to conceal that fact from the Roman authorities.

50 We hear of riots caused by '*Hrestos*' which probably refers to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ (*Hristos*) among the Jews.

58 Paul's letter to the Romans makes no reference of Peter. This at least shows that Peter was not a permanent resident there.

61 According to Acts 28, Paul was a prisoner in Rome. There is no reference to the presence of Peter there.

61-63 Paul in Rome awaiting trial which ends in his acquittal.

64 Peter passes through Rome. Great Fire of Rome, 1 and 2 Peter. Martyrdom of Peter.

67 Paul once again in Rome (cf. 2 Timothy). Paul beheaded in Rome.

95 Letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, which marks the first intervention of one church in the affairs of another.

What are we to make of these scant historical references? What in particular was the relationship of

Peter to the church in Rome? Christianity must have first of all taken root amongst the large Jewish community which we know existed in Rome. This may have been the work of Peter. However, in 49 all Jews were expelled by Claudius, probably because the preaching of the Gospel among them had led to such an uproar. This meant that the church, most of whose members were Jews, virtually ceased to exist. When Nero came to power in 54 the edict of his predecessor was no doubt revoked and the Jews were allowed back into Rome. It was possibly on this occasion that Peter came to Rome to reinaugurate the church. He may well have come accompanied by Mark who had been his interpreter on his missionary journeys in north-west Turkey. When he left Rome again, Mark stayed behind and the Roman Christians persuaded him to record in writing the story of Jesus as they had heard it from Peter's lips (or through Mark's interpretation). This was the origin of the Gospel of Mark and when Luke visited Rome in 60 along with Paul he found Mark's record of great usefulness when he came to compose his Gospel. It may have been from Rome that Mark evangelised Egypt.

The Catholic claim (based on a passage in Eusebius' Church History) that Peter was bishop of Rome for 25 years (45-67) is probably a garbled version of another tradition that Lactantius reproduces in his work: 'the apostles were dispersed throughout the world to proclaim the Gospel, and for 25 years, until the beginning of Nero's reign, they laid the foundations of the church throughout all the provinces and cities. Nero was already emperor when Peter came to Rome.' (On the deaths of the persecutors).

Peter's main area of missionary interest had been what is now north-west Turkey where he probably founded many churches. During a subsequent stay in

Rome he wrote his first letter (I Peter) to them in about 63 and perhaps in 64 II Peter. In 64 he was probably executed in the persecution that followed the great fire of Rome.

200-300 At the beginning of the third century, most of the Christians comprising the church were Greeks, but little by little the Latins began to outnumber the Greeks as the Gospel penetrated the upper echelons of society more and more.

Pope Stephen, in order to triumph over Cyprian of Carthage, invoked the famous text of Mt 16,18.

At the end of the 3rd century, the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia sent a letter to Cyprian in which he said that the bishop of Rome in vain claims the authority of the apostles. However, in the end Cyprian's sacramentalist ideas were used by the papacy to enhance its claims.

The bishops (popes) of Rome considered themselves to be the guardians of the Apostolic tradition since Peter and Paul had been martyred there. The general authority of the Church, especially in the East, was compromised by numerous controversies, synods and councils that contradicted each other (there was no central authority), and people who were looking for such authority and stability naturally turned to Rome.

After the reorganisation of the empire in 284, the emperors no longer lived in Rome but in Milan, Trier and Sirmium (from where they could keep an eye on the barbarians) and in Nicomedia (from where the emperor could keep an eye on the Persians). This left a vacuum in Rome which was filled by the bishop of Rome who greatly increased in power and prestige.

300-400 In 325 the importance of the bishops of the largest cities of the empire can be noticed at the Council of Nicea. It was Rome that gives its seal to the council.

**Damasus** (366-384), bishop of Rome, is the first pope in the classic sense of the word. After a highly discreditable election in which his partisans slaughtered more than a hundred supporters of a rival candidate, he set about consolidating his power. He liked drawing certain parallels between himself and the emperor: his papal letters were worded like imperial edicts. Damasus considered himself to be the historical successor to Peter. In 382 he invoked with all seriousness the text of Mt 16, 18 in reference to himself. He came to the throne of Peter at the age of 70 and his enemies described him as a smooth-talking adulterer. He promoted the cult of the martyrs by establishing a ring of holy sites in Rome. He also claimed that Peter had been a Roman citizen and that he was his legitimate successor, with all the authority that this entailed. The Church of the time needed an authority with which to oppose the Arians. As the Greek East was divided, Rome again filled the gap.

400-500 **Innocent I** (401-17) underlines the importance of the liturgy of Rome for the other churches. The bishop of Thessalonica became his ally whom he nominated and who thus became an important pawn in the game against the Eastern Churches. In 417 the bishop of Arles was appointed by Innocent in the same way in spite of the protestations of the other Gallic (French) bishops.

By the beginning of the fifth century barbarian tribes were on the move. The invasion of the Huns forced the Goths to move on and into the Roman empire. Defenseless and hungry, the Goths were forced to trade their own children for food, but the Romans sold them dog-meat. Tensions reached boiling point and the

barbarians mobilized. With the Western empire weakened by dynastic in-fighting, the king of the Goths, Alaric, made a bold move. He laid siege to Rome. He wanted land for the Goths to settle, but the Roman aristocracy refused to give it to him. The Romans began to starve and could not bury their dead outside the walls as usual, so the corpses rioted in their streets. When the Romans could stand it no longer, a noblewoman opened the gates of Rome to the Visigoths. Alaric and his 40,000 Visigoths poured in and pillaged the city in 410. This had a shattering effect on Roman morale. Augustine believed that the reason why Rome had fallen was that it was still essentially pagan and steeped in sin. The kingdom of heaven was the only salvation.

**Leo I** (440-61) is the true successor to Damasus. He formulated the official doctrine of papal primacy: Peter was the rock appointed by Christ as head of the Church, and the popes (his successors) were his temporary and mystical personifications. In an effort to further christianize Rome, he claimed that the spirit of Peter lived on in him, which gave him exceptional authority to carry out reforms. He became the first pope to be buried in the church of St. Peter. In an effort to further christianize Rome, he claimed that the spirit of Peter lived on in him, which gave him exceptional authority to carry out reforms. He became the first pope to be buried in the church of St. Peter.

Rome was still half-pagan. The Romans were still attached to the holidays of the old Roman calendar, which promised feasting and fun. The Christian calendar overlapped with the old pagan one on 14 days of the year. Thus St Peter's birthday was also celebrated as the Caristia, a pagan festival of banqueting and gift-giving. Some Christians even continued to participate in the

shameless immodesty of the Lupercalia fertility festival, running half naked through the streets while whipping girls with strips of goat-hide. To persuade Christians to fully embrace Christianity, he started to make claims to have the authority of the apostle Peter.

Leo made these claims good by gaining control of North Africa and Spain, and getting the Roman emperor (Valentinian III) to recognise the primacy of the Roman apostolic see (because of Peter). He frustrated attempts to keep an independent Gallic see at Arles. He also built up his political power base. When the emperor Valentinian III was assassinated, Leo virtually took charge of Rome until the next emperor was elected in 451.

In 452 Leo dissuaded Attila the Hun from attacking Rome. A few years later he managed to persuade Gaiseric the Vandal not to set fire to Rome while sacking it.

Leo's theological authority was spectacular. At the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (which condemned monophysitism), Leo's Tome was considered to be the last word in orthodoxy. The battle lines had been drawn up between Dioscorus of Alexandria and Eutyches against Flavian (representing the Antiochian school). Flavian had been condemned at the second council of Ephesus in 449, but Leo backed him and secured his triumph at Chalcedon, largely on the basis of his Tome which stated that Christ had two natures without confusion after union. This did not unite Christianity because the extremists split off, but it did bolster up Leo's claim to be the theological arbiter in matters of faith. However, the council also promoted Constantinople to city second only to Rome in importance, which represented a set-back for Rome.

**Gelasius** (492-96) struggled against the Eastern bishops of Alexandria and Constantinople which enhanced his claim to be universal pope, placing himself even above the authority of the State.

498-506 Symmachus and Laurentius quarrelled about who was to be pope. In the process forged documents were used and also physical violence.

**Gregory I 'the Great'** (590-604) can be said to have laid the foundation of medieval christendom. Gregory came to the throne of Peter at the age of 70 and his enemies described him as a smooth-talking adulterer. He promoted the cult of the martyrs by establishing a ring of holy sites in Rome. He also claimed that Peter had been a Roman citizen and that he was his legitimate successor, with all the authority that this entailed.

By 536 Rome and the whole of Italy was controlled by barbarian Christian kings. Justinian wanted to re-gain control of Italy and make himself the universal emperor of the Christian empire. But to control Rome, he needed a puppet pope. So he made a deal with Virgilius, the greedy papal ambassador to the East who agreed to be Justinian's pope in return for the sum of 315 kilogrammes of gold. But first Justinian had to take Italy from the Goths. He therefore sent off an expedition under his brilliant general, Belisarius, who with just a few thousand men captured Rome. Justinian ousted the old pope and installed Virgilius, but Virgilius later refused to cooperate with Justinian, so Justinian had him kidnapped and sent back to the East. The eastern empire struggled to hold Italy, but within less than a generation another Germanic tribe has its sights on Rome, the Lombards. They marched south, first plundering, then settling. By 590 Rome was in a desperate situation. Pope



Gregory, ex-mayor of the city, bought off the Lombards. He also established a welfare system for the poor.

1. He established the popes as de facto rulers of central Italy. He was the only person who stood up against the Lombards when they attacked Italy. As long as the emperor Justinian was alive, he provided armies to keep the barbarians at bay (since Italy still belonged to the Eastern Empire), but after his death, this help was no longer available. The pope organised resistance and diplomacy and so became leader of the whole province.

2. Gregory strengthened papal supremacy over the Church in the West – even Spain and Gaul looked to him for special guidance. He appointed provincial bishops as his deputies.

3. He initiated missionary expansion, sending, among others, Augustine to England in 597. He evangelized the pagan Jutes in Kent with some success (10,000 were converted) but by the time he died only Kent had been re-evangelised. But Canterbury had been established as the ecclesiastical centre. Two thirds of Europe was still pagan. At a later date, it was the English monk, Boniface, who evangelised further lands in the name of the Vatican. In this way he gained control of most of Western Christendom.

4. He left behind writings that greatly influenced the medieval papacy.

Gregory turned Augustine's speculations into dogmas: purgatory, salvation by works, doctrine of the mass (repetition of the sacrifice and means of shortening people's time in purgatory). However, he conveniently set aside the doctrines of predestination and irresistible grace. He also promoted clerical celibacy. All this was carried out, significantly enough, when Europe was undergoing its most superstitious period.

Thus Gregory laid the foundations of the medieval papacy, which, aided by the monks and in alliance with the Franks, triumphed in the West.

**Summary:** Reasons for the growth of the papacy.

1. The vacuum left by the destruction of the Church at Jerusalem where James had been bishop was filled by Rome.

2. The East was never united – it was always the centre of theological bickering and heresies. Rome claimed to be above all that, and so could give a theological lead.

3. Because Rome was the imperial city, its bishop became more and more important. When the Western empire fell, it took over the rights and privileges of the emperors. The Catholic Church is truly Roman in the sense that it has kept the essence of the civilisation of Rome in its laws and institutions, for better or for worse. For instance, the pope took over the title which the emperor had, *Pontifex Maximus* 'builder of bridges, chief of the pagan priests.'

**The problem of the papacy** It is very important to note that for centuries the bishop of Rome was not elected by the whole Christian or even the Western Church or by other bishops, but like the other bishops, only by the members of his own diocese. Therefore we would have to admit that for a long time the nomination of the universal leader of the church depended exclusively on the Christians in Rome. Later, for several centuries during the Middle Ages, the pope was chosen by rival political factions and by the noble families of the Rome. It was in order to end this abuse that the General Synod of Lyon decided in 1274 that the election of the pope should henceforth be made by all the cardinals in

conclave (behind locked doors), free from the influences of the world.

For a long time the Church did not have an earthly head who was legally recognised. Thus in the sixth century, Gregory the Great, reproached bishop John of Constantinople for having taken the title of universal pope, not because he thought it was reserved for Rome, but because he thought it was a blasphemous claim. 'By what audacity and pride are you trying to take this new title which will scandalise all the brothers? To take this blasphemous title is to imitate Satan. What will you say on the terrible Day of Judgement that is coming, you who aspire in this life to be called in this world not only pope, but universal pope?'

## **CHURCH AND STATE AFTER CONSTANTINE**

The Romans had a collector's attitude to religion. Every aspiring ruler was on the look-out for any new god powerful enough to help him grab and then hold on to the throne. In 274 Aurelian believed that the sun-god has brought him victory in Syria. He set up a state cult to Sol Invictus, the unconquered sun; and announced that the birthday of the sun, a day of special festivity, was December 25th. The sun's halo, as well as his birthday, would later be borrowed by Christianity. A little later, Diocletian declared Mithras, who was very popular with the army, to be the god who was 'protector of the empire'. It was in much the same way that Constantine adopted the Christian god. Being a fairly simple and uncomplicated person, he probably accepted Christ as a sort of guardian angel who would favourably support him if he remained obedient to him.

When Constantine came to power, Christianity became for the first time a positive advantage in

furthering a career, instead of a private and potentially dangerous commitment, as it had been previously. Moreover, the emperor viewed himself as the champion of the cause of Christianity and expected his allies to do the same.

**New legislation based on Christian values** When he was safely settled in Rome, one of his first acts was to revoke all anti-Christian legislation and to make substantial government grants to church leaders, rather like a victorious politician rewarding his supporters. Even so, Christians were still not very numerous in the West at this time: they were much more numerous in the East. He moved the imperial capital from Rome to Byzantium which he renamed Constantinople. One of the reasons for this was that he did not like the pagan atmosphere in Rome, where he felt the hostility of the strongly pro-pagan Roman senate. It is significant that all of the churches that Constantine had built, were outside the walls of Rome, so as not to antagonize the Roman aristocracy. The Roman aristocracy was one of the last elements of Roman society to accept Christianity.

Diviners and magicians were banned, for the sake of public order. The branding of criminals on the face was forbidden because this defaced the image of the Godhead. Infanticide was classed as homicide, whereas before the exposing of children had been a recognised way of getting rid of unwanted children.

Under Constantine, Sunday was placed on the same level as other public holidays, of which there had been 135 under the reign of Marcus Aurelius. In this law there was an injunction that people should attend public worship. In 395, under Theodosius, pagan feast-days were declared to be no longer public holidays.

**The new position of Christians** Constantine offered special concessions to Christians. Soon the rich were flocking into church for the sake of tax concessions, or to avoid wearisome service on city councils: Christian clergy were exempt from public duties. The social status of the high clergy quickly advanced. Increasingly, people from aristocratic backgrounds became bishops. Constantine invested people with the power of magistrates for proving wills and arbitrating in disputes. They dressed as aristocrats and this explains the origin of vestments today. They were also addressed by aristocratic titles such as 'illustrious' (313) though even before this (during the time of Galienus' Edict of Toleration) they had been addressed as 'your holiness'. In 314 the bishop of Rome was addressed as 'most glorious' (*glorissime papa*). This was a title previously reserved for those next in rank to the emperor's family. The leadership of the church in Rome became a big prize over which pitched battles were fought, often leaving many dead.

The model of ceremonial at the imperial court even came to influence some of the external forms of eucharistic worship such as the use of candles: it was the proper way in which the king of kings should be honoured. Later, under the emperor Justinian I (528-65), the same principle was applied to justify the making of statues. In the emperor's absence, statues were made of him and revered as if he were actually present.

**The quasi-divine status of the Emperor** Constantine saw himself as head of the church on earth – a status which the pope was later to adopt in the West. Seeing himself as the champion of Christianity, he intervened in the Arian controversy only because he wanted order in the churches. If there was any ecclesiastical trouble, he tended to send in the troops and exile the ringleaders.

Constantine virtually claimed to be the 13th apostle, which could be seen by the way in which he was depicted on a fresco on his tomb. Strangely enough, though, he was not actually baptised until the end of his reign for fear that he might apostasize and so be damned.

The results of Constantine's coming to power can be summarized as follows:

1. Christianity was recognised as legal, along with other cults.

2. Bishops became the right-hand men of the emperor. They wore the robes of aristocracy and were addressed as such.

3. The emperor became head of the Church after Christ.

4. Court ceremonial came to influence church services, with use of candles, incense and the processional led by the choir.

5. Larger church buildings were often erected with government grants.

6. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land were encouraged. These had been pioneered by Constantine's mother.

7. A reaction to the increasing worldliness of the Church produced monasticism: the single celled variety pioneered by Anthony or the monastic community as pioneered by Pachomius.

### **Between Constantine and Theodosius**

In 337 Constantine died and his three sons succeeded him. Constantine II died during a civil war three years later, thus leaving the empire divided between Constans who ruled in the West until 350 and Constantius in the East. Constans supported the pro-nicene party during the Trinitarian controversy. Athanasius and Marcellus appealed to him for reinstatement during their exile in the

West. But his strong desire for orthodoxy seems to have been motivated from rivalry for his brother Constantius who sided with the Arians.

In 350 Constantius became sole emperor and gave his whole weight to the Arian cause. It is under him that the first laws were issued against paganism.

In 361 Constantius died and Julian the Apostate reigned for three years, instituting his notorious pagan revival. His successor was a pro-nicene emperor.

Then the empire became divided again between two brothers, Valentinian I and Valens.

Valentinian reverted to Constantine's old policy of toleration of both Christian and pagans alike, but he did not meddle in church affairs. Valens in the East took a pro-arian line.

Valentinian I died in 375 and was succeeded by **Gratian** who was a convinced pro-nicene Christian. He was the first emperor to refuse to take on the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, chief priest of the Roman state cult. The title was later adopted by the pope! He also ordered the altar of the goddess Victory to be removed from the Senate, even though most of the members of the Senate were still pagans.

### **Theodosius**

Valens died in 378 and was succeeded by Theodosius. He directed his decrees not only against pagans but also against deviant forms of Christianity.

By 380 under Theodosius, rewards for Christians had given way to penalties for non-Christians. In that year, Theodosius took it for granted in his edict that there was a close link between his will and God's will. In that same year he even allowed himself to be described as 'the visible god'. Churches were carefully designed to emphasise the new hierarchy of Christ and the emperor.

The style was borrowed from the East. In Persia there had existed halls covered with a dome, the inside of which was adorned with sapphires sparkling with celestial blue brilliance, and standing out against the blue background of the stones were the golden images of the gods, glittering like stars in the firmament. This was to be the pattern for the mosaic encrusted interiors of Byzantine churches – displaying, not 'the golden images of the gods' but at least God and the demi-god (the emperor) who represented him here on earth. This is why the emperor is always depicted as wearing a halo. The only buildings that reflect this original style are in Ravenna, which was the only part of the Eastern empire to remain unscathed from subsequent Muslim alterations.

The first person to challenge the emperor was Ambrose who insisted that Theodosius do penance for ordering the massacre of those who had been involved in a riot in Thessalonica. On this occasion Ambrose threatened the emperor with excommunication if he did not comply. Later, the pope was to use this weapon of excommunication against rulers. On another occasion the emperor ordered that a local church rebuild at its own expense a synagogue which it had burned down. Ambrose persuaded the emperor to reverse his decision.

The main architect in the West of the concept of a Christian empire from which religious error could be excluded and its holder reduced to the rank of second-class citizen, was Ambrose of Milan. In fact, Ambrose seems have been the chief influence behind the legislation of Theodosius. It is under Gratian and later Theodosius that we come to specifically anti-pagan legislation:

380-1 The true Christian faith was defined in terms of doctrines held by the official bishops (patriarchs) of the



main cities of the empire. Life was made difficult for heretics and schismatics. Under Theodosius, apostates from Christianity were deprived of honours, hereditary rank and the right of inheritance. Temples were left to rot or taken over as churches.

391 Paganism was banned, though later edicts allowed some respite for Jews and pagans who were law-abiding (edict of 423).

408 Only members of the official church were allowed to be members of the imperial service. Decrees were enacted against Jewish-Christian marriages.

The death penalty was demanded for Christians who relapsed into paganism. Pagans were ordered to go to church for instruction. Exile and confiscation of property was decreed for those who refused baptism. Pagan children of tender years were to be baptised. Baptism was commanded for all citizens.

It was therefore Theodosius who ended the Constantinian toleration and produced the monstrous idea of State-Christianity, where all dissent or non-conformity was ruthlessly suppressed. However, it was the East that inherited the full brunt of this concept.

In spite of the measures taken by later Roman emperors to root out paganism, it still remained entrenched among the aristocracy of Rome and in rural areas. By the time of Theodosius the emperor had little or no control over great tracts of the Western Empire. Pagan philosophical schools flourished in Athens until the first half of the 6th century. The church adopted a policy of baptising much of what was pagan and covering it with a veneer of Christianity, provided a basic allegiance to its authority could be gained.

As we have seen, in the East the Byzantine empire took over directly from the Roman Empire, both politically and religiously. The Byzantine world did not think of itself

as two societies, sacred and secular but as a single society in harmony with the emperor as the earthly counterpart of the divine monarch. In 1453, with the capture of Constantinople, this original Christian empire came to an end and Christians became a minority ruled by Muslims. Without an emperor at their head, they looked to the patriarch for political guidance.

In the West, as the Roman Empire began to crumble under the onslaughts of the barbarians, the Church stepped into its shoes and became the guardian of the Roman way of life. With the absence of an emperor, it was the pope in Rome who came to resemble the Byzantine emperor as 'God's representative on earth'. But he found it hard to extend his power politically beyond the realm of the church without the co-operation of the secular power. On the contrary, it was the secular power which was always trying to influence the Church. Royal nomination of bishops started in Merovingian Gaul in the 6th century.

The true successor to Constantine was Charlemagne – a ruler who adopted Christianity and imposed it on the West at the point of the sword. His coronation service, making the king a sacred figure, came from Byzantium. Under him, state Christianity, long familiar in the Eastern Empire, returned to Europe. Like Constantine, he was an empire builder: the bricks of his empire were imperial soldiers, but the mortar was Christianity – a civil service of Christian clerics and monks.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Outside the New Testament, our main sources of information for this are the *Didache*, Justin's *First Apology*, Pliny's *Letter to Trajan* and *The Apostolic Tradition* (by Hippolytus), and Tertullian's *Apology*. From

these documents we gain information on the Lord's Supper and Baptism. However, the practices mentioned may only have been restricted to certain geographic areas.

The early Christian service that was held every Sunday was divided into two parts. the first part consisted in readings from OT, epistles and gospels interspersed with psalms or hymns. It ended with a sermon. Then unbelievers were asked to leave and the second part began: the Lord's supper. This consisted in prayers and intercessions and climaxed in the long prayer of thanks, followed by distribution of the elements. These (bread and wine) had previously been brought into the church by believers, as a symbol of their consecration to the Lord.

Prayer was of two kinds: silent prayer (kneeling) and public prayer (standing). Unbelievers were not permitted to be present during prayer times.

Liturgy seems to have been used right from the beginning, though there was also room for extemporary prayer.

The brotherly kiss was used, but men kissed men and women kissed women.

**The Lord's Supper.** Originally this was the climax of the fellowship meal (*agape*), but in time it became separated from it, for reasons of church order or because of the pressure of persecution. By the time of Pliny's *Letter to Trajan* this had obviously become the case, in at least certain churches. "They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before sunrise and reciting an antiphonal hymn to Christ as God, and binding themselves with an oath (lat: *sacramentum*, from which we get our word sacrament) – not to commit any crime, but to abstain from all acts of theft, robbery and adultery,

from breaches of faith, from denying a trust when called upon to honour it. After this, it was their custom to separate and then meet again to partake of food". The *Didache* gives some detail as to the liturgy used (in the Syriac church). The other writings quote bits of liturgy, especially from the final prayer of thanks at the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's supper was central to early Christian worship. Its elements were:

1. Commented readings of Scripture, which was lengthy, as no one had copies of Scripture. 2. Prayers 3. Hymn singing

The communion proper began with a kiss of peace. Only those baptised were allowed to attend. The others had to leave.

The prayer of consecration, during which the saving acts of God were recounted.

distribution of the elements.

Tertullian mentions the *agape*: 'After prayer, a light meal is taken with a consciousness of the presence of the Lord. After water for the hands and lights have been brought in, each is invited to sing to God before the rest from what he knows of the Holy Scriptures or from his own heart...In the same way prayer closes the meal...'

**Baptism.** The *Didache* mentions the liturgy that was used. As time went on, the period of instruction for the candidate got longer and longer, as people came from increasingly pagan backgrounds. Eventually the instruction of catechumenae could last for up to 3 years! People were baptised naked (men and women separately). On emerging from the water, they received:

1) a white robe (new life), b) anointing (as priests), c) drank water (sign of cleansing), d) received milk and honey (symbols of the promised land).

Baptism was by immersion or by pouring until the 9th century. However, as early as the 2nd century Tertullian records that some Christian parents had their children baptised, though he did not approve of the practise. Baptism by dabbing water on the head had been practised long before, but usually only in extreme conditions of poor health, deathbed baptisms or scarcity of water. It was in the colder areas of Western Europe in the 9th cent. that this alternative form of baptism became more common. In Italy, baptism by immersion was continued until the 13th century and the Eastern Churches still baptise by immersion.

**Rebaptism:** normally speaking the church did not require re-baptism if the person came from a schismatic or heretical church. Previous baptism was seen as valid as an outward act even though it had conferred no spiritual benefit. What was required was the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit.

Tertullian mentions other aspects of Christian worship: "...we come together for meeting and assembly, to approach God in prayer...we pray also for the emperors, for their ministers and those in authority, for the security of the world, for general peace, for the postponement of the end. We meet to read the divine Scriptures...we also have exhortations, rebukes, divine censure...Every man brings some modest coin once a month, or whenever he wishes...the funds are spent on the support and burial of the poor.

**Church Buildings and services:** The edict of Toleration of Galienus (260) marks the emergence of the

Church from its underground existence. Prior to this, Christians had either met in private houses (some of which were later turned into churches, which has been proved by excavations carried out) or in cemetaries or catecumbs (this was because they reckoned they had fellowship with the departed martyr during the Lord's Supper). It is around this date (260) that we have the first record of a church being built. It probably resembled a Roman Town Hall or Basilica with a rectangular plan and a semi-circular apse at one end. In this apse would be a chair for the local bishop, with seats for the elders arranged on each side. In front of these seats would be the altar-table. The tomb-like stone altar seems to have come into use after the time of Constantine when it marked the spot of a martyr's grave. This part of the building would be slightly raised. The rest of the building would be empty, and apart from perhaps some painted design on the wall plaster, it would be unadorned. In most cases, the martyrs remains were transferred from the local cemeteries to the site of the church. Now, the presence of the martyrs' remains in city churches began to create new sites of holiness: churches were no longer simply the gathering places of the faithful for worship, but shrines of the saints, holy places.

Door-keepers admitted the worshippers and often men and women were segregated on opposite sides of the church. The service would be divided into two parts, the preaching and the Bible reading coming first, followed by the eucharist. Assistant clergy would read the lessons and conduct the prayers. The prayers would be extempore but in form fairly predictable. Only the closing doxology would be fairly stereotyped. Congregational hymn-singing was as yet unknown, being introduced later by Ambrose, but there might be solo singing, if a suitable gifted man was a member of the congregation.

The climax of the first part of the service would be the sermon by the bishop. After this the bread and the wine would be brought in and the rite of the eucharist would begin. The congregation would take part only in a few responses. The bishop's great prayer of thanksgiving would be extempore. Then the congregation might join in the hymn like: "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Isaiah 6). Then one of the lesser clergy would call the people to receive the elements of bread and wine. The congregation would then file up to the altar and receive them. The service would end with a short prayer and dismissal.

**Early Christian Music:** Leading experts are in agreement that, though there is some evidence that Hellenistic poetic meters entered into some Christian hymnody at a later period, the vast majority of early Christian hymnody was distinctly Jewish and originated in the synagogue.' This fact is also evident in the New Testament where Paul commands the Colossians to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16), which is probably a reference to the music of the synagogue. Sendrey states: 'But reports of the Early Church Fathers about the meetings of the first Christians comprise numerous references to the paramount importance attached by the new religion to psalm-singing, as practiced in the traditional, i.e., Jewish manner.... As a matter of fact, the first Christian songs have been either ancient synagogal chants, or were based upon Jewish "tunes," which were familiar to everybody at those times'

**Church festivals:** The great festivals of the Church were Easter and the festivals of the martyrs. Christmas was generally celebrated in the West only after the tri-

umph of Constantine, when the time of Christ's birth was reckoned to coincide with the day of the Unconquered Sun on 25th December. It was not until the last years of the fourth century that Christmas became a regular festival in the Eastern Churches. Many of them continued to celebrate the birth of Christ on January 6th, as they had done before. The only other annual festival in most churches was Pentecost, celebrated by both East and West 50 days after Easter and marking the end of the Easter festivities. In this period between Easter and Whitsun it was considered improper to kneel when praying, as this was considered a sign of mourning.

Easter was the normal time for baptisms. Some weeks before Easter, names were taken of those who desired to be baptised. The candidates were carefully scrutinised to see if their general behaviour made them fit to be received. Some occupations were considered to be incompatible with Christian discipleship. They underwent special instruction from the bishop, with the assistance of the other clergy. Of prime importance was the learning of the creed. After fasting and having various exorcisms pronounced over them, the candidates came to the evening before Easter Day.

**The debate over the date of Easter** Most Christian churches kept the nearest Sunday to Passover, but some, especially in Asia Minor (including the apostle John in Ephesus), kept the actual date of Passover. This party was called the Quartodecimani. Victor, bishop of Rome, tried to excommunicate the Christians of Asia Minor for this but was severely censured by Irenaeus. The problem was settled at the First Nicene Council.

The argument about the date of Easter between the Celtic and Roman churches was not quite the same. The



Celts held that it should be celebrated on the Sunday between the 14th and 22nd of the month, whereas the Romans celebrated it on the Sunday between the 15th and 21st days of the month.

## THE MONASTIC MOVEMENT

**Jewish origins:** Christianity inherited the idea of monasticism from Judaism. The Essenes were essentially monks. Some, like the *Therapeutae* were hermits that lived in caves. They came from Egypt where desert communities had existed for at least 2,000 years. The *Margherians*, in Syria, were also monastic troglodytes. Other cave-monks were the groups practising baptism who lived near the Jordan, of which John the Baptist and his followers are the best known.

**Christian beginnings:** Even in the pages of the New Testament we can read of women (usually widows) who made a vow not to marry again in order to devote themselves to prayer. For this the church agreed to support them financially (1 Tim 5 and possibly also 1 Cor 7,25-40). As early as the 2nd cent. one can find in Christian communities those who had renounced marriage and nearly all their possessions in order to give themselves to a life of prayer and good works. In the first three centuries ascetics and virgins did not live in common, they stayed in the world and lived among other members of the Christian community, in their own houses, owning property and earning their living by work.

Others during times of persecution had retired to the desert to lead an ascetic life. Following the persecutions, from about 313 onwards, certain burning questions were being asked:

1. How could an expanding church maintain an official position in society without compromising its moral force?

2. How could certain Christians who had a martyr complex express their fervour? There were now no more persecutions and they were left in a vacuum. Ascetics began to withdraw from local churches to give themselves to good works, to care for the sick, the prisoners, the orphans and the widows. At the same time that hordes were entering the church after 314 hordes were also leaving it for monastic life in the desert. In fact, so popular did monastic life become that even pagans applied to become monks!

It was Origen who gave a rationale for the monastic movement. His writings were dominated by the ideal of the martyr who hoped for nothing in this world but sought for union with the Lord in his sufferings. The trouble was that when this ideal became fused with those of classical Greece, the result was something very individualistic. In his commentary on the *Song of Songs*, Origen hints that at its deepest level of interpretation, it speaks of the bride as the individual soul which becomes united to the Divine Word in a sacred marriage. What started off as a good thing, went sour under the influence of platonic ideas and ended up as a quest for personal salvation by means of ascetic practice.

Monks as a class did not emerge until the last decades of the 3rd century. The movement started in Egypt because in Alexandria and in the delta of the Nile there was a large Christian population living near uninhabited land with a climate that allowed existence all the year round on a sparse diet in caves or primitive shelters. Very soon, monks were exempted from military service, taxes and certain forms of conscripted labour. As time went on there was always the danger that the

monastic movement would become a convenient refuge (rather like the French Foreign Legion) for people who wanted to escape from their responsibilities in society: those who had gone bankrupt, criminals on the run, homosexuals or just insecure people who wanted to impress others.

While their focuss was on the spiritual, chiefly prayer and contemplation, the monks also engaged in social work on behalf of the disadvantaged – the hungry, the homeless, the elderly and the sick who could find refuge in the large *coenobia*. In this respect these monasteries served as a "safety net" for the underclass in the Byzantine period. Such monasteries received large donations from wealthy believers for their charitable work.

In many respects the standard of living in the Judaeian desert monasteries was higher than that of most people in the Byzantine empire. The monasteries were not crowded and it is probable that the monks from the lower and middle-class strata of society improved themselves by joining a monastery.

Before going into detail, it is important to establish an overview of the monastic movement as a whole. There were basically two tendencies:

1. **THE FANATICAL HERMITS** heavily influenced by the Eastern platonic tradition. These were the extremists: Antony, Shenouti (who chiefly influenced the Coptic tradition), Evagrius (friend of Jerome and heavily influenced by Origen). This form of asceticism spread to Syria and Asia Minor where it achieved several bizarre forms (eg. Simon the Stilite who spent most of his life perched on a column). Cassian brought this type of monasticism to the West. From Southern France it spread via Scotland to Ireland and became characteristic

of Celtic Christianity. It was later exported from Ireland by Irish monks.

2. **MODERATE ASCETICS**, who lived in communities in which their zeal was strictly regulated. They were required to be of service to the community and to be under the authority of the local bishop. Basil of Caesarea founded this type of monasticism. From there it went to Russia, but it was Benedict of Nursia who introduced it to the West. From Italy it came to England via Pope Gregory (who was himself a Benedictine) and Augustine whom he sent to England as a missionary. It gradually replaced the celtic form of monasticism. The English monks who went out as missionaries to Europe were Benedictine monks. The Benedictine order became an important tool in promoting papal supremacy throughout Europe and eventually replaced all other orders.

**ANTONY** became in later years a renowned master whose saintly life and wise counsel attracted innumerable disciples and visitors. He had renounced the property inherited from his parents and in obedience to the command of Jesus to the rich man, gradually moved further and further from society until he finally retreated to the inaccessible tombs to fight the devils out in the desert. There he was assailed by many sexual temptations as the devils projected into his mind flashbacks of his earlier life.

The next step was for hermits to meet together daily or weekly to celebrate the Eucharist and to exchange wise counsel. The fathers in the desert lived alone in twos or threes, supporting themselves on their own vegetable patches. Much time was spent in prayer and memorisation. These were the famous *anchorites* who lived mostly in the northern part of Egypt. This type of

monasticism was called Skete monasticism from Skete which was where it was first practised.

Soon after his death, Athanasius, his lifelong friend and companion, wrote his biography, which became a spiritual classic and contributed much to the expansion of the monastic ideal. The golden age of Egyptian hermit life ran from 330-440.

Roughly contemporary with him, though far to the south in the Thebaid (Upper Egypt) was Pachomius.

**PACHOMIUS** started a community of ascetics by the Nile at Tabennisi, where great numbers of monks were set to strenuous manual labour under strict discipline. Obedience to Pachomius' organisation was military and complete. Thus it was that Pachomius became the first master of the common life. Recruits came in hundreds. Chastity and poverty were presupposed, to which Pachomius added obedience if they wanted to join the community. They also drew up a penal code. Work was an essential feature of the life. The head of the community was an '*abbas*' (from aramaic *abba* = father, from which our word 'abbot' subsequently came). In the East he was known as a *hegumenos* (gr. leader).

His monasteries were small towns of 1,000-2,000 inhabitants, divided into houses of 30-40, in which the monks were grouped according to their skills and crafts. This type of community was called a *coenobium*. (from: *koinos bios* = common life) Mary, his sister, founded a convent for nuns.

**Shenouti** was an extreme product of Pachomius' ideal. He was the abbot of the White Monastery near Sohag in Upper Egypt. He lived to be 100 years old. His monks were organised into a terrible private army. They were subject to a very strict regime with savage

punishments (even the death penalty) for those who misbehaved themselves. He used this army to burn down pagan temples and to beat up prominent Christians who disagreed with him theologically. He appeared at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and hurled a large book at Nestorius who was on trial for heresy.

The same type of asceticism spread to the judaeen desert and into the syriac-speaking world. A further development was the creation of a new type of organisation called a *lavra* where a number of individual monks would have their cells in proximity to an outstanding leader and would meet for common prayers and common meals but would still preserve more solitariness than was common in a *coenobium*. The Judaeen desert became a favoured location for this new type of organisation.

In Syria and Mesopotamia, asceticism occasionally took bizarre forms. The majority of the monks were very simple Syriac-speaking people, ignorant of Greek. Their recorded mortifications make alarming reading. A heavy iron chain worn as a belt was a frequent form of austerity. A few adopted the life of animals and fed on grass, living in the open air without shade from the sun and with the minimum of clothing, claiming to be 'fools for Christ's sake.'

At the monastery of Telanissos in Syria, Symeon the Stylite practised his ideosyncratic austerity by living on the top of a column. He attracted many disciples and later one of them, Daniel (403-93) spent 33 years on a column at Rumeli Hisar near Constantinople.

When the Muslims arrived in Palestine and Syria in the 7th cent., some hermits fled to Mount Athos in Greece. In 963 the first Greek monastic community was founded there.

But there remained an ideological tension between the hermit ideal and the belief that the monastic life required a community under rule with obedience to a superior as an essential principle. In practice there long continued to be numerous ascetics who were neither solitaries nor incorporated in a community (*coenobium*) but wandered from place to place, and were regarded as an irresponsible, disturbing element.

At the opposite end of the intellectual scale stood the ascetics influenced by Origen. Basil of Caesarea was one of them but he rejected much of Origen's speculation, which was heavily influenced by platonism.

**BASIL OF CAESAREA** rejected the hermit ideal as a private and personal quest divorced from the Gospel demand of love and service to one's neighbour. He was the first to give institutional form to the novitiate, to insist on obedience as a means of restraining excess, competitiveness and ostentation of wierdoes who were getting the ascetic movement a bad name. Severe penalties were prescribed by Basil for monks who set themselves austere fasts without permission. In his continual emphasis on restraint, Basil anticipates the spirit of the Benedictine rule. He put his monastic communities under the authority of the local bishop, so that they continued to worship with the church. This principle worked well as long as the bishop was good, but there could be abuses of it. Within 30 years of Basil's death, the bishop of Caesarea was using his monks to terrorize the city militia which had been assigned to protect the exiled John Chrysostom who was his theological enemy. In Egypt, the successors of Athanasius did not take long to discover that a force of peasant monks was an ideal instrument for destroying pagan temples and for use in conflicts involving heresy.

In the East there was a wave of temple-smashing under the anti-pagan prefect Cynegius (384-8) who had occasionally seen to it that the zealous monks were unmolested in their demolition of pagan temples by providing military units to keep angry peasants at bay.

The Byzantine and Russian monks took Basil as their model and Benedict continued the same tradition in the West.

**EVAGRIUS** unlike Basil, was another extremist but an intellectual one. It is important to discuss him because much of his work formed the intellectual basis of Greek ascetic theology which eventually passed to the West. He absorbed the worst of Origen's teaching. First of all, Origen's work had been expounded at Alexandria by Didimus the Blind (at whose feet Jerome sat for a while) and at Constantinople by the archdeacon Evagrius, a close friend of Gregory of Nazianzus. A love affair led Evagrius to leave Constantinople for Jerusalem and finally the Egyptian desert where he became one of the most influential writers on the spiritual life. He introduced order and method especially into the processes of contemplation. He classified the principal or root sins as being 8 in number, his list being gluttony, fornication, avarice, dejection (or: lack of pleasure), anger, weariness, vainglory and pride. He divided them among the different parts of the soul as distinguished by Plato. He differentiated types of contemplation and arranged them in a scale of advancing apprehension, from the corporeal to the incorporeal and so upward to the Holy Trinity. At the highest level, he taught that prayer was a wordless, mental act, and must be free of any physical pictures of God which the imagination, prompted by evil powers, might form. He insisted on the need of moral indifference to external experience and emotions (the



apathy of the Stoics), and intellectual concentration on the unseen deity. Much of his language about the mystery of prayer entered permanently into the stream of Greek ascetic theology, and through John Cassian, passed to the West.

**CASSIAN** (360-435) was a monk of Scythian origin who had undergone a long ascetic training in Palestine and Egypt before undertaking his pioneer work in the West. His sympathies were with Evagrius and his Origenist friends. He moved to Constantinople where John Chrysostom made him deacon, then to Rome in 404, and finally about 415 to Marseille close to where he organised monastic communities of men and women at St. Victor based on Eastern models. On the island of Lérins, a man called Honoratus founded a similar monastery. Both acted as an important bridge between Eastern monasticism and the West, for it was this brand of monasticism that influenced the Celts.

In reply to a request from bishop Castor of Apt (north of Marseille) for advice on Egyptian asceticism, Cassian wrote the *Institutes* which influenced the Benedictine rule. Not only did he follow the ideas of Origen and Evagrius but listed many of the practices of those living in the Egyptian desert. Although Cassian thus carried over to the West much Greek ascetic theology, he was a moderating influence who tried to dissuade over-enthusiastic monks from following some of the more extreme practices ascribed to Martin of Tours. He was, however, a strong semi-pelagian and it was through the popularity of his rule that the Celtic Church became semi-pelagian.

**Martin of Tours** (316-97) was another important name in Western monasticism. He abandoned a military

career, studied under bishop Hilary of Poitiers who gave him a site at Ligugé where in 361 he founded a monastery after the pattern of Pachomius. This was the first monastery to be founded in France. As he became a noted exorcist, he had many encounters with Satan himself. In 371 he was made bishop of Tours and established another monastery in the vicinity (corruption of the latin *maius monasterium* = a larger monastery).

There he founded a community and lived such an austere life that soon a biography came to be written about him which was widely circulated. The West had found its Antony.

One of the disciples of Cassian, Germanus (German), founded a monastery at Auxerre, from where this ideal spread across to Ireland, possibly via Ninian in Scotland. Germanus was on two occasions sent to conduct an anti-Pelagian crusade in England. Palladius, Germanus' pupil, was sent by pope Celestine to do the same in Ireland in 431. After a year, Palladius died in Ireland and another man, a Briton called Patricius (Patrick), was sent out from Auxerre as his successor. Patrick had already spent some time in Ireland as a slave (having been brought there from Britain by Irish pirates who had kidnapped him). After 6 years he had escaped and come to France where he spent some time at the monastery of St. Honoré at Lérins. Following God's call, he returned to England but then went back to Auxerre to prepare for missionary service. By this time he was 40 years old. Patrick had above all a vision for evangelism. However, it must be stressed that when Patrick came to Ireland, there was already a Celtic church in existence: he merely concentrated on evangelising parts of Ireland that were still pagan.

According to the English historian Gildas, there was a monastic revival in England after 450 when the Saxon

invasion was checked by a man called Ambrosius Aurelianus whose successor Artorius (probably King Arthur) led his Romano-British army to a decisive victory over the invading Saxons at Mount Badon near Swindon. This provided the breathing space, which later allowed a monastic revival to take place. It came from Gaul and ultimately spread over to Ireland. It became associated with two Welsh saints Illtyd, David and Cadoc. Among Cadoc's pupils was Gildas who with his monks introduced the idea of learning into Ireland, which then became a university centre for the whole of Europe.

**CELTIC MONASTICISM** Celtic monasticism was known for its ascetic rigour, a high level of culture thanks to the influence of Ninian of Scotland. Celtic monks would spend the whole night on a hillside lying on their backs with their arms outstretched. Others would recite psalms standing up to their necks in water. Even inside the monasteries, discipline was strict. Anyone who forgot to say Amen after a prayer received six strokes of the lash (whip). A celtic monastery was an organisation revolving around the abbot (not the bishop as head of the diocese, as in England). Celtic 'monasteries' were in fact more like mission stations housing numerous families as well as monks and often presided over by an aristocrat who was not necessarily a cleric.

Celtic monasticism produced such missionary figures as Columba (521-97) who founded many monasteries in Northern Ireland before coming to settle permanently on the Island of I (corruption: Iona) off the coast of Scotland in 563 from where he launched a mission among the Northern Picts. He was known for his somewhat fiery temperament: he had left Ireland as the result of a quarrel with the king. It was Columba's rule that prevailed

in Celtic monasteries before the coming of that of Benedict.

Columbanus (534-61) from Northern Ireland undertook missionary work which took place in the Rheinland and the Alps. He founded the abbeys of Luxeuil in France (509) and Bobbio in Italy (612) which became cultural centres of great importance. He was a notable scholar and one of the few men of his time to know both Greek and Hebrew. During the 7<sup>th</sup> century Ireland became the only centre of learning amidst a sea of cultural chaos in Europe. As a representative of the Celtic church he opposed monophysitism and the pope for his claim to papal supremacy.

However, there were other monasteries in Europe where a different rule was observed. This was the rule of Basil which was introduced into the West by Benedict of Nursia in 520.

**BENEDICT** of Nursia combined the rules of Basil of Caesarea and Cassian. This meant that some of Origen's platonic ideas were carried over into the rule of Benedict. Benedict's rule was taken up by Gregory the Great and popularised to such an extent that it became the standard rule for monasteries in the West for the next 600 years.

The Benedictine rule insisted that the monks remain in their monastery and not roam about as the Celtic monks had done. Much importance was attached to work and to prayer. Much time was also spent in academic work, such as the copying of manuscripts. This latter emphasis came from Cassiodorus who founded a monastery in Calabria in 540. Under the influence of Gregory the Great, the Benedictine Rule had, by the time of Charlemagne, become the only rule to be observed within his domains. The first monastery he founded was

at Monte Cassino and then elsewhere in Italy. His rule was brought to England by Augustine and then transmitted to the Celtic Church by Wilfrid (634-709) and ultimately replaced the earlier influence of Celtic monasticism. The missionaries who then went out to evangelize Europe brought the Benedictine rule with them – such men as Boniface who founded the abbey at Fulda.

**Western monasticism** differed from the eastern variety in the following areas:

- 1) It was practical and missionary minded.
- 2) It was communal.
- 3) It was not in conflict with what was considered to be a worldly church but in fact became the church's right arm.

In Spain the monastic movement was characterised by **pactualism**, that is congregations of monasteries and a trend towards joint monasticism (for men and women).

### **The monastic movement in the Balkans**

Monasticism existed in the Balkans before the coming of the Slavs, especially along the Dalmatian coast and in Macedonia. The movement spread under the impetus of the Eastern Church especially under the patronage of the church at Constantinople, and from the 8th cent. onwards initiatives came from Mt. Athos in Greece. Starting with Cyril and Methodius and going to their disciples Clement and Naum and others, monasticism came to play an important historical role in the promotion and spread of Slavonic culture and the bringing of the Slavs into the Orthodox sphere of culture. In about 890, Clement of Ohrid founded a monastery in Ohrid and his pupil Naum founded one at the southern end of the lake. The Bulgarian emperor Samuel supported the building of

11 monasteries along the shores of Lake Prespa. From the 10th to the 12th centuries many Byzantine emperors and bishops had monasteries constructed in Bulgaria. A more detailed account occurs in the section on the Middle Ages

### **An assessment of the monastic movement**

The monastic ideal is in contradiction with the desire of Jesus not to see his disciples opt out of the world (John 17, 15). Besides, the platonic idea of achieving one's own salvation came to dominate the whole movement: it was the idea of shaking off the material world by a series of ascetic exercises in order to arrive at an ecstatic union with God by way of contemplation. Their masters in this respect were Clement and Origen. What was often the main purpose of it all was to achieve one's own salvation through austere practices. It is also a sad commentary on the worldliness that had slipped into the church since the end of the persecutions that the only way they saw of living a saintly life was to opt out of the world altogether. However, many of the monks of that time were really sincere men and showed themselves to be, in their own way, faithful witnesses to the Gospel

The missionary efforts of the monks were of strategic importance. When the Roman Empire dissolved, Christianity was unable to expand because it had been mostly an urban religion. The monks became the answer to the 'evangelisation' of the countryside. There the church was organised along monastic lines, as the social unit was the tribe, not the city. Bishops had belonged to the phenomenon of urban Christianity and so were superseded by abbots in importance. The monks were on the wavelength of the people of the countryside, so much so that they often compromised by converting

sacred wells, trees and stones into the shrines of Christian saints.

## THE DARK AGES

The fall of the western Roman Empire created a number of independent kingdoms, each of which was of great significance for the later history of the church in its territory. It also gave new functions and power to two institutions that had begun to develop earlier: monasticism and the papacy. Finally, new invasions, this time from the southeast, posed new challenges for Christianity. Each of these developments merits separate consideration.

### The Barbarian Kingdoms

Although the "barbarians" appeared to the Romans as looters with their minds set on destruction, most of them really aspired to settle within the borders of the Roman Empire, and there to enjoy some of the benefits of a civilization that until then they had only known from afar. Thus, after a period of wandering, each of the major invading bodies settled in a portion of the Empire – some because that was the territory they fancied, and others simply because they had been pushed into that land by other invaders.

**The Vandals**, who crossed the Rhine in 407, wandered across France and Spain, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar in 429, and took Carthage in 439. By then they were virtual masters of all the northern coast of Africa from the Straits to the borders of Egypt. They then took to the sea and occupied Sicily, Corsica, and

Sardinia. In 455, they sacked the city of Rome, and the destruction they wrought was even greater than that of the Visigoths forty-five years earlier. Their rule in North Africa was disastrous for the church. They were Arians, and repeated persecutions broke out against both Catholics and Donatists. Finally, after almost a century of Vandal rule, the area was conquered by General Belisarius, of the Byzantine Empire. That empire, with its capital in Constantinople, was enjoying a brief renaissance under the leadership of Emperor Justinian, whose dream was to restore the ancient glories of the Empire. The eastern invaders, whom North Africans called "Greeks," brought in still another form of Christianity which, although agreeing in doctrine with that of the western Catholics, showed marked differences in terms of culture and daily practices. The net result was that, when the area was conquered by the Moslems late in the seventh century, they found Christianity badly divided, and it eventually disappeared.

**The Visigoths** – another barbarian group – defeated the Romans at the battle of Adrianople in 378, then swept through the Balkans, and took Rome in 410. By 415 they were in Spain, and they ruled that country until they in turn were overthrown by the Moslems early in the eighth century. The earliest church building in Spain is a Visigoth church dating from 661 AD. The political history of their kingdom was chaotic. Only fifteen of their thirty-four kings died of natural causes or in the field of battle. The rest were either murdered or deposed. They too were Arian, but they did not persecute the orthodox in their territories to the extent that the Vandals did in theirs. Almost two centuries after the conquest, it was clear that the orthodox descendants of the conquered inhabitants were the guardians of ancient culture, and that their



participation was necessary in order to provide the kingdom with a measure of stability. This led to the conversion of the Visigoth King Recared (586-601) to Nicene orthodoxy, which he solemnly embraced at a great assembly in Toledo, in A.D. 589. After the king, the vast majority of the nobles became Catholic, and Arianism soon disappeared.

The outstanding Christian leader of the entire history of the Visigothic kingdom was Isidore of Seville. He was a scholar who sought to preserve as much as possible of ancient culture. His book *Etymologies* is a veritable encyclopedia that shows the state of knowledge at his time, not only in religious matters, but also in astronomy, medicine, agriculture, and so forth. Although one of the best, it is typical of the writings of the time, for all Isidore could do was to collect and classify the wisdom of the past, with very little by way of original thought. Yet, it was through the works of scholars such as Isidore that the Middle Ages learned of the glories and the wisdom of antiquity.

After the conversion of Recared, the church played the role of legislator for the Visigothic kingdom. In this it provided a measure of order, although in reading the decrees of its councils one cannot but cringe at the injustice and the inequalities that reigned. For instance, a council gathered at Toledo in 633 decreed that priests could only marry with their bishops' permission, and that if any disobeyed, the priest was to be condemned to "do penance for some time," while his wife was to be taken away and sold by the bishop.

The legislation regarding Jews was similar. The same council – whose president was Isidore of Seville, the most enlightened man of his time, decreed that Jews should not be forced to convert to Christianity, but that those who had been forcibly converted earlier would not

be allowed to return to the faith of their ancestors, for this would be blasphemy. Furthermore, such converts were forbidden any dealings with Jews who retained their ancient faith, even if they were their closest relatives. And if any of them were found to be observing some of their traditional practices, particularly "the abominable circumcisions," their children were to be taken away from them. Furthermore, any Jew who was found to be married to a Christian woman had to choose between conversion and leaving his wife and children. If the case was reversed, and the wife was Jewish and refused conversion, she had to leave the children with the father.

Even after the conversion of Recared, and in spite of the efforts of the church, the Visigothic kingdom continued to be politically unstable and plagued with violence and arbitrariness. King Recesvinth (649-672), for instance, killed seven hundred of his enemies, and distributed their wives and children among his friends. Finally, under King Roderick (710-711), the Moslems invaded Spain and put an end to Visigothic rule. By then, however, Christianity had become so rooted in the country, that it became the rallying point in the long struggle to reconquer the peninsula from the Moslem Moors.

The **Ostrogoths** established a kingdom based on Ravenna which had previously been a Byzantine enclave. As they were Arians this was reflected in the churches they built. Learning flourished at the court of Theodoric where Boethius was one of his leading scholars, subsequently condemned to death for alleged conspiracy with the hated Byzantines.

**The Burgundians and Franks:** During most of the fifth century, Gaul was divided between the Burgundians, who were Arians, and the Franks, who were still pagans. The Burgundians, however, did not persecute the Catholics, as did the Vandals in North Africa. On the contrary, they imitated their customs, and soon many Burgundians had accepted the Nicene faith of their Catholic subjects. In 516, King Sigismund was converted to orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, and soon the rest of the kingdom followed suit.

The Franks (whose country came to be known as "France") were at first an unruly alliance of independent tribes, until a measure of unity was brought by the Merovingian dynasty named after its founder, Meroveus. Clovis, Meroveus' grandson and the greatest of the Merovingian line, was married to a Christian Burgundian princess, and on the eve of a battle promised that he would be converted if his wife's God gave him victory. As a result, on Christmas Day, A. D. 496, he was baptized, along with a number of his nobles. Shortly thereafter, most of the Franks were baptized. It was during the reign of the Merovingian kings that France acquired its three most important national saints: Martin of Tours, Dennis (or Dionysius, a martyr from the Decian persecution) and a nun called Geneviève (Genovefa):

In 534, the Burgundians were conquered by the Franks, and thus the whole region was united. The later Merovingians, however, were weak kings, and by the seventh century the actual government was in the hands of "chamberlains," who in reality were prime ministers. One of these, Charles Martel (that is, "the Hammer") united the Franks against the Muslims under a feudal system which enabled him to keep a standing army. He led the Frankish troops against the Muslims, who had taken Spain, crossed the Pyrenees, and threatened the

very heart of Europe. He defeated them at the battle of Tours in 732. By then he was virtual king, but did not claim that title. It was his son, Pepin the Short, who decided that the time had come to rid himself of the useless king Childeric III, known as "the Stupid." With the consent of Pope Zacharias, he forced Childeric to abdicate and become a monk. He was then anointed king by Bishop Boniface, who was acting under papal instructions. This was of paramount importance for the later history of Christianity, for Pepin's son, Charlemagne, would be the greatest ruler of the early Middle Ages, one who sought to reform the church, and who was crowned Holy Roman emperor by the pope.

## THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

### THE CHURCH IN THE EAST

**Church and State:** By 324 Constantine had made himself master of the Roman world. He then established a new capital on the Bosphorus, at Constantinople, which he called his "New Rome". From the start, the Roman Emperor began to play the most important role in the church. He held himself personally responsible for unity. He presided over Church councils, and those considered heretics or schismatics were banished by the secular arm. The Emperor, as the "living image of Christ", stood at the head of the Church. As the living icon of Christ, he was considered God's vice-regent on earth: the terrestrial rule of the emperor reproduced God's rule in heaven. It is almost as if the millenium had already arrived. The notion that his office was sacred came from the Roman title that emperors had always carried: *Pontifex Maximus* – chief

priest. Constantine was seen as God's chosen deputy. The imperial power was an earthly reflection of God's heavenly sovereignty.

This close connection between church and state meant that much church practice or even doctrine depended on opportunism. An emperor might want to placate two opposing parties within the church, and in that way Christian truth was compromised (cf. monophysitism). The findings of church councils were sometimes overturned to suit the changing political climate or the changing whims of various emperors or their wives (cf. the iconoclastic controversy). People were anathematised one moment and then later canonised (cf. leading proponents of the mystical movement). In view of these inconsistencies, it is hard to see how such a church can claim to be infallible in any sense.

The emperor also had extensive powers in the ecclesiastical sphere. He selected the patriarch from a list of 3 names submitted to him by the synod, and sometimes he did not even consult the synod. He could sack the patriarch if he defied the emperor. He presided over church councils. The decisions of such councils then became imperial law. The Church could overrule him, but they did not always do so. This happened during the monothelite controversy in the 7th century, the iconoclast dispute in the 8th and 9th centuries, and during reunion negotiations with the papacy in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The patriarch of Constantinople became known as the ecumenical patriarch from 595 onwards. This meant that he was spiritual ruler over a Christian empire. Until the schism with Rome, he recognised the pope as his senior, without ascribing to him direct jurisdiction in the East. He also recognised the autonomy of the other three Eastern patriarchs. He met with the other patriarchs at

Ecumenical councils to determine matters of faith and doctrine. The Council was regarded as being infallible.

Orthodox priests were mostly married and very often had a normal job. The role of monks and nuns was primarily to pray and thus uphold the social and spiritual fabric of the empire. These were either organised into communities or lived as hermits. Their aim was not to evangelise the multitudes, but to attain holiness ('to build one's own soul'). They also had to be able to give spiritual advice.

The Orthodox Church came to be polarised between dry scholasticism in theology on the one hand and extreme mysticism on the other. The danger in all this is that the Jesus as presented in the Gospels becomes abstract and irrelevant. Either he is intellectualised or mysticised to the point of irrelevance.

**The medieval Byzantine empire** really starts with the reign of the emperor **Justinian I** which lasted for over forty years (527-65). Before this, Theodosius I had divided the empire between his two sons: Arkady in the East and Honorius in the West. The factors that served to transform the East Roman empire into the Byzantine empire were: plague, warfare, social upheaval and the Arab Muslim assault of the 630s. These factors forced the empire to consolidate.

The achievements of Justinian can be summarised as follows:

1) Many magnificent churches were built, especially the Hagia Sophia (now the Blue Mosque in Istanbul). Another example is the Sv. Sofia church in Sofia, Bulgaria.

2) He built up an impressive legal system which developed that of Theodosius. Much of his legislation was very Christian. Laws were passed against

blasphemy and sacrilege, and homosexuality. Pagans were ordered to attend church and accept baptism. He closed philosophical schools in Athens. Jews and Samaritans were treated as second-class citizens with limited rights. He persecuted the Montanists. He organised an anti-Nestorian crusade but this failed to satisfy the monophysites, and this led to the condemnation of Origen.

3) He improved the Church, by insisting on a higher level of training and education for priests. He limited the power of monasteries and drew up a detailed code for monastic life.

4). He developed liturgies from various parts of the East: The liturgy of Basil of Caesarea (370-79) and Chrysostom (398-404) became most popular, with some additions from the liturgy of Jerusalem. Another liturgy came from Romanus the Melodist in Syria who composed magnificent hymns. The lives of many saints were published. Icons were increasingly venerated. They appeared in both private and public use: as a channel of divine power for the individual and as a talisman to guarantee success in battle.

5) He won back North Africa for Christendom and also liberated Italy from the barbarians which then virtually became a province of Byzantium. However, his gains in Italy were reversed when the Lombards invaded and Byzantine territory became limited to Ravenna. He also concluded a peace with the Persians on his eastern frontier. He established a foothold in Spain by pushing back the Visigoths there. However, he did not manage to subdue the Balkans where the Bulgarians ravaged Thrace and Illyricum.

In 626, Byzantium (Constantinople) was besieged by the Avars and the Sassanid dynasty in Persia but just

survived. Emperor **Heraclius** led the counterattack and beat the opponents. But he was unable to check the advance of the Arabs into Syria, Palestine and Egypt during his last years. Subsequent Muslim invasions twice got as far as Constantinople. The Empire survived further incursions from the Lombards in Italy, the Slavs in Greece and the Bulgars on the Danube, but it lost much territory. By the end of the 8th century, the Empire had been reduced to Western Asia Minor, the southern part of the Balkans west of Constantinople along the Aegean coast, central and southern Greece, and a narrow strip of the Adriatic coast. In the West, only southern Italy and Sicily were retained. Large numbers of Christians emigrated to the West from the Persian and later, Arab advances. By 800, four of the five patriarchates were outside the boundaries of the Empire (Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were under Muslim rule). Rome was outside also, having been invaded by the barbarians. She turned to the Franks. When the pope crowned Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans", a separate Roman Empire came into being in the West. Byzantine emperors continued to rule until the fall of Constantinople. Some of them lived lives as colourful as those of medieval popes which included adultery and murder.

## **THE EVOLUTION OF THE EASTERN THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE**

### **Evolution of Eastern Theology**

The thus far united theology of the universal Church began to develop into what we now know as Orthodox theology during the time of the emperor Justinian. It was under him that the **Second Council of Constantinople**



was called in 553. This was an attempt to rephrase the statements of the Council of Chalcedon more in terms with the theology of Cyril of Alexandria, and therefore nearer to monophysitism. It also floated the idea of monotheletism (Christ had only one will) in order to placate the monophysites. Justinian and certain eminent churchmen felt they had to do this, in order to maintain unity. Many had felt that the Council of Chalcedon had made too many concessions to Nestorianism. However, despite the efforts of Justinian, the Monophysites were still not reconciled to the statements of the Council of Chalcedon and eventually split off from the main church.

In 680-1 in Constantinople, at the **Third Council of Constantinople**, monophysitism was finally condemned. Interestingly enough, its greatest popular support had been in those regions of the East that were then conquered by the Arabs. The Monophysites finally separated themselves from the official church after this ruling. They are today represented by the Armenian, Syrian Jacobite, Coptic and Ethiopian Churches.

**A further dose of neo-platonism:** In about 500 a Syrian monk published a series of writings which he claimed were by **Dionysius the Areopagite** (converted under Paul's ministry in Athens). In pedalling this forgery, he sought to introduce neoplatonistic ideas into the Church. Unfortunately he was largely successful. In this way, neoplatonic ideas came to heavily influence Orthodox spirituality, especially through the monks. One of the main teachings in this work was that God is utterly transcendent, beyond anything that we can understand. Because of this we can only talk about God, not by saying what he is, but what he is not. This is called apophatic theology. The author of this work also had sections on: Divine names (biblical names of God and his nature), Mystical theology (about mystical union of the

soul with God), Heavenly Hierarchy (angels are classified according to their importance in the hierarchy), and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy (which he justified by seeing it as parallel to heavenly hierarchy). There are 3 orders of ministry – bishops, priests, deacons; three sacraments (baptism, eucharist, confirmation) and three stages of attainment to God – purification, enlightenment and union). As a result of this work, the Orthodox Church received a further heavy dose of neoplatonism, as if it had not absorbed enough from previous centuries!

Thus, in the Orthodox Church we see two parallel developments. On the one hand, an increasingly dry intellectual approach to the subject of theology, but on the other hand a highly mystical reaction, particularly amongst the monks, in the direction of neoplatonism.

**Maximus the Confessor** (580-662) wrote a commentary on the work of Dionysius the Areopagite in order to make it more acceptable to orthodox Christianity. John Scotus Erigena made a Latin translation of the work in about 850. In this way, the ideas contained in this work came to influence Thomas Aquinas.

Maximus, however, is chiefly known as the father of Byzantine theology. He championed the idea of the two wills in Christ. Monothelitism (doctrine of one will) had been propounded in an attempt to conciliate the monophysites and so avoid a split in the Church. However, when this failed and the monophysites found themselves under Muslim rule, there was no need to placate them anymore, and so monothelitism was anathematised at the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-1 and Maximus was thus vindicated. He is called 'the confessor' because he suffered physically for the stand he took when monothelism was official dogma: he was brutally tortured and sent into exile.

He also wrote extensively on other theological topics and thus became the most influential theologian of the Orthodox Church in the 7th century. But he was also an important mystical teacher.

**John of Damascus** (675-749): has been called the last of the fathers (theologians) of the Orthodox Church. It can be said that after John there was hardly any theological development in the Orthodox Church. He first served under the caliph in Syria and then became a monk at St. Sabas, near Jerusalem.

His main achievement was to systematise all previous teaching of the fathers. He did this in a work entitled *The Fount of Knowledge*. This consists of three parts:

1. Dialectic: a discussion of philosophical terms and concepts, especially those used in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Christ.
2. Heresies in Epitome: a brief summary of 103 heresies.
3. Exact exposition of the Orthodox Faith: this is a systematic summary of the teaching of the Greek Fathers divided into 100 chapters. This last section is thus a most important source book of what the present Orthodox church is supposed to believe.

**THE ICON CONTROVERSY** John was also involved in the controversy over icons.

It all revolved around the question of what was holy enough to deserve worship. By the beginning of the 7th century many of the cities of the empire had one or more local saint who was revered as intercessor and protector. From the 6th century both the church and the imperial government encouraged the development of both Christian icon-making and the honouring of monastic holy men. This led to abuse and idolatry. But such a system

had had its precedents: in ancient Rome the icon of the emperor was revered as if the Emperor himself were present. This practice did not cease when the emperor became a Christian. Constantine and his successors erected huge statues of themselves in Constantinople. As this was counted a "royal treatment", the same treatment was given to the supreme king, Jesus Christ. Justinian erected a huge statue of Christ over the main gate of Constantinople. By the end of the 6th century, icons of Christ or Mary were replacing icons of the Emperor. Even coins were minted by Justinian with the icon of Christ on one side.

Iconoclasts (those who wanted to destroy icons) and iconodules (those who wanted to have icons as an object of veneration) agreed on one fundamental point: a Christian people could not prosper unless it assumed the right attitude towards holy images. God punished idolatry but rewarded those who obeyed him. Emperors changed their view point on this question as time progressed and this affected the course of the controversy.

The controversy had important consequences:

1) It served to weaken the empire and so make it more easy for the Turks to conquer.

2) Iconoclasm negatively affected relations between the Eastern and Western Churches.

3) When iconodulia (reverence for icons) was in fashion this alienated the monophysites. For them it was sacrilege. An iconodule was either a Nestorian who reduced the divine nature to human terms by making an image of it, or he was a dyophysite who distinguished two natures in Christ (one of which he claimed to be able to reproduce as an image).

**Icons banned:** Emperor Leo III (717-41) launched an attack against icons. Perhaps the humiliating defeats and

a calamitous earthquake had reminded him that the God of Israel punished idolatry. But it was a struggle. In 730 he issued his edict ordering the removal or destruction of all religious icons in public places and churches. But the pope of Rome dared to condemn the destruction of icons. The emperor retaliated by removing Sicily, southern Italy and the entire Western part of the Balkans and Greece from the bishop of Rome's control. This more than anything else forced the bishop of Rome to look to the Franks for support and protection. Under Leo III and Constantine V, those supporting icons were persecuted vigorously. In 754 a synod met in Constantinople to condemn icons as idolatry. All remaining icons must be destroyed. Supporters of icons were excommunicated, mutilated and sent into exile. Monks were a particular target for this persecution because of their veneration for icons. The Emperor also attempted to limit the cult of saint-worship by destroying relics and condemning prayers made to the saints. The iconoclasts wanted to replace icons with the traditional Christian symbols of the cross, the Bible and the elements of the Lord's supper. These objects alone were to be considered holy. Beyond this, only ordained clergy and dedicated buildings possessed a kind of holiness. Constantine V argued that the elements of the Lord's Supper were the true icon of Christ, since they are consecrated. He apparently believed that the consecrated bread and wine are identical in substance with the flesh and blood of the divine and human Christ, because a proper icon must consist of the same substance as that which it represents. This was in essence what Aristotle had said.

John of Damascus wrote *A Defence of Sacred Images* (icons) in about 740 which was eventually to become the

final statement of Orthodox Church on this subject. He explained that an image was never of the same substance as its original, but merely imitated it. An icon's only significance is as a copy and reminder of the original. His argument is based on Plato's idea that everything we sense in this world is really an imitation of the eternal original form, which can be known only by the soul in the non-material world. To deny that any true icon could depict Christ was in effect a denial of the possibility of the incarnation. Although it was wrong to worship an icon, the presence of an icon of Christ could instruct and assist the believer. The same applied to icons of the saints or of Mary. It was seen as an aid to worship, not an object of worship. It was a window into heaven. Furthermore, John distinguished between worship (gt. *latreia*) which could only be offered to God, and veneration (gr. *proskynesis*) which could be offered to the emperor and to icons.

**Icons permitted:** But Leo IV (775-80) was not an energetic iconoclast. His wife Irene, with assistance from the patriarch Tarasius assembled bishops at Nicaea in 787 and had the whole iconoclastic movement condemned, and adopted the position of John of Damascus.

**Icons banned again:** But after this came another spate of disasters that caused them to think again, so Leo V (813-20) decided that iconoclasm should again become the official policy of the government. Accordingly, the current patriarch was deposed and replaced by a man after the Emperor's heart. Opponents were imprisoned after the anti-icon synod of 754 was affirmed again.

**Icons permitted again:** This state of affairs lasted until Michael III (842-67), when Theodora, the emperor's

mother, decided to give up iconoclasm to gain the greatest possible support for the dynasty. In 843 another synod negated the findings of the previous council and icons were permitted again. The Orthodox churches still celebrate the first Sunday in Lent each year as the "Feast of Orthodoxy" to commemorate the end of the iconoclastic controversy.

**THE ROLE OF THE MONASTERIES:** After the 10th century, a group of monasteries on Mount Athos, near Thessalonika, became increasingly important, for it was there that monks fled from Islamic persecution. In what is now Romania, a Greek monastery was founded at Cenad by a chieftain named Achtum who was baptized according to the Greek rite around 1002. Orthodox monasteries in Romania, including Șcheii Brașovului, were centers of Slavonic writing.<sup>[125]</sup> The Bible was first translated into Romanian by monks in Maramureș during the 15th century. From the second half of the 14th century, Romanian princes sponsored the monasteries of Mount Athos (Greece).<sup>[152]</sup> First, the Koutloumousiou monastery received donations from Nicholas Alexander of Wallachia (1352–1364).<sup>[153]</sup> In Wallachia, the monastery at Vodița was established in 1372 by the monk Nicodemus from Serbia, who had embraced monastic life at Chilandar on Mount Athos. Monks fleeing from the Ottomans founded the earliest monastery in Moldavia at Neamț in 1407. From the 15th century the four Eastern patriarchs and several monastic institutions in the Ottoman Empire also received landed properties and other sources of income, such as mills, in the two principalities.

Many monasteries, such as Cozia in Wallachia, and Bistrița in Moldavia, became important centers of

Slavonic literature. The earliest local chronicles, such as the "Chronicle of Putna", were also written by monks. Religious books in Old Church Slavonic were printed in Târgoviște under the auspices of the monk Macaria from Montenegro after 1508. Wallachia in particular became a leading center of the Orthodox world, which was demonstrated by the consecration of the cathedral of Curtea de Argeș in 1517 in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Protos of Mount Athos. The painted monasteries of Moldavia are still an important symbol of cultural heritage today.

The extensive lands owned by monasteries made the monasteries a significant political and economic force. Many of these monasteries also owned Gypsy and Tatar slaves. Monastic institutions enjoyed fiscal privileges, including an exemption from taxes, although 16th-century monarchs occasionally tried to seize monastic assets.

Wallachia and Moldavia maintained their autonomous status, though the princes were obliged to pay a yearly tax to the sultans starting during the 15th century. Dobruja was annexed in 1417 by the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottomans also occupied parts of southern Moldavia in 1484, and Proilavia (now Brăila) in 1540. These territories were under the jurisdiction of the metropolitans of Dristra and Proilavia for several centuries following the annexation.

**Simeon the new theologian** (949-1022) was the first systematic exponent of the technique of inner prayer. He was given the title 'new theologian' as his writings were put on a par with the older theologians (or: fathers) of the Church. He also wrote extensively of his own spiritual



experiences. He was the abbot of St. Mamos monastery near Constantinople. Due to his new ideas, he first found himself in conflict with his own monks and then with bishop Stephen of Nicomedia (not far from Constantinople) who was the official court theologian. It was really an argument between a scholastic (Stephen) and a mystic (Simeon). The following facets of his teaching brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical authorities:

1.) One of his principal teachings was that humans could and should experience *theoria* (literally "contemplation," or direct experience of God). Bishop Stephen thought this unnecessary.

2) Symeon believed that direct experience gave monks the authority to preach and give absolution of sins, without the need for formal ordination. Bishop Stephen thought this was dangerous heresy.

3) Symeon taught that putting oneself under the guidance of a spiritual father was essential for those who were serious about living the spiritual life. Bishop Stephen thought this was dangerous, as not every spiritual guide was genuine.

He opposed formalism in the Church and taught the necessity of a baptism in the Spirit which should follow water baptism. This involved repentance and conversion to Jesus Christ and an awareness of him as Lord and Saviour. It means a personal experience of God for oneself, by which he meant deification. In his mystical teaching he followed the earlier tradition of Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor. He thought that men could attain here on earth to a vision of God in terms of seeing the Divine light, uncreated and invisible. He preached that anyone, not just monks, who was

sincere enough, could have this type of vision. It is, needless to say, pure neoplatonism.

In the 14th century began a movement of radical mysticism based on contemplative prayer. **Gregory of Palamas** (1297-1360) was the spokesman for this movement, which was accepted by the church. He eventually became archbishop of Thessalonika. He also represented a mystical movement which belonged to the quietistic sect of the hesychasts (the silent ones) who specialised in silent prayer. He was also connected with the monastery at Mt Athos. The other centre of the movement was Bulgaria where Theodosius of Trnovo became its champion: he founded a monastery at Kilifarevo. The technique was evolved in order to gain victory over the passions, and thus 'inner tranquility' (*hesychia*), somewhat reminiscent of buddhism, from which state one could proceed to the 'contemplation' (a typically neoplatonistic word) of God. There was stress on silent meditation and a particular physical posture was recommended: the chin rested on the chest and the eyes were fixed on the navel, 'the place of the heart'. Breathing was carefully regulated and a simple prayer was recited, the Jesus Prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.' The aim of the exercise was to attain the vision of the divine light and union with God (i.e. divinisation). Gregory thus claimed that God could be seen and known directly (a gnostic idea that is refuted by the apostle John in 1 John 4,12). However, the theology of the time maintained that God was the wholly Unknowable (cf. neoplatonistic influence). Gregory got round this problem by maintaining that God is inaccessible in his essence but not in his energies. This was in fact a good bit of scholastic hair-splitting typical of the time. He maintained that although we cannot know or

participate in his essence (his innermost being), we can participate in his energies, his activity towards us, his grace. This is a view of grace that is wholly at variance with NT teaching on this subject. However, it was used to underpin the Orthodox idea of deification that was brought allegedly about by the progressive absorption of Christ's energies.

**Barlaam**, his arch protagonist, accused him of being a heretic. He launched a two-pronged attack against Catholic scholasticism (especially the arrogance of Aquinas who claimed to know all about God by using philosophy) and eastern mysticism (as epitomised by Gregory). He ridiculed Gregory's method of prayer and claimed that God can only be known indirectly (he was a fan of Pseudo-Dionysius and the apophatic school). In reply Gregory published a book entitled *Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts*, which contained his ideas. In 1344 Gregory was even excommunicated by the Church. But in 1347 a new emperor (Ivan VI) came to power who favoured Gregory and appointed him bishop of Thessalonika. In 1351 a council of Constantinople cleared Gregory of all previous charges and his teaching was thus adopted as official in all eastern Orthodox churches. However, the Western Church rejected this decision and thus the gulf between East and West grew even wider.

**The Confession of Dositheus** (1672) This statement of faith marks the reaction of the Orthodox Church to one of its theologians who was sympathetic to 'Protestant ideas'. It is important because it served to cristalise the opposition of the Eastern Church to the Reformation in the West. It is thus the eastern equivalent of the Council of Trent.

**Cyril Lucaris** (1572-1638) was a theologian who became patriarch of Alexandria in 1602 and of Constantinople in 1620. In 1629 he produced a work entitled *The Eastern Confessions of the Christian Faith* in which he sought to combine mild orthodoxy with a mild form of calvinism. He believed strongly in the infallibility of the Bible, predestination, justification by faith and rejected the doctrine of transsubstantiation. He also taught that the Church was subject to Scripture and could err. He came from Crete which was at the time a colony of Venice and so had access to the Venecian university of Padua. Venice was discreetly hospitable to Protestants despite the Counter-Reformation crackdown in the rest of Italy. He sought to defend Orthodoxy against Rome and found allies among the Protestants in Poland where he was working. He established a printing press in Constantinople and on it produced a NT in modern Greek, but the press was attacked by a Catholic mob. He also presented England with a copy of *Codex Alexandrinus* which was superior to the *Textus Receptus* on which previous Protestant translations had been based.

Unfortunately for him, the Jesuits were active in Constantinople at the same time as he published his book. In order to get him condemned the Orthodox Church used its greatest apologist Peter Mogila, who co-operated with the Catholics. In 1638 pressure was put on the Turkish government to have him executed, and in 1638 he was strangled by order of the Sultan and his body thrown into the Bosphoros. After his death there was a strong reaction against his views in the Orthodox Church and they were repeatedly condemned. Most important of the reactions was the *Confession of Dositheus*, drawn up by a man of the same name who

was patriarch of Jerusalem and approved by the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672. In it, the following points are made: The Bible is indeed inspired by God but so are the Church Councils. It is almost in virtue of the Church's position that the Bible is inspired, as the one is the product of the other. Predestination is defined in terms of the arminian understanding of the word foreknowledge. Justification is through faith and works: it cannot lead to a once and for all acquittal of the sinner. Good works merit reward. But without God's grace, good works do not contribute to salvation. The doctrine of transubstantiation was upheld.

### **Missionary expansion of the Eastern Church**

Justinian was responsible for reviving missionary vision, for the church set to work in the wake of his conquests. He recovered N. Africa from the Vandals. He also initiated expansion into Nubia. About 75 years later, the Muslim invasion materialised. After that, the only avenue of expansion that remained for the Orthodox Church was S.E. Europe and Russia. But every missionary thrust had to be authorised by the State, as Church and State were one.

Thereafter there was a great deal of rivalry between East and West over who was going to evangelise first the peoples that stood geographically between them: the Slavs and the Bulgars. Bulgaria in particular became a major point of dissention between Eastern and Western Christianity. Major developments took place when **Photius** became patriarch of Constantinople in 858. It was under him that major missionary activity was initiated among Slavs, Bulgars and Russians. This coincided with a new golden age under the new Macedonian (actually Armenian) dynasty. Photius established Thessalonica as a base to which he sent his key mission leaders: Cyril

and Methodius. The work began in the Slavic kingdom of Moravia and eventually spread to Serbia and Bulgaria. This was because Rastislav, prince of Moravia, in 860 requested the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send missionaries to instruct his people in the Christian faith. The reason for this was he wanted to break free of Charlemagne's control. In response, the patriarch Photius in Constantinople provided two Greek brothers, **Cyril** (827-869) and **Methodius** (825-885). They had the advantage of having grown up near the Slavs who had settled in Ohrid and therefore they knew the Slavic language. Before going on their mission, they prepared an alphabet for the hitherto unwritten language. Through this means, Byzantine culture spread among the Slavic tribes. In 860 they were involved in a mission to the Khazars. Two years later they were sent to Moravia. This Moravian mission met with success for the first three years, but any long-term results were lost when the invading Magyars destroyed the state of Moravia. The Church in this area eventually developed along western Catholic lines. The brothers' work did not disappear however, because their followers (Kliment and Naum) carried their message and Slavonic books southward to the Ohrid which then acted as a springboard for mission into Bulgaria. The Bulgarians became fervently attached to this new religion and culture. In addition Byzantine Christianity was exported from Ohrid to Russia, via Constantinople.

Cyril entered a monastery in Rome in 868 but died soon afterwards. Methodius was consecrated bishop to be sent back to the Slavs, but German bishops opposed his return to Moravia and he was imprisoned for a while by Prince Svjatopolk. The pope procured his release and later consecrated him bishop of Pannonia. He probably died in Velehrad in the Czech Republic.

## BULGARIA

The country had been under pressure from Frankish expansion under Charlemagne and his successors. Missionary work was initiated among the Bulgars, probably by Christian captives taken from Adrianople (813) by the victorious Bulgars. When Krum died in 814, his son, Omortag, had arranged a truce with Constantinople against which he was battling, in order to protect his western frontiers. He persecuted such Christians as existed because he saw them as potential agents of his enemy, the Byzantine Empire. The most famous of the Christian captives was a Greek called Cinamon, for he is credited with having been the major Christian influence at court, eventually persuading the son of Omortag, prince Enravotas, to become a Christian. For this, the prince was sentenced to death and executed in 849.

However, the first Bulgarian monarch to become a Christian was tsar **Boris** (852-889) who was baptised into the Orthodox Church in 865. He seems have done this from largely political motives. He saw it as an opportunity to change his status from that of a Bulgarian khan to an absolute ruler of a united nation with a Slav language. As most of the Slavs were already Christians, they would welcome a Christian ruler. It seems that he also wanted to keep the Bulgarian church independent (and under his control). After his baptism he wavered between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, but when the pope refused to ratify a separate Bulgarian patriarchate, in 870 he finally decided for the Eastern Church. In that year he persuaded the patriarch of Constantinople to recognise the right of the Bulgarians to have an independent church organisation. Some of the boyars who resisted this change were executed. The Bulgarians

also won approval for their liturgy to be conducted in the Slavonic language. In this way, a distinctive (Bulgarian) form of orthodoxy became established in Eastern Europe; state churches employing local languages. The new church was much influenced by hermitism, the most prominent of which was Ivan Rilski (880-947) who was founder of the great Rila monastery. In 927 the chief bishop of the Bulgarian church was raised to the rank of patriarch. The seat of the Bulgarian patriarch was then successively transferred from Preslav to Sofia, then to Voden to Prespa, and finally to **Ohrid**.

**The problem of conversion:** Many saw Christianity as a superior form of magic, which, like the old paganism, made no moral demands on its adherents. Many pagan customs were simply christianised. Some of the old gods were worshipped as Christian saints. Perun (God of the wind) became St. Elijah: Volos became St. Blasius: the goddess who fixed the fate of every new-born child (*rozhanitsa*) became the Virgin Mary, to whom flour and cheese were still offered. The pagan festival of *zadushnitsa* became All Souls Day, a day on which people still brought food and drink to the graves of the dead. Pagan rites still lived on in ceremonies connected with sowing, reaping, cattle breeding, digging of foundations, weddings and funerals. Animal sacrifices were offered on days dedicated to St. George and St. Elijah. Magicians (*volkhvi*) were still tolerated.

**Kliment and Naum**, the two best-known disciples of the missionary brothers Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonika, came to Ohrid after the failure of their mission and banishment from Moravia. Kliment was the first to come in 886 and Naum followed in 900. With their arrival, Ohrid developed into the leading centre of



Slavonic culture and literary activity. Here, Kliment and Naum continued the work started by Cyril and Methodius on devising an ecclesiastical and literary language for the Slavs. According to one scholar, the dialect spoken by the Macedonian Slavs served as the basis for this. Kliment (840-896) spent 30 years among the Macedonian Slavs. The first Slavonic university was founded at his monastery church of Sveti Pantelejmon in Ohrid in 893, two centuries before the university of Bologna came into existence. The 3,500 pupils who came out of this school spread the Slavonic script, culture, art and church singing across several Slav lands, as far as Kiev in Russia.

The first Bulgarian empire lasted from 681-1018. Bulgarian power reached its highest point under tsar **Simeon** (893-927). Under his reign Bulgarian territory on the other side of the Danube was lost, but he expanded westwards as far as the Sava and Drina rivers, thus bringing the Serbs under his rule. He grew so powerful that he aspired to become Byzantine emperor and led numerous campaigns against Constantinople itself. The capital, Preslav, became a glittering metropolis of churches and palaces. After his death, Bulgarian power declined because of internal struggles. In 1014 the emperor Basil II captured 15,000 Bulgarian troops which he blinded in one eye. In 1018 Bulgaria was incorporated into the Byzantine empire. The peasants, who had to endure great hardship through excessive taxation to keep the state going, reacted against the state church and large numbers of them joined the **Bogomil** sect which had become an important movement by that time. It arose in Bulgaria towards the middle of the 10th century from a fusion of dualistic doctrines imported from the Paulicians (who had been exiled to Bulgaria), a sect of Armenia and Asia Minor, and a local Slavonic

movement which aimed at reforming (in the name of a Christianity close to the Gospel) the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. They took their name from their founder, the priest Bogomil. The Paulicians got their name from their favourite author: the apostle Paul).

The movement was really a branch and development of manicheism (qv). In Bulgaria they were a reaction against the sacramentalism and materialism of the church. Instead of water baptism they advocated Spirit baptism. Their ceremony involved the laying of the Gospel of John (the 'spiritual' Gospel) on the head of the candidate for baptism and the chanting of the Lord's prayer. In the Lord's supper, the idea of any form of transubstantiation was rejected. The **Bogomils** also rejected the Old Testament as did most gnostics. The movement originated in the 10th century in Bulgaria where a priest, Bogomil, taught that the Supreme God had two angel sons, Satanel the elder and Christ the Younger. Satanel rebelled against the Supreme God and seduced many lesser angels to follow him. He then persuaded these fallen angels to inhabit bodies of flesh which he had created as part of an evil world of matter – so that human souls are really those of fallen angels. Birth was seen as the imprisonment of the good spirit in evil flesh as a punishment for sins committed in a pre-existent state (cf. reincarnation). To set mankind free from the tyranny of Satanel and his monstrous world of matter, Bogomil taught that the Supreme God sent his younger son, Christ to the earth as Jesus of Nazareth. Satanael killed Jesus but he was resurrected as a spirit-body and returned to heaven. Likewise after death God would give eternal spirit bodies to the Bogomil followers of Jesus.

The patriarchs of the book of Genesis were, they claimed, inspired by Satan. It is a pity that this reaction

was not channelled into more positive lines, but at the time (11th century) the Gospel was unknown.

It remained a powerful force in Bulgaria until the late 14th century. The Bulgarian authorities convened several church councils to condemn its teachings. After the Turkish invasion, many members of the sect converted to Islam, especially in Bosnia to where it had spread in the 12th century. In Bosnia they left behind curiously carved funeral monuments and some of their beliefs survived in folklore.

Although many of them lived exemplary lives, this is, of itself, not a proof that they were true Christians.

In 1185 Peter and Asen I reestablished the Bulgarian state. This marks the beginning of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1393). During this time, Tsar Kaloyan recognised papal supremacy in a bid to distance himself from the Byzantines, but under Asen II (1218-41) the independence of the Bulgarian church was restored. He was a remarkably enlightened ruler and was able to extend his rule (by conquest) to part of Albania, to Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. Under his rule, arts and literature flourished. Turnovo, his capital, was enlarged and embellished and great numbers of monasteries and churches were founded or endowed.

However the Empire was brought to an end by the invasion of the Turks: in 1362 Adrianople and then Plovdiv fell to them, in 1385 Sofia, in 1389 the Serbs and their Allies were defeated at the battle of Kosovo Polje, and in 1393 the capital, Turnovo, fell.

From Bulgaria, the Orthodox faith and culture came to Serbia, the third Slavic nation to be christianised in the second half of the ninth century.

**Serbia** The Serbian church remained in the shadow of the Bulgarians until the time of the most celebrated Serbian Christian, Sava. Sava was the third son of the

Serbian monarch. In 1191 he retired to the monastery of Mt. Athos. Five years later his father abdicated and joined him there. Sava and his father founded the monastery of Hilandari which became a centre of Serbian culture. He remained there until 1208 when he returned to become active in political affairs. In 1219 he became the first archbishop of an autonomous Serbian church, after appealing directly to the Patriarch in Constantinople over the head of the metropolitan of Ohrid, as had been previously customary. He was responsible for its organisation and the erection of many church buildings. He had close contacts with the Russian Orthodox church. The Serbian archbishopric was promoted to a patriarchate in 1346, at the height of the Serbian empire under King Stefan Dusan.

Bulgarian influence also drew the church of Romania into the Orthodox fold. However christianity first came to Romania in the 2nd century through Roman legionaries.

## **UKRAINE AND RUSSIA**

Initially efforts were made to bring Christianity to the Kazars but eventually their power eclipsed, and the head of the tribe had in any case adopted judaism as his religion and therefore the religion of the people.

Kiev was one of the surviving outposts of the old Kazar empire and therefore a natural place to try again to introduce Christianity. Christian expansion into Russia (Rus) now took place through the Vikings who had contacts with Constantinople and trading outposts in Russia. First of all then, a line of communication was established with Byzantium via the Vikings (and later: Varangians = Swedes) and then the Byzantine (Orthodox) religion was introduced via this line of communication.

In 860, Russian (or rather, Varangian, for the dynasty of the time at Kiev was really Swedish) warships sailed down the Dniepr from Kiev to the Black Sea and attacked Constantinople. They were beaten off and almost at once Byzantine missionaries were sent into Russia. The Russians were granted trading rights in Constantinople in 911, but in 941 and 944, led by Prince Igor, they returned to attack Constantinople. Both assaults were repelled and Romanus I set about breaking down the hostility and isolationism of the Russians by diplomatic and commercial contacts. In 957 Igor's widow, Olga, was baptised and paid a state visit to Constantinople. She took on the new name of Jelena (a slavonic version of Helena, the mother of Constantine). Her influence enabled Byzantine missionaries to work with greater security in Russia, thus spreading Christianity and Byzantine culture. Olga's son, Svyatislav was pleased to serve the empire as an ally against the Bulgars from 968 to 969, though his ambition to occupy Bulgaria led to war with Byzantium in which he was defeated and killed. In 971, the Byzantine emperor defeated the Russians and subdued Bulgaria. Byzantine influence over Russia reached its climax when Vladimir of Kiev, who had helped the emperor Basil II to gain the throne, was allowed, as a reward, to marry the Emperor's sister and was baptised in 989. The mass 'conversion' of the Russian people followed. Accordingly, all Vladimir's subjects were baptised and he had the statues of the old pagan gods thrown into the river Dnieper. There followed the establishment of an official Russian Church which was subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople. This occurred under Vladimir's son, Jaroslav, in 1019. The first bishop (a Greek, as most of his successors were to be) was consecrated metropolitan of Kiev. For the next

400 years the head of the Russian church was a Greek appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople.

Jaroslav died in 1054, the year of the final rupture between Eastern and Western Christianity.

However the primary appeal of the Orthodox faith was nevertheless more aesthetic than intellectual or moral. Liturgy (*s/ava*) was the most important thing. When a German bishop visited Kiev shortly before Vladimir's death, he reported that the city boasted 300 churches and 8 markets. Another visitor likened Kiev to that shining glory of the East, Constantinople.

Kiev was not only the national institutional ancestor of Russia herself, but also of two other important East Slav peoples: the Ukrainian and the Byelorussians.

The decline of Kiev in the 12th and 13th centuries, due in no small part to the capture of Constantinople, their chief trade outlet, was accompanied by Russian colonisation of a forested mesopotamia to the north-east, in what is now central Russia. The earlier Finnic settlers were gradually ousted or assimilated as the small fortified settlement of **Moscow**, first mentioned in the Russian chronicles under the year 1147, gradually became a minor and then a major principality. Here, far more than Kiev, one seems to recognise the cradle of the great Russian people, whose physical features tend to include the high cheekbones and slanted eyes associated with the Finns – a characteristic not inherited by the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians. This betrays their Scythian ancestry.

It was at this time that the first **Mongol invasions** began, followed by a long period of Mongol overlordship. The invasion of the Mongol-ruled Tatar cavalry hordes in and around the year 1240 devastated the country and subjected it to overlordship until roughly 1480, the year in

which Moscovy is traditionally regarded as having ceased to pay tribute to the Tatars. This event was celebrated by the construction of St Basil's cathedral in what is now Red Square in Moscow.

Though Moscovy threw off Tatar dependency in about 1480 and went on to the offensive in the following century, itself conquering many of the lands of its former masters, the peril had by no means been liquidated. Centuries of harassment by slave-trapping Tatar raiders and freebooters were to follow, an ordeal which only ended with the conquest of the Crimea under Catharine the Great in the late 18th century. The Tatars were accordingly the scourge of Russia from roughly 1240 to roughly 1783 – more than half a millenium. The Tatar rule established a principle of autocracy that was to characterise Russia as Moscow gradually crushed its more democratically minded rivals in Novgorod and in Kiev.

The Mongol period saw the rise of three key figures for the Church all of who were later canonised.

1) **Alexander Nevsky**, the victor over the Swedes and the Teutonic knights in the 1240s, is credited with saving the church from the papacy.

German knights tried to take advantage of the chaos caused by the invasion of Genghis Khan's Mongols in the 13th century and launched a Catholic crusade against the Northern Russians. In the end the Western invaders were repulsed by the heroic leadership of Alexander Nevsky (of Neva fame), ruler of Novgorod, in 1242, who had previously voluntarily submitted to the rule of the Khan.

2) **Stephen of Perm** in the 14th century became a missionary to the Komi people.

3) **Sergei of Radonezh** (just outside Moscow). In 1350 he withdrew into the forest to become head of a

monastic community at **Zagorsk**, which is now the headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was through Sergei that Christianity began to make inroads into the peasantry. Until then Christianity had been superficial:

- a) The leaders of the church had been mostly foreigners and out of touch with the people,
- b) The perfect Christian was looked upon as the monk. This led to a two-tiered Christianity: all that was expected of the lower tier was the observance of a few rites and a slight conformity to Christian virtues.
- c) The parishes were vast and the clergy were inadequately trained and poorly paid.

Sergei encouraged resistance to the Mongols and helped the advance of Moscow by inspiring colonist monks to go into forest regions.

He inspired the emergence of the Russian artistic genius, especially the great icon painters like Andrei Rublev (1360-1430). He also kindled the spirit of resistance to Mongol overlordship. In 1380 he inspired Dimitry, prince of Moscow, to lead a Russian allied army against the Khan's forces which he defeated at Kulikovo Field. This meant that Moscow now became the most important Russian city.

For over 200 years, the Russian lived under the Mongol yoke. During this period the Russian church continued to be led by the Metropolitan of Kiev and Vladimir, who was usually appointed and consecrated by Constantinople, but approved by the Mongol overlords. This situation goes a long way to explaining why Russia never experienced a Renaissance and a Reformation: it was dominated by outside powers that left it no freedom of action.

The Russian Church remained part of the Greater Orthodox Church until 1448 when they left after failing to



agree with the policy of seeking reconciliation with Rome, ratified at the **council of Florence** in 1439. It was called the Union of Florence. Five years later Constantinople fell to the Turks. The Russian bishops saw this as God's judgement on Constantinople for its acceptance of union with Rome. The Turks appointed a new patriarch of Constantinople who repudiated the union of Florence

Shortly after the fall of Constantinople, Ivan III (The Great) of Moscow married Sophia Paleologue, niece of the last emperor, and subsequently repudiated Mongol domination. Ivan took the Byzantine double-headed eagle as the symbol of his power. Russia now became the chief protector of Eastern Christianity.

Around this time the question emerged as to which was to become the capital of Russia. Kiev was sacked by the Mongols and later controlled by the Lithuanians. Then there was Novgorod and Pskov which had contacts with the West via the Hanseatic league. Novgorod became a merchant republic and cultural centre but was home to much religious dissidence. However, in 1478 it was annexed by Moscow and so lost its independence. The final contest was between Lithuania and Moscow. This was finally settled when the Lithuanians decided to ally themselves with Poland and become Catholic. This left only one more Orthodox bastion: Moscow.

In 1589 the Patriarchate of Moscow was founded, taking rank after Jerusalem. But Russia had to come through a period of much anarchy and civil war before it could ever become the protector of liberator of the Orthodox peoples. Orthodoxy expanded eastwards as Russia expanded. With this movement came the monasteries that acquired great tracts of agrarian land. Here, almost alone in Christendom, came the revival of Egyptian and Celtic hermit ideal in wild areas. For example Kiril of Novojezerska went bare footed on

pilgrimages and lived off berries, bark and grass, spending 10 years amongst wild animals until in 1517 he decided to build a hermit's hut and settle down in Beljezersk.

## THE GREAT DIVIDE

### Relations between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches

Several factors served to lead to the eventual split between the Latin and Greek Churches in 1054:

1) **Misunderstandings**: Relations between the Eastern and Western Churches were on the whole good but were marred from time to time by misunderstandings which rapidly snowballed. The first major problem occurred when Rome rejected canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon which granted great powers of jurisdiction to Constantinople (451). In 649 Pope Martin I was arrested by imperial officials for presiding over a council in which he had opposed the emperor's monothelite theology. He died in remote exile in the Crimea in wretched circumstances. In 680 the Pope (Honorius I) was anathematised at the Third Council of Constantinople as a heretic along with 4 Byzantine patriarchs. This was over the Monothelite controversy (the question of Christ's unity of will). When the Franks recovered land lost to the Lombards, which had previously belonged to the Byzantine empire, they handed it over to the Vatican!!

It was only after the 6th century that differences between West and East became truly significant.

2) **Differences in church practice**: These differences were:

a) celibacy in the West but not in the East among the lower clergy,

b) at the Lord's Supper, only bread was given in the West but both bread and wine in the East,

c) unleavened bread in the West, but leavened bread in the East,

d) priests were clean-shaven in the West but bearded in the East,

e) difference of opinion over the *Filioque* clause in the Creed (the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and from the Son*), whereas the Eastern Church said: *through the Son* (the Father had given the Spirit to the Son for him to pass on to the Church). As a result of this controversy the Apostles Creed came to replace the Nicene Creed in the West, as the principal creed. This reveals a fundamentally different viewpoint on the Trinity: for the West, all three members of the Trinity share the same divine essence (i.e. the names of the three persons signify relationships within the Godhead), whereas in the East, the Father (as source of divinity) communicates his nature (essence) to the other two members of the Trinity thus giving them a derived divinity. Thus Orthodox theology still bears the marks of Origen.

f) the West fasted on Saturdays and allowed the faithful to eat meat with blood in it.

g) Divorce was forbidden in the West, but permitted in certain situations by the Eastern Church.

h) The Eastern Church rejected the West's teaching on purgatory, merit and indulgencies.

The West held that some aspects of sin's penalty could be removed on earth by penance or by indulgence. If a believer died without paying all the punishment he owed, he had to pay off his outstanding debt by sufferings in the fire of purgatory. According to the West, the pope had the power to release souls from purgatory,

because God had given the papacy over the "treasury of merits of the saints". The pope could transfer these merits to souls in purgatory by means of an indulgence, thus paying off their temporal punishment for them and releasing them. By contrast, the East denied the existence of purgatory, rejected the idea that the righteous were punished after death, and did not believe either in the "treasury of merits" or in indulgences.

i) Baptismal practice was different. In the East candidates were baptised by immersion three times (for the three members of the Trinity) whereas in the West a variety of methods were used.

j) The Eastern church rejected the idea of original sin, saying that what mankind inherits from Adam is mortality and death. Consequently the easterners place more emphasis on the resurrection than the cross.

3) **Political problems** served to further distance the Eastern Church from the West. Following an urgent appeal by Pope Stephen who was being attacked by the Lombards in 753, the Byzantine Emperor refused to send military assistance and so he was forced to turn to the Franks for help. This eventually led to the formation of the Western Holy Roman Empire.

#### 4) **Immediate factors:**

1. The revival of the Western Empire under Otto 962 led to the assertion of papal power. The 11th century popes wanted to control the whole of Christendom.

2. There were conflicts of interest in Bulgaria and also in Southern Italy and Dalmatia.

3. The West wanted one man over the whole of the Church but the East had never agreed to this system: for them the Church Councils presided over by the 5 Patriarches had always been decisive.

4. The Pope's secretary, Humbert de Moyenmoutier was apt to be impulsive and crude. In 1054 he went to Constantinople as the pope's personal representative and demanded that the patriarch submit to the pope. The patriarch refused and was excommunicated. Humbert de Moyenmoutier's visit to Constantinople was a reaction to objections levelled by Leo of Ochrid (against enforcement of clerical celibacy and the use of unleavened bread in communion wafers). Humbert was also against the domination of the church by the state. All this added fuel to the fire which eventually resulted in insults being exchanged and sentence of excommunication being handed to the patriarch Cerularius during mass.

5. The official reason was over the differing interpretations of the Creed. The East rejected the *Filioque* clause.

5) **Factors precluding reconciliation:** After 1054 other factors conspired to make a reconciliation impossible.

In 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, the Norman crusaders captured Constantinople and founded the Latin Kingdom of Byzantium (1294-61). In 1185 the Normans had captured Thessalonika and murdered 7,000 inhabitants, raping women and girls. The Eastern Church saw this as an act of treachery which they never forgot.

In 1274, the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII had his back against the wall when he was faced with a coalition of enemies: Charles of Anjou threatened to invade in order to restore the catholic kingdom imposed at the time of the fourth crusade. His solution was to ask the Pope for help, in return for which he offered to submit to the Roman Church: He recognised papal supremacy,

purgatory and the filioque clause. This was ratified in 1274 at the Council of Lyon and called the Union of Lyon. But in 1296, when Byzantine fortunes improved, the council of Lyon was repudiated and Orthodoxy restored. The pope excommunicated the eastern emperor in 1281. A second attempt at reunion was made 150 years later at the council of Florence

On that occasion, the Byzantine emperor was besieged by the Turks in Constantinople. He submitted to the pope in order to get Western help. The pope promised help but was unable to persuade Western armies to come to the help of Constantinople. As a reaction against this "treachery" of the emperor, the other patriarchates (including Russia) severed relationships with Constantinople. The end of Constantinople came when it was finally captured by the Turks in 1453.

Although the schism was declared in 1054 by the issuing of a series of mutual anathemas, the two churches still remained in communion (cf. Jesuits invited to come and minister in Orthodox churches), but the final point of no return was reached in 1724 when the final breach occurred. This explains why the Jesuits were able to play such a part in the overthrow of Lucaris.

Only in 1965 were the mutual anathemas lifted by pope Paul and by Athenagoras, but a reunification is still outstanding.

## **THE CHURCH IN THE WEST**

The history of the Western Church in this period is the history of the most elaborate and most thoroughly integrated system of religious thought and practice that the world has ever known. The identification of the Church with the whole of organised society is the

fundamental feature which distinguishes the Middle Ages from earlier and later periods of history. At its widest limits it is a feature of European history from the fourth to the eighteenth century – from Constantine to Voltaire. In theory, during the whole of this period, only orthodox and obedient believers could enjoy the full rights of citizenship. But in Western Europe, it was not until the 7th century that this doctrine became a practical reality, and by the 17th century it had ceased to be a practical reality. During this period, the church was a compulsory society in precisely the same way as the modern state is a compulsory society. Within it were certain outsiders, but these people had very limited rights. At the top of the list were Jews, who could practice their religion as long as they did not attempt to spread it, and at the bottom of the list were those who fell away and became heretics. Jews could not be killed because they were Jews, but heretics could. From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, the enemies of society were considered to be Jews, heretics and homosexuals, in that order. It was thought that lepers and Jews had combined together with the great external enemy, Islam, to overthrow the good order of Christendom by poisoning wells and murdering babies for use in their rituals. Lepers were victimised, tortured into confessions and burned at the stake and pogroms against Jews were frequent and horrific. Jews were frequently blamed for abducting Christian children for use in their rituals.

A person became a committed member of this society by baptism, at which the godparents made certain promises on behalf of the child which bound him legally for life. Serfdom was another involuntary tie that could bind a person for life, if he was born into that condition, but this could be revoked by purchase, free gift or

through escape. But the Church had limitations imposed on its power:

a) all agents of the church had very limited powers of initiative, and were conscious that they would be punished hereafter for any abuse of power.

b) there were no police. In the last analysis, effective coercion was only possible with the consent and cooperation of the independent secular rulers. If the secular ruler refused, the only weapon left was excommunication.

The Church was the whole of human society subject to the will of God – the ark of salvation in a sea of destruction. Besides taking over the political order of the Roman Empire, the church appropriated the science of Greece and the literature of Rome, and it turned them into instruments of well-being in this world. To this it added the gift of salvation – the final and exclusive possession of its members. It was considered to be the earthly reflection of the perfect heavenly original. In other words, it was the fulfillment of the millennium.

In more political terms, it was a deliberate continuation of the Roman Empire, albeit in ecclesiastical garb. Roman law became Canon Law, the legions became the crusaders etc. But the rise of the papacy was not a smooth upward ascension. It had enemies: the Greek Church in its decline, most of the secular rulers at one time or another and a wide variety of anti-hierarchical critics opposed the claims of the papacy.

Moreover, the Middle Ages passed through 3 distinct stages, each of which was conditioned by very different social and intellectual backgrounds.

## **I. The Primitive Age (700-1050)**



It was by 700 that the Roman system in the West had fully collapsed. This first period was characterised by:

a) The inferiority of Western Christianity over against Greek Christianity (direct descendant of the Christian Roman Empire), and Islam, both of which were more powerful and intellectually superior. Islam had reached the end of its lines of communication. In 846 Arab armies even sacked Rome.

b) Poverty in the West. As a result of plague, famine, destruction and commercial atrophy, the whole of the West was thinly populated, with no towns of more than a few thousand inhabitants. 1347-51 The Black Death (bubonic plague) decimated the population of Europe. It was at this juncture that the flagellants came on the scene: they went through the towns barefoot furiously whipping themselves until they drew blood. They did this to appease God's anger by offering a sacrifice on behalf of others. They believed that, because of their self-inflicted tortures they would all be saved, that they bore on their bodies the stigmata of Christ and that their blood mingled with his blood. They also called for the killing of Jews whom they believed were responsible for the plague. Pope Clement VI repressed them and they were condemned by the council of Constance. The black death was responsible for an increasing emphasis in popular piety on death and also purgatory which was to characterise the later Middle Ages. This was particularly prominent in Northern Europe.

c) It was the Benedictine age during which time the Benedictine rule held the monopoly in Western Europe. The best chance of salvation was thought to lie in keeping the rule or at least contributing to its maintenance and extension. The Benedictine monasteries were thought of as being islands of heaven in a world of flux.

d) For the Christian public, this amounted to an intrusion of the supernatural into their lives in the form of miracles and ritual ceremonies (cf. judicial ordeals). They sought stability and safety through some physical association with eternity, above all sorts of circumstances. The pope's chief claim to fame was he was the guardian of the body of St. Peter. Charlemagne's throne in Aachen, was riddled with relics. Kings had relics in their crown and wore them round their necks. It was their secret weapon in battle. Apart from this heavenly connection, the visible world was either meaningless or evil. Kings were sworn into office as if they were priests – they wore priestly vestments and were anointed for their task of ruling. For three centuries, 750-1050, kings who emerged from these ceremonies exercised an authority which they were encouraged to think gave them a sacred character and set them above bishops and priests. This was the origin of the idea of the divine right of kings. They were considered God's deputies. Hence the post of the Roman Emperor had been merged with that of the OT theocracy.

e) As a result of this, the individual counted for little – he was either swallowed up in the community, or (if he was a great man) in his office. The littleness of man was seen alongside the impersonal majesty of the spiritual world.

f) It was during this period that an indelible pattern was laid down: tithes, dioceses and parishes and loyalty to Rome.

## **II. The Age of Growth (1050-1300)**

By 1000 the scene had changed considerably:

a) The secular ruler had been demoted from his almost sacerdotal position.

b) The pope had assumed a new power of intervention.

c) The Benedictine rule had lost its monopoly. All sorts of new orders proliferated.

d) It became a period of expansion and optimism, and urge to expand and colonise. This last trend was due to many factors:

- 1) growing accumulation of capital,
- 2) rising population,
- 3) return of the Mediterranean to Western control through the decline of the Muslim and Greek empires.

e) The church hierarchy asserts its claim to be the sole channel of supernatural authority. Church now comes to mean "the clergy", and not the body of the faithful. The ideal church of the 12th and 13th centuries was a society of disciplined and organised clergy directing the thoughts and activities of an obedient and receptive laity – kings, magnates and peasants alike. No non-cleric ever got beyond an elementary level of schooling.

f) Relics retained their importance in the personal life but lost it in public life.

g) Modification to canon law. Previously trade had been an occupation scarcely compatible with Christianity but in the wake of this new expansion, this had to be modified. It was still a grave sin in the 11th century for one man to kill another in battle, but by the middle of the 13th century, the theory of the "just war" had been evolved, to mean more or less one that was in the interests of the papacy.

This age had seen a gradual growth in all sectors of the edifice but by 1300 the alternative of the secular state was being seriously considered in some quarters.

### **III. The Age of Unrest (1300-1550)**

New disturbing trends become apparent:

a) The growing confidence and assertiveness of secular rulers typified by Marsilius of Padua (rector of the university of Paris). This extended to demanding a national church independent of the Vatican.

b) The growing menace to established institutions of great urban populations and the movements which they inspired. Eckhart became the spokesman for their leaders' religion. The growth of democracy and private religion was a disconcerting development for the Catholic Church.

The above trends expressed themselves in the following ways: in a violent attack against the pope by French troops and his subsequent long exile in Avignon, disbandment of the Knights Templar and a growing urban resentment against the other orders. It was also expressed in growing papal fear of extremism as evidenced in condemnation of Franciscan doctrine of poverty in 1323, of William of Ockham and Eckhart and Marsilius of Padua. All these tendencies can be illustrated from events in England. It was the home of the most radical social, political and religious movements in Europe – yet it was also one of the most conservative parts of the Western church. Both church and the secular arm realised that they had to stick together or the whole system would collapse. This is why it opted for limited reforms.

## **THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

The main centres of religious life in medieval Europe were communities specially endowed and set apart for the full, lifelong and irrevocable practice of the Christian life at a level of excellence judged to be impossible

outside such a community. They were considered religious as opposed to secular or clerical.

### **The function of the monasteries**

**a. social function:** they were the spiritual equivalent of secular soldiers. They fought to cleanse the land of supernatural enemies. They assured the safety of the kingdom.

**b. The penitential function:** severe penances for such things as taking part in a battle could be imposed on people. These might take the form of fasting on bread, salt and water for 3 periods of 40 days. A great man could either pay the stipulated sum or engage other men to undertake the penance for him (for a fee).

**c. The family function:** The economy of a great family required a monastic outlet. The monastery provided the children of noble families (unable to provide for the future of all their members) with a reasonable aristocratic life and with opportunities of great splendour. For women this was particularly the case: many were widowed at an early age; there were not enough suitable marriage partners for them. But this meant that the parents had to offer an endowment for each child, often in the form of a gift of land. This explains how the Church came to own such extensive lands.

There were a great variety of religious communities. By the end of the 13th century there were some 6 to 8 major types with 20 derivative branches. Apart from the Benedictines they sprang up mostly after 1100 when medieval unity began to break up. Most were founded as a protest against the world. The various attempts to reform laxity resulted in the creation of new monastic orders.

**THE BENEDICTINES** By the time of Charlemagne the Benedictines had become the standard rule. In its hayday the Benedictine rule was held to be the highest form of religious life and almost the only safe road to heaven. By 1100 it had replaced all other forms of spiritual activity. It came to be seen that even earthly battles were to be won by organised and disciplined troops rather than by the exertion of individual valour.

The rule was fairly flexible and based on an earlier more rigid and impractical system of the 'Master'. The whole system of worship was built on two biblical pillars: 'at midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee' and 'seven times a day do I praise Thee' – hence the long night office and the seven day offices of Matins (or Lauds), Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline. All was organised so that in one week the whole Psalter was read and in one year the whole Bible. The pattern left its stamp on every Christian community of Western origin. The chief emphasis of the order was on total obedience.

The rule envisaged three classes of recruits to a monastery: laymen of more mature years, clergy and the children of noblemen. It was from the parents of such children that the monastery received much of its endowments. In addition, their earlier years were spent in the monastery school before they actually took orders.

Although the Benedictine rule had by the time of Charlemagne become the standard monastic rule, it underwent modification as time went on. This was for the following reasons:

1. Increasingly, monks were drawn from the nobility. It was common practice for nobles to 'devote' their sons and daughters to a monastery while they were still children. As the result of such changes, the monks' share of manual labour had been gradually reduced and replaced

by liturgical and cultural activities. This concentration on scholarly and artistic work made the great monasteries of the 8th and 10th centuries, such as Reichenau, St. Gallen and Corbie, the cultural and educational centres of Europe. They possessed large libraries and their monks copied the manuscripts which were to transmit literature and learning to later centuries. Some of the examples of their artistic work can be seen in the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

2. Another development was that the monasteries became far more closely linked with the society within which they existed. Their abbots and their monks were related to local noble families: lands were granted to them by kings and magnates; they achieved both economic and political importance. Instead of a group of men fleeing from the world in order to live a life of perfection, the monastic community was becoming a religious corporation which served a definite function within (not outside) society.

This explains why much of the history of monasticism from the 9th century onwards revolves around attempts at reform. This in turn resulted in the formation of new orders.

In 817 **Benedict of Aniane** had attempted such a reform: greater severity, more manual labour and less study, greater central control, and a curtailment of the outside activities of the monks. However, this reform was brought to an end because of the attacks of the Vikings, Saracens and Magyars who caused much destruction. By 950 destruction caused by these groups had been so widespread that the monastic movement as a whole virtually came to a halt. Riches had also served to produce a decline in the monastic ideal.

Yet, if monastic standards had vastly declined, the idea of monasticism was still alive. There was a deep

conviction among both clergy and laity that Christianity found its truest expression in monasticism, and that monasteries were power-houses of scholarship and piety. Only in monasteries could learning flourish and books be written for the instruction of both clergy and laity; only in monasteries could future bishops be educated. It was accepted that the prayers recited by holy monks helped in the welfare of the kingdom, its rulers, and its inhabitants. And everyone agreed that the behaviour of devout monks was a model for all Christians. It was not long therefore before bishops began to take steps to reform the decadent monasteries, and they found kings and nobles ready to help them in this work.

The **CLUNIAN REFORM** In 909 the abbey at Cluny in Central France was founded. This marked the beginning of a reform based on the life style at Cluny. Henceforth the religious task of monks was seen as, above all, the performance of the daily cycle of worship. In Cluny this was carried to its extreme. Almost the whole of a monk's day was taken up with church services. Cluniac churches were highly decorated and adorned. The intention was to create a service as magnificent and as solemn as possible. All Cluniac monasteries now became daughter houses, closely dependent on the main monastery at Cluny. All monks owed allegiance, not just to their local abbot (actually "prior" – less than an abbot –), but to the head abbot at Cluny. Moreover, Cluniac monasteries were independent both of the local bishop and of local lay nobility. This marks a development away from the Benedictine ideal. In addition all monks owed direct allegiance to the Pope. The Cluniac movement in general aimed at decreasing dependence on secular powers and increasing the power of the Pope. It has been said that



the abbots of Cluny, rather than the popes, were the central figures in the Christian life of Western Europe until Hildebrand became pope in 1073.

The Cluniac order also aimed to educate the children of nobility and pass on to them Christian values.

The Cluniac reform enabled some 50 monasteries to be reestablished after the Viking invasions in England that had destroyed them. This was under archbishop Dunstan and king Edgar. Cluniac houses were also directly introduced into England after the Norman conquest of 1066 who used them as a means of asserting their control over the Saxon monks. It thus became an instrument of Norman imperialism. This often led to confrontations. When the monks of Canterbury objected to the abbot (a Norman) which archbishop Lanfranc had chosen for them, one of the malcontents was brought before him. "Would you kill your abbot?" asked Lanfranc. "Certainly I would, if I could", replied the monk. Lanfranc then had him tied naked to the great door of the abbey and flogged in front of all the people. Then his hair was shaved off and he was driven from the city.

In Lorraine and Western Germany, similar reforms emanated from the abbey of Gorze. In Italy hermit-type monasticism was revived.

The Cluniac monastic reform had important spin-offs for the church in general. What had previously only been binding on monks, now became binding on clergy. Chastity: Celibacy was now enforced on the whole church. Obedience was also extended to the church as a whole, obedience not to the abbot, but to the pope.

But the wealth of the Cluniac monasteries, their easy relationships with the world and their emphasis on the church services led some reformers to seek a more austere and primitive path. For instance, Bruno of

Cologne founded La Grande Chartreuse in Southern France in 1084 as a hermit type of monastery. The Carthusian order which arose from this remained one of the most rigorous throughout the Middle Ages.

The laxity of some of the Cluniac Houses led to the foundation of several strict Benedictine orders around 1100; those of Grandmont, Fontevrault (a double order of monks and nuns) and Savigny.

**THE CISTERCIANS** The most successful of the orders seeking to revive the primitive Benedictine life was that of the Cistercians or White monks. Their mother house was Cîteaux in Burgundy. Under Stephen Harding (1110-34), Cistercian houses spread throughout Europe. They aimed at a complete break with the Cluniac past. Their churches and their services were simple and unadorned. Their abbeys were founded in remote and desolate regions, in the 'wilderness'. Silence and austerity was stressed and there was a renewed emphasis placed on manual work. According to the Charter, each house had to be visited annually by the abbot of the mother house, and there was a very tight chain of command. Every year, a general assembly (Chapter) was held at Cîteaux to lay down ordinances for the whole order. The severity and organisation of the Cistercians proved remarkably successful. By 1300 over 600 monasteries of this type were in existence. The Cistercians claimed that they obeyed the 'whole Gospel' – by which they meant that they followed Christ in poverty and stark simplicity of life and thus were fathers of the Franciscan movement. They refused patronage or incentives to benefactions such as confessions, masses, burials within the monastery etc. It was the Cistercians who who were recruited by the Swedish king Sverker to

extend Christianity to all parts of his country. The first archbishop of Uppsala was a cistercian monk in 1164.

The most famous Cistercian was **Bernard of Clairvaux** who founded the second cistercian monastery at Clairvaux. He was so successful in recruiting that people hid other members of their family when he came round on one of his visits! He emphasized God's love and believed that Christians came to know God by loving him. Bernard preached that physical love which was natural to man, could be transformed by prayer and discipline into a redeeming and spiritual love, the passion of Christ. He preached this in an age that was easily moved by the adventures of knights searching for the Holy Grail etc etc. Bernard did much to promote the worship of the Virgin Mary. He even maintained that no one could enter heaven without her intercession.

**Joachim of Fiore** (1145-1202) was another famous Cistercian. He was an abbot who became one of the precursors of the Reformation. Joachim was virtually a post-millennialist who believed that history was divided up into three ages:

1) The age of God the Father – The OT age of the law characterised by fear,

2) The age of God the Son – the age of grace characterised by faith,

3) The age of God the Spirit – said to begin in 1260. It was to be the golden age of spiritual freedom and contemplation. It was an age when the church would be purified, the whole world converted and transformed into one vast and holy monastery. His ideas influenced the spiritual Franciscans who considered themselves to be the agents of the new age.

As the cistercians operated on the edge of civilisation, they rapidly learned how to survive but also how to put the land to its best use. Their economic activities, especially as sheep farmers, soon made them a wealthy order and they were accused of the sin of greed. Gradually the monks themselves withdrew from manual work, leaving this to lay brothers, normally illiterate folk who joined the order but were not offered full membership – they were forbidden to become literate but were guaranteed salvation.

Others who were influenced by the Cistercian ideal were the Premonstratensians in N. France and the Gilbertines in England.

At the other end of the scale were the **Augustinians**, who aimed to serve society. This order was linked with the reform movement of Pope Gregory VII (1021-85) and they took over the revived rule of Augustine of Hippo. They emphasized the 'apostolic life' – meaning that they went out among the people, preaching, teaching, healing and serving. Thus they were the forerunners of the later Dominican movement. They were divided into two schools:

- 1) The monastic section (epitomised by the monastery at Prémontré – abstinence, silence, manual labour and psalmody). They were the strict branch of the order.

- 2) The canonical section (epitomised by the abbey of St. Ruf near Avignon) which lived in a loosely knit community where everything was held in common. This was their only rule, so they were precursors of the Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer. Among the members of this branch were such famous names as Thomas à Kempis, Gerhardt Groote and Erasmus.

## THE FRIARS

The friars replaced the Augustinians and Cistercians in the 13th century, in order to adapt to a new environment – that of the great towns and universities. They were also the answer of the Catholic Church to the increasing problem of urbanisation and wandering preachers. They were divided into the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Mention should also be made of the Augustinian (or Austin) Friars founded in the 13th century. Luther had been a member of this order.

We must also note the Carmelites (founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> cent and reformed in the 15<sup>th</sup> cent by St Tereza of Avila). The Carmelites took their name from Mt Carmel in Israel where the first community had been founded during the time that the Crusaders controlled Israel. When the crusaders were defeated, the Carmelites moved West and established themselves as an order of friars (the so-called White Friars) in Europe.

The Friars were basically a Mediterranean and urban movement whereas the Cistercians were agrarian, French and feudal.

The Friars were an organised society of beggars who, in order to survive, needed a fairly large population of people who were not themselves on the verge of poverty. They never became great property owners. Most of their income came from small gifts in money or kind, from legacies and from fees for burials and masses for the dead. Wills from the late 13th century show that the dying were no longer overpowered by the fear of hell as they had once been. Instead they trembled at the prospect of prolonged purgatorial pains, and they sought to shorten and mitigate these pains by widely scattered acts of charity. For all townspeople they made the way to heaven easier.

The Friars also offered the ideal way of becoming a permanent academic, as they no longer had to earn a living once they left the university. It also offered an opportunity for useful employment because the friars desperately needed theologians to train their young men as preachers, missionaries and disputants. Until the friars came, the universities had served mainly as a training ground for administrators. It is therefore not surprising that all the greatest names in medieval theology from 1250 till 1350 are the names of friars: Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, among the Dominicans: Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, among the Franciscans.

**THE DOMINICANS** (founded by Dominic de Guzman of Castile) were intellectuals who became the 'watchdogs of the Lord' in fighting against heresy. Dominic had been previously sent to Provence to preach against the Cathars. Their calling was to preach and teach, and for this they wore a white habit and a black cloak (*scapula*). They were called the Black Friars because of this. They were also the executors of the inquisition which made them feared, especially by the spiritual Franciscans (Fratricelli).

**THE FRANCISCANS** (founded by Francis of Assisi) majored on the vow of total poverty. Initially they were not what the papacy considered to be a "proper" monastic order. Part of the vow which their monks had to take was revolutionary: they promised to observe the commands of those placed over them, but with the proviso: "as long as they are not contrary to their conscience and to our rule."

Later on, the Franciscan rule was revised in a conservative direction, which ultimately caused the resignation of Francis himself.

They were later divided into two groups:

1. The Minor Friars who wore dark grey (hence the name Grey Friars) and went barefoot.
2. The Spiritual Franciscans who later reacted to what they considered laxity. But the Pope refused to recognise them and some of them were persecuted as a sect, the Fraticelli.

The Franciscans were more successful than the Dominicans in that they attracted more recruits. In the early 14th century, Dominican Houses numbered about 600 whereas Franciscans about 1400.

The Friars went in for much missionary activity. Francis himself had preached the Gospel abroad and had sent friars to Spain, Hungary and the East. The orders encouraged the study of Eastern languages so that they could communicate with Muslims. During the 13th century they preached and founded houses in North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Ordinary clergy felt threatened by the Friars because:

1. The Friars received fees for marriages, burials which would have otherwise accrued to them,
2. The ordinary clergy were shown up as being unspiritual.

## **FRINGE ORDERS AND THE NEW PIETY**

These came into being from a tendency in the last two centuries of the Middle Ages in the direction of greater freedom from social and hierarchical pressures and a greater diversity of individual effort. Hence we find a return to the small, humble, shadowy organisations for large and indefinite ends.

**THE MYSTICS** This gave rise to such individuals as St. Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich or Gerhard Groote of Deventer; contemplatives and mystics, critics and reformers who stood somewhat apart from organised religious society around them. The spiritual warrior was out, the critic and contemplative was in. In place of the warrior, the new hope of Christendom lay in the individual prophet.

Meister Eckhardt of the Dominican order at the beginning of the 14th century said some things that could be interpreted in a very disruptive sense. The core of his message was that poverty had to be found in the soul itself – not in acts but in an attitude. He was speaking of an interior conversion of the soul, which would manifest itself in the appropriate way determined by God alone. When a man had experienced this conversion, all the other props to devotion faded into the background. In reality Eckhardt was a sort of gnostic. This is the heart of the message of the *devotia moderna* movement.

**THE BEGUINES** were an unofficial order of women. They were extra-regulars who were neither lay nor monastic. They had no common rule or hierarchy, were free to hold private property and free to marry. They lived austere but without vows: they took a vow of service to Christ but not a binding vow of chastity. They worked mostly in hospitals, weaving vestments and embroidery and spent their time in simple prayer and meditation. Their name probably comes from Lambert le Bègue (d.1177), a revivalist preacher at Liège. They were for a long time suspected of heresy, probably because of their link with the Spiritual Franciscans.



## THE RELIGIOUS BRETHERN OF DEVENTER

Gerhard Groote was a popular preacher who in 1380 gathered a large following for his doctrines of a natural union between man and God, and the uselessness of institutionalised religion. He also founded houses where the inhabitants did not take a vow, but earned their living through printing. The significance of this order lies in its power of survival outside the ranks of the formal religious orders, without suppression and without radical change. The survival of these irregular communities ran counter to some of the deepest convictions of the medieval church.

What made the order startling for contemporaries was:

1. The absence of a rule or binding vow.
2. The choice of ordinary work as a source of livelihood, and the general reinstatement of work as something conducive to spiritual health.
3. Mixing of clergy and laymen on the same footing. A second generation member of one of his communities wrote Thomas à Kempis) *The Imitation of Christ*. This book is the classic expression of the *devotia moderna* (new piety).
4. They were no longer considered to be a means for winning other men's salvation.

## THE GROWTH OF THE PAPACY

**THE FIRST PERIOD:** THE PRIMITIVE AGE (700-1050) This period was characterised by the following factors:

1. The Bishop of Rome was spiritually superior to anyone else because he held the trump card: the body of St. Peter. According to the document called the *Donation of Constantine* he was also the rightful heir to lands in Italy and to Constantine's bureaucratic empire.

2. The Pope's alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor gave him political power in Italy. He owed his position there to the Emperor, as indeed the *Donation of Constantine* implied.

3. But there was no papal bureaucracy available to enforce the pope's rule over the Church in the rest of Western Europe. Although he was acknowledged as head, he had no actual power. Decisions regarding the running of the Church were taken at local level with no reference to the pope.

4. Kings appointed important clerics.

**The Papacy and the Frankish State** The pope turned to the Franks to support him because the East was no longer in a position to come to his rescue when threatened by the barbarians.

The first move in the direction of the establishment of an alliance between the pope and a political backer came when Gregory the Great tried to establish an alliance with the Frankish State in Gaul at the time of the Merovingian dynasty. However, during the rule of Clovis and his successors, the spiritual situation in France went rapidly downhill. There was anarchy, immorality and too much control of the Church by the State. Pope Gregory wanted to introduce reform but he failed. Instead, he introduced Catholic Christianity into England through Augustine's 'missionary' expedition. Reform had to wait until the 8th century when

- a. Celtic, and later, English missionaries came.
- b. The papacy was revitalised.
- c. A new royal house had come to power in France (the Carolingians).

The father of Pépin le Bref, the Frankish king, Charles Martel (who was ruler of Westria but functioned more like a prime minister), supported missionaries because of his

desire to extend his rule into Bavaria. The papacy was glad of his support but things soon turned sour when Charles, having defeated the Muslim, refused to give back church lands lent to him for that very purpose. He also refused to come to the aid of the Pope when he was being attacked by the Lombards. But a new era began when the Carolingians came to power under Carloman and Pépin (who was crowned by Boniface in his capacity of papal legate). Boniface was assisted by them in the reform of the church. Pope Stephen II appealed to Pépin for help against the Lombards and Pépin intervened, defeated the Lombards and handed over to the pope the conquered lands of North East and Central Italy in what was called the '*Donation of Pépin*'. The pope had previously supported Pépin's seizure of power and his shift of capital from Paris to Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen).

It was under Charles Martel that feudalism began in earnest: he created a permanent class of warriors on horseback (knights) to keep the fearsome muslim cavalry in check. To them he gave a royal grant of land (lat: *feudum*) on condition that they swore an oath of loyalty to the frankish king and promised to render him military service. They thus became the kings vassals and developed in a line of powerful landed aristocracy. They delegated their power to other lesser nobles and so a chain of feudalism was created. They built churches on their lands but reserved the right to nominate the priests who would minister in these churches. Thus the feudal system was born in which there were three classes: the monks (to do the spiritual fighting, in prayer), the knights (to do the physical fighting), and the serfs. Three factors were later to bring this system to an end: the black death (the great social leveler which wiped out half the population of England), peasant rebellions and the rise of the middle classes.

**The Donation of Constantine** At the same time, the pope's claim to sovereign rule in Italy and his claim for independence from the Eastern Roman Empire was reinforced by one of the greatest forgeries of the Middle Ages, *the Donation of Constantine*. The document alleged that Constantine had bequeathed Rome and the Western part of the Empire to the bishop of Rome when he relocated the capital of the Empire in the East. The document typified attitudes to the papacy during this period: it speaks of Constantine's conversion, baptism and cure from leprosy at the intercession of pope Sylvester. It speaks of the emperor's gifts to the representative of Peter:

1. The grant of preeminence over the patriarchal sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople and all other churches.
2. The gift of the imperial insignia and the Lateran palace in Rome.
3. The transfer to the pope of imperial power in Rome, Italy and all provinces of the West.

The document was then placed on the body of St. Peter, for whom the gifts were personally intended. The supposed history of Peter is in the same vein: Peter became bishop of Antioch in 34, in 40 he moved his see to Rome, in 57 he instituted the fasts of Advent and Lent, and in 59 he consecrated Linus and Cletus, his successors.

**The Papacy and Charlemagne** In 800 Charlemagne was crowned by the pope (Leo III) in Rome, thus reviving the Roman Empire in the West, though Charlemagne did not relish the thought of owing his crown to the pope. He saw himself as a sort Byzantine emperor who was head of the Church. This brought him into conflict with the Pope. He took theological initiatives, without the pope's

permission, ruling in favour of icons (though not their worship) and the inclusion of the Filioque clause in the Nicene creed. He initiated important Christian legislation re. sabbath keeping, compulsory tithing etc.

Charlemagne continued the educational reform of the church which had been begun under Pépin and Boniface, under the direction of an Anglo-Saxon called **Alcuin**. Alcuin was Charlemagne's ecclesiastical advisor who was not afraid to criticise his master for undertaking Christian missions at the point of the sword. Potential converts, he insisted, must be taught and prepared properly. From the palace school at the royal court a generation of Alcuin's students went out to head monastic and cathedral schools throughout the Empire. The Carolingian Renaissance, which marked the end of the Dark Ages, turned to classical antiquity and also to early Christianity for its models. The emphasis was on Latin literature: the efforts at Greek were tentative and quite artificial. The Irishman **John Scotus Erigena** was the only accomplished Greek scholar in the Carolingian world. The Benedictine rule was enforced on all monasteries and the reforms of **Benedict of Aniane** (750-821) were supported..

Between 845 and 853, yet another papal forgery appeared, this time in the diocese of Rheims. These were *The False Decretals*. The document was designed to provide a 'law' which could protect the rights of the bishops. In order to strengthen their argument, the authors invoked the supremacy of the pope. This compendium of Church Law which incorporated the Donation of Constantine, became a vital part of medieval canon law, and buttressed the papal claim to supremacy in the Church and over secular authority. The first pope to make use of this collection was Nicholas I (858-67). The pope's prayers and Charlemagne's arms (weapons)

were seen as going hand in hand. In addition there was the alliance between Charlemagne and Benedict of Aniane to provide unilateral rule. The monks moved in to christianise those whom Charlemagne had conquered in battle. One of the reasons why Charlemagne undertook these crusades was because he was growing short of land with which to pay his nobles. His nobles were also glad to be involved in pursuits which were 'fitting to their status'. The crusades were against the following peoples: 1. The Aquitains (769), 2. Bretons (786 + 799), 3. Bavarians (787-8), 4. Lombards (774), 5. Saxons (772-804), 6. Avars, and 7. Saracens. There was also an abortive invasion of Spain which ended in the tragedy at Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees where Roland was killed.

During the reign of Charlemagne, he had insisted that the papacy be subordinated to the king. When Louis the Pious came to the throne, this trend was reversed. But after Louis the Pious, the Carolingian empire fragmented under the impact of civil war. Elsewhere, the Muslim attacked from the south and nearly captured Rome, the Magyars from the East and the Normans from the North and in the Mediterranean. The pope was now on his own against the feuding Italian princes. All over Europe, in the 10th century there was almost total collapse of order and culture.

England, under Alfred the Great (871-901) who organised resistance against the Vikings, then became the place where learning was preserved. It was he who brought about the defeat and then conversion of the Danes. The chaos which swept Europe had the effect of bringing the Frankish church into closer dependence on the Vatican, to which the latter looked for protection.

By 900 Charlemagne's empire had broken up into several German tribal states: Saxony, Thuringia, Franconia, Lorraine, Swabia and Bavaria. These were

later reunited under a new ruler, Otto, to face the Magyar threat.

**The Papacy and the Saxon dynasty** A turning point came again in the fortunes of the papacy during the reign of pope John XII (955-64), when a strong independent German monarchy emerged. In the face of the Magyar menace, the Germans consolidated and elected a king. The Saxon dynasty began with the election of Henry I and was vigorously continued in his son, **Otto** (936-73). Otto developed, in the context of a feudal system, a very special relationship with the Church in Germany. This meant that the king appointed the bishops and local lord appointed the priests who operated on his land. Gone were the days when clergy were elected by the votes of church members and bishops elected by clergy and people together. Bishops and abbots were given the rights and dignity of princes of the realm, and the church was given generous grants of land. By means of his alliance with the Church, Otto sought to offset the power of the rebellious hereditary nobles of his kingdom. But Otto controlled their appointment, and so loyalty was guaranteed. In fact the German bishops contributed money and arms to help the German kings expand into Italy, East Germany and Poland. Otto marched south to marry a Lombard princess and then declare himself king of the Lombards. He was now in a position to help the pope against all his Italian enemies.

Before that Henry 1 had defeated the Hungarians heavily at the battle of Anstrut in 933. Twenty-two years later at the battle of the Lech, Otto won another victory over them which finally brought to an end their great raiding expeditions. So Otto became the saviour of the West and the natural candidate for the title of Holy Roman Emperor.

In 962 the papacy revived the Holy Roman Empire in the West when pope John XII crowned Otto and Adelaide emperor and empress in St. Peters. The price paid for this favour was Otto's freedom to interfere in Church affairs. Henceforth, not only did the emperor, having been elected, have to march to Rome to be crowned by the pope, but the emperor now decided who should be pope and anti-pope. In 963 Otto made the Romans promise not to elect a pope without his or his sons' consent. In fact soon afterwards he had a pope tried and deposed for immoral conduct, and elected another one.

Thus the papacy became the tool of the secular power, just like the bishops. However, this trend gradually came to be reversed. In 910 monastic reform began and the Cluniac order was formed, which was under the direct control of the pope. One of its members, Humbert de Moyenmoutier, forcefully insisted that the choice of important clergymen should no longer be the prerogative of the secular ruler. He even went further and resurrected the doctrine of pope Gelasius who had said that the pope should be supreme ruler, even over the emperor. Thus the key issue from now on was the liberation of the papacy from secular control.

In 897 pope Stephen VI ordered the digging up of the corpse of a former pope Formosius whom he hated. The corpse was then put on trial and sentenced for the violation of canon law. The corpse was then thrown into the Tiber. But this was just the start: nothing was sacred any more – the popes played a vicious game of power and pleasure. No crime was too diabolical for these heirs of St Peter.

But Rome was still half-pagan. The Romans were still attached to the holidays of the old Roman calendar,



which promised feasting and fun. The Christian calendar overlapped with the old pagan one on 14 days of the year. Thus St Peter's birthday was also celebrated as the Caristia, a pagan festival of banqueting and gift-giving. Some Christians even continued to participate in the shameless immodesty of the Lupericalia fertility festival, running half naked through the streets while whipping girls with strips of goat-hide. To persuade Christians to fully embrace Christianity, he started to make claims to have the authority of the apostle Peter.

Otto III found it very difficult to control the papacy from such a distance. In Rome the controlling factor was the Roman aristocratic families. In the early 10<sup>th</sup> century the papacy became dominated by one aristocratic family: the debauched and merciless house of Theophylact. The women of this family were described as a tribe of sex-mad megalomaniacs. The most infamous of the daughters of Count Theophylact's daughters was Marozia. A wily politician and a murderous man-eater, Marozia must have been as gorgeously depraved as she was dynastically effective. She seduced or married an entire apostolic succession of popes and kings and managed to dominate Rome for years. Drawn deeper into the mire, Rome's once mighty popes became pawns in the cesspit of local politics. At just 15 Marozia had a wicked affair with pope Sergius III, producing a son. Later Marozia became mistress of another pope John X, but she later turned against him and married his enemy, Guy of Tuscany. In 928 she and her husband successfully carried out a coup d'état in the Lateran palace, the papal residence. Marozia had John X arrested, imprisoned and then strangled in the Castel St. Angelo (former mausoleum of the emperor Hadrian), leaving her as de facto ruler of the city. The papacy and Rome sank to even greater depths of moral depravity. Marozia even

raised her own bastard son to become the next pope. But things began to fall apart for Marozia. Her uncle, Alberic, invaded Rome, arrested John XI, and imprisoned his mother in the Castel St Angelo. Marozia died in there, probably murdered by her own son. As for Alberic, he ruled Rome for 20 years with the majestic title of Prince and Senator of all the Romans. Some Byzantine emperors lived lives just as scandalous as those of their Western counterparts. The emperors, once Rome's protectors, were now in the ascendant, dominating Italy. The holy Roman emperors, successors of Charlemagne and in effect kings of Germany, repeatedly marched south to attack Rome and terrorise its popes. Only a few popes had the courage to stand up to them. In 1075 Pope Gregory VII took a stand. He published a document called *Dictatus Papae* which declared the absolute supremacy of the papacy and Rome. From now on, emperors would bow to popes. Gregory's posturing infuriated the German emperor Henry IV. He deposed the pope, but Gregory hit back by excommunicating Henry, Gregory allied himself with the Normans but when they occupied the city in 1084, things turned violent: Rome became a blazing inferno.

In 1044 the citizens of Rome rebelled against Pope Benedict IX (who owed his position to family connections), and set up an anti-pope, Sylvester III. Benedict sold his position to a third man, Gregory VI. Thus three men were all claiming to be the true pope! Henry III decided to intervene. He arrived in Italy and in 1046 set up a synod at Sutri at which two popes were deposed. The third man resigned, and Henry appointed a fourth man (a German) pope, who took the title Clement II. The house of Otto now had effective control of the papacy.

**THE SECOND PERIOD: CONSOLIDATION OF PAPAL POWER IN THE WEST (1050-1300)** This second period was characterised by the following factors:

1. The pope was now superior to the Emperor and stronger than him.
2. He built up a bureaucratic machinery to impose his power on every corner of the Western Empire.
3. Papal benefits (various important positions and rights) could be purchased for money. This increased the dependence of everyone on the pope. He came to be recognised as the final court of appeal in legal matters
4. He (and not local rulers) made all major ecclesiastical appointments.

Leo IX was the man who reactivated the papacy during this period of expansion which included a political alliance with the Normans, the exacerbation of relations with the Greeks, the reform of papal administrative machinery, the beginning of a consistent plan of government through legates, councils and vastly increased correspondence. The Donation document became superseded by a list of absolute privileges of the papacy, found in one volume of Gregory VII's letters: 'The pope can be judged by no one: the Roman Church has never erred and never will err till the end of time', etc, etc. The pope's title changed from Vicar (i.e. representative) of St. Peter to 'Vicar of Christ'. This was a title to bolster up his claim to universal sovereignty.

The most important development of this period was the establishment of a vast and complicated judicial machinery that extended into every corner of papal control. But to enforce papal decrees which involved nearly every detail of ecclesiastical life, the pope only had at his disposal interdict and excommunication, and even this depended on the co-operation of the secular arm. Most popes of this era were lawyers, which shows

the importance attached by the Vatican to the building up of a legal system. Both the secular and ecclesiastical arm co-operated when there was something in it for both of them. This gave some the impression that the church was a conspiracy between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities for the exploitation of ecclesiastical wealth and that the pope, as the head of this conspiracy, was in fact the anti-Christ.

During this period the struggle between the pope and the emperors intensified. In 1059, at a weak point in the Saxon Emperor's dynasty, Pope Nicholas II decreed that the election of future popes was to be by the vote of the College of Cardinals, thus henceforth excluding participation of the Emperor or the Roman noble families. The Normans agreed to intervene militarily if the emperor attempted to influence papal elections. In addition, the papal legate was given special powers as the pope's special representative. The Church in Milan, that had previously rejected celibacy for priests, were brought into line.

**Hildebrand** The real turning point in the struggle for papal supremacy came with the election of Hildebrand (Gregory VII) in 1073. At first he struck up an alliance with Henry IV (of the house of Otto), but Henry was a two-faced man. Hildebrand demanded that Henry put an end to lay investiture. A dispute arose about the appointment of bishops in his domains: he insisted that he appoint them and not the pope. Henry refused to give in to the pope and the pope excommunicated him. He assembled an army and prepared to invade Italy. The pope's threatened excommunication of anyone who would help Henry, caused all Henry's support to melt away and he had to concede defeat. He crossed the Alps with his family and begged for forgiveness from the pope, standing outside in the cold in front of the papal

residence. In the end the pope (urged on by Hugh, abbot of Cluny) forgave him. Henry's enemies then tried to depose him by electing Rudolf, duke of Swabia, to be emperor. A struggle ensued. The pope refused to back Henry and sided with Rudolf, but Henry would not accept this. The pope then excommunicated him, and he marched on Rome which he captured. The pope was rescued by the Norman ruler of southern Italy, who burned down the city in a battle with Henry IV.

Hildebrand died in exile in Salerno. Henry elected the next pope in Rome, but a rival pope was elected in exile! Eventually, Henry's candidate lost control and Urban II, the disciple of Hildebrand, emerged the winner. Under him the First Crusade was called. Later, in 1122 Henry V and pope Calixtus reached an agreement over investiture of bishops at the Concordat of Worms. Bishops were to be elected by the clergy, but would swear allegiance to the king in temporal matters only. But the power of the emperor over the Church was still great and only came to an end with the end of the Saxon dynasty in 1125. When this occurred, the pope became supreme. This was now symbolised by the right of the popes to wear the imperial insignia, including the tiara, a conical-shaped head-dress with a crown surrounding it. Later, this was changed to two crowns by Innocent III and to three crowns by Boniface VIII.

Just before the accession of Innocent III, there occurred two other struggles that are of note:

1. Pope Alexander III v. Frederick I Barbarossa, the most notable emperor since Charlemagne, over the question of the balance of power in Italy. Frederick eventually conceded defeat.

2. The struggle between Henry II (of England) and Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, over the question of papal authority in England. The point of

disagreement was the trial of clergy in a civil court, which Becket resisted. Thomas Becket was murdered in 1170 but his cause subsequently vindicated.

**Innocent III** His reign marks the high point of the medieval papacy. It was said of him that he behaved more like an emperor than a pope! He believed that, as vicar (representative of Christ), he had unique authority to set aside any human action. Accordingly he could intervene in any election and lay a casting vote even for the loser.

He first of all consolidated his power base in Rome and then in Italy. He then intervened in three power struggles in order to impose his authority.

1. **Germany**. The holy Roman emperor, Henry VI died suddenly without appointing an heir. A war between rival claimants (Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick) ensued, but Innocent refused to back either of them. Instead he backed Henry VI's son, Frederick, on condition that he give up his claim to the throne of Sicily and confine his rule to Germany. Henry VI had previously become owner of both Naples and Sicily, which Innocent saw as a threat to the expansion of his power in Italy.

2. **England**. With the king John of England over who should appoint the archbishop of Canterbury (the pope's nominee was Stephen Langdon). John eventually gave in after England had been placed under interdict (the clergy went on strike) for 4 years, during which time all religious activity had come to a virtual halt. John placed England under feudal vassalage to the pope, having been threatened with invasion from France. This was the first time that this had happened because all John's Norman predecessors had refused to swear allegiance to the pope. In the civil sphere, however, the pope lost another contest, when the barons plus Stephen Langton forced

king John (backed by the pope) to sign the Magna Carta, introducing the idea of government by law, as opposed to the king's despotism.

3. **France**: The third contest involved the French king, Philippe Auguste (1180-1223). He wanted to separate from his Danish wife on the day after their marriage! The pope would not agree and placed France under interdict. In the end the king gave way.

**The Fourth Lateran Council** in 1215 was the climax of Innocent's career. As well as deciding important doctrinal matters, the pope affirmed his supremacy over every aspect of Latin (and Greek) Christendom, since the Fourth Crusade had made Constantinople and environs a Latin kingdom. The same council unfortunately confirmed the shameful isolation of the Jews from society at large. They were forced to live in ghettos and to wear a special badge. The real reason for anti-semitism, however, appears to be that so many Christians were in debt to the Jews. As the trade of money-lender was barred to Christians, the Jews enjoyed a monopoly.

Here are the details of the council:

It was this council that promulgated the doctrine of transubstantiation, which holds that in communion the substance of the body and blood of Christ takes the place of the substance of the bread and wine. This council also condemned the Waldensians, the Albigensians, and the doctrines of Joachim of Fiore. It instituted episcopal inquisition, which meant that every bishop should inquire as to the presence of heresy in his diocese, and destroy it. It determined that no new monastic orders, with new rules, could be founded. It ordered that every cathedral have a school, and that education in such schools be open to the poor. It ordered the clergy to abstain from the theatre, games, hunting,

and other such pastimes. It decreed that all the faithful must confess their sins at least once a year. It forbade the introduction of new relics without papal approval. It required all Jews and Moslems in Christian lands to wear distinctive garments that would set them apart from Christians. And it made it unlawful for priests to charge for the administration of sacraments. Since the council accomplished all this, and more, in only three sessions, each of which lasted a single day, it is clear that most of these measures were not the result of the assembly's deliberation, but that they were rather part of a program that Innocent had determined, and which he had the council approve.

**Internal Crusades and the Inquisition** Innocent was the first pope to talk about heresy in terms of 'treason' (1199). He was also the initiator of the idea of the Inquisition. The idea was influenced by an uncritical reading of the Old Testament, a revival of Roman Law that prescribed the death penalty for heretics and the idea of a totalitarian, theocratic society.

He first used force against the **Cathars** (Albigenses), an antisocial sect whose members preached that the material universe was the creation and tool of Satan.

Hence they condemned the use of all things material, prohibited marriage, encouraged suicide and in general stood for a morality that strangely combined asceticism and immorality. The movement found a favorable climate in southern France, and in many places even won over the majority of the populace. Previous popes had been too preoccupied with other concerns to bother about it. Not so Innocent III. His first plan was to use persuasion, so he sent in his dynamic preacher Dominic to France, but after ten years preaching he saw no improvement in



the situation. Then in 1207 the papal legate Peter of Castelnau was brutally murdered at the instigation, it seems, of a suspected Cathar, Count Raymond of Toulouse. Pope Honorius III proclaimed a crusade against the Cathars and two big armies under Simon de Montfort converged on south-west France, stormed the cities of Béziers and Carcassonne and massacred their inhabitants. In the process they also killed any Waldensians that they found. These armies consisted of northern French noblemen who were keen to destroy the political and cultural independence of the South. Finally, at the battle of Muret, they decisively crushed the heretics.

It was in connection with this crusade that the papal system of **the Inquisition** originated. This was a special tribunal appointed by the popes and charged with ferreting out heretics. Until then this had been the job of the bishops. In France they had been granted considerable powers by Louis VIII to judge and punish heretics. The older method of trial by accusation, which depended on the initiative of an accuser, was replaced by a system in which the judge took the initiative. Frederick II had issued a similar decree ordering the burning of heretics. When Gregory IX came to power, he took up Frederick II's law. With this, the execution of heretics by secular authorities had finally and officially become papal policy. Under Gregory IX the Inquisition as a church institution, independent of the bishops, was practically completed, and the Dominicans became his agents in this respect. Victims of the Inquisition were accused on the basis of anonymous denunciations; they were not allowed witnesses in their favour nor legal aid. The innocent as well as the guilty were often forced to confess by the use of brutal torture which was definitely

prescribed in the bull of Innocent IV of 1252, *Ad extirpanda*.

The inquisition had the effect of causing "heretics" to go underground and meet in secret. This is why we know so little about them during the medieval period.

In 1483 the Inquisition was introduced into Spain but not answerable to the papal Inquisition. Queen Isabella persuaded the pope Sixtus IV to make it a national institution. The longest internal Christian crusade up to that point had been against the Muslim of Spain. They had been driven back from the North of Spain but were still fairly firmly entrenched in the South where they had good relations with the Christians and the Jews, until Ferdinand and Isabella came along. By marriage they united the provinces of Aragon and Castille. Together they conquered Grenada in the south and backed the Inquisition under Torquemada (1420-98). Torture was used to extract confessions, and some 2,000 executions occurred. Torquemada was later involved in an Inquisition in Bosnia against the Bogomils. In 1492 the church authorities in Spain stipulated that Muslim and Jews had to be baptised or get out. 200,000 Jews left, many for Constantinople, though some settled in Thessaloniki and other Mediterranean ports. In the same year (1492) Columbus was sent off to convert more infidels for Christ, in India!

### **The Papacy and the Hohenstaufen** (rulers of Sicily)

The next episode concerns the papal struggle for the control of Naples and Sicily. The pope was uneasy that the Hohenstaufen controlled Sicily and Naples and so threatened his control of Italy. He sought to solve the problem by bringing it under the control of the French who were sympathetic to him but the Sicilians would have none of it and rebelled. Even worse a civil war

erupted in Italy which pitched the pope (guelfs) against the Hohenstaufen (gibelines) Although relations between Innocent III and Frederick II started well in 1213, Frederick subsequently proved to be one of the most dangerous enemies of the papacy. By the time Gregory became pope (1227) a full-scale war was on the horizon. This war was to do irreparable damage to the spiritual reputation of the papacy. Frederick II was excommunicated twice by Gregory IX and once by Innocent IV. A terrible war began as both sides fought it out all over Europe. Frederick II saw papal assassins and conspirators in every shadow, and treated hapless suspects with the utmost barbarism. He had them blinded with red-hot irons, dragged to death by horses over stony ground, sewn up in leather sacks with poisonous snakes, and tossed into the sea. The pope replied with his spiritual artillery: indulgences for fighting the holy war against Frederick, excommunication, interdict. Finally, Frederick was defeated in the battle of Parma in 1248 and died soon afterwards. It was the end of the house of Hohenstaufen in Sicily. Henceforth the popes were determined to keep Sicily and the Empire separate. Their first problem was therefore to find a ruler for Sicily who would have no claim to become Holy Roman emperor. They found who they were looking for in Charles d'Anjou, brother of the French king.

The pope conferred the crown of the empire on Rudolf of Habsburg who promised to be docile and was elected emperor on this basis in 1273. Charles d'Anjou secured his hold over Sicily by defeating Frederick's two sons, Manfred and Conradin. But soon Sicily erupted in a guerilla war against the occupying French (Called the Sicilian Vespers). This got the pope the reputation of being an imperialist oppressor. When papal elections came, the candidates proposed were Rossini who

favoured the French descendents of Charles d'Anjou, and Colonna who favoured the Spanish house of Aragon. In the event, both were rejected in favour of Peter Morone, an uneducated hermit who took the throne under the name of Celestine V.

### **THE THIRD PERIOD (1300-1520): THE DEGENERATION OF THE SYSTEM**

This third period was characterised by the following:

1. The threat of papal excommunication began to lose its effectiveness.

2. Papal indulgencies began to lose their value. In the end they were given to anyone for any reason, spiritual or political.

3. Papal political sovereignty waned and was exchanged gradually for the dignity of an arbitrator in disputes. The importance of spiritual matters decreased as nationalism became an increasingly important factor.

4. While the papacy continued as a bureaucratic institution, it lost the initiative to smaller, unofficial groups within the Church. It ceased to be the centre of innovation.

**The Papacy and the French** Celestine abdicated in 1294, the first pope to do so. His successor, Boniface VIII, was a political pope. Although the Hohenstaufen were out of the way, a new threat loomed on the horizon: **nationalism** that wanted to break free of papal control. The pope soon found himself at odds with the leading power of the time, the French. The French king, Philippe le Bel, wanted to get his hands on Church funds, in order to finance a war against England so he levied a tax on the clergy. This started a ding-dong battle with the Vatican. Ultimately the pope issued his bull *Unam Sanctam* which reiterated the traditional claim of the

papacy to ultimate sovereignty over the European Christian social order and concluded that 'it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff'. Philippe's advisors answered this by drawing up an indictment of Boniface, accusing him of murder, heresy, simony, adultery, schism and keeping a demon as a pet. The pope excommunicated him and the French attacked the papal residence at Canossa, south of Rome. The pope only just escaped but died soon afterwards of shock.

Henceforth the French were determined to exert pressure on the papacy to bring it into line, and put much pressure on the cardinals, who were split between anti- and pro-French factions. In 1305 the archbishop of Bordeaux was elected pope, taking the name Clement V, but he did not want to leave his native France. So he moved to Avignon where most popes were to reside for the rest of the century, for they were all pro-French.

Under Clement V, the French were given permission to abolish the orders of the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller, in order to seize their lands and wealth. In 1307 the Templars received a shock from which they never recovered. While their master and other senior Templar knights were visiting France for talks with the Pope on the possibility of a new crusade, the French king, Philippe le Bel, in a dawn raid on Templar houses throughout France, had them all arrested. The French king was short of cash and decided to swoop on the order's large reserves of gold and silver held in the Templar citadel in Paris. The charges against them were: denial of Christ, spitting on the crucifix, sodomy and the practice of satanist rites. False confessions were extracted by torture in France but not in Aragon, Cyprus or England. It seems most unlikely that any of the Templars had committed any of the crimes of which the

king had accused them. It also seems unlikely that the Turin shroud had ever been in their possession.

One result of the absence of the papacy from Italy, was the development of the Renaissance in Italy without any restrictions on artistic genius in the name of the Church. Another result was that many intellectuals used the opportunity to launch attacks against the papacy, notably Marsilius of Padua (rector of the university of Paris) and William of Ockham, both of whom were sheltered by Louis of Bavaria, who was subsequently excommunicated by the pope. Both these thinkers maintained that the Bible should be the source of doctrine and that any disagreements should be cleared up in a democratic manner by a supreme church council, and not by one man acting as a spiritual dictator. The reformers were later to draw on these ideas.

Throughout the period at Avignon, the French made sure that they controlled all elections to the papacy: 82% of the cardinals were French, 13% Italians and 5% other nationalities. One of the results of this period is that the papacy became identified with France and so the enemies of France became the enemies of the papacy. This came to the fore at the time of the Reformation which was much stronger in Germany and England than elsewhere.

In 1350 Rome was a desperate backwater. The kings of France dominated Rome and forced the election of a French pope who took residence in Avignon. Without the pope Rome lost its moral and financial power. Crime thrived on its streets dominated by two aristocratic families, the Colonnas and the Orsinis who operated from their fortified palaces. They ruled the territories in the city like gangster bosses. There were now just 30,000 living in Rome (in the Roman empire there has been one million). The women who would rescue Rome's

fortunes was St Catherine of Sienna, who made it her life's ambition to get the pope to return to Rome. The pope duly returned but the French elected an anti-pope in Avignon. The situation became so ridiculous that there were three men in three different cities all claiming to be the rightful pope. This became known as the Western schism. In 1417 the Colonna family pulled off a major triumph with the election of the Colonna pope, Martin V, in 1417 that brought an end to the Western schism. The 3 claimants to the papacy were all forced to resign. The Renaissance popes launched a massive building programme to put the Vatican on the map. A classic example of a renaissance pope was Alexander V was a member of the notorious Borgia family. His son Cesare was a bishop at 16 and a cardinal at 18, but he probably murdered his own brother. His victims were found floating in the Tiber every morning. The Borgias shamelessly turned the Vatican into a palace of pleasure. The pope himself had many lovers and fathered many children. For the Renaissance popes outrageous parties and ostentatious displays of wealth were regarded as normal. The successor to the Borgia pope became even more closely related to the Renaissance. He was Julius II. He assembled a team of the best artists and architects in the land to make Rome the most beautiful city in the world. In 1505 he pulled down the old church of St Peter and set about building a new one, financed by the sale of indulgencies, a practice that had started in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The building lasted for 120 years which went through the reigns of 20 popes. Leo X was a member of the Medici banking family, but in one year he squandered the entire savings of the papacy on pleasures, art and gambling. In 1528 the German Protestants mercenaries sacked Rome. Sent by the emperor Charles V as a warning to an inept Medici pope Clement VII. When the

Counter-reformaton came, Paul IV ordered a clean-up. He regarded its art as pagan and ordered that all private parts displayed in paintings should be covered up, which earned him the title of the Fig-Leaf pope. And so a rule of austerity set in. The pope did not just attack art, but unleashed the Inquisition on the Eternal City. Homosexuals were burned alive. Jews who had lived peacefully in Rome for 1700 years were confined to a ghetto. In 1539 the church created a new militant wing – the Jesuits. Under pope Urban VIII they launched a new architectural style, Barock, designed by Bernini who was the Michelangelo of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Gregory XI returned to Rome. When he died, the Romans demanded that an Italian pope should be elected. Eventually the cardinals agreed and elected Urban VI. But he soon proved to be too much of a dictator for them, and they elected another pope, Clement VII, who retired to Avignon in 1281 after battles between rival popes. Some countries supported one pope, some another. The cardinals, in an attempt to heal the schism, met and elected a third man, Alexander V. The **Council of Constance** met in 1414 and elected Martin V as the one and only pope. He was not even a priest when he was elected and had to be hurriedly made priest, consecrated as bishop and enthroned as pope!

But then another split developed between the **Council** (of Cardinals) **of Ferrara** and the **council of Basel**: each elected rival popes, but then one resigned. After this the papacy became an entirely Italian institution and the age of the great Renaissance popes began. The first one, Nicholas V, set the tone for the rest: interest in the arts, architectural adornment, humanism, study of Greek etc. Alexander was one of the most controversial popes of that line: he used Turkish help against the French. In the



midst of these political skirmishes, the preacher Savonarola was executed in Florence because of his opposition to the pope, and because of his friendship with the French.

This third period of the papal development was characterised by increased inflation. The first indulgencies were granted in 1095 to anyone who went on a Crusade. An indulgence was seen as a substitute to all other penances, whereby it would ensure the immediate entry into heaven of a Crusader who died in a state of grace (through repentance and confession). But this process gradually snowballed until anyone could get an indulgence for a fee. This led to a case of spiritual inflation whereby an indulgence had little worth. Indulgencies were eventually bought for dead people to shorten their stay in purgatory.

At the end the medieval period, opposition to the pope was building up through the activities of such people as:

1. Hus and Wycliffe
2. The secular writers of the day like Boccaccio, Langland and Chaucer.
3. Political rulers who disliked their subjects' primary loyalty to the pope.

## **EVOLUTION OF DOGMA DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

**The Adoptionist heresy** alleged that Jesus was a man of blameless life who became the adoptive son of God. This view arose in Spain in the late 8th century and appeared again later within the empire of Charlemagne. Alcuin combatted it vigorously in his work entitled *Against Felix* (a Spanish bishop). Behind it lay the conflict between the Frankish Church and the Mozarabs (Christians that had grown up in the islamic part of

Spain). The Mozarabs were really Nestorians who insisted that Jesus was adopted (i.e. began his ministry) at his baptism, not as Son of God, but as Son of Man (i.e. the Suffering Servant). This was therefore not an example of the classic adoptionist heresy.

**The Virgin Mary.** Several monks during the time of Charlemagne disputed the question of the perpetual virginity of Mary, a view widely accepted from the 5th century. Charlemagne's theologians were concerned to protect the holiness and sinlessness of Mary (presumably because they had in the back of their minds the gnostic idea that matter, and so the flesh, is evil).

**Predestination** was also a subject that was widely discussed at the time. A monk called Gottschalk of Orbais (805-868), who carefully studied the theology of Augustine, realised that the church had conveniently forgotten about his teaching on predestination. But Gottschalk went so far as to advocate double predestination. After much discussion he was declared a heretic and imprisoned in a monastery where he is said to have gone mad shortly before his death.

**The Sacraments.** Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor (a monastery in Paris) had said that there were 30 sacraments, but Peter Lombard developed a system of 7: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination and matrimony. This view was pronounced as orthodox by the Fourth Lateran Council and the system became firmly entrenched in Aquinas' theology. To qualify as a sacrament, they had to be:

- a) outward signs of an inward grace,
- b) have been instituted by Christ.

Lombard and Aquinas taught that the sacraments confer grace simply by being performed (*ex opere operato*). People receiving them, can, through unbelief, put up a barrier to grace – though this is of course impossible for an unconscious infant or a dying person. The idea also later evolved that baptism, confirmation and ordination made an indelible seal on the soul, whereby they were unrepeatable.

But Lombard also taught that in the sacrament of penance, the priest can *declare* remission of sins (conditional on repentance) but he cannot actually *forgive* sin. (Aquinas also held this view initially, but later abandoned it). According to Lombard the only thing a priest could remit was a temporal punishment (like excommunication) that had been imposed by the church

The two main sacraments were however: a) baptism, and b) the eucharist.

**Baptism.** As we have seen, baptism was greatly affected by Augustine's controversy with Pelagius. The doctrine of original sin, which Augustine set out, made it vital for the Church to believe in the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation. People took this to mean that unbaptised infants that died, went to limbo (on the borders of hell). The high rate of infant mortality at this period led to baptism being carried out within minutes of birth, often by midwives. In addition, as Europe came to be regarded as a Christian society, virtually all baptisms were of infants, with the enormous pressure to baptise quickly. The older tradition of Easter baptism ceased. It also became impossible for the bishop to lay on hands (or anoint) at baptism, so this was relegated to a separate ceremony – that of confirmation, but at first this was not an important sacrament. A post-baptismal laying on of hands goes back to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century in North

Africa. Not until the 6<sup>th</sup> century did it come in as a separate sacrament in the Western Church.

However, leading western theologians continued to argue that immersion was the best form of baptism. Among them were: Peter Lombard, Bonaventura, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus

**Eucharist.** By 1000, more and more people believed that, at the eucharist, the sign is itself that which it signifies (the position based on Aristotle). A controversy concerning the use of unleavened bread (azymes) in the 8th century standardised the use of wafers at the eucharist in the Western Church. Ratramnus in the 9th century was one of the last writers to describe the elements at the eucharist as "symbols", but his book was condemned in 1050. He opposed **Paschasius Radbertus** (785-860), the abbot of Corbie, who said that at the eucharist the bread and wine actually became the body and blood. **Berengar of Tours** (1000-1080) also could not accept the idea that one could actually eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood, though he said that some sort of change took place. **Lanfranc** (1005-1089), archbishop of Canterbury, opposed Berengar and said that only the underlying substance was changed. Lanfranc's view was called "transsubstantiation" and later became the official doctrine of the Church, backed up by aristotelian logic (as expounded by Aquinas) which said that a symbol was made of the same substance (though not the outward form which is discerned by the senses) as the object which it signifies. This doctrine became official at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) which quoted Aquinas as an authority.

Transsubstantiation itself gave rise to new emphases: the building up to a climax of adoration in the rite: an increase in devotions outside the liturgy; the new feast of

Corpus Christi; the barring of lay people from the wine (lest spilling of transubstantiated wine should occur and cause scandal). Theories were developed that, through the offering of Christ himself under the forms of bread and wine in the sacrifice of the mass, atonement was made for both living and dead. This in turn led to the later medieval proliferation of masses for the dead. It also gave rise to a change in church architecture: glorious cathedrals were built as a fit setting where this "miracle" could be performed.

**The doctrine of the Atonement.** The two most significant theories put out during the Middle Ages were by Anselm and Abélard.

**Anselm** (1033-1109) was archbishop of Canterbury appointed in the wake of the Norman invasion. Like most scholastics he wanted to probe the *reason* for things: he wanted to explain things rationally. First of all he dealt with the atonement. Besides a rational explanation, he was concerned to combat Origen's idea that Christ's death was a debt paid to Satan. His greatest work in theology was *Cur Deus Homo?* (Why did God become man?). Anselm replied that sin runs up a debt with God which humans can themselves never repay (otherwise they would all be destroyed). But Christ's death was of such worth that it "satisfied" God's offended majesty and earned a reward. Hence the Father gives humanity salvation (duly dispensed by the church) on account of the merits of Christ. These merits are credited to the account of the elect (Anselm was an augustinian).

The background to this view is the feudal system with its concepts of honour, merits and rewards. Sin is seen as an affront to God. An affront has to be avenged. Christ (who was God) was affronted on the cross (insulted by a death of such indignity). Justice requires

that Christ be recompensed (for false defamation of character), but Christ is God, so the benefits of his death can be passed on to sinners. What Anselm says is not that there is satisfaction of God's just demands through punishment of Christ in the place of the sinner, but satisfaction (of an affront) *instead of* punishment. This is not the biblical doctrine.

**Abélard** (1079-1142) was known as a scholastic with liberal tendencies. He was also involved in theological controversy and pioneered the moral influence theory as an explanation of what happened on the cross. He claimed that redemption meant having a burning love for God. The Passion (sufferings of Christ) is the means whereby this supreme love is awakened in us. The purpose of the cross is therefore not to effect some thing for us (to expiate our sins and reconcile us with God), but to effect something in us: the cross woos us away from our present evil way of life. This theory lay dormant until the 19th century when it was revived by Horace Bushnell. It is essentially a subjective view that emphasises the power but not the guilt of sin. Peter Lombard was his pupil.

## **CHURCH PRACTICE**

Western Christendom at the time of Innocent III embraced some 70 million members, divided into 400 dioceses, ruled over by a bishop or archbishop all of whom were subject to the Pope in Rome. Bishops usually came from noble families and also served as civil administrators. They kept a very tight control on parishes which were manned by priests who were usually drawn from the lower classes. Since there were no seminaries for the training of candidates (a phenomenon which was

introduced only after the Council of Trent) those who wanted to be ordained simply presented themselves 3 days before the ceremony of ordination and took a three-day oral exam. The candidate had to be at least 24 years old, and not disqualified by reason of servile birth, illegitimacy or bodily defects. His job was to say Mass, baptise, hear confessions, visit the sick and bury the dead. He exhorted his parishioners to care for the poor. He might be the chaplain of a guild.

The local priest was often hardly distinguishable from his parishioners, even though in theory and in theology there was meant to be a sharp distinction, according to the Gregorian concept of the priesthood. To this end, it had been laid down that they should remain celibate, because marriage had been found to be a major integrating factor. All clerical marriages were finally outlawed at the Second Lateran Council in 1139. They were also supposed to dress differently, wearing the cassock (modelled on the Roman toga). It was at the Mass that the separation of clergy from people was made dramatically evident. Sacramental tendencies which had changed the nature of the Mass, became even more pronounced in the Middle Ages. The participation of the laity was gradually reduced to none at all, so that they basically became spectators. The medieval priest had to wear special elaborate clothes and whisper the prayers in Latin. When time for communion came, all the faithful received was a "wafer" dipped in wine. Only monks, nuns and priests received communion regularly. The main object of the layman coming to Mass was to see the elevated wafer. Man would wander around town going from church to church just to see the wafer elevated. This idea was developed in the Feast of Corpus Christi

when the entire town came out to see the host paraded around in a golden monstrance.

Towards the eve of the Reformation, religion started to become more personal. Private chapels began to proliferate. The suffering Christ replaced God, the stern Judge. The pitiful Virgin Mary was made more human and shrine after shrine was built for her. The use of the rosary, the "Hail Mary" and the feasts of the Virgin became increasingly common. In art, the bleeding heart of Jesus began to take its place more often among the other motifs. 'Miracles' of the eucharist became more frequent after the 13th century. This was mostly due to the increasing neoplatonic emphasis of the church and the mystical preaching of **Bernard of Clairvaux** and others of the same type. Bernard pioneered a revolutionary trend in Western piety towards a greater emphasis on the human Jesus, and the centrality of companionship with Jesus the man of sorrows in the believer's life. Jesus the suffering Son of Man hanging on the cross tended to replace the risen Son of God enthroned in heaven as the main focus of Western Catholic spirituality. This emphasis on the suffering of Christ had an unfortunate result: people began to focus on those who had caused this suffering, the Jews. Bernard also popularised the adoration of the Virgin Mary as the most effective human mediator. However, he did not believe in the immaculate conception of Mary.

## **THE CRUSADES**

These were series of seven major and numerous minor campaigns into the Levant undertaken by West



Europeans between 1095 and 1291. The Crusades started for two immediate reasons:

1) Christians had gone on pilgrimages to the Holy Land during much of the medieval period, but with the arrival of the Seljuk Turks their travels were hampered. After capturing Jerusalem from their fellow Muslims, the Seljuks pushed north and defeated the Byzantine forces at the battle of Manzikert (1071) which is near Lake Van in Armenia. The Fatimids had recaptured Jerusalem from the Turks shortly before the arrival of the crusaders. Within the next few years, Asia Minor, the chief recruiting ground for Byzantine soldiers, was lost and the emperor was writing to Western princes and the pope, seeking mercenaries with which to regain his lost territories.

2) The Arabs had of course been in control of Palestine since 636 when they won the decisive battle of the Yarmuk, but they had allowed pilgrims to visit the holy places. It was the arrival of the Turks that put an end to all that. However they had stripped Christian churches of gold with which they built their two mosques on the Temple mount. In 1010 the caliph had systematically destroyed most of the remaining churches and convents (of which there had been hundreds). The demolition of part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was one of the triggers of the crusades. The problem came with the arrival of the barbarian Turks who were comparatively recent converts to Islam.

There were other reasons which favoured such a crusade.

1. It was a chance for the Christians to take revenge on the Muslims.

2. The end of the world was about to come, or so many thought.

3. To die as a crusader was a quick way to heaven. It was also a way of doing penance.

4. The critical economic situation in Europe. The Fatimids had been hindering all trade contacts with Western Europe. Famine had appeared in some parts. Europe had been going through several terrible epidemics (plague?). Thus there was a desire to escape from such terrible realities.

5. The pope saw the Crusades as a golden opportunity for channelling the energies of warring nobles in a more positive direction. The Crusades were a 'pilgrimage with a difference', a new way which opened the ascetic road to salvation for soldiers. Over their chain mail they wore a white robe (with a red cross on it), which was the same colour as the robe of the Cistercians (Bernard's own order). This reflected the marriage of monastic austerity with the knights' spirit of chivalry.

6. The pope also saw it as an opportunity to reunite christendom.

7. The interests of the crusaders and Italian traders coincided. These merchants came from Venice and Genoa. Without the transport (ships) which they provided, the crusades would have been logistically impossible. This was because the Greeks of Byzantine Empire did not help the crusaders to maintain their overland supply lines with the West.

The pope went on a recruiting drive and got an overwhelming response. Of course there had to be an ideological justification for a military crusade. Firstly the Church had to justify the use of force. Their scholars concluded that it was justified if the ends were righteous. The second argument centred around the idea of honour. Jesus had been deprived of his honour when the Muslims had captured Jerusalem, and so this insult had to be avenged by resorting to a holy war. It was also argued that the Jews had also deprived him of his honour by crucifying him, and so this insult also had to be

avenged. This explains the slaughter of the Jews that occurred during the peasants' crusade.

The first crusade was divided into two parts. The first part to set out was the so-called Peasants' Crusade led by Peter the Hermit consisting of three major armies and a number of smaller ones. They started off by massacring a number of Jewish communities clustered along the banks of the Rhine. Many of the participants got no further than the Balkans where they were destroyed by Byzantine Christian authorities in reprisal for pillage, murder and havoc that they had caused everywhere they had gone. The remainder were slaughtered by the Turks in Asia Minor – those who after surrendering refused to become Muslims, were killed. The year was 1096 – only thirty years after the Norman conquest of England.

**THE FIRST CRUSADE** proper set out only a year later. It consisted of about 45,000 people of which only about 15,000 were actually knights. After the siege of Tarsus, Baldwin accepted the title of count of Edessa from the Armenians and refused to go any further. Those who remained defeated the main Turkish force while crossing Turkey, and laid siege to Antioch, which they eventually captured. By this time they had lost 50% of their forces. They also defeated another force of Turks sent to recapture the town. From Antioch only about 15,000 went on to Jerusalem, which they were able to capture from the Egyptian Fatimid garrison without much problem but insisted on executing large numbers of their captured enemies (including Jews). It had taken them 4 years to reach Jerusalem and capture it since the beginning of the crusade. Only 10% of the original force had reached Jerusalem. They established themselves along the coastal strip, because the Seljuk Turks (who

controlled Syria) and the Fatimids in Egypt were divided amongst themselves. The other two Muslim powers were not interested in the fate of Palestine.

To get to Jerusalem, however, many had had to come via Constantinople where, much to the surprise of the emperor, they had almost behaved as an invading army.

A high proportion of the population of Syria and Palestine were monophysite Christians (especially the Armenians in Edessa) although ruled over by Muslim overlords. This helped the crusaders. But the Greek Christians who made up the Byzantine Empire, failed to join the Holy War of the Crusaders, because they were suspicious of them. It was of no comfort to the Byzantine emperor to learn that four out of the eight leaders of the first crusade were Normans – the very people who had been attacking him previously in an attempt to take land from his Empire.

Once they had reached their objectives in Palestine, they set up a number of Crusader kingdoms. There was only officially one: the kingdom of Jerusalem, but because of rival rulers others were set up. These were: The County of Edessa (present-day Urfa), the Principality of Antioch and the County of Tripoli. Most knights having arrived there, promptly went back again to Europe, having 'done their duty'. However, consolidation had to be carried out. This was done under a man called Baldwin I (1100-18) and by founding two orders to defend the Holy Land: the **Knights Templar** and the **Knights Hospitaller**. Originally the Knights Templar had been founded to protect pilgrims travelling from the coast to Jerusalem, and the knights Hospitaller to care for sick pilgrims in Jerusalem. The ports that had been taken were secured and sea links assured by Genoese ships which brought supplies. By 1154 the Crusaders had taken the two remaining centres of resistance (Tyre and

Ashkelon) and now controlled a continuous coastline from Latakia to Jaffa. Europeans were encouraged to settle in Palestine as free men (not as serfs). In order to control the interior they had to rely on a chain of castles (especially in Syria) which they constructed, but they suffered from a lack of manpower. These were mostly manned by the two recently formed Crusader orders who in turn recruited mercenaries. Never at any time were there more than about 300 Templar knights.

The most positive result of the first crusade was that the Byzantine emperor got back the western half of Asia Minor which he had lost from the Turks, but it then came under western control when the crusaders founded their own states in Palestine. In fact the whole of the Byzantine empire now fell under the economic control of the west, in particular that of Venice which had been granted exclusive trading rights in return for the recovery of lands previously captured by the Turks.

Later the Muslims regrouped and went on the offensive, capturing the kingdom of Edessa in 1144. Zengi and a large force including Muslim Kurds profited from the temporary absence of the Duke of Edessa, and captured the town in 1144. This incident shocked all of Europe and sparked off the ...

**SECOND CRUSADE** Bernard of Clairveaux acted as Pope's publicity manager for the crusade and preached sermons far and wide in order to recruit crusaders. Five armies moved out from Europe. These were led by Louis VII of France and the German emperor Conrad III in 1147. This had the scale of a world crusade against all infidels: a campaign was worked out against the Moors in Spain and Portugal, against the pagan Slavs in the East, as well as against the Turks in the Holy Land. After the failure of the First Crusade, Christians were nonplussed

and suggested that the treachery of the Greek Christians was probably the main reason. Accordingly Bernard of Clairvaux began to suggest that they should mount a crusade against Constantinople. In 1204 this happened when the Doge of Venice persuaded an expedition of knights (the Fourth Crusade) to besiege and conquer the city. However, the Second Crusade proved a fiasco. Germans who crossed Turkey were defeated and the French who followed severely harassed. Some managed to reach Antioch and decided to take Damascus but failed. A massive building programme began to protect crusader territories from certain attack from Syria which the Muslims had by now occupied. This was carried out by the Templars and Hospitallers. They did this on the strength of monies raised from the estates they owned all over Europe. They were the nearest thing to a multi-national corporation. Antioch then fell after the crusaders withdrew. The kingdom of Jerusalem was in disarray because of a leper-king, and a subsequent alliance allowed Saladin and Nur ad-Din to defeat the crusaders at Hattin (1187) and to the capture of Jerusalem. This sparked off the third crusade.

At about the same time as the third crusade, a band of knights from England and Belgium who were travelling to the Holy Land, landed on the coast of Islamic Spain, captured the city of Lisbon from the Muslims, settled there and founded the new Catholic nation of Portugal.

**THIRD CRUSADE** which was called the crusade of kings because it was led by Richard I Lion Heart, French king Philip II Auguste and the German emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. Frederick was drowned after a heart-attack while crossing a river in Turkey: Philip and Richard quarrelled until Philip returned to France. Richard took a year to reach Palestine. On the way, some of his forces

diverted to fight the Moors in Spain, some went to Sicily to rescue his sister under siege in Messina. Part of his fleet was wrecked in Cyprus and Richard captured the whole island from the Byzantine ruler. Once in Palestine, Richard managed to recover some territory but not Jerusalem itself. For the first time he faced Saladin, a political adventurer of Kurdish extraction. He defeated him (at Arsuf) and persuaded him to allow Christian pilgrims to visit Jerusalem. He even tried to negotiate a marriage between Richard's widowed sister and Saladin's brother to unite the two sides but the lady refused to marry a Muslim. He did not besiege Jerusalem as he had to contend with Saladin's roving army at the same time. On his return Richard was kidnapped by Austrian and German troops jealous of his success and held hostage until a large price was paid for his release.

During this crusade the order of the **Teutonic Knights** was founded by Bremen and Lübeck merchants during the siege of Acre in 1199. This decision was subsequently ratified by pope Clement III and it soon became an important order in Germany.

**THE FOURTH CRUSADE** (1202-4) The original objective of the crusade had been Egypt, and the crusaders on it were entirely French. French nobles commissioned the Venicians to build a fleet to carry a large force to Palestine. The ships were constructed but not all the force expected turned up. The result was that the crusaders had not enough money to pay for everything. The Doge suggested that they could owe him the rest of the money and pay him back in treasure that they would later capture. The crusaders first of all sacked and pillaged Zadar in 1202 in order to recapture it for Venice. The pope excommunicated them for this. They then set out for Constantinople. This was because the

brother of a deposed Byzantine emperor (Aleksis) had met Richard and asked him to help him recover his throne in return for payment. Richard accepted. Constantinople was duly captured and the emperor reinstated. But only part of the money was paid. In order to get the rest, they had to capture the city and help themselves to its treasures. Churches were plundered (mostly by the Venetians) of their silver and gold. A prostitute was placed on the throne of the patriarch and obligingly sang a bawdy song in Norman French. Then they shared out the loot: one share for a foot soldier, two shares for a priest and the lion's share for Venice!

The result of this crusade was the capture of Constantinople and the establishment of a Latin Kingdom in the area. This kingdom lasted from 1204-61 with its lands divided into feudal holdings and presented to the crusaders. A Latin patriarch was appointed, but the Western Church made little impression on the Greek population.

The French then took over the Byzantine empire and divided it up among themselves, but three enclaves of Byzantine resistance managed to hold out: the empire of Nicaia (N. Asia Minor), the empire of Trebizond and the despotate of Epirus. It was from the empire of Nicaea that the Byzantines reasserted themselves, recaptured Constantinople and restored the empire.

The crusaders had never even got as far as the Holy Land. In the process they had done the unthinkable: attacked their own fellow Catholics (in Zadar) and the Orthodox Christians in Constantinople.

Now (in the 13th century) the crusaders were restricted to the coastal strip with the capital at Acre. There was now almost as much quarreling among the crusaders as amongst their Muslim adversaries.



Crusading, in spite of its successive failures in the East, had become a major instrument of papal policy. In the early 13th cent, the pope was busy organising crusades to Spain, the Baltic regions and Southern France against the Albigensians.

There then followed the Children's Crusade which was a fiasco. They had the idea that only child-like purity could gain God's help in winning back the Holy City. In the event, many of them were sold into slavery by unscrupulous merchants who took them to Tunis.

**THE FIFTH CRUSADE** was launched by Innocent III in 1219 with the aim of capturing Egypt. It was organised by the papacy in Rome (in the church of St. John Lateran). The crusade set out from Split under the command of king Andrew II of Hungary. They arrived at Acre and then reembarked for Egypt. After initial success of the capture of Damietta, they advanced to Cairo, but had to wait. The army was without a leader – the German emperor Frederick II failed to arrive for 18 months. Eventually the papal legate decided to march on without him. The Nile had flooded and the crusaders became bogged down. They were forced to accept humiliating peace terms. Frederick took so much time to arrive that the Pope eventually excommunicated him! Frederick II didn't arrive until 1228 when most of his crusade had returned home, so by that time it was the Sixth Crusade!

During the time when the crusaders were besieging the town of Damietta in Egypt, a scruffy looking friar surrendered himself to the Muslim soldiers and asked them to take him to their leader. He was Francis of Assisi, and he had travelled out from Italy to convert the sultan. Amazingly, the guards took him into the royal presence and he was politely received. Francis explained to the sultan the merits of Christianity, and then asked for

a bonfire to be lit into which he could step to demonstrate his faith by remaining unsinged. The sultan was a considerate man and said no to this display of zeal. But he listened and sent Francis safely on his way.

Legend added another chapter. When Francis arrived back in Italy, he was met by someone as free-thinking as himself, by the emperor Frederick II, a man of insatiable curiosity, who promptly locked him up in a room with a beautiful girl, and settled down to watch the encounter through the key-hole. St. Francis, who emerges from these stories as something of a pyromaniac, had a neat solution. He would lie with the lady, he told her, if she would join him on a bed of red-hot coals which he had raked from the fire onto the hearth. The emperor was so impressed that he dismissed the girl and spent the night in earnest discussion with Francis.

**THE SIXTH CRUSADE** was led by the excommunicated Frederick II who eventually turned up in 1228 after a period of illness. Access to Jerusalem for Christian pilgrims was gained by skilfull negotiations with the sultan in 1228 but on condition that both Jews and Muslims also be given free access to the Holy Places. At this stage both sides were divided and quarreling among themselves, so neither side did much. Then Jerusalem was lost again in 1244 when the Turks swept down from the north and captured it from the German garrison. This led to the seventh crusade. After this the pope led a crusade against Frederick II which eventually led to his defeat.

Frederick II was remarkably broad-minded for his age, coming as he did from Sicily where Islam, Eastern and Western Christianity had co-existed for a long time. He was called the baptised sultan because he kept a harem. Frederick called Jerusalem the city of three religions.

Europe was scandalised by this and the Pope preached a crusade against Frederick II in Sicily.

But access to Jerusalem was lost again. But then Richard of Cornwall came on the scene and signed a treaty with Egypt and regained Jerusalem. Subsequent events went against the crusaders and in the end they lost all but a narrow strip of land along the coast of Palestine.

**THE SEVENTH CRUSADE** Louis IX led a seventh crusade in 1248 which set out from Aigues Mortes but this time against Egypt which he intended to seize in order to secure Palestine. He failed and was captured by the new sultan Baibars. Louis attributed this defeat to his dissolute life. A large ransom had to be paid to secure his release. He then went to Caesarea and fortified the town as an act of penance. Fourteen years later these same fortifications were destroyed by the Mamluke sultan Baybars. This sultan was an ex-slave of Caucasian origin who organised an invincible army consisting of Mamluks – a sort of precursor of the later Janissaries. It was he who was responsible for the defeat of the Mongols who had begun to invade Syria and northern Palestine, the elimination of the Crusader states and the triumph of Islam.

In 1270 Louis mounted another expedition (the eighth crusade), but it was diverted to Tunis where he hoped to witness the conversion of the emir, whom he had been mistakenly informed, was sympathetic to Christianity. In the event, he was not, so they laid siege to Tunis. Disease (dysentery and typhoid) decimated the crusaders as they laid siege to Tunis and Louis died.

The **Ninth Crusade**, which is sometimes grouped with the Eighth Crusade, is commonly considered to be the

last major medieval [Crusade](#) to the Holy Land. It took place in 1271–1272.

Louis IX of France's failure to capture Tunis in the Eighth Crusade led Prince Edward of England to sail to Acre in what is known as the Ninth Crusade. The Ninth Crusade saw several impressive victories for Edward over Baibars. Ultimately the Crusade did not so much fail as withdraw, since Edward had pressing concerns at home and felt unable to resolve the internal conflicts within the remnant Outremer territories. It is arguable that the Crusading spirit was nearly "extinct," by this period as well<sup>[2]</sup>. It also foreshadowed the imminent collapse of the last remaining crusader strongholds along the Mediterranean coast.

After 1250 the Mamluk sultans in Egypt had gradually worn down the Crusader possessions in Palestine until the last Crusader outpost (Acre) fell in 1291. The crusaders fled to Cyprus which became their centre of operations. Famagusta took over the role of Acre.

The Hospitaller knights fled to Rhodes where they established their headquarters and even established a foothold on the Turkish coast at Bodrum. After the fall of Rhodes (1522), they eventually established themselves in Malta (1533). The Templars also left Palestine but were shortly afterwards (1307) forcibly disbanded by Philippe le Bel in France who wanted to get his hands on their money. Both the Hospitaller and Teutonic knights re-grouped and carried on crusading: the Hospitaller knights harassing Muslim shipping in the Mediterranean and the Teutonic knights fighting the pagan Lithuanians from their base in Marienburg (Malbork) in present-day Poland where they had set up their semi-independent state with papal approval.

Two further crusades were conducted in the Balkans in an effort to halt the Muslim advance, but both of these failed, at Nikopolis (1396) and at Varna (1444).

**The results of the Crusades were as follows:**

1. The Crusaders failed in their aims, chiefly because of divisions among themselves, and inability to exploit strategic advantage. On several occasions during the crusades the Western powers considered the possibility of making an alliance with the Mongols to defeat the Muslims. But this never became a reality. The Mongols at this stage were not Muslims and they considered adopting Christianity but finally decided against it. Their motives were dictated by self-seeking. When the Monguls advanced on Palestine in 1259, the crusaders could have negotiated a treaty with them whereby the Monguls gave them the whole of Palestine as a buffer state between them and the Mamluks of Egypt. They failed to seize the opportunity and in the end the Mamluks advanced through Palestine and defeated the Monguls in 1260 at Ein Harod

2. Many crusaders who lived in Palestine for some time adopted Eastern customs such as the saying of the rosary, which they introduced to the West. It was also through the crusades that the eastern heresy of Manicheism reached the West and led to the rise of the cathars in Southern France. Contacts with Palestine also resulted in an obsession with the historical Jesus and the consequent development of the relic industry.

3. The Crusades precluded a reconciliation between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.

The rape of Constantinople made such an indelible impression on the Orthodox people that whatever ties still existed between them and Rome were severed.

4. Crusades were now organised by the Pope against heretics like the Albigensians or any of his political enemies (even Catholics).

5. Some began to argue for peaceful missions to convert the Muslim, rather than armed expeditions to subdue them.

6. The Crusades led to fixed enmity between Christians and Muslims. Before this there had been considerable toleration shown by the Muslims to Christians who lived on their territory so long as they paid their taxes. Henceforth they were sworn enemies.

7. The failure of the Crusades led to the Muslim invasion of Southern Europe because the West no longer had suitable armies to defend this area.

8. In Jerusalem most of the monuments erected during the Crusades were smashed by the returning Muslims under Sultan Baibars. What he did not destroy he turned into mosques or Islamic schools. New building was forbidden, repairs subject to special authorisation – a euphemism for exorbitant fines or bribes. Bells were silent and processions in the streets few and far between. Christian pilgrims told of constant fear, of monks arrested and summarily put to death.

Christians still remember the seven-century period of Muslim rule – from the end of the Crusades to the British conquest of Palestine 1917. Their status was that of second-class citizens subject to heavy taxation, regularly pressed for additional payments by greedy and corrupt local officials. Until the middle of the 19th century they were forbidden to build new churches or repair ancient ones; the pealing of bells was prohibited and in many instances bells were removed from churches and other religious institutions. Pilgrims coming to the Holy Land were made to pay extortionate prices for the privilege of entering the country and being afforded access to the

holy places, a great number of which were under the custody of the Muslims. Thus the keys of the church of the Holy Sepulchre had been handed over 'for safe-keeping' to two Muslim families and they alone could open the doors to the holiest shrine of Christendom. Christians were denied access to the Room of the Last Supper on Mount Zion; to the tomb of the patriarchs in Hebron; to the tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem; to the site of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. Many churches had been turned into mosques.

## **LEARNING IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

In the Latin West theology and learning in general went through several stages during the Middle Ages. The period from 476 to 1000 is called the Dark Ages. The Western half of the Roman Empire began to crumble before barbarian invasions at the end of the 4th century and in 410 the city of Rome itself was captured. In 476 the last Western emperor was deposed by a barbarian Gothic king and the Western Empire had effectively ceased to exist. The West continued to be attacked: from the south into Spain by Islam and from the North by the Scandinavians. During this time of turmoil the only learning that remained was that of the monasteries. The only knowledge that people had of philosophy was via the works of Boethius. There was a brief Renaissance under Charlemagne which produced the only original thinker of the Dark Ages, the philosopher theologian, John Scots Erigena. But before long Charlemagne's empire fragmented and Viking raids brought further setbacks. Theology was then confined to monasteries, and knowledge was subordinated to edification and worship.

In the 11th century with the revival of monasticism, a new 'reform' papacy set about purging the church of corruption and there was a revival of learning. The theologian found himself faced with the question of the relation between faith (theology) and reason (philosophy). This led to scholasticism and theology began to be studied outside the monasteries. The approach was one of questioning, logic, speculation and disputation. It was now more important for the theologian to be a trained philosopher than a godly man. Reason was used (for example by Anselm) to defend the faith. Peter Abélard went even further and applied philosophical methods to theology. For this he was rebuked by Bernard of Clairveaux who represented the older monastic theology. But Abelard's methods were followed by Peter Lombard, who enjoyed Bernard's support.

In the 13th century, theology entered a new and more dangerous phase. Philosophy now appeared not just as a tool for use in theology, but as a rival and parallel system of thought. This arose through the translation into Latin of Aristotle's metaphysical works. Previously only his works on Logic had been available. Faced with this challenge, Aquinas set about making a synthesis, but some tried to maintain the older Platonist world view (e.g. Bonaventura).

The 14th and 15th centuries saw an increase in scepticism about the possibility of harmonizing theology and philosophy. The process began with John Duns Scotus and came to a head in the teaching of William of Ockham. Philosophy and theology went their separate ways. Natural theology went into decline and was replaced by naked faith in God's revelation: i.e. no attempt was made to support it by appeal to reason. Also, practical spirituality became even more mystical in



content (cf. Thomas à Kempis) and continued along a platonic tangent.

### **The educational system**

During the early Middle Ages which was a period of instability, learning was confined to the monasteries which had their own schools for teaching novices, but other lay persons joined them. Education was also carried out in Cathedral schools which took the lead in the 11th century after the monastic movement lost its initial impetus. Here 'the chancellor' taught the seven liberal arts to advanced students. Other teachers would instruct the younger scholars in Latin grammar. Most of these students afterwards became clerics (i.e. civil servants). A degree was basically a licence to teach others. The chief cathedral schools in northern Europe in the 11th cent. were Laon, Paris, Chartres and Cologne.

Cathedral schools eventually developed into universities (meaning originally a guild of teachers or scholars, like a trade-union who ran the university). The first universities were at Bologna, Paris, Salerno, Oxford, Cambridge, Montpellier, Padua, Salamanca and Toulouse.

The universities taught the seven liberal arts – a late Roman system of knowledge which was thought necessary to make an educated person. Although these 7 included grammar, logic and rhetoric, as well as arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, the teaching of logic or philosophy tended to dominate the curriculum for undergraduates. Only graduates could learn medicine, law and theology.

All lecturers at a university had to be celibate: most were clergymen. Students were also forbidden to marry during their time of studies.

All instruction was in Latin, so a student could study at any university in Europe without any language problem. The first university to teach in the national language was Halle in 1694. This was due to pietism which encouraged German nationalism,

### **The growth of philosophy and scholasticism**

Thinking in the Middle Ages was carried out against the background of what had gone before – the classical philosophy of Greece, the Bible and the teaching of the Early Christian writers. What the scholastics or schoolmen did was to make a synthesis of all these currents of thought, to fit everything into a logical system. Hence they were not original thinkers but synthesisers and logicians. They had keen minds but they kept going round in a circle because their sources were either at fault or the various systems irreconcilable. For them, the system was everything, the content not so important.

Their sources were:

1. The Bible, but as interpreted by the Early Fathers
2. The Early Christian writers (who were by no means infallible).
3. Greek philosophy could only be harmonised with biblical theology at the expense of trimming the one to fit the other. The scholastics disagreed among themselves anyway. Between them they held three viewpoints: platonic realists who put universal ideas before things, aristotelian realists who believed in empiricism, and nominalists who believed that universal ideas come from objects.

**REALISM** represents platonic idealism which presupposes the existence of a world of ideas. It is an idealistic teaching according to which general ideas exist

prior to the creation of matter in the mind of God and as innate ideas in our minds (cf. Anselm and William of Champeaux). Ultimate reality is not what we see (which is temporary and passing) but the eternal world of ideas (objects that we see are expressions of these ideas). Hence reality proceeds from heaven to earth. The holders of such ideas are called realists because they hold that only such ideas (a group or class of individual things) represent ultimate reality.

Duns Scotus and Abelard both held to a modified form of 'realism' called "**conceptualism**", according to which universal ideas exist both in the mind of God and in the mind of man, but not as innate ideas. Aquinas is also said to have held this view (Aristotelian realism), which corresponds most closely to the ideas of Aristotle.

**NOMINALISM** is scholastic teaching according to which there are no universal ideas in their own right. Universal ideas are only really names (hence the expression nominalism, from the latin *nomen*) that are used to describe qualities pertaining to these things (or people). Ideas are therefore the product of the human mind. Porphyry was the first to suggest this in answer to Aristotle in his commentary on the latter. Roscelin became the most famous scholastic to represent this position. He was condemned by the church in 1092 for this. In the 14th century nominalism was revived by William of Occam. It is essentially a sceptical approach to sacramental theology which talks about unseen forces operating.

Before Aristotle was rediscovered, all that scholars did was to make exegeses on Holy Scripture. Their opinions were catalogued and compared with one another. The best example of this method are the famous *Sentences* (meaning "opinions") of Peter Lombard, which was an

attempt to organise this material according to topics such as Trinity, Creation etc. The whole emphasis was on the acceptance of tradition and authority. Rational speculation was kept to a minimum.

A new approach began in the 12th century under the influence of the renewed study of Aristotle. His writings were rediscovered through the Muslim (thanks to the work of the Nestorians) and Jews of Spain and Southern Italy. Abélard was the first person to popularise these studies in Paris, but he was limited by the small number of books available. But over the next 100 years, the complete works became available plus a large number of arabic commentaries. Aristotle had been familiar to Western society from the early Middle Ages but solely in the form of logic. It was not until Averros' commentaries on him came on the market that he was studied from a philosophical standpoint and scholars began to draw conclusions that were at variance with theology (cf. eternity of matter).

**ARISTOTELIANISM** The effects of the rediscovery of Aristotle were earthshaking. For the first time Christian thinkers were confronted with a completely rationalistic interpretation of human experience and indeed of the whole of knowable reality. Aristotle had classified all the available knowledge of his day but always from an utterly rationalistic point of view. He saw the world as one vast, self-contained, self-explanatory organism. He portrayed an evolutionary universe in which matter was everything, but constantly trying to evolve upwards to thought and intelligence. But this process occurred in cycles so that the universe never reached its goal. Matter and form were eternal. There was no individual immortality apart from the body. Whereas Plato had posited a static universe, Aristotle posited an evolving universe which could never

get beyond a certain point. Neither Plato nor Aristotle believed in a personal God.

Faced with this onslaught, similar to that of Darwinism in the 19th century, the church characteristically sought to absorb and reconcile it with Christianity. In fact the main preoccupation of scholars during the Middle and Late Middle Ages was to come to terms with Aristotle.

**ATTEMPTED SYNTHESSES** The first scholastic who had tried to reconcile faith and reason, especially using the logic of Aristotle was **Boethius** (480-524) who, living in the twilight of the Roman Empire, was the last Western scholar before the 12th century to be thoroughly familiar with the Greek texts of Aristotle's philosophical works (he had studied at Athens and Alexandria).

Muslims had also had to come to terms with Aristotle, but earlier than in the West. The Muslim scholar **Ghazali** (d.1111) first tried to reconcile faith and reason but later saw that philosophy and religious belief were incompatible, so he condemned Aristotle's theory of knowledge. Another scholar, **Avaroes** (1126-98) proposed a double truth outlook: philosophy is one category of truth and theology in another category. Both are true.

In the West the two most famous scholars who tried to synthesise Aristotle and Christian thought were Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.

**THOMAS AQUINUS** (1225-74) was the greatest scholastic theologian of the Middle Ages. He was born in Aquino in Italy of a noble family. He became a Dominican monk and eventually studied in Paris under Albertus Magnus and in Cologne. He then became a lecturer in Paris where he spent the rest of his life teaching (except for a short time in Italy). Paris at that time was the

doctrinal capital of the Catholic Church: all matters of doctrine were scrutinised by the Sorbonne and either pronounced heretical or orthodox. His longest work, the *Sum of Theology*, was designed to replace Lombard's *Sentences*.

At that time the greatest challenge to the Christian faith was aristotelianism. The church was faced with the choice of either rejecting it outright or trying to absorb it. Thoims chose the latter course of action., using aristitotelian logic to do so, which at the time was most controversial. He tried to harmonise both faith and reason. The link he used was Aristotelian logic. However, in trying to harmonise both systems, he was careful to separate to his own satisfaction what was acceptable to Christianity and what was not.

For Thomas, revealed theology is primary, (especially as interpreted by Augustin), but his interpretation of it is influenced by Aristotle. In fact Thomas was a faithful disciple of Augustine: believed in original sin, prevenient grace, predestination and thus a teacher of the old way. He was a conceptualist in philosophy, since that modified version of nominalism retained the idea of God..By reading his works we can see how he argued. He started with his problem (e.g. Is God omnipotent? Do we sin without willing it?). Then he quoted the authority on which basis we was going to argue – a text of Scripture, a passage from the Church Fathers, or a quotation from Aristotle. He would then use the Aristotelian dialectic (method of reasoning) to compare authorities, and then come to his answer. According to Aquinas, any problem could be solved by reasoning (i.e. logic). He thus anticipates Descartes on this point.

He also tried to harmonize the various sayings of prominent authorities within the church, even though they contradicted each other. Aristotelian logic enabled him to

combine them into a *tertium quid*. Abelard had previously seen the fallacy of such a system and demanded that authority be founded on the Bible.

Basically speaking, he denied the existence of intuitive ideas and argued that on the basis of sense perception, we can argue through negation and analogy to the eternal world. God's existence can be established philosophically through the 5 proofs of His existence, which are all based on God's effects in the world. Even so, his stress was on how little we know God. God is the first cause of everything, except evil.

His theory of knowledge: There are three types of knowledge:

1. Philosophy that is available to everyone through the senses (this is the basis of all natural theology)
2. Theology which is based on revelation and logical deduction from revelation.
3. Mystical knowledge.

He also maintained that knowledge is acquired in various ways:

- a. In this world through experience (hence he was an empiricist)
- b. In the next world it is acquired through mystical experience. This was, exceptionally, how the apostles acquired knowledge to write the New Testament.

Besides his theory of knowledge, Aquinas made other important contributions:

1. The existence of God can be proved by reason. For this he presented his five ways.
2. All knowledge of God is through analogy.
3. He gave the first full account of transubstantiation: the change takes place in the inner reality (essence) of the substance (perceived by the mind) and not in its outward appearance which is accessible to the senses.

4. He watered down the doctrine of original sin. He claimed that hat Adam lost at the fall was his ability to control the various parts of his being; his power to reason was not affected.

5. He elaborated doctrines concerning mortal and venial sins, and transferable merit.

In his day Aquinas did not receive universal acceptance. Some of his statements were condemned by the university of Paris in 1277. He was criticised by the Franciscans Duns Scotus and William of Ockham for not recognising that reason and revelation often contradict each other. In fact it was their teaching that came to replace that of Thomas in the 14th century. Later, however, at the Council of Trent (1545-63) Catholic Reformers used his works to draft their decrees. It was only really in the post-reformation period that Thomism began to be the accepted philosophy of the Catholic Church. In 1879 Thomism was declared to be 'eternally valid' by this Pope, though this decision was reversed by the Second Vatican Council.

The philosopher Bertrand Russel claimed that Aquinas was not a true philosopher since he takes the Bible as his starting point and then tries to find arguments from aristotelianism to back it up.

**BONAVENTURA** (1221-74) was governor general of the Franciscans and professor of theology at Paris. He disagreed with Aquinas, and taught that rational knowledge of God is impossible, because man is different from God in quality as well as quantity. Thus natural knowledge of God, apart from revelation, is only hazy and by analogy. God is experienced by man only when he withdraws from the world and seeks reflections or shadows in material things. This represents a neo-platonic view.



**ROGER BACON** (1214-92) and **ROBERT GROSSE-TESTE** (1168-1253), both of whom were Franciscans, resisted the method of Aquinas and laid the groundwork for modern science in their experimental studies of the behaviour of light etc. They emphasised observations, experiment and the use of measurement as a means of understanding the world (not through logical argument). Bacon contended that to arrive at the correct meaning of any text, one had to have a knowledge of the original languages. He also criticised the then current Latin version of the Bible for inaccuracies.

Grosseteste, who was bishop of Lincoln, also came to be seen as a precursor of Wycliffe because of his biblical preaching (in English) and his opposition to the abuses of the papacy.

**ABELARD** Pierre (1079-1142) was a dynamic popular preacher who put Paris on the map intellectually. He was first of all a lecturer in Paris and then a Benedictine monk. He was one of the pioneers of scholasticism.

He tried to steer a middle course between the realist and nominalist positions (called conceptualism), seeing universals as mental concepts (not ideas existing apart from man or in the mind of God). In his book *Sic et Non* he introduced the method of doubt (later taken up by Descartes). Anselm had said: 'I believe in order that I might understand', but Abélard said 'by doubting we come to enquire and by enquiring we reach the truth'. This was later to become the foundation of Descartes' philosophy. He thus reversed Anselm's idea and introduced the method of doubt. He applied this method to the doctrine of the atonement. What he doubted was not so much what Scripture said but what Church

tradition said. His book *Sic et Non* discusses the relationship between faith and reason. He pointed out that established authorities often contradicted each other. True theology must not be content with simply citing authorities. His search for ultimate authority opened the way for Luther.

**DUNS SCOTUS** (1266-1308) was born in Duns, Scotland (hence his name Scotus = the Scot). Like William he was a Franciscan and his thought (which dominated the later Middle Ages) became known as scotism. Whereas Aquinas had sought to bring together theology and philosophy, Duns sought to separate them again. He lectured on Lombard's Sentences.

Duns wrote a counterblast against Aquinas. He attacked his aristotelianism, maintaining that there was no difference between existence and essence. He argued that it was the will rather than the intellect that was the determining factor in human decisions. (this anticipates the approach of Pascal). He went on to stress the importance of God's will; none of his decisions were ever necessitated by the force of outward circumstances or by reason (as against Anselm).

He believed that philosophy could prove God's existence and some of his attributes, but nothing more. Much of what Aquinas claimed that we know about God does not come in fact from reason but from revelation.

He was a major advocate of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Up till then, most Catholic scholars believed that Mary was kept perfect after her conception, but Scotus said that she was conceived without sin. He argued that it is more perfect to preserve someone from original sin than to liberate them from it. Therefore this PROBABLY happened. But here he is adopting a principle which he elsewhere denies: the

power of reason to tell us about God. His followers said that it did happen. Although it was opposed by Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux and Bonaventura, eventually Dun's theory became a dogma in 1854.

**WILLIAM OF OCKHAM** (1290-1349) was born in Ockham (Surrey). He entered the Franciscan order. He was critical of the papacy which soon got him into trouble. He called for a college of popes to rule the Church and claimed that Christ was the Church's only head. He entirely rejected papal authority in secular matters.

He heavily criticised Thomas Aquinas:

1. On his philosophical proofs for the existence of God: He said that God was known by faith alone, not by reason or illumination and that God's will was absolutely supreme.

2. On Aquinas' reinterpretation of Aristotle to suit his system of syntheses: He maintained that Aristotle's thought was basically atheistic and so could not be reconciled with the biblical view. His radical departure from previous thinkers was that he refused to argue against Aristotle on the basis of platonism. He struck out in a totally new direction by arguing that only individuals have real existence – there are no universals that have an existence independent of God. There is no such thing as abstract thought. This gave the death-knell to metaphysics and threw the intellectual world of the late Middle Ages into a turmoil.

William said that the proper religious task of reason is not to "prove" Christian doctrines or to show how "reasonable" they are, but simply to examine the various statements of scripture.

He also held the all true knowledge is acquired empirically – through the senses. The only reality to be

known is individuals, and they are only known by sense experience. William is thus a precursor of existentialism. It is not possible to prove the existence of God: we can only give 'probable arguments'. God is apprehended not by reason (Thomas Aquinas) nor by illumination (Bonaventura) but by faith alone.

His teaching on God's grace and on human free will was also influential in the late middle ages. He revived pelagianism (which had been condemned at the council of Orange in 529). According to William, the believer can merit grace by doing his very best by his own unaided strength: i.e. good works attract God's grace (cf. the example of Cornelius). This teaching became known as the modern way (*via moderna*) and Luther was brought up on it. When the Protestant reformers later denounced scholasticism, they were in effect condemning the neo-pelagian theology of Ockham, Biel and the *via moderna* which made salvation into the fruit of natural human free-will and merit, rather than (as the Reformers believed) the fruit of God's sovereign grace.

Gabriel Biel who belonged to the Brethren of the Common Life, but who rejected their anti-intellectualism largely followed the doctrine of William of Ockham and others in the fourteenth century (the *via moderna*), which said that man had to take the first step to God (i.e. repentance and good works) in order to attract God's grace which then enabled the believer to perform meritorious works. Biel is especially significant as it was his disciples who taught Martin Luther. The spiritual problems faced by the young Luther were largely caused by Biel's doctrine of grace.

Biel was opposed by Thomas Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury, who revived Augustine's doctrine of grace (God takes the first step in salvation,

not man), He was also opposed by John Wycliffe, the reformer. However, Bradwardine went beyond Augustine by espousing what amounted to determinism, which included double predestination.

## **THE BIBLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

After the fall of the Roman Empire, widespread ignorance and illiteracy came, and so the study of the Scriptures was restricted to the monasteries. Medieval theologians held that Scripture could be interpreted only by the learned few, under the direction of the Church. The medieval church believed that it should uphold the traditions and dogmas of the Early Christian writers. Thus, in general, medieval biblical scholars were content to collect and synthesize the traditional explanations of theologians as far back as Origen. Thus scholars produced massive volumes of dogmas and morality which claim to explain Scripture but which in reality have hardly any connection with the biblical text. The time-honoured method of Origen was used to interpret Scripture at four levels:

- a) literal, (teaches you about events),
- b) allegorical (teaches what to believe),
- c) moral (what to do),
- d) spiritual (where you are to aim).

Never has biblical interpretation been so obscure as during the Middle Ages. Few interpreters paid any attention to the historical and literal sense of the biblical text, still fewer had more than an elementary knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. For about 400 years, priests and monks tediously compiled early Christian writings,

characterised by rigid dogmatic sentences, moral platitudes, mystical play on numbers and false word meanings. Most commentaries were just a regurgitation of what previous writers had said.

Reactions to this system were as follows:

a) Mystical interpretation, involving devotional study of the Bible, aided by the free use of allegory. They replaced dialectical reasoning with ecstasy and intuition as the means of interpreting the Bible. Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventura and Hugh of Paris were just a few of those who favoured this interpretation.

b) The plain sense of the Bible revived by certain Jewish commentators, especially Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac of Troyes). The Spanish Jewish scholar Abraham ibn Ezra strengthened the Jewish shift towards modern historical and grammatical interpretation.

**Nicholas of Lyra** (1265-1349), a Franciscan of the university of Paris, carried on the same approach to the Bible. He was a master of Hebrew and published the first printed Bible commentary. Luther was greatly influenced by this French scholar. Wycliffe was also of the same opinion as Lyra.

## CHURCH BUILDINGS

Medieval churches had two purposes, one didactic and one cultic. Their didactic purpose responded to the needs of an age when books were scarce, and there were not many who could read them. Church buildings thus became the books of the illiterate, and an attempt was made to set forth in them the whole of biblical history, the lives of the great saints and martyrs, the virtues and vices, the promises of heaven and the punishment of hell.

The cultic purpose of church buildings centred on the medieval doctrine of the mass, during which transsubstantiation was said to take place. Everything was therefore done to make the building a fitting setting for this great and continual miracle. A church was not therefore a place for worship or even for worship but a setting for the community's most precious jewel (the miracle of transsubstantiation).

The earliest basilicas evolved into a style called Romanesque, that is, Roman-like. The main differences were three. The plan of the earliest churches had been in a T form, but this evolved into a † form, which allowed the area around the altar to be expanded to accomodate priests, monks and a choir, and also set it apart from the main body of worshippers. Wooden roofs gave place to stone roofs which could now be supported by a system of arches, supported by thick walls and barrel vaulting. This meant that only small windows could be put in and not much light was let in. It also became customary to add a belfry, either as a separate building or as part of the main building.

Towards the middle of the 12th century, Gothic began to supplant Romanesque. Arches now became pointed and rested on columns, rather than on entire walls. This gave freedom for there to be bigger windows and higher roofs, but these had to be reinforced by flying buttresses. The larger windows could now be used to illustrate what previously had been carved in stone.

## **WESTERN MISSIONARY EXPANSION IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

This was initially dominated by the conquests of Charlemagne as a result of which various subject peoples had to adopt his religion. After this, monks were sent in to

teach the people the rudiments of the faith. Charlemagne eventually conquered the Saxons, and with the help of English missionaries, launched a "missionary" offensive amongst them.

Anska was the first missionary to Scandinavia, where many pagans were attracted to the faith because it seemed to accomplish in a better way than that of the old gods what they traditionally expected of religion (eg. winning battles).

Norway and Sweden were almost exclusively evangelised from England, and so was most of Denmark.

In central Europe a large amount of force was employed in conversion for it was often a case of one nation colonising another (especially the Germans v. the rest). Also conversion came later than elsewhere for the Germans had to wait until the waves of invaders had died down (not until 8th and 9th cents was any headway made) and it was not completed until the 15th cent. Furthermore it was where Orthodox and Catholic missions clashed (e.g. in Dalmatia). In the 13th cent Estonians, Latvians and Prussians were forcibly baptised. The conversion of the Wends was a very long and drawn-out affair. The last group to be converted were the Lithuanians. This came about when Lithuania joined with Catholic Poland in a commonwealth (rzeczpospolita) which had an unusual toleration of all brands of religion. It included the Ukraine which was largely Greek-Catholic with its HQ in Kiev. However, it was the Cossaks, who had not been paid, who led an uprising which led to Ukrainian secession from this commonwealth.

**Croatia** In the 7th century the conversion of many of the Croats and Serbs was made by Italian missionaries. At the port of Spolato (Split) was a Latin see. In the 9th



cent. among the Dalmatian Croats we hear of a missionary of the name of Ursius and of a Christian prince called Viseslav who reigned about 800. The latter's capital was Nona (Nin), which became the seat of a bishop and a launching pad for Frankish missionary endeavors. Split had meanwhile become part of the Greek Church. German expansion into Carinthia also brought Christianity.

In **Czech Republic** Christianity first came to Moravia when the country was captured by Charlemagne and his Franks. As a sign of vassalage, Christianity was accepted. The first church was established in Nitra (now Slovakia) in 830.. However prince Rastislav sought to gain independence from the Franks by appealing to Constantinople to send missionaries. So the mission of Cyril and Methodius was primarily a political initiative.

Čechy (Bohemia) broke away from the Moravian empire and became independent under the Premysl dynasty (900-1306). Bohemia was also 'evangelised' by Frankish missionaries. The prince accepted Christianity and it was from the royal family that the church got its first two martyrs: Ljudmila and Vaclav who was murdered by his brother in 929. From 967 Bohemia became a vassal of the German emperors who established an archbishopric in Prague in 973. The first bishop of this see was Vojtěch (Adalbert), who was killed while evangelising the Prussians in 997. For this he was made a saint.

**Hungary** It must be realised that the Magyars only came to Hungary in the 9th century. Before that time local Christian communities were first attested in 303 when Bishop Quirinus of Sescia (Sisak, Croatia) was executed in Savaria (Szombathely, Hungary) under the Diocletianic Persecution. The new faith struck firm roots

after its position had been consolidated throughout the Roman Empire in 313. The large Christian necropolises in Sopianae (Pécs, Hungary) and Savaria date from this period. However, due to the barbarian invasions, refugees from Pannonia started to arrive in other parts of the Roman Empire from the early 5th century. Among these displaced peoples were the inhabitants of Scarbantia (Sopron, Hungary) who fled to Italy taking Saint Quirinus's relics with them. Martin of Tours, the patron saint of France, was also born in Pannonia. Thereafter Hungary was devastated by the Huns and the Avars. The first Hungarian incursion dates from 830. Muslim sources described the pagan Magyars as star- and fire-worshippers who trace their ancestry back to the Uighurs in China.

Otto defeated the Magyars at the battle of Lech in 955. As a result they were forced to adopt the religion of their conqueror: catholicism. The two prominent names associated with this process were Gyula and Géza (972-97). This process culminated in the crowning of Stephen (István) by the pope in 1000.

In **Poland** the names of the first Christian rulers were Mieszko I and Bolesław Chrobry. After Adalbert's martyrdom at the hands of the pagan Prussians in 997, his body was brought to Poland and buried at Gniezno, though the first archbishopric had been at Poznań.

**Bosnia.** In order to continue their evangelisation of the Bosnian Croats, the Byzantine rulers sent latin-speaking priests armed with holy books in glagolitic to Bosnia. As the work was slow, the Bosnian Croats were only converted to the faith in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The most outlying districts had been included in this campaign. When at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> the Franks annexed the northern parts of Bosnia inhabited

by Croats, the influence of Christianity increased considerably. However, as in parts of present-day Croatia, sincretism crept in, which evolved into folk Christianity which contained pagan elements.

Because of the inaccessability of central Bosnia the church there developed in isolation from Ohrid and Constantinople. Before the arrival of the Franciscans the monasteries which had been the backbone of the church had belonged the Orthodox Church which had followed the eastern rule of Basil. Thus the situation of the Bosnian church resembled that of the celtic church in Ireland before the arrival of Norman Christianity. Rome regarded them as being schismatic, but not heretical. After the census of 1203 the Bosnian church received a warning, not because of heresy, but because of a lack of order. Nevertheless the church leaders recognised the supremacy of the Catholic church and agreed to let Catholic priests enter their monasteries. They agreed to restore the altars and crosses in places of worship, to introduce confession and penance as well as the Roman calendar with its feast days and fast days, to receive communion at least 7 times yearly, to separate men from women in their monasteries and to withdraw aid to heretics. When the Catholic church later wanted to strengthen its hold on Bosnia, they dismissed the church there as heretical and bogumil, but this was a mistake. The bogumil heresy was limited to a small minority in Bosnia mostly confined to the Dalmatian coast (Dalmatia was at that time part of Bosnia), or in areas just behind the coast. The pictographs that are found on the grave stones are probably of a heraldic nature and refer to the social status of those buried there and not to some mystic cult like that of the Bogumils.

## THE REFORMATION PERIOD

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 16th century, everyone of importance in the Western church was crying out for reformation, but what they meant by this expression was administrative, legal or moral reformation; hardly ever doctrinal reformation. They had in mind the religious privileges of the rich who were given all sorts of preferences and exceptions, immunity of clerics from the law, moral laxity amongst clergy, etc etc. It did not occur to anyone that perhaps the doctrine of the Catholic Church might not be true. In Bohemia there were admittedly Hussite heretics who exercised authority unrepressed. Hidden in the English countryside were the Lollards and in the Alpine valleys the Waldensians: in Germany a few strange meetings to study the Bible and to frame, as men imagined, a wild medley of sedition and blasphemy. The cry for reformation meant the suppression of such malcontents.

### FACTORS FAVOURISING THE REFORMATION

**THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM** With the decline of the ideal of a united Christian Europe modelled on the Roman Empire, national identity became more and more important. The Renaissance brought with it the ideal of the secular state (cf. Machiavelli). Many monarchs were increasingly irritated by the interference of the Vatican in their national affairs. They felt that they were not the master in their own house. They objected in particular to the nomination of church leaders by the Vatican and to the existence of a state within a state: a body of people (the Church) within their realm that owed final allegiance not to the king but to the pope. If only they could make it

a national church, then the problem would cease. They also objected to the amount of money that left their countries to fill the coffers of the Vatican.

**THE FINANCIAL FACTOR** The papacy had two means of regular income:

1. Indulgencies (originally an expedient to pay for the Crusades) had become a regular source of income.

2. The purchase of ecclesiastical positions. If a man wanted a high position in the church he had to pay the pope for it.

All this money was constantly being drained from various countries and sent to the Vatican. There it helped pay for the upkeep of the papal court and even for the pope to fight his wars. This aroused much resentment. It was in this context that Wycliffe first appeared – as a pamphleteer in the king's cause. William of Ockham was similarly engaged on behalf of Louis of Bavaria whom the pope had excommunicated for entering into an alliance with one of his political enemies in Italy. Countries where the problem was most keenly felt were England and Germany. It was precisely in these two countries that the Reformation was to make a big impact.

One of the results of the Reformation was to bring a huge loss of income for the Vatican. It lost the allegiance and also the tax obligations of something like half of Europe!

**GROWTH OF PIETISM** It is not in the high places of the Church that we must look to find spirituality in the late Middle Ages, but among the poor and obscure priests and the laity, who were touched by a great upsurge in popular piety. This amounted almost to a new movement within religion, a *devotio moderna*, as contemporaries called it. Its most remarkable expression is to be found in the communities known as the Brethren of the common life, founded by the disciples of the Flemish mystic,

Gerhard Groote (1340-84). One of the things that he objected to in his teaching were the riches and abuses of the contemporary church. This theme is also found in the sermons of popular preachers such as Thomas à Kempis and Milič of Kromeríc in Bohemia. Both wrote in Czech. The German mystics, Eckhard and Tauler wrote in German. Richard Rolle and William Langland wrote in English. Their use of the vernacular rendered anti-clericalism when mixed with piety, more formidable. It was in the lands where popular mysticism laid the foundations in the 14th century of a lay religious attitude that Protestantism, much later, was to find ready converts. It was in England, Germany and Bohemia that pietist movements were to be found and also where there was the most criticism against the papacy.

**DECLINE OF THE PAPACY** The wealth of the Vatican and rival claimants to the papal throne served to discredit the papacy in the eyes of many. There was also the struggle between the pope and the church councils. This can be seen in the councils of Constance and Basle. At the Council of Constance a decree was issued stating the superiority of the general council over the pope. The Council of Basel confirmed this and so the pope dissolved the council rather than admit defeat. This isolated the pope's critics to small pockets of ecclesiastical dissatisfaction in various countries. But this led to an independent attitude by churchmen towards the Vatican, which went arm in arm with a new nationalism.

**KEEN MINDS AGAINST THE PAPACY** William of Ockham was the foremost of these, and Wycliffe came a close second. Erasmus was also important in this respect.

William of Ockham's new critical and logical approach to philosophy served to undermine the entire medieval system of obscurantism which the Church had used to

buttress its own position. Through people like Ockham, an intellectual atmosphere was established in which men became sceptical of the old claims for papal supremacy.

**THE INVENTION OF PRINTING** By 1500 more than 15 million books were in circulation in Europe. One in every three books sold in Germany was written by Martin Luther.

## **THE PRECURSORS OF THE REFORMATION**

These were:

1. The Brethren of the Common Life
2. The Waldensians
3. John Wycliffe and his lollards
4. Jan Hus

**THE WALDENSIAINS** The movement started when a wealthy merchant of Lyon, Peter Valdo, had a conversion experience in 1175. He gave up his wealth and devoted himself to poverty and preaching. He had translations made from the Latin NT into the local language. He soon gathered followers around him. Initially the pope (Alexander III) approved of his movement but cautioned him that he had to obtain the permission of the local church authorities before undertaking a preaching tour in their area. But in 1184 his followers were excommunicated for showing up the faults of the rich church which found their preaching embarrassing. After this they were hunted as heretics. They fled from Lyon and began to spread, particularly in provinces noted for their unorthodox beliefs; Lombardy and Provence. Some were received back into the church in 1207 but from then on there was no compromise. By the end of the 13th century they had infiltrated into practically the whole of Europe, except Britain. Their distinctive doctrines and beliefs were as follows:

1. They held that they were the true church.

2. They rejected the intermediary role of the clergy.
3. Most Catholic feast days were rejected.
4. Oaths given in a court of law were rejected, except under special circumstances.
5. Purgatory was rejected as well as prayers to the images of the saints.
6. They had a sort of baptism and they only held to three sacraments.
7. They placed much emphasis on preaching tours in the local language.
8. They placed emphasis on visions, prophecies and possession of the believer by the Spirit.
9. They placed emphasis on social concern.

Though they spread all over Europe, they were strongest in East and Central Europe. Persecution of them reached a height in 1400. In Central Europe there was some interchange of ideas between them and the Hussites and the followers of Wycliffe but they never succeeded in uniting, because of certain doctrinal differences.

The Waldensians were later incorporated into the Reformed Church.

**JOHN WYCLIFFE** and his lollards. Wycliffe came from the North of England and became a leading philosopher at Oxford university. He was invited to serve at the royal court by John of Gaunt (Ghent), but he offended the church by backing the right of the government to seize the property of corrupt clergy. According to Wycliffe, the source of all authority was God, which he delegated to the secular and to the ecclesiastical sphere. Either side could forfeit this authority by misconduct. If the church did this, then the secular state had the right to strip it of its possessions. Similarly secular rulers could lose their right to rule. His views were condemned by the pope in



1377 (who was in Avignon), but his influential friends protected him.

Wycliffe then pushed his anti-clerical views further and began to attack some of the central doctrines of the medieval church. He opposed the doctrine of transsubstantiation and claimed that Christ was only spiritually present in the eucharist. He held that the church consisted only of God's chosen people (the elect), who did not need a priest as a mediator. The elect proved their election by their fruits, which precluded many corrupt church leaders (including the pope!). Gradually his powerful friends deserted him and he retired a sick man to the Midlands where he died in 1384. John of Ghent had left the country and one lollard leader had been implicated in the peasants revolt of 1381. Later a lollard nobleman, Sir John Oldcastle, organized an insurrection, which included an attempted kidnapping of the king. The rebellion failed, and Oldcastle was executed. Oldcastle's revolt made Lollardy seem even more threatening to the state, and the persecution of Lollards became more severe. In 1401 Henry IV revived a law which called for the burning of heretics and the lollards were the first to suffer.

He wrote a book on doctrine and started a new translation of the Vulgate into English. For Wycliffe, Latin was the language of the Church, but not used by the people. By replacing Latin with English, he sought to create a national church and speak directly to the common people. Another reformer who chose the English language as a vehicle for his attack against the princely rulers of Church and State, was William Langland, a clerk and poet who wrote '*The Vision of Piers Ploughman*'. He tried to show simple souls that the way to salvation was through grace alone.

Wycliffe also attracted followers who came to be known as lollards (mutterers or mumblers of Scripture). In 1395 they had become an organised sect with their own ministers. They issued a document entitled the *Twelve Conclusions*. They objected to the hierarchy of the church, transubstantiation, clerical celibacy, the temporal power of the church, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, images, war and art in the church. They held to predestination and were millenarians. They also held that a priest's main vocation was to preach and many went on preaching tours. The devastating effect of the great plague which had killed half the population of England, made the public very receptive to their message. They held that the Bible should be available in a language that the people could understand. In 1384 an English Bible was completed after his death. It was followed by a better translation by Wycliffe's secretary, John Purvey in 1396. Lollards prepared the way for the Reformation in the next century. The writings of Wycliffe were greatly to influence Hus. However the lollards only had their translation of the Bible in manuscript form – printing had not yet been invented!

Lollards became known for their scorn of priests, denial of transsubstantiation, iconoclasm and their reading of Scriptures in the vernacular (which was against the law). They insisted in the authority and infallibility of the Bible. They also maintained that no teaching contrary to the Bible should be imposed on believers. They also believed tht the Bible could be prefectly well understood by any “Spirit-taught” believer and that the interpretation of the priest was unnecessary. The lollard movement also produced a social revolution which ended in the peasants’ revolt which demanded the abolition of serfdom and a demand that all men be recognized as equals.

Bishop Pecock, who tried to make lollards see the error of their ways, criticised the movement for its lack of trained biblical expositors and for its interminable splits. Pecock on the other hand also got into trouble for putting too much emphasis on the role of reason, for belittling the Church Fathers and for claiming that the Apostles Creed as not apostolic (in particular in its reference to the descent into hades).

**JAN HUS** (1374-1415) was ordained priest in 1402 and spent much of his career teaching at the Charles University in Prague and as a preacher in the Bethlehem chapel close to the university. Prague had been turned into a splendid city by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, who had made it his capital. In 1391 the Bethlehem chapel had been founded specifically for the preaching of sermons in Czech. There he became involved in power struggles between Czech and German professors who backed different popes at a time when the papacy was divided. Thirty years after Wycliffe's death, his books were brought to Prague by a Czech scholar, Jerome, who had copied them out during his time at Oxford. King Richard II of England was married to a Bohemian princess which explains why there were Czech students at Oxford. Soon, there were student riots for and against Wycliffe. The German professors used Hus' sympathy for Wycliffe to accuse him of heresy. Finally the German members of the faculty left (to found a university in Leipzig) because the king Vaclav objected to their opposition to his church policy. When the archbishop of Prague tried to get the pope to ban preaching in all chapels, Hus refused to comply and was excommunicated. Later he opposed the sale of indulgences. For this Prague was placed under papal interdict, so Huss agreed to leave for Southern Bohemia where he

took refuge in a castle (much like Luther) where he spent much time writing.

In his writing and public preaching he emphasised personal piety and purity of life. He was, however, heavily indebted to the work of Wycliffe. He stressed the role of Scripture as an authority in the church and placed importance on preaching. His chief work was entitled *On the Church*, in which he defined the Church as the Body of Christ, with Christ as its head. Although he defended the traditional authority of the clergy, he taught that only God can forgive sin. He believed that neither popes nor cardinals had any right to establish doctrine that was opposed to Scripture, and that no Christian should obey an order that was plainly wrong. He condemned the corruptness of the clergy and criticised his people for worshipping images, belief in false miracles and undertaking superstitious pilgrimages. He criticised the church for withholding the chalice from the people during communion, and condemned the sale of indulgences. Bohemia had inherited from previous Byzantine missionary involvement the idea of communion in both kinds. Hus was also a Realist – meaning that it was no problem for him to conceive of the elements as being symbols. Czech students returning from Paris also tended to be realists

Hus was at the centre of a long struggle in Prague and his case was referred to Rome. In 1415 he was summoned to the Council of Constance in order to defend his views, having been given a promise of safe conduct. In the event he was treacherously murdered and burned. Jerome was also murdered, which created an even greater uproar in Bohemia.

The Czechs then drew up the Four Articles which summarised their demands:

1. The word of God was to be preached freely throughout the kingdom
2. Communion should be given in both kinds.
3. The clergy should be deprived of their wealth.
4. Gross and public sin, especially simony, should be properly punished.

His followers, led by Jan Žižka, returned to Prague and demanded religious toleration and the liberation of their friends who had been imprisoned. When this was denied them, they threw 13 of the members of the city council out of the windows of the council room. This led to a war that lasted 15 years. (1410-36)

After the death of king Wenceslas (Vaclav), the emperor Sigismund tried to enforce Catholicism on them by force of arms and with pope Martin's blessing. Hussites were persecuted and met in the open air in places to which they gave biblical names like Horeb or Tabor. The Czechs demanded that he agree to the Four Articles but he refused. This led to an armed uprising. Sigismund was crushingly defeated outside Prague by the one-eyed Hussite general Jan Žižka. He was a brilliant general who never lost a single battle. He employed novel methods reminiscent of Cromwell's new model army. Žižka was the leader of the Taborites which was a mass movement which was founded in 1419 when 40,000 people gathered on a hill to which the biblical name Tabor was given. The whole Czech nation rallied to the cause of communion in both kinds and the native liturgy (In 1414 Huss' friend, Jakob von Mies, had discovered that the denial of the cup to the laity only went back 200 years). Huss backed him up in a letter from Konstanz and soon all the churches in Prague were giving communion in both kinds. They appealed over the head of the pope and the emperor to a future church council. To make their point, the priest general Prokop

(Žižka's successor after his death in 1424) led Žižka's army out of Bohemia, to ravage far and wide in Germany, into Prussia and as far as the Baltic. He did not do this just to be destructive, but because he was chasing the Catholic army which was on the run. The pope, Martin V, also under pressure from a threatened Muslim invasion, gave way and in 1431 convoked the Council of Basel. The aim of the Council was to reconcile the Hussites and also the Greek Orthodox, in order to be free to counter the threat from the Ottoman Turks. The Council sat for 17 years! In 1433 it achieved a formal reconciliation with the moderates among the Hussites after the death of Žižka had caused the collapse of unity among them, but the Taborites or extremists refused. The pope granted them the right of communion in both kinds but later went back on his word. In 1433 the moderates combined with Catholic forces and defeated the Taborites at the battle of Lipany where their new leader, Prokop, was killed and the Taborite movement destroyed. However, the moderate party survived as a semi-autonomous Bohemian national church (unity of Czech Brethren) until the Reformation when they merged with the Protestant movement in Bohemia and adopted a Lutheran theology.

However, certain of the followers of Hus did not agree either with the militant Hussites or the moderates and broke away led by a pious peasant called Peter Chelcicky. They founded a society called 'the Brothers of Christ's Law' at Kunvald in Bohemia where they had all possessions in common and worked in a community. All official posts were refused as was the oath and military service. The Roman Catholic claim to apostolic succession was denied. Soon the community grew to 100 members. Initially they were called the Bohemian Brethren but in 1547 emperor Ferdinand tried to crush them, so they fled. Some escaped to Poland but their

new centre was established in Moravia and so they became known as the **Moravian Brethren**. They could only stay in Bohemia by uniting with the moderate Hussites. But in 1620 the Catholics crushed all Protestant opposition at the Battle of Bilá Hora during the 30 years war. This even virtually destroyed Protestantism in Bohemia and Moravia for the next 150 years. In 1722 one such group crossed to Germany where they were given land to settle on by Count Zinzendorf. From this grew the Renewed Church of the Brethren.

The Hussites produced the first Protestant hymnal in 1501 (well before Luther).

## **ERASMUS**

Erasmus (1466-1536) is an important figure, chiefly because of his ridiculing of the clergy and the pompous nonsense of the scholastics. This acted as a softening up process for the Reformers, for his most penetrating critique was aimed at the church.

Erasmus grew up educated in the convent of the Brethren of the Common Life founded in 1380 which practised the *devotio moderna*: the emphasis was on a life of quiet devotion and of a close relationship to God. It was a sort of quakerish pietism. It saw academic theology and philosophy as being of limited value. The Brethren valued 'spiritual experiences' and undertook methodical contemplation. But they also studied the classics and mystical literature. The most influential book of the movement was '*The Imitation of Christ*.' by Thomas à Kempis. Though pietistic, it contains no doctrine of justification by faith.

He was also educated as a humanist. This explains why he was always for humanist moderation akin to Stoic and Platonic values. He wanted people to "see reason". This is why he attacked the Church for its hypocrisy.

Something of the quality of the satire which Erasmus wrote can be judged from the following extract which tells us what happened to the pope when he reached the gates of Heaven:

Pope Julius II: What the devil is going on here? The doors won't open. It looks as if the lock has been changed, or tampered with anyway. Open this door immediately, somebody!

St. Peter: Immortal God, what I sewer I smell here! Who are you and what do you want?

Julius II: I trust that you recognise this key. And do you see the triple crown, as well as this robe shining all over with jewels and gold?

St. Peter: Why are you wearing armour?

Julius II: Do you expect me to wage war naked?

St. Peter: You are bristling with weapons. To say nothing of the fact that you are all belches and smell of brothels, booze and gunpowder. In fact you appear to have just finished vomiting.

Julius II: Thanks to me the Christian Church, once starving and poor, is flourishing with all sorts of adornments. Royal places, beautiful houses, plenty of servants, well-trained troops.

St. Peter: In poverty, sweat, fasting, thirst and hunger, Christ passed his life: and in the end he died by the most humiliating of deaths

Julius II: Well, perhaps he will find someone to praise him for that – but no one to imitate him. Not these days, at any rate.

By 1517 his critique had become part of the accepted order, except perhaps in Italy. By this time Nominalist philosophy founded by William of Occam (similar to existentialism) was making big inroads in the universities. Nominalists attacked in particular any notion that the doctrines of the church could be proved by reason. In



particular they attacked any effort to reconcile Christian doctrine with the natural philosophy of Aristotle. For them, biblical truth could only be known through revelation – either on the authority of the Bible or of the Church. The Nominalist theologians thus drove a wedge between truth known by revelation and the doubts of the rational faculty. Both were seen to be on entirely different planes. However, philosophy was not yet dead. The Franciscans were still Scotist, the Dominicans still Thomist and the studies of the old ways of thought still continued at the universities, but it was no longer the main effort of the philosophers who now turned away from theology to study logic.

There was also the clash between the schoolmen and the humanist but this was chiefly because the new scholars were arrogant, contemptuous and aggressive, and not because they had closed their minds to the new humanism.

Faced with the threat of the humanist destruction of theology, Erasmus elaborated a programme for the recovery of true theology. He worked on a Greek text and then wrote a Latin paraphrase of all the books except Revelation. Erasmus and his fellows were impatient and angry with the superstitions of the people. 'Going through the motions does not make a man a Christian.' – he affirmed. The medieval sense of contrast between the ideal and the reality was beginning to merge into an educated sense of contrast between the Bible and religion, as it was popularly practiced by the church.

Like Erasmus, many educated men would have preferred that church be ridiculed into good sense, efficiency and purity of life. But there were too many vested interests at stake.

Later on he parted company with Luther over the question of free will. He also parted company with

Augustine in favour of Origen: He rejected Augustine's pessimism re. human nature and preferred Origen's interpretation; at the fall only the body of man had been corrupted, not his soul or his spirit.

Finally he found himself caught between two fires: "Some (espec. Catholics) claim that since I do not attack Luther, I agree with him, while the Lutherans declare that I am a coward who has forsaken the Gospel."

### **LUTHER AND LUTHERANISM**

Luther has been called: 1) An erudite and studious man, 2) Uncouth and even rude in manner, 3) He was a man of the people and master of propaganda which was greatly aided by the recent discovery of printing. 4) He was also a German nationalist.

Luther (1483-1546) was born in Eisleben and attended school at Mansfeld. At Magdeburg he came under the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life. He underwent further education in Eisenach and in 1501 enrolled in the university of Leipzig where he was influenced by the Nominalists. His nominalist professors taught him the so-called *via* (or *devotia*) *moderna*, the Nominalist school of philosophy based on the writings of William of Occam and of Gabriel Biel, his disciple. Nominalist metaphysics meant that neither the existence of God nor the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity could be proved by man's wretched little rational arguments, but only by God's own acts of self-revelation. From this view-point Luther acquired his sense of the majesty and transcendence of God who could save even a man devoid of good works and intrinsic merits.

But the *via moderna* had distinctly Pelagian tendencies; it still thought of man as a free agent, one able to cooperate with God, able to make himself worthy of salvation (see example of Cornelius). When Luther

subsequently came to study Paul and Augustine, he came vehemently to deny these notions.

At the age of 17 he enrolled at the university of Erfurt to study law, but four years later he abandoned his studies, for he had for some time been troubled about his own salvation and in 1505, following a vow he made during a thunderstorm, he enrolled in the order of the Augustinian Friars in Erfurt. In 1507 he was ordained priest. The following year he transferred to the university of Wittenberg where he studied for his doctorate and began lecturing.

His first conversion was from a semi-pelagian position to an Augustinian one. In his theology studies he had come under the influence of Gabriel Biel. According to Biel, we need to do our very best (including loving God above all else) before God will help us, and even after that it is still a question of faith and works. On reading Paul he turned to an Augustinian position: when the sinner recognises his inability to keep God's Law and turns to God in faith, God gives him the Holy Spirit who makes him righteous (i.e. regenerate), but after that it is still a question of faith and works (the Holy Spirit produces good works which earn the believer the merit necessary for salvation).

Luther only came round to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith much later: that is, we are accounted righteous by faith in Christ, and so we can have Christian certainty. He came to this conclusion largely on the basis of Melancthon's masterful analysis of the Greek text.

Following the advice of Staupitz, his superior, he also read the Epistles of Paul. Romans in particular deeply influenced him. He came to see the human heart is too vicious to save itself; forgiveness is a gift that cannot be merited. Later he opposed Erasmus for extolling the merits of free will. Luther started to proclaim justification

by faith as his Pauline Gospel. When the question of indulgences came up, he saw it as a denial of the Gospel. His avowed aim was to rid the church of the scholastic system and get back to the pure Gospel. His attack against indulgences came from his theology as he saw their sale as putting good works in the place of God Himself. God had been replaced by outward formality, payments and good works.

( a certificate of pardon issued by the papacy, by which the merits of the saints in heaven were transferred to a sinner, releasing him from the temporal penalties of sin: the pope could even extend these pardons to the souls in purgatory)

One main difficulty for the pope in the expensive Renaissance world was bankruptcy – he was living wildly beyond his means and thus had to resort to the sale of indulgences. The papal administration consisted of a whole array of middle men, each of which pocketed his commission, leaving the pope with very little left. The creation of more and more offices which the pope sold for money had the effect of inflation. In 1484 pope Innocent VIII was even forced to pawn his tiara.

Albert was archbishop of both Mainz and Magdeburg, but he needed to pay the papacy to keep up these offices. He hadn't enough money, so he was forced to borrow from Fugger's Bank in Augsburg. As security for this he agreed to permit the sale of a special papal indulgence for the construction of St. Peter's. Thus the money from the sale of the indulgence went partly to the pope to finance the construction of St. Peter's and partly to Fugger's to repay Albert's debt. Tetzel, a Dominican, was employed to preach this indulgence. However, the Elector, Frederick the Wise, ruler of Saxony, forbade the sale of this indulgence on his territory. This was not only because he wanted to prevent the flow of funds out of his

territory but also because he had his own collection of relics to safeguard and resented the power wielded by the neighbouring House of Brandenburg which Albert represented. Luther for his part was troubled at the idea of the sale of indulgences chiefly because the people imagined that no further penitence was required. He was professor of Scripture at the university of Wittenberg which was ecclesiastically within the jurisdiction of Albert but politically under the Elector of Saxony. Furthermore Luther was shown a copy of the archbishop's instructions to Tetzel, and was appalled by them.

**1517: The 97 Theses:** In April 1517 he had posted on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg, a list of 97 theses entitled *Disputation against Scholastic Theology*, in which he attacked the neo-pelagianism of the later schoolmen and called for a return of the theology of Augustine).

In October 1517 Luther affixed his 95 Theses on Indulgences (*Disputation on the power and efficacy of indulgences*) saying that he was willing to defend them publicly. But none of the central doctrines of the Reformation appeared among them. One of them read: 'The pope has wealth far beyond all other men – why does he not rebuild St. Peter's church with his own money instead of with the money of poor Christians?' While these theses echoed the cry of the German people against Italian exactions, they were not in themselves anti-papal. Luther claimed that if only the pope knew about this, he would disapprove of it. Luther at the time was 34.

But Archbishop Albert was not too interested in the theology of Luther – all that concerned him was that the sale of indulgences had decreased due to Luther, so he reported the Wittenberg theses to the pope. The pope

thought the quarrel was trivial and told the head of the Austin Friars to keep his men quiet. But the Dominicans, who were the antagonists of the Austin Friars and who considered themselves guardians of pure doctrine, considered Luther a heretic and tried to prove their case by referring to his questioning papal authority.

**1518: The Heidelberg Disputation:** In 1518 Luther was summoned by the head of the order to appear before the governing body of the Augustinians in Heidelberg. Here Luther presented his "Heidelberg disputation", 40 theses in which he defended Augustine's doctrines of sin and grace and attacked the way the schoolmen had subjected Christian theology to Aristotle's philosophy. Bucer and Brenz were won over to Luther's point of view.

At first Luther was not pleased to find himself hailed as the leader of an assault upon Rome. He would have been successfully silenced but for the growing body of support. Moreover the Elector supported him and the pope was not anxious to offend the Elector.

**1518: The Augsburg confrontation:** The pope issued an ultimatum for Luther to be handed over within 60 days. Instead Luther's patron, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, arranged a peaceful meeting between Luther and Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg in October 1518. The meeting was convened to listen to a series of demands against Roman exactions and interference in Germany. To it the pope sent Cardinal Cajetan, the great Dominican theologian. For him it was not a question of indulgences but of rebellion against the pope. Luther was respectful but refused to retract his objections to indulgences. Luther later issued a report on the proceedings to which he added a supplement calling in

question papal infallibility. For Luther the pope was only the head of the General Council, so authority resided with that council and not just with the pope. The dispute ended in deadlock and in November Luther appealed to an ecumenical council to settle the dispute. This was later held at Worms in 1521.

**1519: The Leipzig Disputation:** But what really marked the turning point was the debate with John Eck in 1519 at Leipzig. By his superior attitude of wanting to win at all costs, he forced Luther even further. Leipzig was near Bohemia (where Hus had preached) and Luther's opponents were calling him a Bohemian and a Hussite. Luther had always considered Hus a heretic and repudiated the charges. But Eck was determined to demonstrate that some of Luther's opinions agreed with the opinions of Hus and so Luther was a heretic. Faced with Eck's nimble manoeuvring and stung by his vituperation, Luther admitted that Hus had sometimes been right and that the General Council that had condemned him had been wrong. Luther had now denied an infallible council! His only remaining source of authority was now the Bible. By 1520 he was saying: 'We are all Hussites without knowing it. St. Paul and St. Augustine were Hussites!'

It was at Leipzig that Melancthon set forth the important Protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which meant that Christians should read and judge the early Church fathers in the light of Scripture, rather than reading Scripture in the light of what the fathers said.

Luther then embarked on his pamphlet war. The speed of Europe's reaction to Luther's challenge was made possible by printing. Within two weeks all Germany had read the theses and within four weeks the whole of Europe. Soon, a full-scale pamphlet war began.

Luther's aim was the spiritual and moral reformation of Christendom. His three most famous works were:

1. *To the Christian nobility of the German nation*. This appealed to the princes and magistrates of Germany to reform churches under their jurisdiction, as the pope was unwilling to do so himself. For Luther, reform in Germany was impossible unless the pope's power was destroyed. The clergy should confine themselves to preaching and praying. The church consisted not just of clergy but also of the people.

2. *The Babylonian captivity of the Church*. This was a treatise written against the seven sacraments, which he reduced to two. Luther especially attacked the doctrine of the mass.

3. *The freedom of the Christian man* – justification by faith and the moral consequences.

4. *Bondage of the Will*. This was a counterblast against Erasmus' book *The Freedom of the Will*. Unfortunately Luther goes too far in the other direction and almost espouses determinism. This marked the end of cordial relations between Lutherans and humanists.

In these writings, all of which he wrote in 1520, Luther expounds the basic doctrines of the protestant faith:

- a) Justification by faith alone.
- b) priesthood of all believers
- c) The supreme authority of Scripture.
- d) Scriptures can be interpreted by the individual, thanks to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

By 1520 Germany was behind Luther. On the 15th June the papal bull giving Luther two months to recant or be excommunicated, was burned publicly by Luther. In 1521 Luther was excommunicated. He stated: 'All the propositions that Hus made were Christian and in condemning him, the pope has condemned the Gospel.' The papal legate wrote: 'All Germany is in revolution.'



Nine tenths shout 'Luther' as their war cry, and the other tenth cares nothing about Luther and cries: 'Death to the court of Rome'.

When Luther burned the bull, Charles V had been king of Spain for 3 years and elected Emperor in Germany for 2. It looked as though all Germany might do what England was to do later, repudiate the Roman allegiance and declare a German national church. But this would have meant the secession of Germany from his empire which he did not want to see split.

**1521: The Diet of Worms:** At this ecumenical council Luther refused to recant and was outlawed. He said: 'Unless I am proved wrong by Scripture or by evident reason, then I am a prisoner in conscience to the Word of God. I cannot retract and I will not retract. To go against the conscience is neither safe nor right. God help me. Amen!' The proceedings were then confined to the following dialogue: 'Are these books yours?' "Yes" 'Will you recant?' "No" 'Then get out!'.

The Elector wanted to protect Luther, yet thought it imprudent to give the appearance of protecting a man who was condemned by the rest of the Church as a heretic and outlaw. So he had him kidnapped. He reappeared in the Wartburg castle as Squire George. There Luther went through a time of great depression, then pulled himself together and started to translate the NT and later the whole Bible into German. This became, together with Luther's hymns, the pillar of the Reformation.

Luther's doctrines came to be proclaimed all over Germany and with them, ecclesiastical reforms. But in some places things got out of hand and there were riots.

**MELANCHTON (Philip)** – real name Schwarzerdt (1497-1560). From 1518 onwards he was professor of

Greek and humanist at Wittenberg where, under Luther's influence, he was won over to the idea of the Reformation. They began to work closely together. During Luther's absence in the Wartburg castle, Melancthon took over the leadership of the movement. He worked out a basis for the reorganisation of Protestant churches and schools. He was the author of the **Augsburg Confession** which he defended at the Council of Augsburg in 1530.

His main theological work was the first attempt by any reformer at writing a systematic theology. His great desire was to produce a truly biblical theology. He strongly believed that the Early Church Fathers had, under the influence of platonism, distorted Christianity. The Scholastics of the Middle Ages (espec. Thomas Aquinas) had produced further distortions under the influence of Aristotle.

On the question of the Lord's Supper, he initially supported Luther on the idea of the real presence (i.e. the belief that Christ is bodily present at the Lord's Supper). The reason for this was expediency: he secretly hoped that agreement could be reached with the Catholics. Later, under the influence of Oecolampadius (Reformer of Basel and friend of Zwingli) he abandoned this in favour of a Calvinist position. This prepared the way at a future date for an alliance in Germany with the Calvinists and a break with the more extreme Lutheran party. Even Luther later admitted, shortly before his death, that he had gone too far in his formulation of the doctrine of the real presence, but that it was too late now to change! The **Formula of Concord** (1577) marks the conservative Lutheran reaction to many of Melancthon's ideas.

On the question of **predestination**, Luther was a strong Augustinian who believed in single predestination,

unlike Calvin who held to double predestination (though in later life he came to believe that a Christian could lose his salvation), but after his death it was Melanchton with his semi-pelagianism that left the most enduring mark on lutheranism. Predestination was relegated to a secondary doctrine and its logical consequence, the perseverance of the saints, denied.

**Luther and the anabaptists:** Luther rejected them because of their extremism. Not only did they believe in adult baptism but also in prophecy and speaking in tongues which they tended to put on the same level of Scripture. He also felt that if he became identified with the lunatic fringe, he would forfeit the sympathy of the civil authorities without whose help he could not carry out the Reformation.

In 1521 a small group of 'prophets' (Storch, Hübner and Müntzer) arrived from Zwickau at Wittenberg while Luther happened to be away. Müntzer was heavily influenced by the mystics of the day like Tauler and Joachim de Fiore, as well as by Hussite millennialism. He believed in dreams and visions which he put on a par with Scripture and had evolved a "natural theology" which claimed that the Gospel could be read from the Book of Nature. Melanchthon who happened to be there, was impressed by their knowledge of the Bible but rejected their stand against infant baptism. However, two of Luther's disciples were won over to them: Cellarius and Carlstadt. Luther returned in 1522 and opposed them. In 1524 they were banished from electoral Saxony. Luther's attitude hardened further, and by 1530 he gave his consent to the death penalty for Anabaptists. Luther started off with the idea of the gathered Church, consisting only of those who had been born again, but eventually came round to a much harder attitude. He

rejected anabaptism because it would have meant a complete reorientation of Church, State and society.

**Luther and the Jews** Initially Luther criticised the traditional negative attitude of the Catholic Church in his pamphlet: *Daß Jesus Christus ein geborener Jude sei* (That Jesus was born a Jew). Nineteen years later, in 1542, he published another essay on the Jewish question entitled *Gegen die Juden und ihre Lügen* (Against the Jews and their lies) where he makes remarks that savour of a violently anti-semitic attitude. Luther seems to have become so insensed by the Jews' refusal to embrace his religion that he turned against them with surprising vituperation. In so doing, he revealed himself to be very much a child of his time. Unfortunately this set a precedent that was later to reap a terrible harvest under Nazi rule.

**Luther's theology:** For him, the Word of God is not just the written word but the Logos – God's creative power. The Bible is the Word of God because in it Jesus, the Word incarnate, comes to us. This is essentially a dynamic view which approaches that of Barth. We must remember that Luther was anxious to deny monopoly of the Bible to the Catholic Church which claimed to be its custodian and interpreter. You can no more have a monopoly of the Word of God than you can have a monopoly of Jesus. Hence, if he did not find Jesus, the Word, in a book of the Bible, he could pass a negative judgement like "an epistle of pure straw" (James). He had difficulty with the book of Revelation.

In his doctrine of God, although he pays lip service to natural revelation, his main stress is on God's otherness. God's highest self-disclosure takes place in the cross, and therefore Luther proposes, instead of a theology of

glory (that is, natural theology), a theology of the Cross. There God is seen in weakness and suffering. Thus it can be seen that both Barth and Bonhoeffer are reproducing ideas which start with Luther's theology. Because of Luther's extreme way of expressing himself, he unwittingly became the seed-bed of much 19th and 20th cent. liberal theology.

In his Christology, Luther tended towards monophysitism. This led him to maintain that, as Christ's divine and human nature cannot be divided, then Christ must be bodily present everywhere. Therefore he must be bodily present in the eucharist. The communicant receives Christ with the bread and the miracle takes place when he actually eats the bread.

The basic flaw in this argument is that the Bible tells us that Christ is omnipresent in this world through his Holy Spirit and therefore his presence is limited to a spiritual one. The ascension (which Luther significantly refused to take literally) marked the end of his bodily presence until his second coming.

### **The Peasants' Revolt (1524-5)**

In Germany, central government was weak. Peasants used the mood of the times to press for political and social reforms, led by starving disbanded soldiers or bankrupt knights. They joined the simple cries for Christian land where all property should be common, and believed apocalyptic prophecies given by wandering radical preachers like Thomas Müntzer. In May 1525 the Saxon peasant army was defeated at Frankenhausen and Müntzer was executed. Luther also hit hard at the oppression of the landlords and agreed with many of the peasant demands, but he hated armed strife. In 1522 Luther had come out of hiding to publicly oppose rioting. He said: 'I do not want to struggle for the Gospel by

violence and murder.' But round Luther's cry for religious reformation gathered men who wanted other things besides. So aghast was Luther at what was going on that he advised princes to punish the peasants accordingly. Erasmus and Staupitz transferred their allegiance from Luther elsewhere, because they held him responsible for the excesses that were going on.

The result of the refusal of Luther to join the Peasants' War was that the Lutherans lost much of their support from the lower classes. These then either reverted to Catholicism or became Anabaptists.

### **Thomas Müntzer** (1490-1525)

Müntzer is a typical example of an Anabaptist. He received a university education at Leipzig and in 1520 came to Zwickau through Luther's influence. Here he came into contact with the traditions of the Taborites and of the Waldensians who radically criticised the Church and wanted to apply the Gospel to transform society. Zinzendorf was later to apply these principles to a religious society: Müntzer wanted to apply them to nominal Christian society in what was a form of Christian communism. The authorities of Zwickau did not take kindly to his revolutionary proposals and expelled him. He went to Bohemia, the home of the Taborites in 1521. In 1523 he was involved in an attack on a Catholic church during which statues were smashed. Luther attacked him for this and brought him to the attention of the Duke of Saxony. At the request of the Duke's son, Müntzer was invited to preach a sermon in the castle chapel in 1524. He tried to persuade the duke to reform the social structure of his realm, but in vain. Müntzer concluded that this was just another example of bishops and princes being in collusion against God's elect and against a reform of society by making a 'covenant with

the people'. In 1524 he came to Mühlhausen where he engaged in social agitation and made an 'eternal covenant of God' consisting of 11 articles for the transformation of society. In 1525 he led the Peasants' Rebellion in Thuringia against the remnants of the feudal society. But the rebellion was put down when the peasants' army was defeated at the battle of Frankenhausen on May 15th. The peasants were no match for a professional army of Hesse and Brunswick. Müntzer was taken to the army camp and executed by hanging.

### **The formation of the Lutheran church**

a. **Political protection**: In 1526 a Diet was called at Speyer by the Emperor at which religious liberty was granted to all until a council should re-establish unity. He was thus playing for time. In 1529 another Diet was held at Speyer at which the previous decision was reversed. The Emperor could see that the previous policy was not working and that they were not all coming back into the Catholic fold. The aim of this second Diet was to forbid the spread of Lutheranism but to insure toleration for Catholics in Lutheran territories. In other words, Roman Catholics must be tolerated in Lutheran lands, but Lutherans were not to be tolerated in Roman Catholic lands! The Lutheran princes were outraged at this action and signed a document called the Protestation (from which came the word Protestant). But the emperor demanded that everyone accept the supremacy of the pope. The reaction to this was the **Colloquy of Marburg** in 1529 at which the princes tried to get the various reformers to agree so that a political alliance could be formed against the Emperor. (There were also discussions between the Reformers in an effort to agree on the doctrine of the eucharist, but they failed, largely because of Luther's intransigence). The princes

protested that the Emperor had no right to interfere in the religious life of any German state. They thus became the protesting states or protestants. After long arguments with Luther, they eventually persuaded him that they were not legally bound to obey the emperor at any price and that therefore politically they were justified in resorting to force to resist his unjustified claims.

The emperor was persuaded to give Lutherans an opportunity to explain their faith. This led to the **Diet of Augsburg** and the Augsburg Confession in 1530. The Emperor still hoped for a reconciliation, but by this time both sides had started to arm. The Peasants' Revolt had led the Catholics to believe that a revolution was being planned. In 1531 the Protestant princes and cities became linked in a political confederacy called the **Schmalkaldic League**. They were determined to resist the Emperor Charles V and the Catholic imperialists. This became the new power in Europe and in 1532, at the **Interim of Nuremberg** this league was officially recognised by the Emperor. In 1539 this Protestant League included the following states: Electoral Brandenburg, Prussia, Electoral Saxony, Hesse, Mansfeld, Brunswick, Anhalt and other territories and 20 cities of the empire. The Emperor was too busy elsewhere (trying to defeat the Turks) to oppose the Protestants by force of arms. The French for their part did not want the Protestants to be suppressed because they guaranteed a divided and so weakened Germany. This was one of the reasons why the Counter Reformation did not succeed. The most important task to hand for all was to stop the Turkish advance across the Balkans. By 1529 they had reached the gates of Vienna.

In 1541 a group of Protestants and Catholics met at Regensburg at what was called **The Colloquy of Regensburg** (in Latin: Ratisbon) and came very close to



reconciliation. The Protestants would have been satisfied with four main concessions:

1. The marriage of the clergy,
2. Communion in both kinds,
3. Freedom to teach the Real Presence of Christ at the Communion without defining it as transubstantiation
4. Freedom from papal jurisdiction (but they were prepared to recognise papal supremacy over Christendom in a general sort of way.)

But Rome would not yield: France and the two Bavarian dukes and even the Pope would not agree for political motives. This irreparable schism was finally recognised at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555.

b. **The Confession of Faith**; the Bible was to be in the forefront, and recent doctrines, not found in Scripture, were to be removed. Sacraments were reduced to three. Luther and Melancton did not consider themselves to be founding a new church, but just reforming the Catholic church from abuses. Transsubstantiation was reduced to the doctrine of the Real Presence, priests could marry, monks and nuns were absolved from rash vows they might have taken, the church was to stop making money from selling church offices or sacraments. All this was canonised at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 which body of belief became known as the **Augsburg Confession**. It was drawn up by both Melancton and Luther, the former being the moderating influence.

c. **The organisation of the Lutheran Church**: the bishop tended to be edged out and replaced by the prince or by the local town council. In 1542 a system of consistories (consisting of lawyers and theologians appointed by the government) was set up in each Lutheran State, supervised by the prince who was

considered to be a Christian layman – a sort of emergency bishops acting for the pope and bishops who had refused to implement any reform. They visited churches in order to enforce discipline. This arrangement, which was meant to be temporary, later became permanent in the wake of the Peasant's Revolt, in order to forestall total anarchy. Luther, however, emphatically rejected the idea of lay church government, whereby the congregation would have the right to choose and control the pastor.

Money previously collected from endowments and private masses was now given to charitable ends: payment of pastors, schoolmasters and the destitute. In Hesse such funds contributed to the founding of the university of Marburg, the first university to be founded by Protestants. Some endowments were devoted to the first State attempts to care for the poor, to replace relief previously given by religious orders.

**Literary output;** The German Bible (between 1534 and 1584, 100,000 copies were produced on one press alone), the German Mass, German hymns and German Catechisms. However, it must be stressed that Luther was not the first person to translate the Bible in German. There had been a number of translations done before him. What was revolutionary about his translation was that it was in idiomatic German as spoken by the people and the language was modelled on Kanzleideutsch, which was a language common to different German States which all spoke different dialects. Luther also wrote two catechisms, one for the clergy (the Greater Catechism) and one for the laity (the Little Catechism). He wrote a book of 8 hymns and then another one of 24 hymns, based on old religious songs and tunes.

Luther placed great importance on education, especially theological education, which was disparaged by the anabaptists.

Luther sought to bring religion to the heart and to everyday life, but it would be naive to suppose that he achieved in one moment what the medieval church had failed to achieve over centuries. For instance, even in the 17th century, the reading of the Bible in the country (as opposed to the towns) was not common except among the upper classes.

c) **Lutheran Worship**: the liturgy used was basically the same as that used by medieval catholicism, except in 3 areas:

- 1) It was in German, not in Latin
- 2) A new liturgy was introduced for the communion service, replacing that of the mass.
- 3) Preaching was promoted to the central position in worship.

Vestments were retained by Lutheran churches in North Germany and Scandinavia, but abolished in Southern Germany.

### **Split among the Lutherans in Germany**

A year after Luther's death in 1546, German protestantism faced destruction. Charles V had made peace with France, thus upsetting the balance of power under cover of which the Protestants had operated up till then. In addition, the Turks had ceased to be a threat. The Emperor won to his side Duke Maurice of Saxony who coveted the title and lands of the Elector of Saxony. The Saxon army was beaten and the Elector taken prisoner. The whole of Saxony and Hesse was soon in his power, all except Thuringia.

The **Interim of Augsburg** After this victory over the Protestants Charles now felt that he could impose religious uniformity on Germany. He therefore drew up the Interim, which was to be a provisional agreement until the Council of Trent had completed its work of investigating possible reforms. In the Interim, Charles tried to reimpose the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the German Church and to reestablish the old fasts, feasts and ceremonies. To allay the discontent of the Protestants, he introduced certain external reforms, permitting the marriage of the clergy and the giving of the cup to the laity in the Lord's Supper. Inevitably, such a compromise satisfied no one.

The reaction amongst the Protestants produced a split between the Jena Group of Luther's disciples who would tolerate no compromise and Melanchthon who was for a compromise and wished to meet Duke Maurice half way. The result (a compromise suited to Melanchthon) was the **Leipzig Interim** which granted Protestants credal formulas of a Lutheran persuasion. In South and Central Germany the Interim was not objected to and was enforced by Spanish troops, and in Saxony and Brandenburg evangelical sounding formulas made it workable, but in North Germany there was firm opposition. Catholics also doubted an arrangement not approved by the pope. But the result was a division among the Lutherans. Melanchthon as the only Lutheran leader left with an international reputation and he had half the Lutherans against him for compromising. The resulting division comprised:

1. Melanchthon and the moderate party based in Wittenberg
2. Flacius Illyricus and the strict party based in Magdeburg and Jena.

The Lutherans never recovered this unity. The followers of Melanchthon soon became known as the Philippists. Melanchthon was also anxious not to offend the Reformed Party in Switzerland.

In 1540 he produced a **revised version of the Augsburg confession** that had accommodated the Reformed view of the eucharist. Melanchthon also said that Luther had not been infallible. All this added fresh fuel to the fire. Stricter Lutherans almost regarded Catholicism as preferable to the Reformed Faith.

Flacius was determined to defend Luther to the hilt and regarded the Interims as sell-outs to the papacy by compromisers such as Melanchthon. In his zeal to defend Luther's doctrines of total depravity, Flacius went so far as to say that the fall had totally obliterated God's image in man and that he was totally characterised by sin. He was therefore accused of being a Manichee. He also powerfully reaffirmed Luther's original doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation. Conversion for him was not a matter of God acting on the will of man, but of him overriding the will completely.

In 1555 the tables were turned on the Emperor by the formation of a Protestant alliance; assisted by the Turks and by France, and the **Peace of Augsburg** was signed: every land that had been Lutheran before 1552 was allowed to remain so, and as for the other lands, each ruler had to choose either Catholicism or Lutheranism. However, neither the Calvinists nor the Anabaptists were included in this agreement. This oversight (omission of the Calvinists) was eventually to lead to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in 1618. Those who disagreed could leave. This agreement secured religious peace in Germany for another 60 years.

In 1577 the **Formula of Concord** achieved partial settlement in Lutheran debates. But as it contained an

uncompromising exclusion of reformed doctrine of the eucharist and of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, no Philippist could subscribe to it.

### **The Formation of State Calvinism in Germany**

Many Lutheran States accepted the Formula of Concord, but the following did not because they preferred calvinist doctrine: Denmark, Bremen, Anhalt, The Palatinate (Nuremburg), part of Hessen and the Elector of Brandenburg. The continuing existence of Philippist churches in Germany encouraged the growth of the Reformed faith in that country. But they did not follow the Swiss system of church government – it was either the Lutheran form of consistory or direct government of the prince over the elders.

It was the Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate who gave the German Calvinist church its greatest chance. He made Heidelberg university a centre of calvinist theology and commissioned scholars (Ursinije and Olivetanus) to draft a constitution for the Palatinate churches which would express calvinist views. Thus the **Heidelberg Catechism** was drawn up in 1563. However it has been said that they were really Luthrean churches with Calvinist creeds.

Calvinist churches came to be strongest in Prussia, Pomerania, Poznan, Silesia, Westphalia and the Rhine provinces.

But relations between Lutherans and Reformed were very strained. In a Lutheran State, anyone who was a Catholic or a Calvinist was disciplined. Calvinists for their part regarded Lutherans as quasi-papists and ignorant. Lutherans were horrified by the Calvinist denial of the Real Presence. The Lutheran Hutter looked upon the martyrdom of the Huguenots in France as God's just judgement against this sect. Until 1648 the Lutherans put

the Calvinists in the same bracket as the Anabaptists, as being both illicit sects. This quarrel weakened the political power of the Protestants in Germany, Poland, France, Hungary and Transylvania, opening doors to the Counter-Reformation and wasting pastoral energies in controversy.

### **The further growth of Lutheranism**

In spite of these divisions, the Lutherans never lost their energy and ability to expand. In 1589 Straßburg became Lutheran. One of the methods of expansion was to win an archbishop over to the Lutheran faith and then his see would become protestant. The Catholics tried to counter this with an additional clause to the peace of Augsburg called the **Ecclesiastical Reservation** whereby if a prominent cleric in a Catholic State became Protestant, he automatically forfeited his post. However, the Emperor winked at the circumvention of this ruling. In this way, Magdeburg, Lübeck, Verden and Minden passed into Protestant hands. But it was the political and religious interests of Spain that kept the Rhine bishoprics Catholic. The Spanish army in the Netherlands was never far away.

In the 1560s Protestantism was growing in Austria, Bavaria, Tyrol and Bohemia, though it was usually confined to the nobility and the merchants in the cities. In 1568 the Emperor Maximilian II was pressed into allowing a measure of legal liberty to the Lutherans in Austria, and four years later in Bohemia. As late as 1575 it still looked as if the Protestants might convert the whole of Germany.

Lutheran learning grew: the universities of Tübingen, Rostock, Greifswald and Leipzig were reformed, Marburg was founded, then Königsberg, Jena, Helmstedt and Gießen.

**Martin Chemnitz** of Brunswick (1522-86), a pupil of Melancthon, became the most learned Protestant theologian of the century and was the chief author of the Formula of Concord. He helped systematize Lutheran doctrine further. His most famous book was *An Examination of the Council of Trent*. His particular theological contribution was the theory of Christ's multipresence. Having rejected the idea of the automatic ubiquity of Christ's glorified body, he attempted to retain the idea of Christ's bodily presence by saying that He can be bodily present when he chooses to be (for instance at the eucharist) by a materialization similar to the phenomenon of theophany in the OT. .

**Further controversies:** Luther was involved in fierce controversies during his lifetime and after his death, there was no let up in them. The one with Osiander involved the idea that justification is the same as regeneration. Osiander was a professor at Königsberg. Such was the fierceness of the controversy unleashed that the professors of Königsberg carried firearms into their academic sessions. It was seriously circulated and believed that the devil wrote Osiander's books while he had his meals.

Controversies regarding the bodily presence at the eucharist were also fierce. German Christians found it very difficult to get away from the idea of transsubstantiation. Joachim Westphal of Hamburg in particular polarized the whole debate between Lutheran and Reformed Christians. When on Lutheran pastor inadvertently spilled a little wine at the communion, he was summoned before a Synod, and the Elector, John Joachim of Brandenburg declared that deposition, prison and exile were too mild a punishment for such a crime,



and that the offender, who had not spared the blood of Christ, must suffer bloody punishment, and have two or three fingers cut off.

**Lutheranism outside Germany:** Lutheranism expanded northwards into Scandinavia. This was due to three factors:

- 1) The influence of German trading colonies in almost all northern cities.
- 2) The ability and self-interest of the Scandinavian kings.
- 3) The enterprise and vigour of missionaries trained in Luther's circle.

Wittenberg university became a centre of Augustinian theology and a training centre for Lutheran missionaries. Luther had a very impressive group of fellow university professors: Karlstadt, Amsdorf, and Philip Melanchthon, with Frederick and Spalatin as patrons..

Denmark was the first to become Lutheran. This then served as a model for Norway after a Catholic invasion was thwarted. Sweden developed independently under the Petri brothers. The main Lutheran reformer in Finland was Michael Agricola who also laid the foundations of written Finnish. In all Scandinavian countries, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular played a key role.

**THE REFORMATION IN CROATIA:** The Reformation which came from Austria in the north and from Hungary in the north-east, was able to take advantage of the following factors:

1. Croatia was in a time of crisis. The scene was very similar to that of Bosnia or Kosovo today: because of the security situation there was a large influx of foreign troops. The country was the front line of the empire against the invading Turks. This meant that all sorts of

foreign armies were stationed there. Among them were Protestants who had their own chaplains. The Turks had devastated the southern part of the country (mostly Slavonia) and as a result there had been large shifts of population and the Catholic church had been profoundly weakened. There was chaos and insecurity everywhere. By the time the Catholic church had recovered, protestantism was there to stay for the next two centuries.

2. The Protestants came in with the Scriptures in the national language which people were eager to read.

3. In Slavonia, which had been occupied by the Turks, protestantism was favoured over against Catholicism and the reformers had a free hand.

Lutheranism came in from Austria and down the coast from Italy (Trieste) and Calvinism from Hungary. As in Poland, the progress of the Gospel depended to a great extent on the patronage of various powerful land-owners like Erdödy (Zagreb), Zrinski (Cakovec and Dalmatia) and Ungnad (Varazdin).

Protestantism was able to gain a hold in what is now North Eastern Croatia (Medjimurje) thanks largely to the patronage of Juraj Zrinski. Zrinski was also the protector of Lutherans in North-Western Hungary. His domains became a haven for Lutheran printers:

Ivan Manlius (Jan Mandelc) first printed sermons in 1586 in Varazdin. He also operated a printing press in Ljubljana from 1575 onwards. He also had a printing press at Eborovo which was on Zrinski's property. Rudolf Hofhalter had a printing press at Nedelisce, also on Zrinski's property, having previously operated one in Dolnja Lendava. It was in Nedelisce (1571-73) that he printed at Zrinski's expense three Protestant works of the excommunicated priest of Nedelisce, Mihalj Bučić: the NT, the Catechism and a booklet entitled *Against the*

*presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the eucharist.* In the 1560s Protestant works were being printed in Croatian and Slovene at Tübingen (Urach).

In 1596 things became too hot for Protestants in Ljubljana and a notable preacher, Janz Znojilsek, took refuge in Croatia with Juraj Zrinski.

Yet another key to their success was that the Protestants invested heavily in education – many attended Lutheran schools in Ljubljana, Graz and Germany.

In Slavonia, Protestantism was able to get a hold on the population, because the Turks preferred this to catholicism. The prominent reformer in this area was Mihajlo Starin.

Protestantism spread into the Istrian peninsular from Austria and from Italy. For a brief spell, the Venetian republic favoured the reformation and we know from records kept by the inquisition (1542-1775) that the Reformation reached just about every town in Dalmatia in this period. Dubrovnik proved to be the exception because the rich merchants feared the financial consequences. Both the bishop of Koper and of Pula (the Vergerije brothers) were won over to the reform but had to leave eventually.

At the beginning of the 17th century, protestantism in Croatia suffered two major setbacks:

1) The Croatian Parliament in 1609 reached a final decision to refuse to recognise protestantism. Ever since 1567 they had been passing bills designed to hinder the progress of the Reformation.

2) At about the same time Juraj Zrinski the Younger returned to the Catholic Church, although he still

remained extremely favourable towards protestantism. He built a monastery for the Franciscans in Cakovec.

A further factor that had worked against the Reformation was the continual emigration of Croatian Protestants. Protestantism had always remained on the geographical periphery of Croatia, unlike in Slovenia where it had affected the centre of the nation until the Counter-Reformation swept it away.

## **THE REFORMED FAITH**

It was Calvinism that was to become the dominant international form of Protestantism: only Germany and Scandinavia preferred Lutheranism.

The Reformed churches expanded at the expense of the Lutherans. In fact the term 'Reformed' originally meant 'Reformed Lutheran'

The Reformed Faith made its greatest inroads in those countries which resisted it by force and where a religious revolution as well as a political revolution was required: in France, the Netherlands and Scotland. The more hostile the State was to the reformation, the more likely that the brand of protestantism would be calvinism, for calvinism established an authority of the ministry, free from spiritual subjection to the State authorities.

Reformed doctrine was characterised by a modified separation of Church and State. All of the early reformers saw state control of the church as the only answer to control by the papacy. Reformed theologians proposed a third solution to the problem. Calvin and the other Genevan pastors demanded independence for the church in religious matters and the right to criticise on religious grounds the acts of the government and the

moral life of the city. The Church, however, was to have no authority in civil matters.

Calvin's proposals were as follows:

1. The church must be made up of all the inhabitants of the country.
2. A church protected by the civil government. The State stood behind the church constitution which had legal force.
3. The church must be free to choose its own officers.

The Reformers' teaching was not generally that the State should control the Church or that the Church should control the State. Rather, they taught that both church and state were ordained by God and that each was to co-operate with the other in their respective spheres. The church is to proclaim the Gospel and build up the people of God. The state is to provide peace and security for its citizens and also to recognise and acknowledge God as king.

Calvin and other reformed theologians pioneered the idea of a contract between people and rulers as a basis for government. Right of resistance to the ruler was recognised if he violated his contract to rule according to the constitution previously drawn up with the people. On the basis of this theory presbyterians in Scotland, France and in England attacked the divine right of kings of Europe. Under Luther the religion of the state was determined by the religion of its ruler. Knox went one further by saying that the people had the right to choose their own religion, regardless of the will of the monarch. According to Knox people practising the true Protestant faith had the right to resist, if necessary by force, any Roman Catholic ruler who tried to prevent them. Calvin disagreed with Knox on this point, recommending a patient acceptance of persecution. Men such as John Locke, by isolating this concept from its religious context,

caused these ideas to become the basis of standard British and American political theory.

**ZWINGLI** Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) came from less humble circumstances than Luther, being educated in Basel (the capital of humanism) and the university of Vienna. Unlike Luther he was trained in the 'old way' of Thomas Aquinas and strongly influenced by the humanism of Erasmus. He did not hold to the doctrine of original sin. In 1506 he had become a priest and gradually became very critical of the sale of indulgences and of pilgrimages. He was also critical of the trade in Swiss mercenaries who were sold to fight in foreign armies. He started to preach in Zürich and large crowds flocked to hear him. Even the Pope backed him in this new initiative. However, Zwingli soon went beyond what the Catholic Church was prepared to tolerate. The Reformation started in 1522 and was completed by 1525 when the leading citizens were influenced by its doctrines. The authority of the bishop of Constance was repudiated and the city council started to implement a reform: allowance of clerical marriage, removal of images and relics, suppression of monasteries and the use of their endowments for education, a simplified liturgy instead of the mass, and a campaign to clean up public morals. Soon other cantons accepted the new faith but the Catholics organised opposition to it in alliance with Austria. A civil war threatened to ensue, but a compromise was worked out whereby Protestants in Catholic cantons would be left alone. But the Catholic cantons soon broke their word and Zürich was invaded by an army of 8,000. Zwingli raised an army of 2,700 but the Catholics won and Zwingli was killed on 11th October 1531 together with 25 other pastors at the battle of Kappel. Some Catholic soldiers found him lying helpless

under a pear tree and killed him when he refused to pray to the Virgin Mary as they demanded. His body was burned and his ashes scattered. A further Catholic victory at the battle of Gubel enabled the Catholics to dictate the terms of a subsequent peace treaty and put a stop to any further spread of the Reformation to other cantons in Switzerland.

Zwingli's attitude was basically the most radical of the Reformers. He was involved in two main controversies with other reformers: the Lord's Supper and Baptism. He felt less obligation to the past than Luther did and therefore did not hesitate to initiate a more radical reform. Whereas Luther wanted to keep as much as he could of the old religion unless it clearly contradicted Scripture, Zwingli wanted to throw out as much as he could, unless it was found in Scripture. Apart from this, Zwingli had been considerably influenced by humanism before his conversion and still held after this experience that no doctrine should be contrary to reason. This influenced his attitude to the Lord's Supper. Luther had rejected transubstantiation but he still believed in the real (i.e. bodily) presence of Christ at the eucharist. Zwingli only believed in Christ's spiritual presence, not because of the elements, but because of God's people coming together in obedience to his command. The phrase 'This is my body given for you' signified for Zwingli 'This is the sign of my body that was given for you' – in other words the Lord's Supper was a reminder of His death and a thanksgiving for it. It is not primarily 'a means of grace'. The doctrine of the eucharist was to become the main cause for division between the different confessions involved in the Reformation.

Zwingli started off with grave doubts regarding the validity of infant baptism but he was under pressure from the civil leaders who rejected the denial of its validity as

too radical an idea, though they were favorably disposed to his idea of reformation as a whole. In the controversy over baptism, on the one hand Zwingli was not prepared to give way to extremists (i.e. Anabaptists) who wanted a voluntary church of committed Christians. He defended infant baptism on the basis of covenant theology but he did not believe that baptism automatically bestowed on either infants or adults the new birth or the forgiveness of sins. He saw it as an outward sign of faith.

For some of Zwingli's followers (Grebel, Manz and others), their master did not go far enough. Such people were to later constitute the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. They refused to accept Zwingli's stand on infant baptism and started to rebaptise people (hence: anabaptists). For this they were soon expelled from Zürich by the city fathers who decreed death by drowning for anyone who refused to baptise his baby within 21 days or tried to rebaptise others. The Anabaptists led by Grebel who had refused to baptise his baby then established themselves in Zollikon but the movement soon petered out but continued outside Switzerland.

There was an attempt to bring agreement at **the Colloquy (or conference) of Marburg** in 1529, where Luther, Zwingli, Melancton, Bucer, Oecolampadius and others gathered. They agreed on much, but on the eucharist they failed altogether. The churches of the Netherlands and of some cities of the Rheinland, as followers of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, now looked to Zürich for inspiration.

Zwingli met an early death and so was unable to develop many of his thoughts. Although he can be claimed as the founder of reformed protestantism, it was left to Calvin to develop a solid reformed theology, which became known as calvinism and not zwinglianism.



Zwingli was not the only reformer active in German-speaking Switzerland: Oecolampadius (Hußgen) was active in Basel and Berthold Haller in Bern.

Zwingli's successor was **Henry Bullinger** and under his ministry a Reformed Confession of Faith was accepted in 1556 by all the Reformed cantons. It was known as the (Second) **Helvetic Confession** and signed by Knox and other Scottish ministers, by the churches of Southern Rheinland and by the Reformed congregations of Poland and Hungary. Bullinger also wrote a Systematic Theology which later became the standard textbook for Anglican clergy. His chief contribution was the development of the idea of covenant theology.

**CALVIN** (1509-64) was born at Noyon, Picardy in France. His father was a lawyer and destined his son for the church. Calvin went to study classics at the university of Paris but his father had a quarrel with the bishop of Noyon and withdrew his son from studies for the priesthood. He went to study law at Orléans and Bourges and then returned to Paris where he graduated at the same time as Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier. During his time in Paris, he had become deeply influenced by the German Reformers and he was converted, probably in 1533. He then openly took the side of the Protestants in Paris. That same year his friend, Nicolas Cop was elected rector of Paris University and Calvin helped him to prepare his inaugural address in which he attacked the Roman Church and advocated Lutheran reforms. François I got to hear of this and issued a warrant for the arrest of heretics. A year later the *Affaire des placards* (a poster campaign denouncing the mass as a papist superstition) so infuriated François I (one poster was

affixed to his bedroom door) that he initiated a purge of Protestants.

Cop then escaped to Basel. Calvin disguised as a vineyard worker, first took refuge in Angoulême (Western France). In 1534 he fled to Basel where he stayed for just over a year. It was at Basel in 1536 that Calvin published in Latin the first edition of his book *Institutes of the Christian Religion* – a lucid handbook of Christian doctrine. It was designed to be read (as a sort of glossary) in parallel with his commentaries on Holy Scripture. This work immediately established him as a leader of the Reform movement. He subsequently added to it before translating it from Latin into French. From Basel he made a visit to Ferrara where the seeds of an Italian reform movement were beginning to sprout and where Renata of Ferrara offered asylum to persecuted French Protestants, including Marot. After a brief return to Paris, he set out for Straßburg in 1536 intending to lead a quiet life of scholarship there. But a detour (became of the Franco-Spanish war) he took by chance through Geneva changed everything. There he met the Protestant Reformer Guillaume Farel (who was spearheading the introduction of the Reformation from Berne) who persuaded him to stay and complete his initial work by transforming Geneva into a vital Protestant community. In fact Geneva had been in chaos, following the rejection of the Pope and the Duke of Savoy. Farel had been labouring for 4 years but had not achieved much. Although Geneva was now nominally protestant, this had not affected the morality of this city state. Calvin was asked to institute a *moral* reform. He was desperate for help. Both Calvin and Farel were powerful preachers and soon thousands flocked to hear them. Calvin tried to enforce strict Christian discipline on his hearers, but the

"libertines" who resented this, won over the city council and Calvin was banned. The city of Bern had also tried to impose its ecclesiastical customs on Geneva and Calvin had objected to this interference. Both he and Farel had to leave. Farel went to Neuchâtel and Calvin back to Strasbourg. From 1538-41 Calvin lived in Straßburg at the invitation of Martin Bucer, an ex-Dominican Lutheran preacher who influenced him. Calvin became the pastor of the French refugee community there, but he also did a lot of study. He wrote a Reformed liturgy, compiled a Psalm book to be sung, wrote commentaries on Scripture and published a new edition of his *Institutes*. From Straßburg he attended the colloquys of Worms (1540) and of Regensburg (1541), convened by the emperor Charles V in an effort to restore unity. Calvin was optimistic. Meanwhile in Geneva, turmoil continued but in the end Calvin's supporters got the upper hand and invited him back again, which he did in 1541. He immediately set to work to turn the town of 13,000 inhabitants into a truly Reformed church and disciplined community.

He drew up a blueprint called *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* which was adopted, with some modification, by the City Council. The essence of it was that the state had no jurisdiction in the church, unlike in Lutheranism. He established 4 offices in the church: pastors, teachers, elders and deacons. Pastors had to meet together once a week for the compulsory study of the Scriptures. Pastors were elected by the church and not by the State and they in turn elected teachers. The elders were a disciplinary body of ministers and elders called the Consistoire. It also directed the church as a whole. If the culprits refused to repent, they could be excommunicated and the magistrates informed. However, the Geneva Council was not too happy with this arrangement and

Calvin was often at odds with them. Legislation which regulated private behaviour was not an unusual feature of medieval town life but in Geneva it was taken to extremes. People could be arrested for such things as: laughing during a sermon, singing songs which made fun of Calvin, dancing or going to a fortune-teller. Under Calvin, prostitution was wiped out. Two people who fell foul of Calvin were executed (Jacques Gruet for being rebellious libertine, and Michel Servetus for anti-Trinitarian heresy). The execution of Servetus was later used by Calvin's enemies to discredit him and the reformed movement.

In 1559 he established the Geneva Academy (which later became Geneva university) with Theodora Beza as its first principal, where pastors were trained and often sent back secretly into France, but also further afield (John Knox). Geneva thus became a sort of 16th century Moscow (centre of subversion). English and Scottish refugees in Geneva translated the Geneva Bible, with guidance from Calvin. Calvin's achievements:

1. He was the "master-builder" who completed the building for which Luther had laid the foundations. Coming a generation later, his main concern was church order, personal piety.

He came to differ from Luther on a number of important points: the Lord's Supper, the Canon of Scripture, the doctrine of the Church, Christology and the sacraments. His main theological contribution was: predestination, sanctification and a clearer formulation of justification. If Luther stressed the wonder of forgiveness, Calvin stressed that of election. However this involved him in the doctrine of limited atonement. Calvin claimed that the infinite value of the atonement does not lie in the divine person of Christ, but in the value that the Father elected to attach to it. Calvin stated this, in order to

support his doctrine of limited atonement, but it is clearly heretical, since it indirectly casts doubt on Christ's divinity.

5. He was essentially a man of intellect, a man of doctrine. He was always grave and had none of Luther's exuberance, warmth and generosity. His wide influence rests on the clarity of his theological system and of his biblical exposition. It was his disciples that were guilty of upsetting the balance of his theology.

6. His innovation was that he turned the doctrine of election into a devotional reality: For the Christian, the assurance of his election to eternal life was the deepest source of his confidence, his fearlessness, his humility and his moral power. However, by insisting on double predestination his logic and legal training took him beyond what Scripture actually says. One of his colleagues, Sebastian Castellion, was refused two posts because he refused to believe in double predestination.

He also believed in limited atonement. He claims that the infinite value of the atonement does not lie in the divine person of Christ, but in the value that the Father elected to attach to it. Calvin stated this, probably to support his doctrine of limited atonement, but it is clearly heretical, since it indirectly casts doubt on Christ's divinity.

7. His particular view of the Lord's Supper was as follows: Luther had believed that the body of Christ comes down to earth during the eucharist: Calvin said that the believer is transported up to heaven (by the Spirit) during the eucharist, there to have mystic sweet communion with the body of Christ.

8. Under Calvin the Genevan psalter was produced, combining the work of Clément Marot, Louis Bourgeois and Beza, all of whom were first rate poets and musicians.

### **Reformation theology:**

It is often thought that the Reformation was just another schism produced by a revolt against abuses in the medieval church, but this is a superficial understanding. It was essentially a return to the Bible and a rejection of scholasticism, and therefore to a restating of doctrine based on the Bible alone. In some cases this brought it back to a position nearer the Orthodox point of view. Reformation theology differed from Catholic theology on the following points:

1. The essence of God, long debated by platonists and aristotelians, is seen as being of secondary importance. The Reformers said that God speaks (in the Bible) sparingly of his essence because he wants us to focus our attention and worship on Himself as revealed in salvation history. This is admittedly nearer to the mystical position, but the Reformers refused to speculate on things that were not revealed in the Bible. They were unlike the mystics in that they did not preach a transcendent union of the soul with God by way of ecstatic experiences.

2. The persons of the Trinity are equal to one another in every respect. Each person of the Trinity is *autotheos* (God in his own right). This is not because they share some impersonal essence, but in virtue of their mutual fellowship and co-inherence. This was stated quite clearly by Athanasius and what the Cappadocian Fathers had taught, but the medieval Catholic church had understood this differently. They maintained that the Father is a source of divinity in a way that the other two

persons are not. The Holy Spirit was regarded as the bond of unity between the Father and the Son, thus bringing his own personhood into question. Calvin opposed Servetus as a Sabellian and an Arian.

3. Knowledge of one of the Persons involves knowledge of the other two at the same time. The three Persons cannot be explained as three roles (sabellianism) of divinity: each person is involved in every level of divine activity. While each divine Person has a certain sphere of activity, they cannot be explained only in terms of their activity. The Reformers insisted that the Trinity as a whole, not each of the Persons separately, was the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, and they attributed a specific function to the Father Son and Holy Spirit in each of the great works of God. Calvin said: To the Father is attributed the beginning of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom (i.e. implementation of the Father's plan), counsel, and arrangement in action, while the energy and efficacy of action is assigned to the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who makes real in our lives the work of the other two Persons.

The relations between these Persons are voluntary, since no person can claim the authority to impose his will on the others. But this freedom can never imply contradiction or lead to anarchy, because in God there is but one single will which is governed by the operation of his perfect love.

4. Human creation in the image and likeness of God cannot be understood either as the image of the Trinity or as the image of Christ. The first view represents that of Augustine and the second that of the Greek Fathers. Calvin, however, was not able to provide a satisfactory explanation of what the expression actually meant. He said that the image represents everything that makes man different from an animal. It means a restoration to

full fellowship with God, which was broken off at the Fall: the image being the ability to have fellowship with God. We become partakers of the divine nature in that we come to share with God in the disposition of his will. The essence of sanctification is one of co-operation: to allow the Holy Spirit to act on our wills.

5. The divine Persons possess distinctive attributes of personhood which they share with elect human persons. In God there is an absolute distinction of persons which cannot just be defined in terms of their relationship to each other. The relationship is one of mutual respect and love, not of determinism.

**FRANCE** The Reform went hand in hand with the Renaissance, but it was confined to noblemen in the country and to the merchants. The peasant remained Catholic unless his feudal Lord turned Protestant.

Initially, under the influence of his beloved sister Marguerite de Navarre, Francis was relatively tolerant of the new movement, and even considered it politically useful, as it caused many German princes to turn against his enemy, Charles V. In 1533 he even dared to suggest to Pope Clement VII the convening of a church council where Catholic and Protestant rulers will have equal vote in order to settle their differences – an offer rejected by both the Pope and Charles V. However, Francis' attitude toward Protestantism changed following the "Affair of the Placards", on the night of 17 October 1534, in which notices appeared on the streets of Paris and other major cities denouncing Mass. A notice was even posted on the door to the king's room, and, it is said, the box in which he kept his handkerchief. Antoine Marcourt, a Protestant pastor, was responsible for the notices.



The most fervent Catholics were outraged by the notice's allegations. Francis himself came to view the movement as a plot against him, and began to persecute its followers. Protestants were jailed and executed. In some areas whole villages were destroyed. Printing was censored and leading Protestants like John Calvin were forced into exile. The persecutions soon numbered tens of thousands of homeless people.

These persecutions against Protestants were codified in the Edict of Fontainebleau (1540) issued by Francis. Major persecutions continued, as when Francis I ordered the massacre of the Waldensians at the Massacre of Mérindol in 1545.

By 1545 thousands had been killed or sent to the galleys, and 22 towns and villages had been destroyed.

Some Protestants took refuge in Navarre where the king's sister, Marguerite of Angoulême, was queen. She was sympathetic to the Protestant cause through her contact with a biblical circle led by the archbishop of Meaux, a town near Paris. Calvin was operating from Geneva, sending back missionaries as under-cover pastors, trained in his seminary, armed with the French Bible published by Olivétan and the Psalms translated by Marot. Henry II and François II (who married Mary Queen of Scots) continued the policies of François I. During the reign of Charles IX (1560-74) Marie de Medicis was Regent but after 1570 Coligny held the reins of power. In 1560 the 'Lutherans' became known as the Huguenots (corruption of German: *Eidgenossen* or Covenanters). In 1561 they were sufficiently strong to come out into the open. The organisation of the Huguenot church consisted of: *consistoire* (a church council consisting of the minister with lay elders), provincial synod and national synod. The first national synod was held in Paris in 1559

but the real nerve centre was Geneva. Their main areas of influence were: Provence (association with the Vaudois), Normandie (Coligny), Navarre (Bourbon king and Queen sympathetic – also arch-enemies of Catherine de Medicis), Orléanais and Dauphiné.

Two things irked the Catholics: firstly the taking over of their churches, and secondly a supposed plot against the crown (*La conspiration d'Amboise* in 1560). There was much heart-searching amongst the Protestants to determine whether they should take up arms to protect themselves. Calvin and Beza were reluctant, but eventually conceded. In 1561 Catherine de Medicis who at that stage supported the Protestants against the powerful house of Lorraine led by the Duc de Guise, summoned the Colloque de Poissy to try and bring some agreement between the two parties. There was no official agreement, but Huguenots had to give back the churches they had taken over, and they were allowed to establish their own meeting house for public worship outside the walls of a town (inside the town only in private houses).

The Wars of Religion broke out in 1562 with the massacre of the Protestants at Wassy, and lasted until 1598. In 1570 a truce occurred during which time the Peace of S. Germain was signed giving Protestants guaranteed places of worship and four cities entirely under their control: Cognac, La Charité (previously Serre), Montauban, Nîmes, Saumur, Loudun and la Rochelle. In 1572 hostilities resumed again when the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve occurred. The war, which lasted intermittently for 40 years, was a tragedy. The Venetian ambassador said 1569 that, but for this war, all France would have become Protestant.

In 1589 Henri IV (of Navarre) came to the throne. Having won his kingdom back, he became a Catholic for the sake of peace. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes was

signed whereby both sides were to live peaceably together in the same country (the first time that such an experiment had been tried). However it more like an interim – to give the Protestants time to come to their senses and accept the Catholic faith. The Protestants were given considerable safeguards (they now constituted about 1/15th of the population). But in 1628 these privileges were taken away only to be restored by the Edict of Nîmes in 1629. The Edict of Nantes was later revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV.

**SCOTLAND** Although John Knox is the big name associated with the Reformation in Scotland, he was not the first reformer. In 1433 Paul Kravar, a native of Bohemia, had been burned as a Lollard for preaching the Gospel. The first Reformation martyr was Patrick Hamilton (1504-28), who had studied under Luther. George Wishart (1513-46) was also a prominent preacher, who was more Reformed than he was Lutheran. John Knox had been his bodyguard on his preaching tours. Wishart was arrested and burned in the presence of archbishop Beaton and an invited audience in front of St. Andrew's cathedral. Godine 1547 (ista godina kad je protestantski Schmalkaldski Savez bio porazen u bitvi kod Mühlberg): In 1547 (the same year that the Protestant Schmalkaldic League was defeated at the battle of Mühlberg), in revenge for Wishart's execution, a band of extremist Protestants broke into the residence of archbishop Beaton and killed him. They then barricaded themselves inside the castle and appointed John Knox as their chaplain. Eventually they had to surrender when the French fleet bombarded the castle. In defiance of the terms agreed, Knox and others were condemned to serve on French war galleys. After 19 months he was released, after England's intervention on his behalf, and

became a pastor in England and even chaplain to Edward VI. When Mary came to power, he had to flee and took refuge in Geneva where he studied under Calvin and returned to Scotland in 1559. He found the following situation: Mary Queen of Scots (koja je šurovala s militantnoj francuskoj katoličkoj kućom Guise, s kojom je bila srođena) Guise in cahoots with the militantly catholic house of Guise, to which she was related) in France claimed to be Queen of Scotland and France and was encouraged to claim the throne of England, which brought her into conflict with Elizabeth I. Certain Protestant barons formed an organisation known as the Lords of the Congregation to contend for the faith and win Scotland for the Reformation although the Scottish government was strongly Roman Catholic. They vowed to "establish the Word of God and his Congregation" – i.e. the Reformed church. Knox launched a massive crusade to win the country for the Reformation but there had to be a political solution as well, an overthrow of political power, and this came from England. The sides were arrayed as follows: a) Catholics backing Mary Queen of Scots and drawing on French assistance, b) Those who despised the Catholic bishops and looked to English support, especially the Lords of the Congregation.

In 1560 Queen Elizabeth, who could not risk a Catholic and pro-French Scotland in her rear, sent money and troops to Leith. She did this reluctantly, as she hated John Knox, who had written a book against women rulers. Under the Treaty of Edinburgh French troops (and British) were expelled and the Scottish Parliament repudiated the authority of the Pope and abolished the mass. Nevertheless the struggle continued and developed into a civil war. However, by the death of Knox in 1572, the reformed faith had gained a secure

foothold: whereas in 1560 not more than a dozen ministers professed the reformed faith, by 1572 that number had risen to 500. It accepted a confession of faith drafted by John Knox. But a *Book of Discipline*, intended to establish the reformed system of church government where moral supervision would be exercised by a consistory and elders, was not given legal force. A *Book of Common Order* was drawn up based on the Genevan model, which contained a number of metrical psalms which led to the name of *Psalm-Book* being given to it. At the time of the Protestant take-over, France, which would otherwise have posed a threat, was busy with the wars of Religion, which meant that she was not in a position to intervene.

Knox's special contribution to Reformation thought was the theory of the justification of Revolution. Whereas Reformers such as Luther and Calvin said that only the civil ruler had the right to rebel, Knox in his book *The Appelation* went further by saying that the common people had the right to rebel if state officials ruled contrary to the Bible. Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) went further by stating in his book *Lex Rex* (written against the divine right of kings), that the law is king and if the king and the government compel (not just permit) citizens to sin, a revolution is justified. In every country where the Reformed Faith triumphed, it was usually as a rebellion against the State involving armed uprising, as in Scotland and Holland. Where it lost the fight, it was crushed, as in France and Hungary. However, in all these countries, the ruthless suppression caused the moderates to shrink back.

### **The Reformation in Hungary**

The Reformation initially enjoyed major successes throughout Hungary but the Counterreformation later won

back for Catholicism whatever ground it had lost in the West. There were two reasons for this: 1) its proximity to Catholic Austria and 2) the continued occupation of the area east of the Danube by the Turks, after their victory over the Western Alliance at the battle of Mohács in 1514. The Turks were against the Catholics and saw no reason to oppose the Reformation.

Initial reformers in Hungary were Lutherans who had studied in Wittenberg under Luther. These were Sztárai Mihály (1500-78) who was active in the Miskolc area, Szegedi Kis Istvan (1505-72), and Dévai Biró Mátyás (1500-1548) who was active in the area of Kosjice (Kassa). A second wave of Reformers went over to the Reformed Church. The reason for this was that the Hungarians preferred calvinism to the early Lutheranism which was associated with German domination of their country. These were Méliusz Juhász Péter who became the first Reformed bishop in 1567 in Debrecen, which he then organised along the lines of Geneva. Another famous name was Károli Gáspár who translated the entire Bible in 1590 which became a classic of the Hungarian language. Another man, Szenci Molnár Albert (1577-1633) was the only one of the three to spend some time in Geneva where he was very impressed by the French Psalms. He translated the Psalms into Hungarian and became the foremost Hungarian hymnwriter. In Transylvania (which belonged to Hungary) the chief reformer was Hontér in Koloszvár (Cluj). Soon the Lutheran Church (associated with the upper class) collided with Reformed Faith (associated with the poorer classes), but an agreement was reached in 1567 at the First Reformed Council where both confessions of faith were recognised. Towns in Hungary subsequently associated with the Reformed Faith are: Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc, Veszprém and Eger. When the

Counterreformation won back Western Hungary, the Reformed Church lost Eger and Veszprém.

**POLAND:** The Reformation in Poland was complex because so many different groups were involved and because Poland was at that time divided up into separate regions. Besides Reformed Catholics, there were Lutherans, Moravian Brethren, Calvinists, Mennonites and the Polish Brethren. This was due to the fact that the country became a haven for all sorts of groups who were persecuted in neighbouring countries. It also had porous borders which enabled merchants and tradespeople from neighbouring countries to bring new ideas into the country. Noblemen also often sent their sons to foreign schools where they came under the influence of new ideas.

The two special features of the Polish Reformation were:

1) The Reformed Catholic Church which was attracted to the ideas of the conciliar movement. Catholics were encouraged by this idea as they could observe the Greek Catholic church which did not accept papal authority.

2) The Peace of Sandomierz (1570) which guaranteed religious freedom for Lutherans, Reformed and Hussites.

The most prominent name associated with the Catholic Reform movement was Andreas Frycz Modrzewski (1503-1572), theologian, secretary to the king, and friend of Melanchthon. He is best known because of his proposals for reform within the Catholic church. «*De Republica emendanda*» (On the renewal of the Republic). Towards the end of his life, he exhibited certain unitarian leanings.

Lutheran ideas spread in from adjacent German-speaking areas into Wielkopolska. As the Polish king stood in semi-vassal status to the Teutonic Knights in Prussia (hence the symbol of the White Eagle), he was not initially in a position to counter this. Małopolska (especially Kraków, Lublin and Sandomierz) was infiltrated with Calvinist ideas, and strongly backed by humanism in the universities. The Calvinists also sometimes combined with the Moravian Brethren from Bohemia. Jan Łaski became the most notable Calvinist reformer, but he spent most of his time abroad.

Because Lithuania was at that time part of Poland, reformed ideas spread there also, especially thanks to the influence of the university of Kaliningrad which the German Lutherans used as a base. The Lutheran church in Lithuania came under the protection of Count Radziwiłł and the magnate Stanisław Kiszka. The leading reformers of Lithuania were the Kaliningrad professors Abraham von Kulva and Stanisław Rapagelan (Rafajowicz), both of whom died in 1545.

At the height of the Reformation (1569) a half of the members of the Polish senate were Protestants. Towards the end of the 16th century the following statistics were recorded: in Wielkopolska 142 Lutheran churches. The Reformed had 80, in Małopolska 250, in Lithuania 150 churches. In 1570 there were 64 Moravian churches and 171 unitarian (lesser reformed) churches, most in Małopolska.

All this unfortunately changed with the Counterreformation. A Jesuit-educated king, Zygmunt Vasa (1587-1632) came to the throne and initiated the counterreformation. Bishop Stanislaus Hosius of



Ermland, and the Jesuit Peter Skarga (d. 1611) were names most associated with this movement. Only Catholics could get good jobs. In Wielkopolska within the period 1592 -1627 the Lutherans lost two thirds of their churches. The Catholics could now offer three alternatives: the Jesuits, the Dominicans (their enemies) and Greek-Catholicism, so why chose protestantism? However, just as things looked blackest, the 30 years war broke out and Poland was soon flooded with religious refugees. Nevertheless Polish protestantism was doomed. Not one Polish king had thrown his whole weight behind the reformed movement. Many nobles went over to the reformed side for economic, cultural and ideological reasons, so that when the pressure was on, they defected. The protestants were divided. The peasantry remained largely unaffected by the reformation.

**HOLLAND** Spain controlled the Netherlands but it was the only part of her empire where the Protestants were numerous enough to be a political force. The population was prosperous, pietistically inclined, educated and open to outside influences – mostly protestant. Antwerp with its anticlericalism and large merchant class, soon became a bastion of protestantism and even became the cradle of English Protestantism, as many English exiles took refuge there during times of persecution.

However, Holland was the home of the *devotia moderna* which found Luther's theology too conservative and objectively scriptural for their liking. They preferred emotion to defined dogma

The most well-known Dutch reformers were **Guy de Bres** (1522-67), who wrote the Belgic Confession of Faith, and **Peregrine de la Grange** (d. 1567). The Protestant faith that had chiefly come in from Germany,

faced big problems, especially under Charles V of Spain. The first Protestant martyrs were Lutherans (Augustinian monks). Opposition hardened and, after a wave of calvinistic idol smashing, Charles' successor, Philip II, lost patience and summoned his best general, the Duke of Parma, to come and settle the problem. He used the inquisition to root out Protestants and moderate Catholics who opposed Philip's policy of non-toleration of Protestants. Some 6000 people (many of them women) were executed as heretics.

By 1564 Holland found itself in a similar situation to that prevailing in France. There were those in the south who were content to live under a Spanish (and therefore) foreign king, and there were those who resented increased increased centralisation and demanded toleration of Protestants – most of these were Protestants but many (including William the Silent) were moderate Catholics. Soon a league of patriots was founded to oppose the Catholics in the south who had the advantage of having the army on their side. War broke out in 1566 after the Calvinistic council in Antwerp approved the use of force (Calvin was against the use of force)

William the Silent initially tried a policy of moderation but soon gave up in frustration and in 1579 placed himself at the head of the anti-Spanish coalition, and in 1573 even became a Calvinist himself. Under William's rule in the north, both Catholics and Anabaptists were allowed to practise their religion. Thousands of Calvinists migrated to the North, which then became a refuge for Protestants from far and wide. The first Dutch Protestant university was founded in Leyden. Even French and English Protestants joined in the struggle against Spain. William used his privateers to good effect against the enemy. Unfortunately he did not live to see the end of the

war (he was assassinated in 1584), but his son Maurice stepped into his place and it was he who was finally able to dictate terms to the Catholic side.

In 1579 the war ended with recognition of a northern Protestant state (now Holland) and a southern Catholic one (now Belgium). But official Spanish recognition did not come until 1648 at the Treaty of Westphalia.

## **THE REACTION AGAINST CALVINISM**

This was first of all doctrinal (cf. Arminius and his followers) but also ecclesiastical (revival of the High Church liturgy and government) and political (reaction against Cromwell). There was also a fresh wind blowing across Europe: new interest in metaphysics, mysticism and philosophy (cf. Descartes, Spenser, Donne) plus a revival of the best of ancient Catholic devotion.

Arminius studied under Beza in Geneva, travelled in Italy, and was professor at the university of Leyden from 1603 until 1609 when he died. The other professor there was Francis Gomar, who was almost extreme Calvinist. Arminius took issue with Gomar, saying the NT revealed a loving God and this was incompatible with the interpretation which consigned many mortals to hell without regard to their conduct.

Arminius stated that God decreed the salvation of certain specific individuals, because he foresaw that they would believe and persevere to the end. In this way he rejected the Calvinist idea of unconditional election – that God chooses or elects people for salvation regardless of any foreseen merit in them. Arminius was careful to stress our full dependence on God's grace. But he differed from the Calvinist/Augustinian position on one vital point. We are dependent upon God's grace, but this grace is given in such a way that man is left to decide

whether or not he will accept it. God's grace makes our salvation possible, not inevitable. Thus the ultimate choice regarding salvation is made by man himself. God's election and predestination of individuals are based not upon His sovereign choice but upon his foreknowledge of our choice.

After the death of Arminius, 46 ministers assented to a document known as the **Remonstrance**. This declared that election to eternal life is conditional upon good works in this life, that grace can be resisted and lost, that Christ died for all men. These men also introduced into the document an attack on the idea of a church independent of the State. In 1618-19 the Reformed Churches held a **synod at Dort** – attended by delegates from most countries, except France (the French delegation had been forbidden by the State to attend and Brandenburg did not send any representatives). The synod confronted the Arminians, now led by Simon Episcopius. Gomarus's language was indeed deemed to be too extreme, but the synod still stood by the following points which can be summarised (in English) under the acronym TULIP (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints). In addition the synod commissioned the translation of the Bible into Dutch (the *Staatvertaling*) which became the standard text of the Dutch Reformed Church.

The Synod of Dort (which represents the views of second generation Calvinists) promoted certain ideas which went beyond what Calvin himself taught. For instance, Calvin probably did not explicitly teach limited atonement nor did he have such an emphasis on covenant theology (e.g. the idea of a pre-fall covenant between God and Adam). Calvin believed that although the scope of Christ's death was universal, its application

was limited to the elect. In other words, for all practical purposes Christ died only for the elect. Moses Amyraut went a step further by saying that God wants all to be saved and that is why he sent Christ to die on the cross (not just to die for the elect), but man's refusal to believe frustrates God's original purpose. Nevertheless God *has the final word* in that he regenerates only those of his choice. Calvin, by missing out the middle proposition of the above argument actually oversimplifies the issue. One step further in this line of thinking is to say that God predestines some to damnation. Calvin was still basically a prisoner of scholasticism. In this controversy everything revolves around God's original *intention*. Calvinists maintain that God by definition cannot be frustrated, but this is patently unbiblical because we can quote many examples of God's purposes being frustrated in the Bible. For instance we read that God was sorry that he had made man. This has the advantage of keeping two biblical truths in tension (which classic calvinism does not) and acquits God of being an ogre. Amyraut was opposed by François Turretin in the name of calvinist orthodoxy. Limited atonement is in any case an unfortunate formulation, since by its very nature the potential scope of Christ's sacrifice must be unlimited, as he is God. Besides, Scripture specifically says that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn 2,2; 1 Tim 2,6). Calvinists try to get round these verses but not very convincingly.

The States-General banished the Arminians who refused to conform. This was because it was a political issue: the arminians were prepared to compromise with the Spaniards whereas the calvinists were not. Therefore the Arminians were regarded as traitors and imprisoned or exiled. Accordingly harsh sentences were meted out: a

prominent nobleman (Johan van Oldenbarnevelt) was executed and Grotius sentenced to life imprisonment (but he escaped with the aid of his wife). The arminians had protested partly against Calvinism on grounds of reason (and as such were the precursors of the liberals). They were suspicious of all creeds and eventually acquired affinities with the Socinians. But they had in their number eminent scholars like Gerhard Voss, Hugo Grotius and Jean Leclerc. Arminian theology was further developed by Curcellaeus and Limborch, who, in reacting against the errors of sabellianism, viewed the death of Christ in the light of the OT sacrificial system – it results in the forgiveness of sins for those who believe. An OT sacrifice was never envisaged as the payment of a debt or satisfaction of justice for sin.

## **THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND**

Protestant doctrine first came into England through the Augustinian Friars (Luther's order) in Cambridge, amongst who was Coverdale (Bible translator and successor to Tyndale). Bilney and Latimer met at the White Horse Inn to discuss German theology in 1520. When the group broke up in 1525, the radicals quietly moved to Germany or Switzerland to study or pursue plans for reform. Other Englishmen of like mind on the Continent during the reign of Henry VIII were Barnes (burned 1540), Tyndale (produced English NT in Worms in 1525-6, burned in Brussels in 1536), Coverdale (produced the first English Bible in 1535 in Zürich). However Coverdale's Bible contains 84% of Tyndale's work in the NT and 75% in the books of the OT which he had translated, but Tyndale's name was deliberately suppressed.

In 1524 Tyndale fled England to mainland Europe. Ending up in Worms, a city that had been recently been made safely Protestant. Tyndale's English NT was completed there by January 1526 and within weeks, copies were on sale in London. What followed was an English version of the inquisition: denunciations, book burning and show trials. Those who recanted were forced to carry before them faggots of wood, symbols of the bonfire that would consume them if they ever lapsed again. In 1530 symbolism gave way to gruesome reality when a priest named Thomas Hitton confessed to smuggling in a New Testament. Condemned as a heretic he was burned at Maidstone on the 23 February. The Reformation had claimed its first victim.

This new movement soon found followers among the laity, especially merchants, and also among former lollards in the London area and the South-East. An important factor in the spread of these ideas was Tyndale's New Testament. Copies were smuggled in by the thousands thanks to German and English merchants in London and Antwerp, who not only supported the work of Tyndale and other translators but smuggled copies of the NT and of Luther's works. They even had a safe house in Antwerp which was called the English House.

**The political background** The Reformation in England was essentially a political revolution, the religious consequences of which were resisted fiercely by Henry VIII. He was in many ways a typical Renaissance ruler – shrewd, cruel and with a lust for power and wealth. He remained a Catholic in doctrine all his life and during his reign many Protestants died for their faith. He had actually been a prominent opponent of Luther and in

1521 had written a treatise defending the Catholic Faith, to which Luther had replied. For this "gallant" service Pope Leo X nominated Henry 'Defender of the Faith (*Fidei Defensor*)'. He had called Luther, a "poisonous serpent, a wolf of hell".

By tradition England had never been anti-papal: it had always been very conservative, with one third of the land in the hands of the Church. The king could not rule effectively unless he used the power of the pope as a means of controlling the clergy.

For a long time it was widely known that the British king ruled the church and not the pope. Henry VIII merely made this official. In any case, English bishops were primarily civil servants responsible to the king, and not clerics.

Cardinal Wolsey, just prior to the Reformation, combined one high post after another with that of his ecclesiastical position and papal authority. From 1518-29 he ruled England as the representative of both king and pope. His unpopularity, especially in connection with taxes, led to much anti-clericalism. To be freed from papal interference became the goal of many in England.

Henry had married Catherine of Aragon, a Spanish princess, in order to cement a political alliance with Spain which had been negotiated by his father Henry VII in 1503. Catherine was the widow of Henry's elder brother, Arthur, although they had both been very young at the time of their marriage. According to the book of Leviticus, if a man marries his brother's wife the marriage is invalid and the couple will be childless. Therefore Henry had had to obtain a papal dispensation to marry Catherine. To this end Pope Julius II had issued a Bull of Dispensation.



Over the years Catherine had born Henry six children, although only one of them, princess Mary, had survived. As both were getting on in years (Henry was 37 and Catherine 42) Henry became increasingly worried about a male heir to succeed him. He began to have (convenient) doubts about the validity of his own marriage. He now had doubts as to whether the pope had the authority to grant this dispensation, as Leviticus was divine law. He now wanted the present pope Clement VII to admit that the dispensation granted by one of his predecessors was invalid. That would mean that Henry's marriage had never been valid from the start and therefore must be dissolved. In the controversy over the divorce, Henry and the pope both quoted different verses from the Bible to support their respective positions: Henry quoted Lev 20:21, and the pope quoted Deut 25:5 (on levirate marriage). Cranmer, as we shall see, opted for Henry's interpretation and so assured himself a successful career.

But Wolsey had now got England allied with France against the Emperor Charles V, who happened to be Catherine of Aragon's nephew. Besides this, in 1527 imperial troops fighting in Italy had pillaged Rome and the pope found himself at the Emperor's mercy. So it was most unlikely that Charles V would allow the pope to grant this dispensation to Henry VIII. This put Wolsey in an impossible position, for he was not just the head of state, but also a cardinal and a papal legate. He could not possibly connive in any divorce solution that did not come from Rome. Catherine appealed direct to the pope. Wolsey was asked to resign and Henry now directly took over as head of State. A board of scholars was appointed to look into the legal aspects of the marriage. After three years study they came up with their solution: they proposed a new theory of kingship, imperial kingship

based on the concept prevailing in the Byzantine empire where the emperor was also the head of the Church, and where there was no pope (the church being represented by a church council). The Act of Appeal of 1533 proclaimed that England was now an empire. Cranmer (the Archbishop of Canterbury) proclaimed a divorce and so Henry was now free to marry Anne Boleyn, who had Lutheran sympathies. From this second marriage came a daughter, the future queen Elizabeth I.

In the following year, Henry cemented his rejection of the pope's authority with an act of Parliament (**the Act of Supremacy**) making himself the supreme head of the Church in England. But this didn't mean that he was joining the Protestant revolution that had been gaining strength in Europe for the past 15 years. He detested Protestant 'heresy' and wanted to keep a Catholic Church of England. But this was not acceptable to many of his subjects: it pleased neither Catholics nor Protestants.

Bishop Fisher of Rochester and Sir Thomas More were beheaded because they had refused to swear to royal supremacy.

Having abolished the pope's power and subjected the clergy to this new law, Henry and Thomas Cromwell now proceeded to suppress the monasteries. Some 10.000 monks and nuns monasteries were dispossessed and their 800 monasteries sold off at bargain prices to members of the nobility. It must be emphasized, however, that previous to this as Wolsey's secretary, he had dissolved a total of 24 monasteries in order to fund two educational institutions

Initially Cromwell had used the money to fund educational institutions, but this later use of the money displeased Anne Boleyn who wanted it used to fund

charitable institutions. This produced a rift between himself and Anne that was later to lead to Anne's downfall.

**Anne Boleyn** (Henry's new wife) was a blue stocking and sympathetic to Lutheranism. She had New Testaments smuggled in to her from France in bales of silk. For the first time there was a Lutheran influence at court.

**Thomas Cromwell** The other person of influence that was sympathetic to Lutheranism was Thomas Cromwell. Initially both Anne and Thomas Cromwell had been keen promoters of the Reformation, but they eventually fell out over the question of the use of money that had come from the sale of the monasteries. But there were also political reasons for Anne's fall. Cromwell had decided to engineer a reconciliation between Henry and the emperor Charles V. With the emperor's aunt Catherine now safely dead, the timing was perfect but for one thing, Anne Boleyn, The price of peace would include the re-legitimisation of Lady Mary who had previously been declared a bastard, and to this Anne would never agree. She stood in the way of this agreement and so she had to go. This was the real reason for her execution. Cromwell (and Henry) conspired against Anne and had her accused of committing adultery with the whole court!

After Henry's third marriage to Jane Seymour, who died soon after giving birth to a male heir, Thomas Cromwell engineered a fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves (Klever), the sister of a moderate Lutheran prince. Soon afterwards he also lost his head for arranging a marriage to a woman for whom he felt no physical attraction, and for pushing his radical (Lutheran) ideas too far behind Henry's back. He had promoted the first official English Bible, which was to be placed in every church. He had also attempted to define some articles of

faith. He attempted to get the bishops to agree upon a new doctrine of the mass (inspired by Zwingli) for the new Church of England. But in all this he was going too far. Henry was conservative; he did not want doctrinal change. By 1540 Thomas Cromwell was in serious trouble for advancing the Reformation behind Henry's back. Another reason for his fall was that he had made an enemy of the Duke of Norfolk (whose monastery, in which all his ancestors were buried, he had summarily dissolved, brushing aside a proposal that it should be turned into an educational institution). In this he had gone one step too far and it was not difficult for his enemies to get him accused of being a dangerous Protestant. In spite of this, Cromwell had cemented parliamentary democracy and made the first step in the foundation of a welfare state which led to the passing of the poor laws of Elizabeth I's reign and which were in force until the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. In addition, the disaffected monks were given pensions.

Catherine Parr, his last wife, turned the queen's residence into a recognisable centre of religious reform within the court and thus paved the way for further reform under Edward VI.

**Cranmer** (1486-1556) was also a very important figure in the English Reformation. He was sent to the Continent in order to investigate possible legal solutions to Henry's dilemma. He was appointed ambassador to the emperor Charles V. While in Nuremberg he married the daughter of a Lutheran theologian. He was subsequently appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, having been commended by Anne Boleyn. He was first and last a quiet scholar and only gave a quarter of his time to being archbishop. Because of his quietness and loyalty, he managed to survive the vicissitudes of Henry's reign. In 1539 the repressive Act of Six Articles attempted to

vindicate the Catholic faith of the king by decreeing savage penalties for denial of transubstantiation, private masses, private confession and clerical celibacy. Bishops of reforming sympathies were deprived of their posts. As late as 1543 Cranmer accepted the doctrine of transubstantiation. Almost his sole contribution to the Protestant cause before Henry VIII died, was to write a preface to the Bible permitted after 1543 to be read only by clerics, noblemen, gentry and merchants. His 1549 Prayer Book contained prayers of thanks addressed to the Virgin Mary as well as prayers for the dead! After his arrest in the reign of Mary he signed a document recanting his Protestant faith, but then went back on this shortly before his execution. As the fire began to take hold, he thrust his right hand into it first, because with it he had signed the act of recantation.

**Edward VI** In 1547 Henry died, and at last the gates were open for the Reforming party. Jane Seymour's brother, Edward's uncle, manoeuvred his way to the double title of protector of the realm and governor of the king's person. He soon took the title of Duke of Somerset. As Edward was only 9, he ruled on his behalf. He wanted to carry the reformation forward some more steps. Accordingly he repealed Henry's Act of Six Articles. Images were removed from churches, tracts printed, communion in both kinds was permitted and the compulsory celibacy of the clergy was abolished.

In 1549 a Prayer Book was introduced in which these reforms figured. It followed the Lutheran principle that custom should only be altered where Scripture demanded it. The Latin mass was abolished and a new liturgy was introduced that was chiefly modelled on Lutheran principles. The laity became more active participants. The influence of Bucer became obvious.

The idea of a repeated sacrifice was denied. Some medieval liturgies were retained, especially that of Sarum.

The future question of the English Reformation was whether the Lutheran principle of compromise was realistic. Even in 1548 Cranmer was being won over to the point of view of the Swiss Reformers via Ridley, Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli and Jan Laski from Poland. Bucer was a compromiser, but Martyr and Laski were Zwinglians. Bucer was the leading professor of divinity at Cambridge while Peter Martyr was professor at Oxford.

The next man to obtain power was John Dudley who became Duke of Northumberland. Under him the Reformation progressed even further and Archbishop Cranmer's revised Protestant prayer book was published in 1552. There was a simplified liturgy in English, a Swiss doctrine of the Eucharist, a communion table (altars were abolished because of sacerdotal associations), a doctrinal outline consisting of 42 Articles of belief after the pattern of Swiss theology.

In addition, the council of State now ruled the bishops. On the death of Edward, Dudley managed to get his son married to the Protestant Jane who was heir to the throne and still a teenager. She only reigned for nine days when her life was tragically cut short by having her head cut off by order of Mary. Lady Jane and her husband, both of them teenagers, had been the victims of their parents' scheming.

By 1553 the English Reformation was still external to most of the people; it was still an affair of legislation. England was by no means a Protestant country but it was more nearly made so by the vicious reign of Mary – its seed was to be the blood of the martyrs.

**Mary Tudor** The reign of Mary (1553-8) represented almost a return to the beginning. She came to the throne at the age of 37, already an embittered spinster. She was

half Spanish, the daughter and confidante of Catherine of Aragon. Her two aims were to make England Catholic again and to provide a male Catholic heir, so that England would remain Catholic after her death. Her marriage to the son of Charles V of Spain was disastrous and no heir came of it.

From the very beginning of her reign, Mary's aim had been to restore the Catholic Church to what it had been before her parents' divorce. She was quite convinced that her subjects felt the same way as she did. But she was wrong: most of them wanted religion as it had been when Henry VIII died (that is: catholicism minus papal supremacy). Papal supremacy was restored at the first session of Parliament in 1554 and an act passed for the suppression of heretics. The papal legate visited England to grant absolution to the rebels.

In addition an act of Parliament from 1401 was revived which called for the burning of heretics. Up to that time she had preferred to persuade the Protestants of the error of their ways, but in February 1555 the most terrible wave of persecution began; by the end of her reign 280 people had been burned to death for heresy, ranging from barely literate peasants to archbishop Cranmer who had granted Henry VIII's divorce. The actual break-down of the numbers was as follows: one third of those executed were clergy, one fifth were women and two thirds were from London and the South-East. Not all were literate: Rowlands White, a fisherman, paid for his son to go to school and learn to read, so the boy could read the Bible to him each night after supper. Joan Waste of Derby, a poor blind woman, saved up for a New Testament and paid for someone to read it for her.

The effect on public opinion was disastrous. Neither she nor her advisors (especially her chancellor Stephen Gardner) appreciated that protestantism was a genuine

religious movement or that Protestants were really prepared to die for their faith if their lives were at stake. She assumed that it was really a pose to cover a political conspiracy aimed at seizing and retaining power. She seriously miscalculated. She called their bluff but they refused to recant, and were burnt. When she realised her miscalculation, it was too late: she could not go back on her convictions and principle.

**Elizabeth I** In 1558 Elizabeth came to the throne. Her own views were difficult to detect, but she hinted on one occasion that she wanted a return to the status quo under Henry VIII: catholicism without a pope, royal supremacy, preferably celibate clergy, real presence in the eucharist. But for political reasons, she settled on a compromise: England was still two thirds Catholic (especially in the North), and she sided with Philip II against France. She refrained from interfering in the Dutch war of independence in order not to offend Phillip.

After the ravages caused by the reign of Mary, the Anglican church was in a sorry state and almost entirely pastored by those who had come back from exile on the continent.

In 1559, in accordance with The Act of uniformity, the 1552 Prayer Book was reissued but with important amendments in a Catholic direction. The number of articles of religion was limited to 39 in an effort to counter Roman and Anabaptist extremists. The deleted articles referred to eschatology which was a controversial issue. An attempt to add Calvinistic definitions (the Lambeth Articles) was rejected by Elizabeth. The Church of Ireland increased the number of articles to 104 (which included the Calvinistic Lambeth Articles. The Methodists later reduced the articles to 24, especially rejecting Article 17 on (single) predestination.



The aim of the revised prayer book had been to reconcile the disparate elements (papists and puritans) within the Anglican church. In the event it satisfied neither party and many Puritans left to form independent churches. It fell to Parker, the new archbishop of Canterbury, to implement the agreement. Elisabeth herself was excommunicated by the pope (Pius V) in 1570 and had to face numerous Catholic plots to unseat her.

It is often not realized that everyone over the age of 14 had to attend church every Sunday as well as on 17 feast days per year. Failure to attend on a regular basis incurred a fine of 20 pounds (4 years wages for a labourer). Infant mortality was very high. In one parish register it is recorded that in one year 63 children were baptised but 45 were buried. One woman in 50 died in childbirth.

**THE PURITANS** The Puritans were those who worked to purify and reform the Anglican church beyond what the government had established. They mostly wanted to abolish ceremonies that were remnants of Catholicism – the use of the cross in baptism, the surplice, kneeling at Communion. Many Puritans considered bishops to be unbiblical. Most wanted the Reformed pattern of church government, with elders and synods, and stricter church discipline. The Puritans also wanted England to get involved in the 30 years war and fight on the side of the Protestants.

The Puritans represented the second generation of Calvinists. Their stress on personal experience led them to modify Calvin's view on assurance. For them, it was no longer something that came with conversion and which functioned as soon as the Holy Spirit came into a person, but an experience to be sought subsequent to conver-

sion. We see here the seeds of a tendency which was to develop via Wesley into a theology of second blessing experience.

The Anglican Church thus consisted of two wings, the Puritans (evangelicals) who were Calvinist, and the episcopalians, whom the Puritans called Arminians and crypto- papists.

As a movement, puritanism really began in the reign of Elizabeth I, when the Puritan exiles returned from the continent, and it soon became an aggressive force within the Church of England. The Queen not only disapproved of the anti-Catholic stand of the Puritans but also their private meetings for prayer and Bible study. Their favourite books were the Geneva Bible and Foxe's book of Martyrs. But a section of the Puritans called the Separatists went further by saying that all true believers should cut themselves off from the Anglican Church. This group was singled out by the State for particular persecution. At this juncture, the separatists decided to emigrate, first to Holland and then to the USA. In fact Oliver Cromwell was about to emigrate when he was approached by members of Parliament.

When **James I** (son of Mary Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley) came to power, the Puritans tried to get him to reform the Anglican church further but they failed because in James' eyes to abolish bishops would in the end lead to the abolition of the monarchy. However, James did allow the Church of Ireland to reform itself and many dissatisfied Anglicans moved to parishes in Ireland. He also authorised a new translation of the Bible to replace the Geneva Bible, as he objected to the anti-Catholic notes in it. This became known as the (only) Authorised Version: all the rest were outlawed. The translators did not refer to all the manuscripts available at

the time and their Hebrew was shaky, their use of Tyndale and Coverdale's versions meant that the language was old-fashioned even in their own day, and their book did not win immediate acceptance – even archbishop Laud continued to use the familiar Genevan Bible when preaching. In fact the Authorised Version was a revision of the Bishops' Bible which had been designed to replace the work of Tyndale and Coverdale. The compilers had their hands tied from the very beginning since 1) they were ordered to stick to the Bishop's Bible as closely as possible, 2) They were forbidden use any Puritan terms (like congregation instead of church), 3) They were not allowed to add any notes.

The AV was not the first English Bible. In 1539 Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer had published the Great Bible and in 1568 – a revised version of the latter came on the market entitled the Bishops's Bible. The Great Bible had been designed to replace previously unauthorised versions (especially that of Tyndale with its acrimonious notes). However, no official version was able to replace the ever-popular Geneva Bible, which had been a revision of the Great Bible in the light of the scholarship of Calvin and Beza, as well as contemporary French translations. For the first time Bible verses had been numbered, and the text printed in two columns. Its popularity had increased when it had appeared in a pocket edition.

During the first half of the 17th century the Puritans were particularly strong in Parliament and at Cambridge University, where Thomas Goodwin and other famous names ministered the Word. James I was succeeded by **Charles I** who had married a French Catholic princess (Henriette de France), which did not endear him to

Parliament. During the period 1629-40 he ruled as a despot without Parliament, encouraged by his ministers Buckingham, Strafford and archbishop Laud. Laud and Wentworth were his advisors in an anti-Puritan campaign. Laud was a member of the High Church who were also called sacramentalists or arminians, and regretted that the Reformation had ever taken place. He used various non-parliamentary courts to impose this legislation. Catholic practices were re-introduced and offenders were branded or fined. He then attempted to impose episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer (1549) on the Scots. But the Scots refused. Charles invaded Scotland but had to withdraw. He recalled Parliament in order to raise money to oppose a Scottish army which threatened to invade. Parliament convened, but refused Charles I the money he requested. At this, he dissolved Parliament and sent Buckingham to arrest all the members. Parliament demanded that Buckingham be charged with treason for this. Charles had to agree and Buckingham was executed. Parliament then sent a delegation of MPs to Charles to negotiate a reduction of the king's powers and an increase of those of parliament. The king paid no notice and attempted to arrest the members of the parliamentary delegation (one of whom was **Oliver Cromwell**). Parliament resisted this and Charles dissolved Parliament. In the end the largely Puritan parliament declared war on the king and the Civil War followed. This war was not primarily religious, but a battle over the constitution. In a series of battles the king's side was defeated.

Laud, having been imprisoned in 1641, was finally executed in 1645 for having tried to overthrow the reformed religion of England and for having tried to reconcile the Church of England and the Church of Rome.

Charles I had been imprisoned in 1645 when he lost the battle of Naseby. In 1647 he attempted to negotiate with the Scots and others for their armies to intervene and restore him to the throne. When this was discovered, the king was put on a charge of treason because he had negotiated with the pope for money and arms and he intended to use Irish Catholic troops (who had previously massacred thousands of protestants in an uprising in 1641) with which to quell English and Scottish parliamentarians. Cromwell's campaigns took him to Scotland and to Ireland where royalists had regrouped often with Catholic troops. Ireland was subdued and the Scottish army was defeated in a series of battles.

After winning the war, Cromwell on behalf of Parliament set up a Puritan State (1649-59). It was largely because the Protestants could not agree among themselves that Cromwell was obliged to take the initiative. However, the Rump parliament of 1649 (remnant of the Long Parliament) excluded Presbyterians who would have opposed the execution of Charles I. In 1653 the Commonwealth gave way to the Republic.

i) The Westminster Assembly was formed, which consisted of representatives of the clergy which acted as an advisory body to the House of Commons. They appointed Evangelicals to all Anglican parishes. Not only Puritans were represented but also those sympathetic to the Independents who feared that a new form of tyranny (presbyterianism) would replace episcopalianism. It was the army (largely Independent in sympathies) that held the whip hand, even though the Parliament was largely Puritan. i.e. those supported the independance of the local, gathered church. They were the precursors of the Congregationalists and thus of the Baptists. They were the first to promote the idea of denominationalism which

effectively solved the problem of churches clashing over the question of territory.

ii) The Westminster Confession of Faith was prepared for the Anglican church and Presbyterian government was introduced. The *Book of Common Prayer* was to be replaced by a *Directory for the Public worship of God*, and the *Westminster Confession* was to replace the *Thirty Nine Articles of Religion*. The Westminster Confession of Faith represents a much stricter form of calvinism than that taught by Calvin. It was characterised by: 1) Covenant theology, (which included the idea that God had made a covenant with Adam before the fall). 2) Limited Atonement, 3) Personal assurance of salvation is now seen as something distinct from and subsequent to saving faith.

iii) Under Cromwell, the Baptists and Congregationalists came to be permanent features of religious life in England. They were even allowed to use some of the cathedrals as meeting places.

iv) Under Cromwell, much biblically-based legislation was introduced by Parliament, more in fact than at any other time of the nation's history. With Cromwell, the Reformation affected the law of the country.

v) Cromwell allowed the Jews to return after an absence of 366 years. They had previously been brought to England by William the Conqueror as money-lenders (a profession not open to Christians, but then expelled by Edward II on the strength of wild rumours about killing Christian children for use in their rituals).

vi) Much Puritan literature was published. Associated with Cromwell were many famous Puritans like John Milton, John Owen and John Bunyan, who though a humble tinker, had fought for him.

Famous Puritan writings of the 17th century included John Bunyan (*Pilgrim's Progress*, *Grace Abounding*, *The*

*Holy War* etc.), William Gurnall (*The Christian in complete Armour*), Richard Baxter (*The Saints' Everlasting Rest*), Matthew Henry (one volume commentary on the whole Bible). Many were written by those who were denied pulpits when non-conformity was being repressed.

The Cromwellian period was a one of intense political and religious agitation. One example of this is the fifth monarchists who looked forward to the setting up of the millenium in which they were to reign. They set the date of arrival of the antichrist at 1666. On 6 January 1661, 50 Fifth Monarchists, headed by a wine-cooper named Thomas Venner, made an effort to attain possession of London in the name of "King Jesus." Most of the fifty were either killed or taken prisoner, and on 19 and 21 January, Venner and ten others were hanged, drawn and quartered for high treason.

British historian Christopher Hill explains that, long before the English Revolution, there already existed a "lower-class heretical culture" in England. The cornerstones of this culture were anti-clericalism and a strong emphasis on Bible study, but there were specific heretical doctrines that had "an uncanny persistence." There was a rejection of Predestination, and an embrace of Millenarianism, conditional immortality, anti-Trinitarianism, and a general suspicion of 'theology'. Such ideas became "commonplace to seventeenth century Baptists, Levellers, Diggers, Seekers, early Quakers and other radical groupings which took part in the free-for-all discussions of the English Revolution."

In 1660 **Charles II** returned and enforced bishops and the prayer book. Charles wanted to obtain freedom of religion for non-Anglicans (especially Catholics) but was

opposed by Parlaiment who overruled him. The presbyterians (puritans) had supported this move, but soon came to regret it. After his father's death he had taken refuge in Scotland from where he agitated to regain the crown, but since he failed, he moved to France. He started to victimise not only the separatists and Puritans outside the Anglican Church, but by the Second Act of Uniformity (part of anti-Puritan legislation classified as the Clarendon Code, named after the minister who introduced it) forced Puritans in the Church to give absolute assent to everything in the (revised) Prayer Book and to accept ordination by a recognised bishop. Two thousand refused and were expelled and joined the ranks of non-conformists who had gained official recognition under Cromwell. This was called the Great Ejection. Many were thrown in prison for their stand, among them John Bunyan. The establishment feared a resurgence of Puritan power as it had been under Cromwell and so sought to suppress them. But the established church later lost credibility when their pastors deserted their pulpits to flee London during the plague and the great fire which was seen by many as God's judgement on England for the great ejection. A system of informers operated and those convicted were mostly fined, but about 15% were imprisoned. All this happened on and off during the period 1660-1688. Under **James II** (who was a Catholic), a major war went on between the Covenanters in Scotland and attempts to impose Anglican worship. When it became more obvious that James II was angling to make England Catholic, William of Orange was invited to become king of England in 1688. An act was passed forbidding any reigning monarch to be a Catholic or to marry one. Thus it was under William and Mary that Oliver Cromwell's reforms finally bore fruit, having suffered a reverse under Charles



II and James II. From now on, there was freedom of religion for all.

## **NEW ENGLAND**

The country was first settled by a mixture of traders (encouraged by London investors) and refugees from the repressive religious policy of the English government.

In 1606 James I granted a charter to a group of colonists (the London Company) to trade and colonise between the 34th and 41st parallels. In 1607 they founded Jamestown which became the first permanent trading settlement in the New World. The charter of the Virginia company (founded in 1606) provided that the true Word of God be preached both to colonists and savages, but from 1609 papists were not allowed to enter. The settlement was intended to reproduce the Church of England across the Atlantic. The clergy were to use the Book of Common Prayer; every plantation had to provide a church; there were penalties for failing to attend worship; the clergy were supported from a tithe but the congregation had some control over the clergyman.

In 1620 the Mayflower arrived but the Pilgrim Fathers had to establish their earliest plantation at Plymouth because the ship's crew refused to take them any further. Plymouth was the first settlement of what was subsequently to develop into the state of Massachusetts. Their colony became a refuge from persecution. As we have seen, the Pilgrim Fathers were really anabaptists in their thinking. Each member of the colony had to sign a covenant which stated that he agreed with the rules of the Pilgrim Fathers. No one was allowed to work on Sunday, the sanctity of marriage and the rules of the commune were to be upheld.

In 1629 the Massachusetts Bay Company was formed to help Puritans to emigrate to America. 400 Puritans came out from England to settle there. They belonged to a less extreme group led by John Winthrop, a Suffolk squire. They differed from the Pilgrim Fathers on the following points:

1. The Pilgrims had come from the working class whereas the Puritans were richer and were still class conscious.
2. The Pilgrims were in reality Anabaptists that wanted to separate the Church from the State.
3. The Puritans insisted on maintaining a theocratic state, but in this particular case their charter did not contain any clause of loyalty to the English crown, so they effectively ran an independent republic without the checks and balances inherent in a church-state relationship. This is why they felt free to introduce extreme legislation which would never have been tolerated in England.

After a quarter of a century the ideals of the Pilgrims became submerged in the Puritan state. Massachusetts became a theocracy like Geneva under the rule of Calvin; an attempt was made to resurrect the old Israelite theocracy. Citizens were beaten if they failed to attend church. Those that dared to work on a Sunday were placed in the stocks. Engaged couples were taken to court if they were caught sitting together on Sunday. Man and wife were fined if they kissed in public. If a man failed to pay his debt, he received 30 strokes of the whip. Stealing and swearing were punished by flogging or amputation of a limb.

Church government was mostly congregational: no Prayer Book was allowed. Moral discipline was exercised through a governing court. In 1631 it was decided that no one who did not go to church should have the right to

vote. Harvard university was founded and John Eliot became the first missionary on that continent to the Indians.

Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island were all founded by groups who resented the limitations imposed by the Massachusetts voting system to church members only. Maryland was founded as a colony for Catholic refugees, but soon afterwards attracted both Catholics and Protestants.

In Rhode Island even their tolerance was tested when the Quakers arrived in 1656. They had a reputation for hooliganism. Some of them were smashing bottles in a Boston church and shouting at the congregation: 'Thus will the Lord break your bones!' A woman streaked through the town stark naked, another undressed in church, all 'under the guidance of God', so they claimed. The Quakers were banished.

## THE RADICALS OF THE REFORMATION

The Radicals can be divided into three main groups:

1. The Anabaptist Radicals: Konrad Grebel, Felix Mantz and Balthasar Hübmaier. Also Pilgram Marbeck, Melchior Hoffman and Menno Simons.
2. The Spiritualist Radicals: Hans Denck, John Hut, Sebastian Frank and Caspar Schwenkfeld
3. The Rationalist Radicals: Socinius, Ochino, Gribaldi, Gentile, Curio, Renato, Stancaro and Biandrata.

**The ANABAPTISTS** was a group term covering a number of independent groups outside the major denominations. They were essentially in disagreement with the idea of State Christianity which stated that

society was held together by a religion to which all members of that society were committed: entry to that society was provided by infant baptism, which was seen as the New Testament equivalent of circumcision. The Anabaptists insisted on the re-baptism of those who joined their movement and they actually called themselves "the Brethren".

Around the middle of the 16th cent., the Anabaptists became known as Mennonites. It is significant that Anabaptist hymn collections only survive today among the Amish.

All Anabaptist groups held the following tenets:

The positive side of anabaptism was commitment to the following:

1. The New Testament (and not the Old) as the supreme rule of faith and practice.
2. Believer's baptism
3. They were very strict in their insistence on discipleship and practised the ban: the excommunication of those deemed unworthy.
4. The Lord's Supper reserved for re-baptised believers.
5. The complete separation of believers from unbelievers in all religious and political matters.
6. The high importance of the pastoral office
7. Total pacifism and non-violence, hence the rejection of politics as a Christian calling, since rulers have to use force to uphold the law; and the total rejection of oaths.
8. They practised redistribution of wealth and footwashing.

Whereas present-day Baptists could agree with points 1-4 and 6, they would find points 5, 7 and 8 more problematical. However one cannot disguise the fact that their theology was semi-pelagian. Thus in some ways the Anabaptists foreshadow the independent churches of our

own day, in the area of practice, though possibly not in the area of theology.

It is important to understand point 7 in their historical context. Swiss cities required of their citizens that they swear an oath of loyalty to their city once a year. In addition it was the duty of every citizen to take up arms and fight in the town militia whenever their town was attacked. Both of these things the Anabaptists refused to do and so were regarded as traitors.

Most of the above tenets are contained in the **Confession of Schleithem** (a town near Schaffhausen) which was drawn up in 1527, but which has hardly anything to say about doctrine, probably because they tended to emphasise practical Christianity.

Present-day Baptists have borrowed many of their ideas but have not opted out of society as they did. Their true heirs today are not so much present-day Baptists, but groups like the Mennonites, or even more extreme groups like the present-day Hutterites or Amish.

However, in doctrine they profoundly differed from the main reformers in that they rejected an Augustinian theology. They rejected the doctrines of original sin, predestination and justification by faith alone, chiefly because they thought that such doctrines contradicted practical sanctification. They thus inherited the semi-pelagian theology of the medieval church. They also denied that Jesus derived anything from Mary at the incarnation – he had "heavenly" flesh, all this to safeguard his sinlessness.

Inevitably among their ranks were extremists. Thomas Müntzer put prophecies on the same level as Scripture, which profoundly irritated Luther. There were wild pro-

phesies regarding the imminent end of the world and plans for a new kingdom of God to be established by force. It was widely believed that the New Jerusalem was going to descend on Strasbourg and that Hoffmann, a prominent Anabaptist, was to be resurrected there. When this did not materialise, it was prophesied that it would descend on Münster. Accordingly the town was taken over and closed to all but their sympathisers. Eventually they were all killed when the town was captured. Another extreme example was John of Batenburg who believed that anyone unconverted ought to be killed, that churches ought to be plundered. All these people got the movement a bad name. This tended to tar them all with the same brush and overshadow their positive side in public opinion. Menno Simons, one of the anabaptist leaders, struggled hard to resist extremism, and managed to turn north-German anabaptism from a movement of revolutionary anarchism to a church of peace-loving martyrs:

The saner anabaptist groups tended to congregate in:

1. Zürich, led by Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, in the time of Zwingli
2. Southern Germany, led by Balthasar Hübmaier and Hans Denck, and later by the Tyrolese engineer Pilgrim Marbeck,
3. The Hutterite Brethren in Moravia
4. The Mennonites in the Netherlands and in North Germany

The Reformers were against the Anabaptists because they thought that social anarchy would prevail if they succeeded. For them, the preservation of the Reformation was at stake and the special Church-State relationship was essential for the Reformation to succeed. Hence they sought to preserve it at all costs.

Nearly all the Anabaptist leaders in Switzerland were executed before they could organise a strong movement. Gradually the gulf between them and the Reformers widened to irrevocable proportions. From 1535-46 in Friesland (Holland) about 30,000 Anabaptists were martyred by Catholic and Protestant alike. In Germany the Baptist cause was almost obliterated and not until the appearance of Oncken (1800-1884) was there any real growth. This was because Anabaptists unfortunately later tended to become legalistic and lost their evangelistic zeal.

**THE HUTTERITES** were formed in Moravia, partly under Swiss influence. Jacob Hutter, the founder, was executed in 1536 but he stamped the group with his ideals which were taken from the first chapters of Acts. They founded a Brüderhof at Nikolsburg which was a self-sufficient farm colony whose ordinances are in some way reminiscent of a medieval monastery: they were manifestations in the family context of the old ascetic ideal. According to them, 'private property is the greatest enemy of love, and the true Christian must render up his will and become free from property, if he wants to become a disciple. They stated: 'We think that it is wrong to buy something and sell it and take the profit, so making the thing more expensive to the poor and taking the bread from their mouths.' According to their rulings, no one could bequeath property. They were pacifists and refused to allow the manufacture of weapons. At their height they had over 100 farming communities comprising some 20,000 people or more, especially in Slovakia. They became renowned artisans, but the Thirty Years War ended all this. In 1622 they were expelled from Moravia and the remnant fled eastward through Slovakia, Transylvania, Turkey and the Ukraine. None of

these countries would accept their stand on pacificism. They eventually wound up in South Dakota and Canada, where they allowed no new sermons later than the 17th cent., but they did not go as far as the Amish.

**THE MENNONITES** were founded by Conrad Grebel, a one-time disciple of Zwingli. Melchior Hofmann brought the doctrine to Holland where it linked up with various pre-reformation splinter-groups. There Menno Simons (after whom the movement became named) soon became a prominent leader. He believed that exclusion from the pure (i.e. Mennonite) community must carry a social (not legal) exclusion. This might range from banning from table fellowship to divorce. Most of their attitude to the world stemmed from the idea of the pure congregation drawn out of the world as an alternative society. This was the root of their attack on infant baptism and upon churches established by law.

Menno Simons held to the Evangelical Anabaptist position as set out in the Schleithem Confession of Faith. He opposed the revolutionary Anabaptists, holding to a firmly pacifist position. He also opposed the 'spiritualist' Anabaptists who relied on the 'inner light' for special, private revelations, as opposed to the Bible alone. Unlike the Reformers, he had no time for the Early Church Fathers.

A contested case of divorce led to a split in the movement: in North Germany and Holland the movement split into the liberal and rigid wing. The Old Order of the Amish Mennonites (founded by Jacob Ammann) still practice a form of the ban. Many interesting customs prevailed in these assemblies: foot-washing, an addition to the Lord's Prayer (Give us the eternal, heavenly bread) and the kiss of peace. Baptism was by affusion and not by immersion.



In the 18th century the Mennonites spread to Russia at the invitation of Catharine the Great. Later, persecution in Russia caused migration to North America, especially in 1873-82 and 1923-30. Today there are 700,000 Mennonites world-wide, of whom about half are in the USA and Canada.

**LIBERAL MENONNITES** were to be found in Holland. They adapted themselves more freely to the surrounding world. Despite their principle of pacificism, they sailed with armed ships and raised money for William of Orange. They permitted their members to hold office in the government. They denounced but tolerated marriage with non-Mennonites, and even allowed Calvinists to join them without being baptised. Their services were much more orthodox and their relations with the Dutch government were very good. Members of these little, god-fearing sober groups established themselves in Dutch society as bankers, merchants, scholars and painters (including Ruysdael).

**THE SOCINIANS** (Arians or Unitarians) also sprang up on the edge of the Anabaptist movement. They basically questioned the decisions of the Early Church, especially on the nature, person and birth of Christ. These were not initially liberals but earnest Christians who insisted on taking nothing as true unless it was evident from the Bible. This explains the title of a book by one of their number entitled '*Against the whole world since the apostles*'. Orthodox Mennonites expelled any anti-Trinitarians but the Socinians did not.

Michael Servetus was a prominent person who adopted anti-Trinitarian thought. In 1537 he was lecturing in Paris on Astrology and casting horoscopes for money! In 1553 he published his main work entitled *The*

*Renewal of Christianity* which promotes pantheistic neo-platonism. Having escaped the French Inquisition, he was eventually burned outside the walls of Geneva in 1553, with the approval of Calvin.

The movement made headway in Poland because each lord of the manor won practical freedom to choose his own religion. One such unitarian community grew up at Raków. This community was thus able to flourish while the crown was weak. Anabaptists fleeing eastwards found a haven in several of the great Polish estates, and also in Hungary and Transylvania. This influx led to the establishment of the Minor Reformed churches of Poland which professed Anabaptist principles and held anti-Trinitarian doctrine. It was based on a few important estates that gave it a haven: those in Vilna, backed by prince Radziwill, and at Raków, the property of an anabaptist magnate called Jan Sienin'ski. Raków also collected radicals from other Polish estates, from Moravia and from Germany. They wanted to turn it into something like a Hutterite Brüderhof. They established a press and a college there. In 1580 an Italian radical called Sozzini (in Latin *Socinius*) arrived. Having written a book on *The saving work of Christ* (atonement by example), he arrived in Poland, but he was refused admission to the Minor Reformed Church. However he managed to worm his way into their fellowship and eventually came into a leadership position in the movement. He encouraged people to worship Christ as divine, in spite of his anti-Trinitarian teaching. In 1605 three of his disciples published at Raków the so-called Rakovian catechism which became the confession of faith for the Socinians. It denies the doctrine of the Trinity, original sin, baptismal regeneration, predestination to hell, substitutionary atonement and justification by faith alone.

After the abolition of the community, the centre of unitarian thought passed to the more radical among the Dutch mennonites.

**THE QUAKERS** was the only radical group to survive a larger group of Seekers who waited for the direct inspiration of the Spirit and rejected all external forms. They mostly flourished during the Cromwellian period. Fox, who was the founder, was a sort of mystic after the medieval pattern of Tauler. Such people maintained that 'we need no external guide, no minister, no authority, for we have immediate knowledge of the Christ within, the 'inner light', the seed of divinity within the soul.' A rival leader of the movement began to allow himself to be worshipped as the Son of God and entered Bristol in a downpour, riding upon a horse, with his follows strewing garments in the way and crying: 'Holy, holy, holy!'. For this he was sentenced to a public flogging.

**THE BAPTISTS** Two distinct groups of Baptists emerged during the 17th century in England, the General Baptists (mostly Arminian) and the Particular Baptists (Calvinists). The General Baptists were the first group to be formed, having been started by John Smyth who had strong Puritan leanings. During the reign of Charles I, on the borders of Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire a number of villages had already formed themselves into congregations of the Calvinist pattern, with pastors as elders. From their ranks came the Pilgrim Fathers. After suffering persecution, they came to Amsterdam in 1608. A quarrel broke out and some stayed in Amsterdam while others moved to Leiden. Thomas Helwys separated and returned to London in 1612 to establish the First Baptist Church in England. It was the Leiden group that decided in 1620 that they

preferred to settle somewhere completely on their own: not as one sect among many but as the only sect. The Inquisition was uncomfortably close – in Belgium. So they hired the Mayflower and set sail.

Meanwhile the first General Baptist Church continued in England. This church was Arminian in theology. Helwys died in prison in 1616 and was succeeded by Murton. By 1630 there were six congregations. These corresponded with the Mennonites on the Continent and sought fellowship with them.

The Particular Baptists (so called because they believed in particular i.e. limited atonement – atonement only for the elect) came into being when a group left the Calvinist Independent Church (also known as the Congregationalist Church), whose theology they retained. This happened between 1633-38. Growth was steady, so that by 1660 there were about 131 Particular Baptist Churches, and 115 General Baptist Churches. Unfortunately doctrinal declension set in after 1689 (the year of the passing of the Act of Toleration) and by the first half of the 18th century many of the General Baptists had lapsed via Arianism into sheer Unitarianism, whereas the Particular Baptists lapsed into Hyper-Calvinism. However much later (1966) many Strict Baptist Churches were called Grace Churches and had a greater desire for evangelism.

The **Second London Confession** of 1677 was the (strict) Baptist version of the Westminster Confession of Faith of the Puritans and other Independents. In the following year the General Baptists issued their (arminian orientated) statement of faith (**The General Baptist Orthodox Creed**).

English Baptists, as well as related churches in Europe initially baptized by sprinkling, but there were

amongst them those preachers who advocated baptism by immersion. Some Dutch Menonites introduced baptism by immersion at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. English Strict Baptists in 1641 officially introduced baptism by immersion which subsequently became the practice of the entire Baptist movement.

In some ways the Baptists resemble the Anabaptists of the 16th century, in their rejection of infant baptism and of the idea of a state church. But there are other matters on which they differ from the Anabaptists, in that they did not opt out of society: they were not pacifists and neither did they discourage Christians from involvement in politics etc. So the true heirs of the Anabaptists are rather to be seen as the Mennonites, Hutterites and even Amish. The majority of the 17th century Baptist groups had emerged from Puritanism and their theology is best understood as a Baptist modification of Reformed theology.

### **LESSER KNOWN REFORMERS:**

**Bucer** (1491-1551), the Reformer of Strasbourg devoted much of his career to reconciling the Zwinglians and the Lutherans. To this end he espoused a position half-way between that of Zwingli and Luther on the eucharist: the divine gift was not given in or under the forms of bread and wine (in this he agreed with Zwingli) but it was given in conjunction with them – as the bread is given to the body, so the divine gift passes into the faithful soul (there is an objective gift being offered to the communicant). This compromise doctrine became known as receptionism and was espoused by Calvin during his time of working under Bucer at Straßburg from 1538-41 (having been banished from Geneva).

He was also about the only reformer to appreciate Anabaptists and be prepared to listen to them.

When the Interim of Augsburg (against the wishes of Bucer) was accepted by Strasbourg, Bucer was expelled and fled to England where he ended his days as professor of divinity at Cambridge university. Peter Martyr was professor of divinity at Oxford.

There were of course other Reformers:

**Oecolampadius** (1482-1531) alias Hauschein, who established the Reformed Faith in Basel. He attended many disputations, and followed Zwingli's view of the Lord's supper.

**Jan Łaski** (1499-1569) who brought the Reformed Faith to Poland. He had previously been dean of Gniezno but had come to faith through reading Erasmus, Zwingli and Oecolampadius. He spent most of his life outside Poland but moved back for the two last years of his life.

**Peter Martyr** (1491-1562) alias Pietro Martire Vermigli, who was from Florence in Italy. Known as the second Savonarola, he came to adopt the Reformed Faith, having been influenced by Bucer and Zwingli, but had to spend most of his time outside Italy (notably in England and at Strassburg).

**Theodore Beza** (1519-1605) was Calvin's successor in Geneva. Before this he was much involved in events connected with the Huguenots in France. More than anyone else he served to harden Calvin's line to produce double predestination, biblical literalism and church discipline.

## THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

The Counter-reformation was not just a crusade against Protestantism but also a reform of the Catholic Church itself. The impetus came as much from the Catholic kings as from the Pope and clergy. It is also necessary to realise that the Counter-reformation did not begin after the Reformation. At about the same time that Luther was nailing his theses to the door of the Church of Wittenberg, a group of Catholics in Rome desirous of reform in their church, founded a society called the Oratory of Divine Love.

The Catholics recognised that the Church needed to be reformed because;

1. The clergy were very uneducated.
2. Morality left much to be desired and certain ecclesiastical abuses needed to be remedied.
3. The Protestants were capitalising on this situation
4. Humanism and secularism was challenging the Catholic Church, especially in Italy.

Rome used the following methods to implement a Reform:

1. It founded new orders and reformed old ones.
2. It called a Major Church Council: the Council of Trent
3. It strengthened the hand of the Inquisition where necessary
4. It encouraged new political initiatives through Catholic rulers. However many of these political successes were reversed by the Peace of Westphalia

The three popes involved in the Counter-reformation were:

Clement VII (1523-34) who was pope at the time of Henry VIII's break with Rome.

Paul III (1534-49) instituted a commission to investigate ways in which the Church should be

reformed. Under his rule the Council of Trent was also convoked.

It was left to Paul V (1555-59) to implement many of the recommendations of the Council of Trent.

### **The abortive Catholic Reform in Spain**

The leading nation in this crusade for Catholic reform was undoubtedly Spain (France having opted out of the race because of religious wars). In Spain, Church and State had been welded into a crusading force through their campaign against the Muslim, and through the Inquisition. Spain was also rich, through new-found wealth in the Americas. It also dominated Italy politically through the Duchy of Milan, and through Naples and Sicily.

Under the patronage of Queen Isabella, Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros conducted a reform of the church in Spain from 1495-1517. Scholarship was encouraged and a group of pro-Erasmans had a great deal of influence in the production of Scriptures. Between 1502-17 a group of scholars under the personal direction of Jiménez produced the Polyglot Bible in 6 volumes, a Bible in Hebrew and Greek, and Latin texts and critical apparatus, but publication was delayed until 1522 (through lack of papal approval) and by that time the NT of Erasmus had come on the scene. In 1512 a Castillian translation of the Epistles and Gospels appeared. The Inquisition went into action in 1530 against the Erasmians and after that nothing could stop it. At the same time, some 200,000 Jews who refused to be baptised, were expelled. Grenada was captured in 1492 and the Moors forced to convert. Jiménez then became the next Grand Inquisitor after Torquemada.

In Italy the destruction of Protestantism was as rapid. Thus this unofficial reform proved to be short-lived.



### **The Creation of New Religious Orders**

One method of reforming the church was the founding of new religious orders. This happened in Spain and Italy during the first half of the 16th century. The most successful attempt at reconstructing an old order was that of Matteo de Bascio, an Italian Franciscan who sought to revive the simplicity of St. Francis. This became the order of the **Capucin** – named after their brown pointed hoods. After a chequered start (one of the earlier superiors became a Protestant), they eventually became the second most important order in implementing the Counter Reformation after the Jesuits. The name of this convert to Protestantism was Ochino who was a contemporary of Peter Martyr Vermigli

**THE JESUITS** were by far the most important new order created. Its founder was Ignatius Loyola. He started life as a soldier or rather, a free-booter. As a result of military action, he was left with a mis-shapen right leg and knew that his military career was over. After reading various devotional books, he decided to become a saint. He went on a pilgrimage and devoted himself to religious exercises which, however, failed to bring him peace of mind. Luther had discovered the way of escape by reading the Epistle of the Romans. Ignatius discovered his way of escape through (compensatory) concentration of his iron will upon obedience to the suffering Christ (i.e. by obeying the precepts of the Church). He wrote a book of spiritual exercises which virtually contains a month's course on attainment of sanctity, the aim of which is obedience to a superior as a soldier of Christ and self-abnegation of the individual. The book ends with the *Rules for Thinking with the Church* according to which he is ready to believe that

what is white is black, if the Church says so. This is the beginning of 'the end justifies the means'. The Jesuits were to become the sword and shield of the Catholic Church, rather like the KGB of not so long ago.

His first six regular disciples joined him in 1534 in Paris; Francis Xavier, Faber, Lainez, Salmeron, Bobadilla and Rodriguez. In a chapel on Montmartre, they vowed to go to Palestine to convert the Turks. For this purpose they offered themselves to the Pope for any service that he might choose. Since they were not able to sail for Palestine, the pope asked them to remain in Europe to implement the Reformation. However, they were subsequently to become the spearhead of Catholic Missions in South America and the Philippines. This made up for Catholic losses incurred in Europe because of the Reformation.

The new order was officially founded in 1540. The Jesuits became known as educators of children, conductors of missions or retreats, as popular preachers, as chaplains to hospitals, chiefly because of the appalling state of church life in Italy. They did not start out as a weapon for fighting the Protestants, nor had they at first any special reputation for intransigence. Their charter in 1540 was to propagate the faith, but in 1550 their task became the propagation and defence of the faith. They established orphanages, houses for prostitutes, schools, centres for poor relief. But they abolished the idea of saying offices in choir. Excessive ascetic practice was discouraged; the order was to be fit for hard work in the world. Its success was due to its ability to adapt older concepts to the needs of a new generation.

The novitiate lasted two years and contained a period of concentrated study. The order was governed by a general, but the governing body of the society was

formed of those who had taken the fourth vow – that of unconditional obedience to the Pope.

In 1541 Xavier, with 3 Jesuit companions, embarked at Lisbon for the Indies – the first of a long line of missionaries to go to the Indies and the Americas

By the time that Ignatius died in 1556, it had more than 1,000 members and had become one of the most powerful forces in the Catholic world, by its ministry, not to the poor, but to the upper ranks, because of Jesuit hold on higher education. Because they had the best educational system of the time, they came to have great influence at court, where they had educated many of the members of royalty. Because of the teaching of the Catholic faith at the universities, they soon found themselves defending the faith against Protestants who had a wide following among the humanists. Their oath of total obedience to the Church and to the Pope demanded that they defend the faith. Two of the original six were the Pope's most enthusiastic supporters at the Council of Trent. In 1542 they were summoned to work in Southern Germany and established their base at Ingolstadt. From 1552 onwards they saw their principle task as the battle against heresy.

In 1555 many thought that the Catholic cause in Germany was doomed. The Reform was still spreading in Austria, Bavaria and Bohemia. During the first 40 years of the Reformation, the Catholic Church had nothing worth saying in its defence. The Jesuits were to change all this.

**The Dilemma of the Catholic Church** In 1555 Canisius brought out a reasoned defence of the Catholic Faith that won wide acceptance, but the Catholics recognised that the most effective way to counter the Protestants was to reform the Catholic Church itself. A

blatant example of an area needing reform was Bavaria: the clergy were often illiterate, the monasteries often like country inns, the vicarages commonly contained a concubine and numerous children, there were many drunken priests. Some of the Bavarian middle class were already affected by the teaching of the Lutherans and of the Anabaptists.

The choice facing the Catholic reformers (Fisher, Contarini, Sadoletto and Pole) was either to become more Protestant or to dig their heels in, adapt forms of devotion and strengthen the hierarchy. The history of the Counter-Reformation is in part the history of the triumph of the conservatives and militants over the conciliatory and liberal elements. The conciliatory wing under Contarini met the moderate Protestants (Melancthon and Bucer) at the **Colloquy of Regensburg** (Ratisbon) in 1541. They managed to agree upon a doctrine of justification by faith, but became bogged down on the article of transsubstantiation and papal supremacy. But Pope Paul regarded all these agreements as ambiguous formulas and in any case, both sides had repudiated their respective representatives. Contarini was rumoured to be a heretic and died in 1542. He had undergone a conversion experience in 1511.

The failure of the Colloquy of Regensburg and the limited scope of the Peace of Augsburg led to the outbreak of a series of religious struggles throughout Europe, especially involving the Calvinists. The fire was also fuelled by the desire of the Catholics to regain lost ground. In France the wars of religion lasted from 1562 to 1598. They ended with the signing of the Edict of Nantes which guaranteed certain rights to Protestants (in this case the Calvinists). The Dutch wars of Independence (1560-1618) also had an important religious dimension. The Protestant Dutch found themselves fighting the

Catholic Spaniards. The same applied to the English Civil War (1642-49) in which Puritans were engaged in fighting Catholics and those who were prepared to compromise with Catholics. The Thirty Years' War was of course the most important religious conflict. This ended with the signing of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

**The Victory of the Conservatives** The failure of Contarini to agree with the Protestants, opened up the way for the opposing party. In that same year Caraffa (the hard-liner) recommended to the Pope that a new and powerful Inquisition be founded to eliminate heresy. He and his school believed that the way to purify Catholicism was by an assault against heresy. In 1542 the Roman Inquisition was founded. It was given power to imprison on suspicion, to confiscate property, to execute the guilty, but the power of pardon was reserved for the Pope. Caraffa bought a house which he fitted with offices and dungeons and shackles, issuing a series of rules for inquisition, of which the fourth ran: 'No man is to lower himself to showing toleration towards any sort of heretic, least of all to a Calvinist.'

In the late Middle Ages in Europe torture was originally introduced by the Inquisition to combat heresy because the Church believed that information about this could be obtained in no other way. Eventually, however, it became part of the normal judicial machinery in Europe, though not in Britain. The result was that thousands of innocent women accused of witchcraft were tortured into confessing impossible crimes like flying to midnight assemblies.

**Reign of Terror in Italy** But this Inquisition was a dead letter outside Italy where kings would not tolerate papal witch hunts on their territories. In Italy, on the other

hand, the Inquisition almost brought the Italian Renaissance to an abrupt end. An additional reason for its severity was that Caraffa (Pope Paul IV) was intent on reducing Spanish power in Italy. Indeed, until 1870, the papacy was also the centre of Italian politics and a power among the princes of Europe. Caraffa forced every Jew to wear a yellow hat and live in a ghetto with only one exit. The first index of prohibited books was published. It included the Decameron, Rabelais and the Koran. Learned Italy was returning to the piety of the Church; Italian poets were returning to sacred poetry, Italian artists to devout practice. The wave of moral austerity, which in other parts of Europe was creating puritanism, was now strengthening the hand of the Catholic Reformers. The Capucin and Ursuline orders were founded. The Ursulines were a teaching order for women.

**The Counterreformation in France:** The Jesuits established themselves in France in 1550, initially in Clérmont-Ferraud (at the Collège de Clérmont) and from there the movement spread quickly elsewhere. Because of their alleged involvement in the plot against Henry IV (the assassin was a former Jesuit), the Jesuits were expelled from Paris and other towns. They found themselves locked in a battle with the Sorbonne (the theological faculty of Paris) because they had voiced doubts re. the immaculate conception and had speculated that the maximum time in purgatory for anyone was only 19 years.

### **The Council of Trent**

The Council failed to meet until 1545 when the German Emperor and the French king signed the Peace of Crépy. Trent was selected because it was part of Italy

and 'in German lands' (South Tyrol). The council was unrepresentative, as three quarters of the delegates were Italians. The Emperor wanted the council to iron out questions of discipline and thus remove friction between Protestants and Roman Catholics. He did not want them to discuss questions of doctrine which, he was assured, were insoluble. The Pope on the contrary instructed his legates to first deal with questions of doctrine. The first section dealt with a formulation of Roman Catholic doctrine in the light of the controversy with the Protestants and the second with the ways in which RC practice should be reformed.

In the session of 1545-8 most of those taking part were from areas that had been untouched by Protestantism (especially Spain), and felt no obligation to be tender to Protestants. Their uncompromising attitude made impossible any sort of religious peace hoped for by the Emperor, or change hoped for by the moderates of the Council. But it should be noted that that the doctrinal decrees of Trent, because they were sometimes given a polemical tone, sounded more hostile to the Protestants than they really were. During the early sessions of the council there was a division of opinion but the formulations always seemed to be made in the language of the hard-liners. Most of the formulations were given a hard-line interpretation in the Church.

Catholic practice was reformed as follows, it being understood that reform of doctrine was a non-negotiable issue.

1. The office of seller of indulgences was abolished.
2. The Vulgate was proclaimed to be the only valid version; tradition was proclaimed to be on a par with Scripture. Tomism was declared to be the official Catholic line.

3. The mass is a true sacrifice, even for the dead; communion in both kinds was unnecessary.
4. A man is justified by faith and works, not faith alone.
5. Bishops were given effective power of supervision in their dioceses and were no longer to be the puppets of the crown. The bishop of every diocese where no university existed was to establish a seminary to train young men in the priesthood. The clergy were now to be educated and to preach.

However, the Council of Trent was an effective reforming council mainly in Italy – elsewhere it was only an encouragement and a stimulus.

### **The failure of the Counter-reformation in England**

Pope Pius V (the ex-Grand Inquisitor), in the Spirit of the Council, organised a gigantic purge in Rome. He was also responsible for the tragedy of the English Counter-reformation, for he supported the various plots during the reign of Elizabeth I to reestablish catholicism under Mary Queen of Scots. Most Catholic sympathy was centred in the North where in 1569 the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland rose in revolt but were suppressed. Because the Pope had supported this uprising and had issued a Bull excommunicating Elizabeth I, he stamped English Catholics with the imputation of treachery. This was added to by the incident of the Spanish Armada which was an attempt at an armed invasion of England to reestablish Catholicism by force in 1589). Things were made even worse by the Guy Fawkes plot (1605). In 1571 anyone who became a Catholic or who led another person to do so was liable to death for treason. But Catholicism was kept going by Archbishop Allen abroad and by the Catholic squires in the North who built priest holes where priests could hide. In 1603 returns show that



there were 8,570 recusants in the country – the highest numbers being in Cheshire and Lancashire

**Catholic Mysticism** Catholic mysticism developed a certain form around this time. Jesuit retreats became popular. Mariolatry got a boost. The cult of the Sacred Heart was also started. Medieval interest in miracles revived. Baroque (and later, Rococco) art accentuated the importance of the new doctrine transsubstantiation (such a holy miracle demands beautiful buildings). Mysticism became popular. Prominent mystics of the time were St. Teresa of Avila (founder of the renewed Carmelite order), St. John of the Cross, St. Francois de Sales. In a way mysticism was the Catholic answer to the Reformation. Nevertheless it was considered dangerous by the Catholic authorities because it dispensed with the need for priests and sacraments by opening up a direct way to God, but to which God? It all smacked of platonism. It was also worried by the apparent gnosticism of Molinos.

Latin now became a purely liturgical language, whereas at the beginning of the Reformation it had been a living language and the highest form of expression.

Catholic scholarship suffered a setback through strict censorship, which directed its attentions more against heresy than against obscenity. The Gregorian calendar was suppressed. The Catholics tried to answer the *Magdeburg Centuries* (so called because each volume covered a century of history) by the Lutheran Flacius Illyricus which traced with zeal and care the slow corruption of the Church from NT times until the Middle Ages. It was called the *Annals* and was written by Philip Neri. Robert Bellarmine, another Catholic, wrote his *Disputations against the Heretics of our Time* (1586-93). The Spanish Jesuit, Francisco Ribera wrote a book on

Biblical prophecy based on a futurist interpretation of the book of Revelation (1590) in order to oppose the Protestant idea that the pope was the antichrist. Amongst other things he stated that the Antichrist was an eschatological figure and that the church was destined to be raptured 45 days before the end of the Great Tribulation which would last not 7 but 3,5 years. It is interesting to note that the first people to call the pope the antichrist were the Spiritual franciscans.

**New Catholic Initiative** The political Counter-Reformation was made possible by the absence of France from the political scene from 1562-1629, during which time she was engaged in religious wars. This gave a free hand for the foreign policies of the Habsburg powers to restore Catholicism in Spain and Austria. The Catholic League under Philip II of Spain set about winning back Protestant areas. In 1562 it looked as if Bavaria and Austria might follow the example of North Germany and become Protestant. In Austria probably about two thirds of the population were sympathetic towards Protestantism. But between 1565-85 there was a change in morale; the Protestants became less certain of themselves, and the Catholics more self-confident. This was partly due to the tougher stand of the Catholic rulers, to genuine Catholic reforms, and to Protestant divisions. In Graz for instance the tables were completely turned on the Protestants where they had attained a virtual monopoly. In the Cologne area, the continuation of the Catholic presence was due to the presence in the Spanish Netherlands of the Spanish army, and due to the success of the Catholics in holding on to traditionally Catholic bishoprics, thanks to the Ecclesiastical Reservation which had modified the Peace of Augsburg. In Poland there was religious liberty under Stefan Batory,

but as soon as he died, Zygmunt III (1587-1632) allowed the Jesuits to come into Poland and Protestantism was crushed.

### **Catholic Missions**

it was during this period that Catholic missions expanded in the Americas, thus serving to compensate the Catholics for their losses in Europe. Catholic missionaries following hard on the heels of Spanish and Portuguese conquerors (Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru). However, it must be said in their favour that these missionaries did not endorse the brutality of the conquerors and often took the side of the Indians against them. The Franciscans (who even penetrated California) were the chief Catholic missionary arm in the Americas, but the Jesuits in the Far East. The Jesuits evolved controversial missionary methods in China and Japan where they sought to identify themselves so closely with these highly cultured civilisations, that they were sometimes accused of compromising the Gospel.

### **The Thirty Years' War**

This war started when the free city of Donauwörth was occupied by Maximilian of Bavaria after the Lutheran majority had suppressed a Catholic procession in the town. Catholicism was then forced on the town, thus breaking the terms of the Treaty of Augsburg. An Evangelical Union was formed to defend Protestant States and soon the Catholics had formed a rival Catholic League. In 1618 Protestant nobles of Bohemia defenestrated (threw out of the window) the imperial commissioners, drove the Jesuits out and revolted against Austria. They offered the crown to the Calvinist Elector Frederick V who accepted it. War broke out because a Calvinist ruler in Bohemia would have tilted

the balance of power throughout Europe. However, the 30 Years War was only a religious war until 1635. It was at first a war of Calvinists fighting against Catholics, for most Lutheran States stood aloof. In 1620 the Battle of the White Mountain (Bila Hora) decided the fate of Bohemia and all Protestants were ordered to leave the country. But this brought other states into the war: Denmark, Sweden and France decided to invade in order to restore the elector of the Palatinate (son in law of James I). This failed and the treaty of Lübeck was signed in 1629. It then became a war of France against Germany. The main Catholic gain was Bohemia and Austria. A Catholic general (but convert from protestantism), Wallenstein, conquered North Germany (except neutral Saxony and Brandenburg) and enforced the Edict of Restitution in 1629 whereby Protestant gains were reversed. By this everyone was to go back to the state of affairs prevailing prior to 1552. But the Calvinists were completely left out of any agreement.

This crisis was reversed by Gustavus Adolphus. This was fortunate because the Edict would have been unacceptable to France, Spain and Bavaria who saw it as putting too much power into the hands of the Emperor. This was also what the Pope feared. Gustavus Adolphus won back the Northern territories for Protestantism but it soon became clear that the Catholics could not hold Northern Germany, nor the Protestants Southern Germany, but the war continued for another 13 years until 1648 after the battle of Lützen in 1632 in which Wallenstein was defeated and Gustavus Adolfus killed.

The terms of the Peace of Westfalen in 1648 established the present religious boundaries and were a set-back for the Counter Reformation. However, it allowed the Counter-Reformation gains to stand in the

lands of the Austrian Habsburgs. It re-established the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 but this time guaranteed protection of the Reformed Church.

According to the Treaty:

1. The imperial court was to be composed of Protestants and Catholics in equal numbers.
  2. Except in the hereditary Habsburg dominions, all states were to tolerate the other religion if it had existed before 1624
  3. France gained Alsace, except Strasburg
  4. Switzerland and the Netherlands became States.
  5. The Elector Palatinate recovered the Lower Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz) but the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz) was given to the Duke of Bavaria.
- Catholic gains were: Bohemia, a fully Catholicised Austria, parts of Alsace under France and the southern German bishoprics.
6. No post-reformation Catholic order was allowed to operate in Protestant states.

The Peace of Westfalen marks the end of the Holy Roman Empire and of the medieval age in which religion and the idea of a Christian republic had dominated. Henceforth the sovereignty and independence of individual states was respected. The pope objected to the treaty but was ignored by both sides, which was a sign of the times.

## THE ORTHODOX CHURCH UNDER ISLAM

By 1526, most of the Orthodox Church was under Turkish domination – that is, after the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, the Aegian, Crimea, Belgrade and two-thirds of Hungary. There were talks of another crusade by the Western Powers but the furthest it got was the Battle of Lepanto where the papal forces defeated the

Turkish fleet. Under Turkish rule, the sultan aimed to rule over the Christians through the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Church became very poor because all its wealth was confiscated and its educated men had fled westwards, though orthodox Christians still came to study in the West (mostly in Venice and Padua where they were assured freedom from oppressive Catholicism). As only a minority could afford this, Greek Orthodox priests were deprived of education and became abysmally ignorant. Its peasants were also subjected to the crushing burden of taxation, including the provision of many male children to Muslim religion and service (the famous janissaries). Christians were much used as contractors, ship-builders or cannon-founders. But the church was poor and often came on begging expeditions to the West.

The covenant of Omar required that Jews undertake to respect the supremacy of the Muslim, to avoid imitating them, 'to rise from our seats when they wish to sit down' – and to follow other practices of deference and self-abasement. As early as the 8th century, Jews and Christians were required to identify themselves through the clothes they wore and in many other ways as subject peoples. The Jewish practice of wearing a head-covering during prayer, probably dates from this period. By the 14th century, Jews were commonly required to wear yellow, Christians blue, and Samaritans red; badges had become standard equipment and non-Muslim women were required to wear shoes that did not match, in combinations of black with white or red. Although these regulations were not uniformly applied in the empire, as precedents they were available to any Muslim ruler, who, for religious, political or economic reasons, wanted to

humiliate his Jewish or Christian subjects. Many were martyred for their faith.

In the Greek lands, the Balkans and Russia, the Orthodox church was still the church of the people, and the Turkish Muslim were only a ruling minority. But in Crete, Euboea and parts of Albania, the Muslim advance had meant the conversion of Christians to Islam. Despite Turkish attempts at Orthodox Church centralisation, in order to control it better, the Serbian archbishop of Peć and the Bulgarian archbishop of Ohrid had a measure of autonomy. It is also to be noted that within the Turkish empire there were quite a number of Latin Christians: on the ex-Venetian islands of the Aegian, in Bosnia and Serbia and Northern Albania, and even in Trabzon. Besides this there were Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Churches subject to Rome, in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, which for political reasons claimed they were Orthodox. Christians and Muslims shared the same superstitions and muslims often reverred Christian holy places. The Turks transformed many churches into mosques (a good example is to be found in Ohrid). In Damascus both Christians and Muslims held services in the same former Christian cathedral. In Constantinople muslims added minarets to the Orthodox church of Sveta Sophia and turtnd it into a mosque. In Jerusalem the Muslims built the mosque of Omar on the Temple Mount on the pattern of a Byzantine church using gold for the roof which they has stolen from other churches in Jerusalem.

In the 16th century many promising young Orthodox young men went for their education to Italy, to the university of Padova, since they could not get a decent education under Turkish rule. Orthodox theologians took over the Western idea of seven sacraments as well as

the concept of transubstantiation. Greek students in the West came to study at Tübingen university via Padova and Venice, in order to hear lectures given by a Lutheran theologian Martin Kraus, who spoke about the possibility of uniting Protestant and Orthodox churches. Kiril Lukarski, the patriarch of Constantinople who continued to defend Orthodox Church from catholicism, found natural allies among the Protestants who at that time were particularly strong in Poland. He sent his best priests to study at Oxford, Helmstedt and Geneva. However, after his death, an Orthodox church council at Jerusalem officially condemned his 'protestant heresies'. The Orthodox Church, because it was under Turkish rule, did not experience the Renaissance or the Reformation. However well-disposed they may have been towards Rome, they still regarded protestantism as something that was foreign, odd, untraditional and erroneous.

After the fall of Constantinople, Moscow laid claim to be the capital of Orthodoxy. Accordingly Ivan the Great adopted the two-headed Byzantine eagle as his coat of arms. However, Russia had yet to go through a period of anarchy and civil war before it could become the liberator of other Orthodox countries within the Ottoman Empire. A monk named Filotej between 1505 and 1533 wrote the following to the czar: Two Romes have already fallen, but the third one, our Moscow, is still going strong, but there will never be a fourth one...In the whole world, you are the only Christian emperor.

**Bulgaria under Turkish rule:** In 1371 the last king of Bulgaria, Ivan Shishman, was forced to declare himself the vassal of the Ottoman sultan Murad I. In 1389 the Turks defeated the combined forces of Serbs, Bosnians and Croats and from then on began to dominate the



whole Balkan peninsula. In 1393 the Bulgarian capital in Turnovo was destroyed after a siege of 3 months.

The next five centuries form the dark period in Bulgarian history. During this time, many of the nobles embraced Islam. Others, together with numbers of priests and people fled across the Danube. Among the people, only the religious sect of the Paulicians adopted Islam in large numbers. In the Rhodope mountains many of the Pomaks (meaning 'renegades') were still pagans, but later converted to Islam. Large numbers of Turks settled in the plains and the Bulgarians tended to flee to the less fertile districts. Christians were subjected to heavy taxes, especially that levied on agricultural products. Many young boys were forcibly taken to Istanbul where they had to serve in the élite janissary guards. However, there was at least stability. Christians were not forced to do military service, and no systematic effort was made to extinguish either their religion or their language. The clergy were still allowed to perform their role of adjudicators in matters of inheritance and family affairs. Although many churches were converted into mosques, by about 1570 Sofia had 13 mosques, but 300 churches and two church schools which were controlled by the metropolitan.

In 1688 a Catholic revival in Chiprovets was crushed by Turkish intervention. Later on, Austria made some half-hearted attempts to unseat the Turks from the Balkans in 1739. Russia now became the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, a rôle which it has still maintained in relation to the Serbs.

## **THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN AGE:**

## 17th and 18th Centuries

### **SURVEY OF THE PERIOD IN BRIEF**

The date 1648 is a watershed because it marks the final break-up of the medieval era. This had a profound effect on the importance of religion. It marked the end of religious wars but not of religious persecutions. Religion ceased to be a question of international importance. The Pope's influence in national affairs dwindled drastically: the power of the secular prince was all-important within his realm. There was increasing tolerance within states, but with some notable exceptions.

a) Hungary, where the Reformed Church became heavily victimised by the Catholic monarchy.

b) France, where the Edict of Nantes was eventually revoked, in the interests of political unity.

c) Austria where 15,000 Protestants were expelled from the principality of Salzburg.

In spite of this, states were beginning to realise that persecution was counterproductive: it destabilised the state and could result in enormous economic losses (cf. exodus of Huguenots from France). However, religious minorities were allowed no more than to follow their consciences in worship: they were not allowed equal rights to proselitise or hold public office. In fact, in no state in Europe were the members of religious minorities treated as completely equal, before the French revolution.

The Church was supposed to support the status quo, yet it was being weakened by the rise of rationalism. A new view arose that ethical culture was an adequate substitution for the Christian Faith. Reason, not revelation,

becomes the final arbiter. People wanted freedom to think and act as they pleased. The Enlightenment grew as an alternative system of values, and even the reaction to it in the form of the idealism of Rousseau was not any more favorable to Christianity.

European life was being secularised; religion was becoming personalised and individualised: the two things went together and were interdependent. The fragmentation of the universal church into competing churches, and weariness with religious warfare, hastened on the secularisation process.

By the middle of the 17th century, we stand on the threshold of the modern world: science had made remarkable progress and by the end of the 18th century everyone accepted Newton's view of the world; **Locke**, basing himself on his philosophy of empiricism (sense experience), established that Christian morality was supremely wise. Christianity was being increasingly shorn of its supernatural element and its uniqueness. Reason was magnified and revelation depressed. Contradictions in the Scripture were pointed out: miracles denied and prophecy re-assessed.

Only in England was this challenge met with vigour and determination (cf. Butler and Berkeley). **Hume** showed that extreme rationalism leads to complete scepticism. Wesley showed that religion was not a mere intellectual hypothesis. On the continent of Europe, people like Voltaire took their cue from the English deists (especially from Locke and Newton) who had popularised a view of reason which had been largely discredited in the country of its origin.

French apologists were unconvincing, while in Germany the Pietists re-established the credibility of Christianity, but failed to combine zeal with intelligence and so bequeathed to the 19th century problems which it had not solved.

The Enlightenment produced some startling conclusions. David Hume reasoned that God's existence could not be proved. Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that religion was not so much about God as about people's religious experiences of God. Hegel said that God was not the personal being in the Bible, but an impersonal force.

The Enlightenment championed the scientific method, where everything – including the Bible – was subject to rational, empirical analysis. In this environment, the discipline of biblical criticism grew up. It was also the context in which Charles Darwin concluded that the world had not been created in 6 days, but was the product of millions of years of evolution.

It was an age which contained problems that are now familiar to us and one in which many important movements in modern Christianity had their origin.

## **THE BEGINNINGS OF RATIONALISM AND REVIVALS**

### **Development of thought: 1648-1715**

By 1648 the modern period had already begun:

- a) **Bacon** already pointed to scientific method as the only certainty,
- b) **Descartes** adopted the scientific method and applied it to philosophy, which had never been done before.

The ideas of the Enlightenment had started when Copernicus had proclaimed that the earth went round the sun. This was the starting point for Kepler, Galileo and Newton, all of whom revolutionised our understanding of the physical universe, and in so doing torpedoed the Ptolemaic world view contained in Aristotle's philosophy. The Catholic Church stubbornly resisted these discoveries because it had adopted Aristotle as its ideological and theological substructure thanks to the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

The weak point of Descartes' philosophy was the relationship between the mind and the body. Three continental philosophers offered alternative explanations: Malbranches (occasionalism), Spinoza (monism) and Leibnitz (monads).

**Malebranche** who belonged to an order of secular priests (Oratorian), maintained that body and soul do not communicate directly, but only by divine intervention. Faith and reason did not contradict: according to him the whole universe is reasonable and runs like a clock, which really reduces God to a force (no longer an active person) and does not give an adequate account of evil. It is latent pantheism.

**Spinoza** was a Jew who had been expelled from his Portugese sinagogue for heresy. He was a pantheist: according to him, there is only one substance: the infinite being, therefore there is no problem of communication between soul and body. The aim of man is reintegration into the eternal, a complete union with God which produces imperturbable tranquility. Critics said that Spinoza left no place for God as a personality and with it, purpose and design. Religion ceased to be the highest form of personal relationship. Besides his philosophical work, he

also published a work on biblical criticism, which effectively undermined the authority of the Bible.

**Leibnitz** was a great scientist who as a Christian, wanted to see the divisions within Christianity healed. He believed that his basic philosophy was common to both sides. According to him, the existence of God is the key to knowledge and the postulate of morality. He sought to rectify a weak point in Descartes' philosophy which did not give a satisfactory account of the relationship between mind (the thinking part of man) and body (the special part of man). The universe is mechanistic and made out of monads, presided over by a benevolent God who has preprogrammed them to behave in a certain way. This world is the best possible world, in spite of the presence of evil. This philosophy, systematized and expounded by his disciple **Wolff** (a graduate of pietistic Halle), dictated the pattern of thought in German universities for years to come, and in theology he paved the way for the Enlightenment.

**Pascal** was the only Frenchman who offered an effective apologetic to creeping rationalism. He saw the Jesuits as the chief internal enemies of the Church but he saw Descartes as being the chief external enemy. This is why he wrote his *Pensées* (Thoughts) which were to have been part of an Apology. Pascal maintained that reason was a neutral force that can be harnessed to either good or bad (either side can interpret scientific findings to back up their point of view). The Christian religion is not primarily a matter of morality but of a personal relationship initiated by God. The Fall has produced an abnormal condition from which only God can save us. Only the Christian world view can adequately explain the contradictions in this world.

The later 17th century was a period of rapid scientific advance. Most of those involved were humble and reverent men, but a new class was beginning to emerge: men of sceptical outlook, impatient of all restraint. Travel in the same century meant that people could compare one religion with another and as each was seen to be as moral as the other, relativism started to eat into religion – each religion was seen to be as good as the other.

The materialistic atmosphere of the age encouraged critics of the churches to become bolder. However, most of them were primarily anti-clerical and not anti-Christian as such. The question of Biblical chronology was raised: it did not agree with the Egyptian, Persian and Chinese chronologies. A Catholic, **Richard Simon** (1638-1712), started a critical study of the Bible to be used as a weapon against the Protestants, but he was expelled from his order when the Catholics realised that this was a weapon which could be used against them as well!

**Pierre Bayle**, one of the exiled Huguenots in Amsterdam, compiled his famous **Dictionary** (*Encyclopédie*) which proved to be a mine from which Deists and sceptics could quarry material for attacks against the Bible and against the Christian Faith. This became a launching pad for sceptical enquiry in the 18th cent. as followed up by such men as **Diderot and Voltaire**. Voltaire, the son of Jansenist, had been converted to deism through a stay in England. He was a militant anti-cleric, but he also denounced all forms of christianity, vowing that he would be the apostle that would put a final end to it. His old house in Geneva was later to become the headquarters of the Geneva Bible Society!

The age of Louis XIV was coming to an end: men no longer thought in terms of a hierarchical disposition of life, of disciplined order, divine right to rule, divine providence and the stability of the classical period, but in terms of movement and change.

## **1715-1789 THE DEVELOPMENT OF RATIONALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE**

The new science disposed men to regard the universe as an orderly system, guided by a purpose in which man can participate, and governed by laws which human intelligence can grasp. Newton and Locke had been in the forefront of scientific and philosophic progress which seemed so attractive to the French, for instance. However, those in England approached the problems without the presuppositions of their continental counterparts – they were in no mood to discredit Christianity, which they found eminently reasonable. But the Deists had two glaring faults. They failed to provide an adequate explanation for evil. They denied revelation and also the proofs advanced to support it (miracle, prophecy, and biblical authority). They failed to explain why man had failed to respond to the evidence of natural religion.

**Deism:** Locke's influence can be discerned in many quarters. Its most disconcerting manifestation was seen in the increase of the popularity of deism, which became a threat to traditional Christianity in the closing years of the 17th cent and reached its apex halfway through the next century. It sought to avoid the two extremes of religious dogmatism and atheism by stating that what we call certainty is nothing more than the highest degree of probability. It had 5 fundamental truths: a) God exists, which is proved by the classic proofs for His existence, b)



it is our duty to worship Him, c) the proper way to do so is to practice virtue, d) men ought to repent of their sins, e) rewards and punishments will follow death. Revelation, it was implied, was a disguise for superstition and Christ was little better than a pagan wonder-worker. The essentials of deism were: the primacy of reason, the supplementary and subordinate role of revelation, the elimination of wonder, the curtailment of the supernatural and the equivocal portion assigned to Scripture. Anticlericalism was very strong.

The answer to rationalism and deism was much what it had been in 17th cent. France. Law, Berkeley and Butler attacked it, and Hume took it to its logical nihilistic conclusion. According to him there is not such a thing as cause and effect, so the "proofs" for God's existence which are based on this postulate, are invalid. The Deists cannot have their cake and eat it. Wesley and the Evangelicals countered their criticism of religion with living and transforming faith.

William Law insisted that the loose vocabulary of the deists be defined. God is too great to be a mere adjunct to the neat little mechanistic universe of the deists.

**Berkeley** attacked from an idealist point of view. Active independent existence can only be attributed to minds. These are the only things that we encounter with any certainty. The material world is only guaranteed by the Supreme Mind. The laws of nature are determined by God who upholds everything. Nothing has an independent existence.

**Butler** was by far the most acute critic of the system, for he exploded the orderliness and rationalism that was meant to characterise the universe. He pointed out con-

traditions and disorder, inferring that only the Christian revelation is capable of explaining both (much as Pascal did). Reason, he pointed out, can only offer us probabilities.

**Rationalism:** In France, the '*philosophes*' assembled elements that were later to be characteristic of Marxism. These elements were:

a) By nature man is good, not bad. b) Our primary concern must be with the life we now live, not with the hereafter, c) Educate men along the right lines, and we shall see the emergence of the "new man", d) A Revolution is all that is needed to set the ball rolling in the right direction. This set of ideas gained impetus because: a) the Church was unbending and unreasonable, b) there was no Wesley, c) there was no adequate apologetic.

In deism we see Reason + Scripture, whereas in Rationalism we see Reason minus Scripture.

In Germany, the emphasis was slightly different: it was a movement of Reform within the Churches rather than an attack on them from outside. Pietism had been the equivalent of Wesley, but it had not provided sufficient intellectual answers. Many Pietists (like Wolff) in fact later degenerated into liberals. Christianity was "simplified" and made more reasonable. Lessing propounded the view that each religion was as good as the other – Christianity was not unique. There are many ways to God – all you need to be is sincere.

**Kant** made a valuable contribution by advancing the moral argument for the existence of God, but in many ways this was a position into which he retreated, having conceded to the liberals other areas.

The Romantic movement (influenced by Rousseau) reduced religion to a feeling. Rousseau who had been brought up a calvinist in Switzerland, eventually settled on a unique blend of deism and reverence for nature. His political theories did much to shape the bloody revolutions that were to shake France and North America.

Schleiermacher emphasized the subjective element of Christianity: the essence of faith was not dogma but intuition and feeling (i.e. an awareness of dependence on God).

### **POST-TRIDENTINE CATHOLICISM:**

The Council of Trent was by no means welcomed by all sectors of catholicism. Opposition centred round three points:

1) A centralisation of papal power found itself on a collision course with nationalism.

2) Certain clergy were not ready to implement what they considered to be the extreme demands of the council.

3) Trent was a triumph for the conservatives and therefore had gone too far. Doctrinally, they regretted that Augustine's doctrine of the primacy of grace in salvation had been neglected, chiefly because of the influence of the Jesuits.

Opposition was perhaps most acute in France which was nationalistic and where freedom of thought had always been at a premium. In France, Gallicanism was the name given to the idea of a national Catholic church free from papal authority. Those of the opposite persuasion were called Ultramontanists – those who supported the papacy which lay in Italy (beyond the mountains – the Alps).

## CHURCH LIFE IN FRANCE

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century France had replaced Spain as the leading European power and hub of church life. Under Louis XIV an absolutist state was built up in France. The formation of this state began, however, well before Louis came to the throne. Richelieu and Mazarin were the founders of it. Whereas the foreign policy of both was not based on religion but on cold politics, their internal policy was absolutist: they did not want a state within a state and so curbed the Protestants. The King continued both their policies when he came to the throne (1661). Louis' policy eventually led to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and to Gallicanism (an independent stance of the French Catholic Church vis à vis the Vatican).

**The Huguenots:** Under Richelieu and Mazarin the political power of the Huguenots was destroyed but then they were left in peace. But when Louis XIV came to the throne he had a mania for centralisation and uniformity. Louis' policy against the Huguenots was strange because they were not a threat to the Catholic Church: some of the pastors were able orators and learned scholars, but few engaged in proselytism. In addition they were an economic force of great importance. After calling a halt to his crusade under protest from Colbert and the Elector of Brandenburg in 1666, Louis resumed his policy against the Huguenots ten years later. He was encouraged in this policy by Mme de Maintenon (an ex-Huguenot). When the persecution reached a peak with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, fighting broke out in the Cévennes, where a group of Protestants refused either to become Catholics or to leave the country. This war lasted for 20 years and drained

France's resources. There was a wave of prophecies and apocalyptic pronouncements which led to a death or glory approach, as a result of which many were needlessly killed. The calvinist leaders in Lausanne attempted to impose some order on the situation by forbidding women to preach any more and by denying that the canonical Scriptures could be added to in any way by so-called prophecies. Persecution of those who remained in France was vicious: those caught were automatically sentenced to the galleys for the rest of their lives. Women were sentenced to life-imprisonment, children were taken away from their parents, and preachers were hung.

The Camisard war finished in 1710 and then the nerve centre of protestantism shifted to Lausanne where pastors were trained. A more moderate approach followed which was to lay the foundations of the French Reformed Church. In spite of this, persecution still continued right up to the French revolution. From 1684-1762 a total of 90 pastors were executed and 27 were sent to the galleys. Most of these were young men in their twenties. During the Revolution, Protestants continued to be persecuted for refusing to co-operate with the atheist state and in 1815 Royalists went on the rampage massacring many Protestants in what came to be known as the White Terror.

**Gallicanism:** The other controversy that faced Louis was the issue of the power of the papacy. The Church in France, against a strong background of Gallicanism, was prepared to accept the doctrinal stipulations of the Council of Trent but not prepared to accept its political implications and allow any intrusions of the papacy into ecclesiastical law in France. At the end of the 17th cent. an infallible papacy faced an absolute monarch. The

chief issue was Louis' right to appoint clerics within his realm and within realms that he might conquer. The 4 Articles of 1682 summarized this policy. The exclusion of the Pope from internal ecclesiastical affairs automatically put Louis in the position of quasi-divine authority. The pope reacted strongly and Louis toyed with the idea of schism and founding an independent national Catholic church. However, a new pope came to power and in 1693 Louis revoked the Gallican Articles, but Gallicanism still lived on, and always gave the autocratic monarchy the excuse to treat the Church as a department of State.

**Jansenism:** If Gallicanism sought to safeguard the autonomy of the Church in France, Jansenism sought its purification, especially from the Jesuits and their casuistry which jansenists found abhorrent: it was not strict enough. It arose out of the writing of Cornelius Jansen (d.1638), a Dutch theologian who was bishop of Ypres at the time of his death. He heavily criticised the deadness and formalism of average Catholic worship. Much popular morality was self sufficient with no dependence on God. The fact was that man can only be saved through the love of God creating faith. This love becomes effective through conversion, and conversion is dependent on the good pleasure of God. But although he opposed the Jesuits and all that they stood for, he also rejected the Protestant faith. He found his inspiration in St. Augustine, who had similarly stressed predestination, but whose doctrine had been obscured by the medieval preoccupation with merit.

Jesuits and Jansenists disagreed over the result of the Fall. According to the Jansenists, original sin made a complete slave of man, so that God had to intervene first. The Jesuits, following their favorite authority (**Luis**

**Molina**), reputed to be a gnostic, said that the fall only deprived man of his supernatural gifts (i.e. his glorified state) leaving him in a natural state, from which he was free to develop in one of two ways.

The greatest influence of Jansenism was in France, due to certain key men who were won over to his doctrine: du Vergier, abbot of S. Cyran, several members of the brilliant Arnaud family (espec. Angélique, prioress of Port Royal), and eventually Blaise Pascal. Many high churchmen were sympathetic to it, it was elitist and morally challenging, thus threatening to upset Louis' religious equilibrium. 1649 Five Propositions taken from Jansenius' *Augustinus* were condemned by the Sorbonne. A fight developed between the Jansenists and the Jesuits. **Pascal** came to the rescue of Arnaud and wrote the *Letter Provinciales* (chiefly against Jesuit casuistry). In 1653 pope Innocent X condemned the theses of Jansenius as heretical. Towards the end of the century the Jansenists seemed to be in a strong position. The pope condemned 65 propositions drawn from Jesuit moral authors. They had sympathizers among the high clergy. But at the turn of the century, the Jesuits attacked Quesnel, Arnaud's successor, whose book reaffirmed basic Jansenist tenets. The new Pope was not sympathetic. In 1705 the king drove the nuns out of Port Royal and levelled it to the ground. In 1713 the Pope launched his bull *Unigenitus* which condemned the 101 propositions taken from Quesnel's book. However, 16 bishops, sympathetic to Jansenism, refused to submit, saying that the Pope by himself was not infallible.

By this time, the more extreme members of the Jansenist party had succumbed to extravagant tendencies. They spoke with tongues. They claimed to perform miracles. They lived in a world lit by flashes of

apocalyptic prophecy. An earnest young Jansenist had been buried in the cemetery of Saint Médard, and Parisians were amazed to learn that his grave had become the scene of miraculous cures. In 1732 the government intervened and closed the cemetery. Next came the phenomenon of the convulsionaries. By frightful self-tortures, these extremists worked themselves into a state of frenzy, then prophesied and performed miracles. The reputable Jansenists repudiated them and the police severely repressed them.

But the Jansenists lost ground after this and broke up as a movement, but the same debate raged on throughout the 18th century, chiefly between Dominicans and Jesuits. Many Jansenists fled to the Netherlands and founded their own church in Utrecht. However, the Jansenists that remained had the last word when they allied themselves with the Gallicians to have the Jesuits expelled, in 1764 after a financial scandal.

**Quietism** was another reaction against the dry moralism of the day. It had foreign sources: the tradition of St. Teresa in Spain and Michael de Molinos in Italy. According to the *Spiritual Guide* (which was condemned by the curia and the Jesuits) the soul attains Christian perfection when it is wholly at rest in God. When it abandons all effort and resigns itself to complete passivity, it loses itself in God, and takes no interest in its own well-being.

It was **Mme Jeanne Guyon** who gave the movement both notoriety and importance. In her book entitled *A short and easy method of prayer*, she elaborated her views. Contemplation, she claimed, was the essential activity of the Christian life. In rapt contemplation of God, the soul, losing all concern for its own well-being, grows



indifferent alike to reprobation and to eternal felicity. There is not need to ponder the great truths of the Gospel, not even the life and death of Christ, since these are not the proper objects of pure contemplation. The one thing needful is to yield "to the torrent of the forces of God". This smacks strangely of platonism and even pantheism. Watchman Nee was influenced by her. She also said that there may be times when, in order to offer God a true sacrifice, one must commit sins one truly despises. Remarks like this seemed suspect to the Church authorities and she was placed in a convent, out of harm's way. However, Fénelon, was won over by her teaching, which earned him the condemnation of Bossuet, and later, of the pope.

**Vincent de Paul** also reacted against the dry moralistic mood of the day. He founded the Lazarists to evangelise the neglected areas of France. To alleviate poverty he founded the Sisters of Charity. All his workers were subject to the local bishop. The Sulpician and Eudist orders were founded to train country clergy (the others were trained at St. Maur and at the Oratoire) in 1642 and 1643. In 1680 the Christian Brothers were founded as a lay teaching order. Other mystics of the time were: Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629) and Charles de Condren (1588-1641).

**The sacred heart:** Marie-Marguerite Alacoque, (1647-1690) was founder of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She entered the Visitation convent at Paray-le-Monial, central France, in 1671, and after a regime of severe austerities declared that Christ had revealed to her His heart burning with love for man and had commanded her to establish the Holy Hour, Communion on the first Friday of each month, and the feast of the

Sacred Heart to be observed on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi. The skepticism with which her visions were at first regarded was gradually dispelled, and devotion to the Sacred Heart quickly spread throughout the Christian world through the Jesuits. She was pronounced venerable in 1824, beatified in 1864, canonized in 1920.

### **The Church and the French Revolution**

In the course of the 18th century the Catholic Church in general, and in particular the upper clergy became more and more impervious to criticism and calls for reform. They were exempt from paying taxes at a time when other people's taxes were being increased. They behaved like leisured aristocrats materially and morally (Cardinal Rohan was even accused of trying to seduce the Queen of France). The ordinary country clergy were much closer to the people and ready to engage in revolution. Monasteries declined alarmingly.

In other European countries around this time the following characteristics prevailed, a) In one country after another the Jesuits were expelled, b) the Papacy declined and the pope even eventually dissolved the Jesuit order. c) Ideas of the Enlightenment were introduced into constitutions by enlightened despots.

In many ways, the French Revolution was the climax of the Enlightenment. It began as a non-violent experiment in reforming the French Government. Twelve hundred selected deputies came to Versailles from every corner of France at the request of the king to solve a grave financial crisis in the spring of 1789. The country was bankrupt due to the financial support tht it had made

to the American war of independence. Once gathered there the 600 commoners of the Third Estate decided that what France needed was a much more radical and comprehensive reform than any envisaged by the king. They wanted to replace the Ancien Régime by a society based on the political and economic ideas of the Enlightenment, the experience of the British with representative government, and the social and economic realities of late 18th cent. France. This meant doing away with all the privileges due to birth, giving the middle class political power, and putting an end to arbitrary government. They wanted complete economic freedom, allowing each person unrestricted enjoyment of private property. Their first demand was that Louis XVI would have to share his power with the elected representatives of the nation. Eventually the king gave in. But the Revolution turned bloody when the king engaged in underhand methods and tried to restore his power by force. The people of Paris stormed the Bastille and formed their own army. A general national uprising occurred all over the country. But the king still engaged in treacherous plots and so sealed his own fate. He was executed and a Republic proclaimed.

The Church, as an integral part of the old order, was bound to be affected. Up to that time the church had formed a state within a state (called the First Estate). They had the only form of public worship recognised by the State and they controlled all education and public relief. They were the sole registrars of birth, deaths and marriages and they controlled censorship of literature.

At first there was no conflict between the Revolution and the Church. When the States General had met in 1789, the lower clergy had thrown in their lot with the

bourgeoisie, thus effectively breaking the power of the nobility. From this arose a National Assembly. They willingly gave up church land, though they objected to a law which gave civil rights to Jews and Protestants.

The conflict began when the National Assembly took it upon themselves to reform the Church itself in 1790. It was based on pre-revolutionary Gallican principles. Diocesan boundaries became those of civil départements (57 of these were suppressed). Archbishoprics were abolished. The pope ceased to have any authority over the French Church. Bishops were now to be elected in a similar manner. But what caused the real problem was the demand that every cleric should take an oath of allegiance to the State (thereby putting the pope in second place). In March 1791 the Pope forbade the clergy to take this oath accepting the constitution. 50% refused and 50% took it, though this depended on the area. Most of the bishops refused to take the oath and promptly emigrated. This split the church down the middle for the next 10 years, even at parish level. Only those who had taken the oath were allowed to continue their ministry. Feelings ran high when in one town someone put a cat in the tabernacle which jumped out and clawed the face of the new priest who had unsuspectingly opened it during mass. When Austrian and Prussian troops invaded France to put down the Revolution, things got especially tough for those priests who had refused to take the oath. Many were driven into exile and others were massacred. The rest were allowed to carry on their ministry.

The turning point came when the Revolution began to take on the character of a religion itself. A wave of anti-clericalism was let loose. The clergy were accused of being unpatriotic because they refused to get married

and so increase the number of patriots! A campaign was launched to dechristianise France. The Christian calendar was abolished and a 10-day week was instituted. Church-bells were melted down and coin made of them. Church services were forbidden, but every tenth day, it was arranged that philosophical or political sermons should be preached; alternatively popular banquets or balls were arranged. Children were given "un-christian" names. Patriotic ceremonies featured sacred oaths and sacred trees, and the religious names of streets were replaced by revolutionary names. In the provinces, men were sent out with unlimited powers to deal with the emergency situation created by the invasion and by "counterrevolution." Others turned churches into Temples of Reason. Clergy were pressured to resign and marry. Churches were ransacked and the burial of all citizens was henceforth to be in a common cemetery whose gates were marked with a sign "Death is an eternal sleep". Christianity was abolished and in its place the worship of Reason was proclaimed. In Paris, a certain Mlle Maillard, an opera dancer, wearing the three colours of the new republic, was enthroned as the goddess of Reason upon the high altar of Notre Dame where she received the homage of the revolutionaries. All other churches were closed "by order of the commune".

By 1794 the dechristianisers had achieved a wide measure of success. The cathedrals and parish churches of most towns had been turned into Temples of Reason. But in rural France, where the majority clung to the old religion, the operation could only be carried out by armed force. In many towns young girls decked out as Reason or Liberty or Nature led processions to altars erected to the new religion. About 20,000 priests resigned and

married. The others, previously outlawed, had either emigrated or had gone underground. However, Robespierre found the worship of reason too close to atheism for comfort and preferred something a little closer to Christianity; therefore in 1793 he instituted his cult of the Supreme Being in order to unite Catholics and Protestants around the same altar. It only had one dogma: the immortality of the soul and only one precept: do your duty as a man. But by 1794 dechristianisation was a spent force and a decree guaranteed free exercise of religion in February of that year. But at the very moment when the Church seemed to be on the verge of making a comeback, the revolution struck at the person of the pope. In 1796 Napoleon conducted a campaign in Italy where he set up a number of republics in Northern Italy on the French style. When one of the papal troops assassinated one of his generals, he had the pope taken prisoner and brought to France where he soon after died (in Valence). In 1799 the army under Napoleon seized control of France. In 1800 he defeated the Austrians at Marengo and became master of Italy. In 1801 he signed a Concordat with the pope. This united the two parties in the French Church but also imposed restrictions:

1. All bishops had to hand in their resignation to the pope; the First Consul had the right to name bishops and the pope had the right to consecrate them.
2. The church would not seek to recover its property. The clergy would be paid by the State.
3. Practice of religion would be limited by whatever police regulations were required for the public order.

By this last order, Napoleon wanted to minimize papal control and use the Church for his own ends as a cohesive force in French politics. The pope was forced to attend his coronation as Emperor of the new phase of the revolution; the Empire. But the pope refused to join

him in his blockade of England. Napoleon seized the papal states and was excommunicated. Napoleon arrested the pope and carried him off to France where he stayed until 1814 when Napoleon was defeated.

**The Congress of Vienna** (1814-15) brought a general peace to Europe after nearly 30 years of war – a peace that lasted 100 years. It disavowed the revolution, restored the old order, put the Bourbons back on the French throne and exiled Napoleon to St. Helena. The pope was restored as absolute monarch of the papal states. But France could never go back to its original state: dechristianization had failed but had given birth to anticlericalism. But the Catholic Church, no longer under the domination of a monarch, increasingly looked to the Vatican for support.

The Revolution had also profoundly transformed the Catholic Church in Germany. Here the Catholic prince bishops lost their feudal princedoms. Under a general organisation, many Catholics found themselves governed by Protestant rulers. Church property was taken over and monasteries dismantled. The Church was reduced to an agency of the State: its schools and clergy were supported by the State.

## **THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA**

**CHURCH AND STATE** In 1503 a split occurred within the Orthodox church following a church council at which there was a dispute between Nilus of Sora and Joseph, abbot of Volokolamsk. It all turned around the extent of the involvement of the Church in the world. The two groups that emerged from the controversy were the Possessors or Josephites (followers of Joseph) and the

Non-Possessors. The Possessors believed that they should own (or possess: hence the name) large estates in order to engage in social work (mostly to provide hospitality and to care for the sick and the poor). The Non-Possessors believed that priority should be given to inner prayer and observance of strict poverty. The Possessors also believed in a close alliance between church and state, whereas the Non-possessors did not. The victory of the Possessors led to a great subservience of the Church to the state, especially during the reign of Ivan IV.

In 1589 the patriarchate of Moscow was founded, taking rank after Jerusalem. Orthodoxy now expanded eastwards as Russia expanded. With this movement came the monasteries that acquired great tracts of agrarian land. Here, almost alone in Christendom, came the revival of the Egyptian and Celtic ideal in wild areas.

**NIKON AND THE OLD BELIEVERS** In the middle of the 17th century an able and aggressive patriarch called **Nikon** wanted to extend the Tsar's leadership over all Orthodox peoples. But to do this he had to persuade the Russians to give up their exclusivism. Closer relationships with the five Eastern patriarchs involved a re-examination of the Russian service books. Careful study showed that at many points the Greeks were right and Russians wrong. Translations had been faulty, mistakes had crept in through careless copying. Nikon therefore proposed a revision of the Russian forms of worship but he was not content with merely textual corrections. He borrowed various Greek forms and altered the ceremonies to bring them into conformity with Greek usage. The result was division: the schism of the Old Believers (or Raskolniki, from *raskol* meaning schism), who split off from the church under the



leadership of the archpriest Avvakum. The word old believer (*starovjery*) really means an adherent of the old rite. They thought that the Antichrist has been let into the Church and that the leading role of Russia had been challenged. Many fled to remote parts like Siberia and Karelia. Nikon was deposed in 1666 and as they thought he had been the Antichrist, they expected the end of the world to come that year. Crops were not sown, people took to the woods, dressed in white, some even laid themselves down in rough coffins to await the end. Nothing happened, and more careful calculations revealed that the end would be in 1699. Peter the Great was now seen to be the Beast because of his sacriligious reforms. But again nothing happened.

The Old Believers became a persecuted minority some of whom burned themselves rather than fall into the hands of their persecutors. It lasted until Peter the Great's Reign. Today there are estimated to be about a million still left.

**THE GROWTH OF SECTARIANISM** During the period marked by the schism, new sects proliferated, some due to foreign influences and some due to indigenous forces. Many Russians sought satisfaction for their religious needs outside the Church which they looked upon as unspiritual. Some turned to mystical protestantism and freemasonry. Many odd sects grew up, such as the *Hlysty* (flagellants), *Skoptsy* (castrates), *Duhobors* (spirit-wrestlers) and *Molokany* (milk eaters). The Molokany were fairly evangelical. They received their nickname from the fact that they refused to keep the fast-days decreed by the Orthodox Church, but ate their curds and cheese as on other days. Their worship was simple: Bible reading, prayer, psalm singing and even the singing of whole chapters of Scripture. The Duhobors on the

other hand were more unorthodox to say the least: they believed in the preexistence and transmigration of souls, the dualism of flesh and spirit and in 'christhood'.

According to this concept, God dwells in the hearts of all true Christians, but Christ is incarnate, generation after generation, in one man of his choice. Accordingly, there arose a dynasty of Christs. The more extreme sects were marked by radical tendencies, both in moral and social practice, which invited persecution and this indeed became their lot.

**THE GROWTH OF STATE CONTROL** The split-off of the Old Believers weakened the churches and enabled **Peter the Great** (1672-1725) to complete the subjection of the church to the state. The patriarch now became an administrator under the Tsar, so that the church virtually became a department of state. In 1721, Peter who always looked westward for his inspiration, established a body similar to what the Lutherans called a consistory (governing board) and gave it the task of governing the church under the crown. This became known as the Holy Synod and was a sort of prototype of the Ministry of Cults or Religious Affairs. It governed the Russian church until 1917.

Peter the Great's reign was followed by the reigns of a series of enlightened despots. They became increasingly irritated by the church, and the intelligentsia increasingly alienated from it. The rites of the countryside contrasted strangely with the superficial deism which was increasingly characteristic of the educated layman who called the priests 'ploughmen in cassocks'.

The **empress Anne** (1730-40) openly despised the Orthodox and treated the clergy with more contempt than any Tsar before or after her.

**Catherine II the Great** (1762-96) also had little sympathy with the Russian church, for she was a German deist. Although she converted from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy, she continued Peter the Great's policy of westernization. She became enamoured with the ideals of the Enlightenment but when this produced the French Revolution, she went back on her liberalizing policies and reverted to traditional Russian and Asiatic autocracy. At least she emancipated the aristocracy but not the serfs. Under her patronising but contemptuous despotism, the church even began to show signs of renewed vigour. In 1764 she carried out a sweeping secularisation of monastic estates, using the funds for the State and the education of the clergy.

It was during her reign that the first Mennonites came to Russia (in 1788) in response to invitations for settlers from Western Europe. They were offered full religious freedom and freedom from military conscription. In the course of the next century some 50 colonies were established, first in the Ukraine, then along the Volga and finally in the Urals and in Western Siberia. But in the 19th century emigration to USA began when their previous status was revoked, especially with reference to conscription.

Theological academies were founded in St. Petersburg, Kiev and Kazan, after that of Moscow. Now, instead of the Latin scholasticism that had been introduced by **Peter Mogila** (1596-1647), there was now a return to the native sources of Orthodox theology in the patristic tradition.

## THE CHURCH IN GERMANY

## The Rise of State Control

After the close of the Thirty Years War in 1648 we see the growth of State control of the churches in Prussia. This trend was to eventually lead to the secular State that claimed to replace the church in men's allegiance (cf. Hitler's Germany).

In 1539 Joachim Hektor introduced the Reformation into Prussia.

In 1608 Johann Sigismund became a Calvinist but refused to force his religion on his Lutheran subjects, who resented Calvinism. A Lutheran crowd in Berlin said: "You damned black Calvinist, you have stolen our pictures and destroyed our crucifixes: now we will get even with you and your Calvinist priests!"

Friedrich I developed the idea of a tolerant Christian State. During his reign (1640-88) Huguenot refugees were welcomed from France and Salzburg. His wife invited Leibnitz to Berlin to lecture and the university of Halle was founded which became a springboard for the pietist expansion under Spener.

Friedrich Wilhelm brought this happy period to an end. He held that all religions were equally valid and that the State must therefore fill the vacuum and become all important. He tried to dictate the pattern of Lutheran worship and the subjects of Calvinist sermons. He tried in vain to unite Reformed and Lutherans. Catholics were tolerated. But Christian vocabulary became secularized and politicized.

Frederick II (the Great) was the first confessed non-Christian on the throne. The state system was further tightened and the church became a cog in the bureaucratic machinery of a secular state. His policy was dictated by his personal views: all faiths were equally spurious, yet military considerations and economic

livelihood made them expedient. The church was useful because it inspired such qualities as integrity, loyalty, submission and obedience. In the long run, however, his policy led, not to tolerance but to the replacement of the church by the State. Two events which influenced this development were:

a) The Thirty Years War (1618-48) which made people cynical of religion in general.

b) The Rise of Enlightenment under such men as Voltaire.

The Enlightenment led to a stultifying of spiritual life but also to a rise in the educational level of pastors. Many student pastors started off as tutors (cf. Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schleiermacher). Because they were the most intelligent men in the community, they represented the State, which further tied their hands. But there were many devout and learned men in Protestant parsonages in Germany at the time. However, sermons tended to be a show of learning with little spiritual food at all (cf. the example of the sermon on the text "even the hairs of your head are numbered" – a) origin, style, form and natural position of our hair, b) the correct care of the hair, c) reminiscences, reminders, warning and comfort derived from the hair, d) how to care for the hair in a good Christian fashion and to make use of it.

### **The Rise of Pietism**

The universities were still fettered by ancient patterns of thought. Literature was moribund and science was suspect. Fear of witchcraft still obsessed the minds of the peasants. Anti-semitism was widespread. Under such circumstances, Pietism was born. It was a reaction against the 30 years war. It was also the protest of a living faith against a lifeless and unbending orthodoxy,

which was what second-generation Lutheranism had become. Lutheranism, while stressing justification, had had little to say about sanctification. They wanted to return to the original Luther but also explore some of the areas he had neglected. It was the Lutheran equivalent of the Anglican evangelicals. Like every revolutionary movement of the spirit, it had its precursors and pioneers. The hymns of Paul Gerhardt, works of popular devotion like Arndt's *True Christianity*, the graphic and realistic preaching of men like Schupp and Grossgebauer had kept alive a strain of genuine Lutheran piety. Among the great hymnwriters Paul Gerhardt was Lutheran, Joachim Neander Calvinist, and Gerhardt Tersteegen Pietist

The influence of the great German mystics was also important. The man chiefly responsible for the rise of pietism was **P.J. Spener** (d.1705). In 1675 he published his *Pia desideria* (Holy Desires), which attacked existing evils in the church. Basing himself on Luther, he appealed for a revival in personal religion. He majored in an area that Luther had neglected in his preoccupation with justification – that is sanctification. He held that if a man were truly converted, doctrinal differences were relatively unimportant. In 1694 the university of Halle was founded, which became a centre for the new movement. Many students passed through the theological faculty each year and the university was also the training ground for officials of the Prussian state. Under **Franke**, his successor, the Bible was restored to the central place of devotion and much philanthropic work was started. He translated the *Spiritual Guide* by Molinos, thus revealing a link between quietism and pietism. The Pietists were also pioneers in promoting Protestant missionary work, first to South India and S. America. **Bengel**, the noted biblical scholar, gave the movement more balance,

combining emotionalism and thought, individual conversion and corporate responsibility.

Spener had a particular interest in eschatology. He became convinced that the prophecies of the book of Revelation were being fulfilled in his day, and that the end was near. He believed that the conversion of the Jews would herald the return of Christ, but unfortunately the Jews did not oblige. Since his predictions did not come true, his enemies would argue that, having erred on that point, he was probably mistaken on others as well.

Unfortunately pietism did not retain Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, but rather reverted to an Augustinian (and pre-reformation) doctrine of justification (which confused sanctification with it) and an unhealthy stress on feelings and religious experiences subsequent to justification. This opened the door to Wesley's second blessing doctrine.

In the area of church music, Schmolck and Neumeister became chaplains of the older conservative lutheranism. They spoke out against the "novelties" of the Pietists and Moravians.

Thereafter a decline in congregational singing set in, due to the pietist movement as well as secular influences.

Into this unpromising situation stepped J.S.Bach. Spitta says that "pietism had finished off good church music.", so that when JS Bach came, he had little to work with.

In the later phase of pietism, the outstanding figure was **Count von Zinzendorf**. He was a man of ardently emotional temperament. He believed that the mark of

true Christianity was a simple and childlike faith: it is enough to believe in the power of the blood of Jesus and to trust wholly in the merits of the Lamb of God. In vivid, almost erotic imagery he described the relationship of the soul to Christ.

Zinzendorf came from an Austrian aristocratic family. Through his grandmother he came into contact with the pietist teachings of Franke. He came to the conviction that he could not conceive of Christianity except in terms of fellowship. But how? The turning point came when in 1722 he offered asylum in his estates to Moravian refugees driven from what is now the Czech Republic (but then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire) by religious persecution. Anabaptists, charismatics and other sectarians sought refuge on his estates, and soon tensions grew up between the various groups. The miracle occurred on 17th August 1727 when during an evening celebration of the Lord's Supper, revival broke out and they became brothers united in the love of Christ shed abroad in a new way. The great revival at Herrnhut was accompanied by prophecies, visions, glossalalia, and healings. A faction were modalistic monarchians which also insisted on baptizing in the shorter non-Trinitarian formula. Kruger's introduction of deviant Christological teaching was claimed by him to be the only teaching of the godhead that the Jews would ever accept. Thus the community at Herrnhut (previously Hutberg) became the centre of a new and dynamic phase of the Pietist movement. The distinguishing mark of their life was its combination of intense personal experience with a deep sense of corporate fellowship. At Herrnhut, the importance of personal experience was strongly emphasized, but eccentricity was controlled by the disciplines of community life. In time it evolved into a



separate denomination – the renewed Church of the Brethren, but Zinzendorf made no attempt to organise schism. Gradually the more exuberant type of emotional imagery was subdued. Herrnhut played a notable part in the expansion of missionary work, which established missions in every part of the world. Zinzendorf has been called the greatest German evangelical since Luther.

The modern Moravian church still draws heavily on traditions established during the 18th century renewal. It observes the convention of the love feast, originally started in 1727, and continues to use older and traditional music in worship. In addition, many Moravians are buried in a traditional God's Acre, a graveyard organized by gender, age, and marital status rather than family. It also uses the *Losungen* or Watchwords, a collection of devotional texts for everyday piety.

The main emphasis of this revival movement was on conversion and regeneration, and the subsequent battle between good and evil in the believer. There was much morbid introspection and a disparagement of "theology": the dogmatic theologian and the rationalist free-thinker were singled out for attack. Zinzendorf had said: "He who wishes to comprehend God with his mind, becomes an atheist". The big weakness of pietism was that it gave no intellectual answers, it had no apologetic, which created a dangerous vacuum in Christianity which 19th century rationalism filled. Beside its religious influence, Pietism was nationalistic in character and so gave a boost to new German literature. It resisted state control and so gave a boost to individualism and the Romantic movement in literature. Pietists condemned French culture and helped to overcome class distinctions. Pietism also broke the

Protestant religious stalemate between states and facilitated unity.

**The Moravian Mission:** The Pietist movement led to remarkable missionary expansion. The first missions, at the beginning of the 18th century, were focussed on British colonists, Indians and negroes in North America and the Caribbean. At about the same time (1705) the Danish-Halle mission was founded by Pietists at Halle, who responded to an appeal from the king of Denmark. Two missionaries arrived in India but were met with opposition on all sides. They concentrated on educating local children, translated the Bible into the local language, preaching a Gospel of personal conversion and training a local clergy. All these were later to become hallmarks of evangelical Protestant missions.

In 1714 a missionary college was established in Copenhagen. This guaranteed missionaries official Danish sanction and support in further areas. A missionary colony was started in Greenland in 1722. Other missionaries went to the West Indies. By 1800 Halle had contributed about 60 people to the Danish-Halle enterprise. The English also became involved as Boehme persuaded the SPCK (Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge) to support Danish Halle missionaries in British holdings in India, where they ministered to British troops. The most significant part of this movement was the work of the Moravians. By 1740 Moravians had reached the Virgin Islands, Greenland, Surinam, the Gold Coast, North America and South Africa. Hundreds of their missionaries were sent out in the 18th century. Wesley's encounter with such missionaries was to transform his ministry. In England and the American colonies the awakenings created

missionary enterprise: in 1741 the Scottish SPCK sent Horton and Brainerd to work among the American Indians. Brainerd's diaries and journals later inspired such missionaries as William Carey and Henry Martyn. The Moravian missions served as a pattern for the missionary advance of the 19th century.

There had been previous missionary interest, centering chiefly on the plight of the Red Indians in America. The Pilgrim Fathers and their immediate successors had had the Red Indians on their hearts. Cromwell was also interested as they had been the first heathen to become British subjects. Gustavus Adolphus had sent a missionary to Lapland, in 1550. Calvin had hoped to start a Gospel work in Brazil. In 1620 the king of Denmark urged his chaplains to preach the Gospel to Hindus. Hans Egede, a Norwegian pastor, went to the Eskimos.

## **METHODISM AND THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL**

The Hanoverian Church of England had many weaknesses: failure to provide adequate pastoral care, the inflexibility of its parish system, and its neglect of the new towns. God's answer to this was to send the Great Awakening. However it must be born in mind that what later became known as methodism was only part of a larger "great awakening". There was also the Moravian mission led by Ingham and Cennik. There was the Calvinistic mission led by Whitefield. There was the movement within the Church of England which eventually spawned the Evangelicals within that church.

**John and Charles Wesley** founded the Holy Club at Oxford, of which Whitefield was also a member. At this

period they were largely under the influence of the high-churchman William Law who had written the religious classic *A Serious Call to a devout and Holy Life*. (1729). In fact Oxford was a bastion of the High Church party of the Church of England and Wesley remained a High Churchman all his life. They and a few others were united on the principles of 'be good and do good'. Most, if not all, of them were totally ignorant of the way of salvation – faith in the atoning work of Christ. When Wesley was finally converted, he not only maintained his High Church emphasis on personal holiness, but also sought to spread the Gospel by all means, which was novel for a High Churchman

John was an academic until 30, a lecturer at Oxford University and ordained into the Anglican Church. In 1734 he set out for the newly founded American colony of Georgia, in order to engage in a mission to the Indians. The Georgia episode proved to be a fiasco. John discovered that the noble American savages were "gluttons, thieves, liars and murderers". Moreover his white colonists deeply resented his rigid high-church ways, his refusal to conduct the funeral of a non-conformist, and his prohibition of ladies's fancy dresses and gold jewelry.

John's frustrations were compounded by his pitiful love-affair with Sophie Hopkey, the 18-year old niece of Savannah's chief magistrate. Wesley was so mixed up emotionally and spiritually that he did not know his own mind. Sophie finally resolved the affair by eloping with John's rival. John, the jilted lover, then barred her from the Lord's Table and her furious husband sued him for defaming Sophie's character. The trial dragged on and, after six months of harassment, Wesley fled the colony in disgust.

On his way back he came into contact with Moravian missionaries – a contact which convinced him that he was not really born again. There is some confusion as to when he was actually converted. Even after his experience at a Moravian mission hall in London, he still did not have the assurance of salvation. John was by temperament very emotional and the Moravians with whom he consulted were very subjective in their doctrines and did not have a firm grip on the reformation doctrine of justification by faith. It is from them that he claims to have got the doctrine of sinless perfectionism resulting from an emotional experience. Wesley, in a desperate search for the assurance of salvation, next visited the Herrnhut community in Germany, but again to no avail. Besides, he was put off by the personality cult that had grown up around the person of Zinzendorf. He finally concluded he had found it when he began to see results in his open-air preaching ministry. He had begun to preach in churches but as most churches closed their doors to him, he had to resort to open-air meetings, undertaking long itineraries all over England, as is recorded in his famous Journal. Someone has rather unkindly said of Wesley that “his restless journeyings were eventually to wreck a marriage already ill-chosen when he entered it in 1751 and were also to prove a welcome escape from that mistake.” (Rack *Reasonable Enthusiast*). He especially concentrated on towns and industrial centres, in particular London and Bristol. Thousands were converted. But Wesley became chiefly noted for the very tight organisation he left behind, from which Methodism gets its name. Converted people left behind by Wesley were exhorted to meet once or twice in a week, in order to reprove, instruct and exhort each other. They met in groups of twelve which were called “classes” (i.e. divisions). Each class had a leader who

exercised oversight and collected "class money". The first class was founded in Bristol in 1742. Neighbouring societies were formed into circuits or rounds. Quarterly meetings were added in due course, and when districts were set up, the system was complete. A superintendent oversaw each district. There was overwhelming lay participation and lay financial involvement. The life of the believer was regimented down to the last degree: each member had to report his victories and defeats and his way of life was subject to searching scrutiny. Advancement in responsibility meant increased discipline. The penalty for failure was expulsion.

Wesley constantly visited the poor and even begged for them. He pushed for social reform. Many have claimed that Methodist revival saved England from a French Revolution. During Wesley's lifetime, Methodism remained a movement within the Church of England, though not in America, but in 1795, 4 years after his death, the break came with the church. Many within the Anglican Church were for Wesley but some were against him, like Bishop Butler who said: "Sir, this pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Spirit is a horrid thing – a very horrid thing". But Bishop Loath said: "Mr. Wesley, may I be found sitting at your feet in the next world": A man called Asbury brought Methodism to the USA, where superintendents became known as bishops. Methodists there remained true to the English crown during the American War of Independence.

Wesley's High Church position led him to reject predestination and to affirm humanity's universal potential for acceptance by God. Sheer vitriol characterised the debate between Calvinists and Arminians during the 18th century. Toplady (a well-known Calvinist, today known as the writer of several hymns) called John Wesley "a tadpole (i.e a nobody) in divinity".

Wesley called Toplady "the rancorous hater of the Gospel system" (i.e. evangelism).

However, Methodism remained a religion for the popular classes in England. Methodists made no impact on high society. William Wilberforce, a young member of Parliament, thanked God that he had not become 'a bigoted, despised Methodist'. It was left to the evangelical movement within the Anglican church, led by Whitefield, to evangelise the upper classes. Wesley's legacy was a church within a church with a membership of some 79,000 members in the UK and 40,000 in the USA belonging to what had become a separate church (before his death) with its own bishops.

Wesley also had some decidedly strange views on some crucial topics. At times he wobbled over the doctrine of justification by faith alone. According to him, the once and for all acceptance with God removed the motive for holy living. He also went too far in his teaching on Christian perfectionism. In all this, however, he had good intentions. He was a great evangelist but not a brilliant theologian.

This theological weakness many partially explain the spectacular decline of Methodism in the 20th century. When faith and discipline are seen as the essential ingredients of Methodist piety, there is no mystery about its collapse.

Methodism's departure from reliance on Scripture, its rejection of substitutionary atonement, and its rejection of dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit are lamentable. Men like Weatherhead and Sangster were actually men who undermined Methodism.

**George Whitefield** had been converted 3 years before Wesley, at Oxford. It was he that pioneered open-air preaching. At Bristol it was said that he had driven 13

people mad. He was a Calvinist, unlike Wesley, and a better orator. He was involved in the Scottish revival and the Great Awakening in America. In Wales, Howel Harris cooperated with Whitefield. There, preaching was in Welsh. Daniel Rowland was assisted by hymn writer William Williams. This religious revival had been preceded by a literacy drive that had led many to read the Bible in Welsh for themselves for the first time. In England, Isaac Watts made a breakthrough by composing hymns, in order to draw on material in the NT thus far denied to the worshipping public who only sung the Psalms. This breakthrough occurred with the advent of Isaac Watts. It was threefold:

1. The Psalms were re-written according to NT concepts. see "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun..." (Psalm 72). He thereby christianized the Psalms.
2. He wanted freedom to paraphrase the biblical material. In fact he produced a book containing paraphrases of all the psalms.
3. He wanted the hymns to reflect the thoughts and feelings of those who sang, and not those of the OT Psalmist.

In 1736 Whitefield visited Georgia where he founded an orphanage and engaged in many preaching tours. After each of his sermons, he would often take up an offering for this orphanage. He divided his time between England and America: everywhere he preached revival broke out. His diary reads like a repeat of the Acts of the Apostles. He was not only an incredible preacher but also a tireless personal worker. In England he had the support of the Countess of Huntingdon who built chapels for Whitefield's converts. This eventually led to a separate denomination called the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, which was eventually incorporated into the Congregational Church. Thanks to



the Countess of Huntingdon, Whitefield was able to preach to the aristocracy, some of whom came to faith. Later many clergymen from the Church of England were converted and constituted a new evangelical party.

John had a famous brother, Charles Wesley, who wrote many famous hymns. Charles' conversion seemed much more clear-cut. Although for a time Charles supported John in his separation from Whitefield, gradually Charles moved closer to Whitefield in his theology and at one point considered joining Whitefield, but Whitefield advised Charles to stay with John.

We must not forget that Whitefield was initially at least an Anglican and so dissenters were wary of him.

Anglican Evangelicals later founded the Clapham Sect, which grew out of the same revival movement. William Wilberforce who attended Whitefield's church and had a close relationship with John Newton, an ex-slave-trader, led a campaign for the abolition of slavery. Evangelicals founded the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), the British and Foreign Bible Society and Religious Tract Society.

The Baptists founded the Baptist Missionary Society sent out such famous men as Carey, Henry Martyn and from USA, Adoniram Judson of Burma.

At about the same time, a similar revival was taking place in America and there was much contact between the two continents on this issue. Originally it was not one movement, but pockets of revival appeared in Northampton, Mass, where the preaching of **Jonathan**

**Edwards** deeply stirred the whole community. One peculiarity of Edwards' preaching was his post-millennialism – what better place to establish the millenium than America, which could free itself from sinful and hidebound Europe? In New Jersey, Freylinghausen achieved remarkable results, and so did Gilbert Tennent in Pennsylvania. These various strains were drawn together by George Whitefield. Churches recorded phenomenal growth. Presbyterians and Baptists expanded rapidly, as did the new Methodists which were to become one of the largest groups in the country. Previously dormant Christians reached out to the uncommitted, giving impetus to Indian missions (cf. David Brainerd). There arose a growing group opposed to slavery. The revival also resulted in splits in denominations between those for and those against it. This is the beginning of American revivalism which came about when two streams coalesced: the pietist movement as embodied by Freylinghausen and the patterns that had grown up with the Scottish community in Northern Ireland characterised by large open-air conventions and eucharists called Holy Fairs. Prior to the arrival of Whitefield or methodism, revivalism had been centered on Dutch, Scottish or German congregations, not English ones.

In spite of these revivals, elite educational establishments tended to produce deists and heirs of the Enlightenment, some from nominal Anglican backgrounds. It was these people who framed the US constitution, which does not even mention God or Christianity.

## **THEOLOGY IN GERMANY IN THE 19th CENT**

It is most important to understand the philosophical background of 19th century theology, because this was such an important influence. If deism had exaggerated the transcendence of God, liberalism exaggerated his immanence and thus blurred the difference between God and man, heaven and hell, revelation and natural religion. Objectivism was replaced by subjectivism and the Bible by religious experience.

**Kant** (1724-1804) attacked the basis of rational argument. According to him, knowledge is based on appearances which we observe (phenomena) and not on the things in themselves, so one cannot have a rational metaphysics or a rational theology. He claimed that there is no such thing as empirical ideas, but there are fundamental structures in the mind (categories) into which all sense data is slotted. These are: time, space, causality, existence, substance etc. They are not perceived through our senses but they are structures that our mind has to use in order to enable the mind to make sense of them. Therefore traditional arguments for God are of no use. What he virtually said is that you cannot be certain of what you see. Only innate ideas are a reliable guide. The most clear innate idea is that of a sense of unconditional moral obligation, life after death and a system of rewards and punishments. This only makes sense if belief in God, freedom and immortality is postulated. He stressed moral consciousness whereas Schleiermacher emphasized religious consciousness.

**Hegel** (1770-1831) presented a reconstruction of theology that was based on a quite different plan. He was also an idealist, but he rejected Kant's account of reality. According to him, if things in themselves are unknowable, we have no means of knowing this. No,

everything is knowable by the spirit of man, for the universe is to be explained in terms of the working out of a rational principle (the Absolute idea). According to him, the reasoning process in the mind (highest product of evolution) works as follows: we pose an idea, examine it so as to surpass it or deny it in favour of another, and finally reach a third idea which includes whatever was of value in the two previous ones. This rational principle which he called the dialectic lie at the heart of the construction of the universe. Nature and history are an evolving process, through which the spirit is realising itself. It becomes self-conscious only in man. The rational spirit, in order to develop, goes through the interaction of contradictions, to end up by being reconciled. Only philosophers can understand this 'mystery' – religion represents the same thing but simplified and in picture form to explain itself to the masses.

From this summary of his philosophy we can detect the following points.

- 1) Hegel was a pantheist. In fact his philosophy is really a revival of aristotelianism. The danger of this point of view for theology is that we end up with a dualism: good and evil have always been there and they are both really two sides of the same coin. This is pure gnosticism and contradicts the biblical view which sees evil as an abnormal intruder into the world, which is destined in the end to be destroyed. This influence can be detected in the theology of Karl Barth.

- 2) His philosophy reduces God to an impersonal force. This is not the God of the Bible. This served to confirm Lutherans in their Christomonism: that only in Christ has God revealed himself. Under the impact of hegelianism, in time Christ came to be seen as the supreme example of the manifestation of the divine spirit in man. Natural theology was surrendered to the philosophers.

3) His idea of the dialectic allows him to reconcile theological opposites. For him there is no concept of right or wrong but only of what is partial or incomplete because each development in history is but a stage in the progress of the dialectic towards the perfect synthesis. A man can be both saved and damned, for instance. This explains the universalism of Karl Barth. It also encourages an evolutionary view of Scripture based on conflict and the reconciliation of opposites like faith and works. This was the basis of much liberal criticism of the Bible.

Hegel really has a cheek to say that Christianity is nothing less than a simplified version of his own philosophy. Unfortunately many people believed him because they saw his philosophy as the respectable man's way out of the dilemma of rational critique versus the supernatural in the Bible. In other words, the theological aspect of Hegel's philosophy was yet another defence mechanism designed to circumvent the rising tide of rationalism. It marks a further retreat from the biblical revelation. Karl Marx was one of those who saw through this subterfuge. Most theological critics henceforth approached the Bible as convinced Hegelians and then tried to find a pattern which fitted in with these preconceptions. In other words, much of 19th century theology is a Hegelian reading of the Bible.

Hegel had an enormous influence on the 19th century. He is the philosophical apologetic for the romantic movement in literature and for the later theory of evolution. In fact, it is doubtful whether Darwinism could have had the success that it did, had not Hegel's philosophy preconditioned men's minds to think in an evolutionistic way. Darwinism went on to spawn racism and ultimately nazism and the holocaust.

It was in Germany alone during this period that there was a great blossoming of theology which radiated out from Berlin. It was here that **Schleiermacher** (1763-1834) was at work. He made a bold attempt to recover for religion the position that it had lost in the intellectual world, but in so doing he succeeded in watering down Christianity even more. In particular he wanted to reach a generation which had been heavily influenced by the Romantic movement. He wanted to vindicate Christianity from the charge of the Romantics of his day that it was little more than dead orthodoxy and stifling moralism. He came from a pietistic background. For him, religion was man's feeling of dependence which is a God-given awareness (i.e. intuition). Though it forms the basis of all religions, what distinguishes Christianity is the idea of redemption. The essential thing about Christ was not his teaching or the fulfillment of prophecy or miracles, but his perfect God-consciousness "which was a veritable existence of God in Him". He is the one perfect revelation of God in the human race. His work as redeemer consists in imparting to others the strength of his consciousness of God. Sin is the antithesis or incompleteness of the consciousness of God. Here he confuses sin with the results of sin. Heaven and hell "cannot be clearly understood." The concept of immortality is called in question. Unlike many German theologians, he attached importance to the Church's autonomy and freedom from control by the State. He became the primary source for all future liberal theology. Schleiermacher had continued where Kant had left off.

**Strauß and Baur:** Two of the most ardent followers of Hegel were D. F. Strauß (1808-74) and F.C. Baur (1792-1860), but Albert Ritschl (1822-89) reacted vigorously against his master.

**Strauß:** in 1835 he published his *Life of Jesus*. Interpreting Christianity in terms of Hegelianism, Christ stood for an idea (the fulfillment of history – the final reconciliation of all previous contradictions). The life of Christ was a myth, that is concretisation and embellishment by the Christian community of ideas that Jesus had propounded during his lifetime. Jesus was seen as a purely human person who came to believe himself to be the Messiah, and who made so profound an impression on his followers that their myth-making imagination transformed him into the divine and supernatural Christ.

In this way, Strauß sought to avoid the argument between conservatives and liberals regarding the historicity or not of the Gospel accounts. This once again represents a further retreat before the tide of destructive historical criticism.

**Bauer** saw that Strauß had only criticised the Gospel history without any proper criticism of the Gospels themselves. He therefore set out to discover how the NT had arisen and been composed. His Hegelian dialectic led him to see that it had been the product of conflict between the judaists and the universalists. This is seen in the antitheses found in Galatians, Romans, I + II Corinthians – grace and law, faith and works, spirit and letter of the Law. The more the documents reflect this antithesis, the older they were. According to him, not until 150 did the Early Church arrive at a final synthesis which was Pauline (universal) and Petrine (new law, new priesthood, new ritual). The culmination of the synthesis is reached in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus is identified with the Logos of Greek philosophy. It was to fit into this scheme of things that a late date was consistently

postulated for most NT documents: time had to be allowed for the dialectic to do its work.

Both Strauß and Bauer saw Christianity not as the outcome of particular concrete events, but as part of an ideal, evolutionary process, and their handling of the historical data seems to have been controlled by their philosophical presuppositions. They turned Christianity into a myth (i.e. a collection of true ideas but couched in picture language), as the Greeks had always sought to do in the first centuries of the Church's history. This was later to become the starting point for Bultmann and his demythologization.

Other theologians, especially **the Tübingen school of theology**, following Strauss, directed their attention to the Old Testament. The documentary theory was elaborated whereby the Pentateuch was divided up into at least four different sources or documents, all thought to have originated at different times several centuries after Moses, the traditional author. This became known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

The influence of Herder was plainly seen when liberal theologians began to maintain that the Jewish religion was simply one natural religion among others with its own myths and folklore, and with Jahve as a regional and purely national deity.

**Ritschl** (1822-89) reacted violently against these points of view. He was the son of a bishop in the Lutheran Church and professor at Bonn and Göttingen. His views were as follows:

a) He insisted on separating theology from philosophy which had forced divine revelation into the mould of alien intellectual systems. He accepted Kant's account of



reality, but he held that things in themselves can only be known through their action up on us and through our response to them (cf. existentialism). According to Ritschl, Christianity is about values, morality and living here and now for God, rather than pie in the sky when you die. God reveals himself in his personal impact upon man (cf. the Acts of God), of which the Bible is a human commentary. Christianity is not a matter of intellectual assent to arguments, but of a response of person to person, in which the will plays a larger part than the intellect. This seemed to give Christianity a much needed niche (as the God of the gaps) in an age when it seemed to have been discredited by philosophical criticism or by scientific discovery.

b) Christianity is about value-judgements of man by contact with objects that evoke in him feelings of pleasure or pain, of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This is the sort of description that we come across in the Bible. It is a (fallible) record of man's experience of the supernatural.

c) The Jesus of history. Christianity owed nothing to any other religion or philosophy. The accounts of the NT were trustworthy, though couched in non-scientific language. All the same, faith in Christ was for him a value-judgement, not an inference from the study of history. The historical facts become the revelations of God to every believer, in so far as Jesus appears to him, lays hold of him and sets him free, enabling him to share in divine lordship for the world. This is illumination (not regeneration).

d) The kingdom of God is seen as ethical rather than eschatological. He opposed mysticism and asserted that God had redeemed us to belong to a community that was active in good works. It was such teaching that gave rise to the Social Gospel movement, led especially by the

American theologian Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918). This movement saw the central task of the Church as the transformation of society, to bring it into conformity with God's kingdom. This is today reappearing in evangelical guise: preference for social concern as opposed to evangelism: the building of God's kingdom now (cf. restorationist theology).

All this is once again, an attempt to state Christianity in terms that would avoid a collision with the natural sciences. Doctrinally, Ritschl's view had many weak points:

a) His view of Christ is really that of Paul of Samosata (dynamic monarchianism) – an impersonal power, God, was supremely at work in the man Jesus. Jesus becomes God for us by his work, which is inspired by God.

b) His view of sin is defective – it is seen as a sensation of our conduct (i.e. conscience, not objective guilt).

c) His view of the atonement naturally follows on from this. According to Ritschl, the death of Jesus is not a propitiation for sin – its value lies in its power to awaken faith in God's love and so to end the alienation from our side. Here Ritschl is talking about reaction or feelings to an event (i.e. result), not about objective guilt or objective pardon (that kind of knowledge is hidden to us).

**Kierkegaard** (1813-1855) Another person who reacted very violently to Hegel was Kierkegaard. Hegelianised Christianity as he saw it entrenched in Denmark was a stultifying force that had been deprived of all its personal categories and vigour. He particularly objected to its account of sin as temporary imperfection inevitable in the evolutionary process. According to

Kierkegaard, there is no intellectual proof of Christianity. For instance it is impossible for the intellect to accept the fact of the incarnation. It is a contradiction that can only be accepted by a "leap of faith". With his emphasis on contradictions he is very close to Pascal, but he lacks the apologetic element. He was concerned to knock away the props that man has erected, so that he has to trust in God alone. He asserted the freedom and dignity of the individual in reaction to the Hegelian system which saw him as a cog in a machine or the number of a church pew.

Kierkegaard can be called the father of both Christian and secular existentialism. He became one of the greatest philosophical influences of the 20th century. His main ideas are as follows: There is an infinite gulf which can only be bridged by God Himself, by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. But this was still a veiled revelation, only discernable by those who had faith. Mere historical knowledge of Jesus is of little value; the vital thing is to meet Him personally. This can only be done by the jump of faith, which is a leap in the dark.

Kierkegaard influenced the early Barth who adopted the idea of veiled revelation and divine incognito. His ideas have also proved congenial to those like Bultmann who were extremely sceptical about our ability to know about the historical figure of Jesus. Although Kierkegaard had no difficulty in accepting the Gospel accounts, others who adopted his outlook were suffering from a heavy liberal hangover.

In many ways Kierkegaard's views were a reaction and a healthy corrective to the lifeless orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church, but if his ideas are taken as dogma, this can lead to error. It is true that there is an infinite gulf between a Holy God and sinful man, but we must remember that this gulf has been spanned by Jesus

Christ in a historical and objective setting. We must also remember that man is still made in the image of God, although this image has been deformed by sin. Kierkegaard almost seems to imply that man is sinful because he is created and finite. It is true that a mere historical knowledge of Jesus does not guarantee faith, but faith is nevertheless based on both a historical person (and what he did in history = the cross and resurrection) and a person who is alive today. The historical aspect cannot be ignored.

### **Evangelical Christians in Germany**

But was there anything positive going on in Germany in the 19th century? There was for instance E.W. Hengstenberg, professor of Theology at Berlin from 1828-1869 who managed to escape the pernicious influence of rationalism and wrote some sound Bible commentaries and other theological books. Another theologian, J.K.F. Keil, came under his influence and also wrote good commentaries on the Old Testament.

The 19th century also saw the launching of the Baptist movement in Germany through a man called **Oncken**. Although from a dead Lutheran background, he was led to an evangelical position through his contact with Christians in Scotland. He then went back to Hamburg where he became a preacher of the Gospel. Under the influence of Haldane he became a Baptist and in 1867 built the first Baptist chapel, in Hamburg, in spite of much opposition from the town authorities. Through him, the Gospel gained a new lease of life in Germany, but there was also much opposition, chiefly from the established Lutheran Church which opposed the Baptists on two main points, a) infant baptism, b) payment of church taxes.

The Baptist faith spread to Eastern Europe mainly through the German minorities there and the work of the British and Foreign Bible Societies whose representatives in those days were real evangelists. Germans that had been won to the faith then spread it to the nationals with whom they came in contact. Finally, when the Germans had to leave, chiefly at the end of World War II, the national Baptist church had to stand on its own two feet. In Romania and Russia it made rapid progress whereas in Hungary and Yugoslavia less so because of past national ill-feeling.

## **THE CHURCH IN 19th CENTURY ENGLAND**

During this period a number of important developments took place. These were:

- a) the growth of the High Church movement within the Anglican Church,
- b) the growth of liberalism,
- c) the growth of Christian Socialism,
- d) the science and faith debate.

The consequence of the French revolution was to stiffen conservatism and postpone any effort to reform church or state. As far as the Church of England was concerned, there were no political or intellectual upheavals during the first quarter of the century. For instance, legislation against slavery was delayed. The Church of England was divided into several parties: a) the High Churchmen which basically were Anglo-Catholics. b) The Evangelicals, heirs of the Reformation and Evangelical revival, and c) the Liberals.

As a result of the French Revolution, many French Catholics had sought asylum in Britain and in 1829 the Catholic Emancipation Act allowed Catholics to worship

freely. Full civil rights for Jews were not granted until 1866.

**Evangelicals:** The foremost name associated with the Evangelicals of the time was Charles Simeon (1759-1836) whose influence radiated out from Cambridge. Other manifestations of the same churchmanship were the Clapham Sect (Venn, Thornton, Wilberforce, Mauley, Stephen). They were conservative and disciplined, aware of their accountability before God for the use of their gifts and time. They consecrated themselves to good works and noble causes, and above all to the abolition of the slave trade which was subsequently achieved by Wilberforce. The Evangelicals were also responsible for the formation of various societies such as the British and Foreign Bible Society.

**High Church:** In 1830 the Whigs came to power and embarked upon a programme of Reform. They represented Middle Class power. When the next Tory government came to power recommendations for the reform of the Church of England were made in 1835-6. The Oxford Movement arose as a protest against the reform of Holy Church by sacrilegious pagans. It was also seen as an attempt to prevent Anglicans from going over to Catholicism, in the wake of the act of emancipation of the Catholic Church. The leaders of the movement were John Keble, Newman and Froude. They were also called the Tractarians because they wrote a series entitled *Tracts for the Times*, which were written on articles of the Creed, and addressed to educated minds. They tried to reassert the mystery and dignity of the Church. However, it was not until 1845 that the movement became concerned with reaching out to the

poor. In 1845 Newman left them to join the Roman Catholic Church and the movement came to an end.

**Liberals:** The seeds of doubt which had been sown by the rationalists of the 17th century and which were nurtured by the sceptics and deists of the 18th century came to full flower in the 19th century. The whole fabric of Christianity was called in question. Science, philosophy and history were all called upon to show that the Christian faith no longer had a leg to stand on. The Christian faith found itself challenged from 3 directions: from science in the shape of the theory of evolution, from philosophy in the form of alternative world views intended to make belief in God obsolete, and from history in the guise of biblical criticism. If the truth of the Bible could be shown to be doubtful, then there would be nothing left on which the Christian faith could stand.

The 19th century marked an ever increasing erosion of the faith by liberalism which spread from Germany. Coleridge and Maurice were two important precursors in this respect. In 1860 a volume entitled *Essays and Reviews* was issued, to which there were seven contributors (Temple, Williams, Baden Powell, Wilson etc). These essays served to introduce German critical scholarship into England. Objectors who saw the drift of these arguments, protested that the contributors should not be allowed to stay in a Church, with which they no longer agreed.

Later, in 1866, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort saw fit to advocate a middle way between *Essays and Reviews* and traditionalism. However, not one of them answered OT criticism, for they were all essentially NT scholars. Westcott approached the subject, having dismissed prophecy and miracles as being of no consequence.

Lightfoot demolished the Theory of Bauer and the Tübingen school (which had dated most NT documents in the 2nd cent) by showing that the evidence could equally well be interpreted otherwise. Hort was a textual scholar who gave the coup de grâce to the *Textus Receptus*. In 1889 the document *Lux Mundi* appeared which sought to combine the critical and Catholic views for the first time (previously the Anglo-Catholics had sided with Evangelicals in condemning the liberals). It was edited by a group of High Church theologians at Oxford, who had been influenced by F.D. Maurice and T.H. Green. The editor was Charles Gore. A further document entitled *Foundations* followed in 1912, of which Streeter was the editor.

**Christian socialism:** Maurice was however also linked with the Christian Socialists. It has been said that the Christian Socialist Movement was born out of Chartism. Chartism had challenged the non-committal attitude of the Church that maintained that everything in the social order was willed by God. The Christian Socialist Movement (1845-54) realised that the Gospel of Christ had something better to say to the working class people of England than what the official church was saying. They opposed the capitalist idea of competition, saying that men ought to be working with each other rather than against one another. They met the Chartists and founded the Cooperative movement (today represented by Co-Op stores), and Working men's Colleges. But the Established Church did not take up the challenge and temporized, leaving the Trades Union movement to develop independently.

**Science and faith:** The Evangelicals failed to provide adequate answers in the 19th century to Liberal



Theology and also to the Science/Religion debate, especially with regard to Darwin's Theory of Evolution. On the surface the Victorian era was one of respectable religious conformity but underneath it was one of doubt and uncertainty. Strangely enough, most of the influential teachers of the age were either unbelievers or professed a faith more or less removed from conventional Christian orthodoxy (Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, James Anthony Froude, Francis Newman, John Morely, Matthew Arnold, Leslie Stephen, George Meredith) – the teaching of all these was calculated to unsettle, if not destroy, traditional Christian belief.

In the 1830's books appeared on geology by Sir Charles Lyell and Dean Buckland, which claimed to establish the geological succession of rocks and fossils, thus allegedly showing that the world was much older than the accepted date for the Garden of Eden. Arguing against the theory of catastrophe which Cuvier represented, Lyall in his book *Principles of Geology* represents the evolutionary principle as a means of interpreting the earth's past, and introduced uniformitarianism as a basis for geological thought. The theory maintains that all earth's natural processes happened at the same speed at which they happen now.

Some theologians started to compromise by saying that the days in Genesis referred to geological periods (in such a category comes the "gap" theory, popularised by the Scofield Bible)).

In 1844, *the Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. was published by Robert Chambers. This book launched the philosophy of uniformitarianism. According to this, creation could not have happened as it says in the Bible. But scientists found it fairly easy to refute him, and around 1850 few scientists of any note had a good word to say for the idea of evolution.

In 1859 Darwin published his famous book on the *Origin of Species by Natural Selection*. For the first time, the evolutionary viewpoint was presented with a mass of scientific data, which, it was claimed, conclusively proved the point. The book sold well, but there was no widespread agreement with Darwin's views at first. In fact many leading scientists condemned it outright. What turned the tide was a debate between two men at Oxford University – Thomas Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. The bishop did not know what he was talking about and poured scorn on Huxley, and Huxley won. From then on a number of factors were in favour of Darwin:

1) He had presented new evidence which seemed to support his theory,

2) Man was anxious to believe in anything rather than His Creator. Previously men had believed in spontaneous generation because, they claimed, it must be true – otherwise it would be necessary to believe in a creator.

3) The clergy were rather unpopular at the time.

4) A large portion of the Church began to assimilate the theory rather than to oppose it with facts.

5) Wilberforce had been arguing from an extreme view that the Bible did not hold – there can be no evolution within a species (propounded previously by Linné). The implications of Darwin's view were soon spotted by the more discerning: not only was creation being attacked but also the Fall, Sin, Redemption and atonement. What they did not see was that Darwin first decided what he wanted to find, and then arranged his material accordingly. Unfortunately there was no Christian scientist that bothered to stand up to him. In the past there had been such men as Cuvier, Harvey, Pasteur,

who had opposed such men as Lamark, and Steno, but this was unfortunately no longer the case.

It was Thomas Huxley who was chiefly responsible for championing evolution as a rival world view to that of Christianity. In doing this, he surreptitiously introduced a materialist philosophy to underpin Darwin's ideas and make science into a pseudo-religion. He founded the X-Club at Oxford university and set out on a campaign to propagate militant atheism, using evolution to support this world-view.

### **DEVELOPMENTS IN SCOTLAND**

In Scotland three outstanding churchmen reacted in an arminian direction against the calvinistic aridity of the time and laid an emphasis on the inner life of the believer.

**Erskine** (1788-1870) could not reconcile calvinistic predestination with the love of God. He believed that God was seeking to educate *all* men into a filial relationship with himself.

**McLeod Campbell** (1800-1872) also came to adopt the idea of universal atonement. He reasoned as follows: How can any man in particular know that God loves him unless he can be assured that Christ has died for all men (and not just for the elect)? For holding this view, he was condemned and expelled from the ministry. Later he criticised substitutionary atonement. According to him, atonement consists in communicating to men that God loves them.

**Edward Irving** (1792-1834) started out as a pupil of Thomas Chalmers, and was then influenced by McLeod Campbell. Like him he arrived at a doctrine of the atonement which stressed that the atonement was allegedly brought about not only by the death of Christ, but by the incarnation in general (i.e. by Christ living a perfect life,

which cancelled out Adam's performance – cf. the recapitulation theory of Irenaeus).

He became associated with a development in Campbell's church at Row, in Scotland, where it was claimed that the gifts of the Spirit which had been manifested in the primitive apostolic church of the first century had never ceased to exist and were prevented from manifesting themselves only by the faithlessness of Christians. Both at Row and elsewhere in Scotland there were outbreaks of speaking in tongues and apparently miraculous healing which aroused widespread interest.

In 1822 he moved to London where similar phenomena appeared in his church where many people came to hear him. So many came that he had to have another church specially built. This church (or rather, cathedral) still stands in Albury near Guildford in Surrey, but it is permanently closed. On Irving's instructions it is not to be opened until the Lord returns. In Scotland his denomination expelled him, but his church in London did not recognise their decision and started to evolve into the first Catholic Apostolic Church in England.

At first many people came to hear Irving, but gradually the novelty wore off. Unbalanced emphases crept into his preaching, and many were alienated by his treatment of prophecy, eschatology, his high view of the sacraments and his encouragement of speaking in tongues during public worship. Prophetic conferences were held at Albury Court. One of the regular attenders was J.N.D. Darby. It was Irving who, on the basis of a note sent to him by a young lady who claimed to have had a vision in which she was told that the Church would be raptured before the Great Tribulation, first introduced the idea of the pre-tribulation rapture in its modern form, which was subsequently adopted and widely taught in Brethren circles. The followers of Irving believed that the

appearance of miraculous signs was an evidence that the end of the world was approaching. The object of the Catholic Apostolic Church was to prepare believers for imminent judgement and the glory that was to be revealed. He believed the Millennium would commence in 1867. For many people, his prophecies convinced them he was a “crank.”

In 1832 twelve latter day apostles were recognised, though Irving was not included in their number. These, together with the original Twelve, were expected to occupy the 24 thrones of Revelation 4.

In the face of the failure of other Christian bodies to recognise them, the Catholic Apostolic Church developed an elaborate ritual involving the Real Presence, Holy Water etc, together with the distinctive sacrament of 'sealing' by which members were numbered among the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and would thus escape the Great Tribulation. The movement now no longer exists, as the 144,000th witness has been sealed.

Irving wrote a number of books. Because of one of them on *Our Lord's Human Nature*, he was summoned before the London presbytery and accused of believing that Christ's human nature was *capable* of sin (though he never gave in to sin). Irving was so obsessed with ideas pertaining to the Holy Spirit that he conceived of Christ as being a perfect man who was entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit for any spiritual achievement. This tended to underemphasise that Jesus was fully Son of God, even before his baptism (during which time he was presumably also tempted). What he received at his baptism was a spiritual gift (an anointing). We can therefore conclude that Jesus was tempted in the desert in respect of his role or ministry and not in respect of his person as such. Though Irving claimed that his words

had been misunderstood, he was excommunicated and became an itinerant preacher.

His ideas must be seen against the background of his time. Like the High Church, he reacted against the austerity of traditional protestantism. He also seems to have been somewhat influenced by the Romantic movement in his emphasis on experience, intuition and rejection of calvinistic austerity for something more colourful and more mystical. No doubt there was a movement of the Spirit, but it soon became intertwined with tenets of the Romantic movement and of some aspects of liberal theology.

The movement spread to Europe. In 1863 the senior apostle of the Catholic Apostolic Church in England excommunicated the movement's German prophet, Heinrich Geyer, for recognising new apostles to replace those who had already died. As a result of this, the *New Apostolic Church* was founded in Germany. Less emphasis was laid on the Second Coming, and apostolic succession was established. These new apostles were appointed by the senior apostle who claimed that he was the 'visible incarnation of Christ on earth.'

Irving is important today because other people later adopted some of his ideas. As he is seen by many as a forerunner of the Pentecostal Movement, the danger is to take him as a model and uncritically accept all that he believed.

## **EVANGELICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE 19TH CENT**

**The Brethren movement** began in Ireland where J.N. Darby was a Church of Ireland curate who left the Church in search of a more simple and heartfelt type of Christianity. He and others felt that the Anglican Evangelical movement had not gone far enough, but

non-conformists were also involved. They became known as Plymouth Brethren because it was there that they were particularly strong. Their emphases included: the centrality of the Lord's Supper as a simple celebration expressing the priesthood of all believers (anyone could take part); an emphasis on prophecy (they presented one of the most systematic expositions on the subject); strongly Calvinist; enthusiastic evangelists. They developed into two main groupings: the Exclusives, which were originally assemblies set up without elders or deacons because the imminent coming of the Lord was expected, and the Christian Brethren (Open Brethren) who developed into a regular nonconformist group. At quite an early stage, a controversy developed regarding spiritual gifts between those who believed that every believer had a spiritual gift and those that favoured a charismatic approach. The charismatics were overruled and left. Later another controversy arose involving prophecy. Those who disagreed with Darby's dispensationalism (espec. the pre-tribulation rapture) had to leave. Most prominent among those who were excommunicated was George Müller. Darby later visited the USA where he persuaded a lawyer, C.I. Scofield, to adopt the idea of the pre-tribulational rapture. These ideas, together with those of the Keswick holiness movement, were later propagated and popularised in the Scofield Bible.

### **The Salvation Army**

William Booth, its founder, had been a Wesleyan preacher and was ordained in 1858, but in 1865 he and his wife branched out on their own with a tent in Whitechapel. It has been said that the Salvation Army was perhaps the only Christian movement of the 19th century to reach the wavelength of the masses. It

basically took up where it was felt that Methodism had been flagging. The salvationists alone understood and principles of mass communication and, in particular, the techniques of religious advertisement. Booth was authoritarian in his attempt to achieve results and gained control of the Mission in 1877 by what was virtually a military coup. After that the military emphasis developed, with uniforms, corps and citadels and the magazine *War Cry*. Initially the Salvation Army continued the traditional revivalist evangelism, adding its own military slant, which fed the appetites of an increasingly jingoistic nation. But Booth's friendship with J.B. Patton led him to an increasing interest in social problems, and the publication of the book *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. The book produced a rift in the Salvation Army. One party pushed for more social action, whereas the more conservative officers regarded this as a sidetrack from their main task of evangelism.

### Spurgeon

Spurgeon was a Baptist preacher of Dutch ancestry. During his 38 year ministry in London he built up a congregation of 6,000 and added 14,692 members to the church. In fact 5 years after the beginning of his ministry in London, so many people wanted to hear him preach that he had to have a special church built. This was the Metropolitan Tabernacle, built in 1859. It was called a "tabernacle" after the portable church structure that Moody used on his evangelistic campaigns in the USA. Spurgeon had an exceptional gift as a preacher and an exceptional command of the English language. His sermons have been printed and distributed throughout the world. He had a wry sense of humour. He is once reported to have prayed: Lord, save the elect and go ahead and elect some more!



He was involved in various controversies during his life. Although a Calvinist, he preached against hyper-calvinism and arminianism. He opposed liberal teaching among Baptists. He resigned from the Baptist Union because of this and other pastors joined him, but to his credit he never founded his own denomination. This explains today why Spurgeon's College is the main Baptist training institute in England.

### **The Missionary Movement**

The missionary movement was one of the characteristics of the 19th cent. church scene. Its origins, however, go back to the Moravian missions of the 18th cent. At the time of the Middle Ages the word "mission" was used with reference to God sending His Son into the world, rather than to indicate the human agents that God chose to continue His mission to the world.

The formation of missionary societies marked the means by which Christendom could become organised with a view to the conversion of the world. They became for Protestantism what the religious orders were for Catholicism. For a variety of reasons, the Protestant churches that emerged from the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century did not reach out in mission to other parts of the world. Most of them were national or territorial churches which functioned in countries that did not have access to other parts of the world (i.e. they did not at the time have an empire). They possessed no machinery for launching a mission beyond their own home territory and they had plenty to do at home. When Protestant missionary work did commence, tentatively in the 17th cent. and more strongly in subsequent centuries, it was largely the product of religious revivals and stemmed from the enthusiasm of individuals who

where unable to carry church authorities with them. Denominations were too lethargic and unenthusiastic. It was therefore individuals who took action on their own initiative, devising a most interesting structure that came to be known as the "missionary society". This was structured along lines that had been pioneered in the form of a voluntary society in which a number of people group together for an agreed purpose, pool their resources and get on with the job. It was thus for pragmatic reasons that the wider tasks of mission in the world was taken up, not by churches, but by societies. They had the advantage of permitting interdenominational effort. At first they were denominational missionary societies but later they were organised according to geographic areas. This development came about in connection with the student volunteer organisations at the end of the 19th century, from where they got most of their recruits. Thus, the first overseas missions were founded at the end of the 18th century in the wake of the Evangelical Revival, but only in the 1820s and 30s did they become a *regular* feature of *church* life.

Trading organisations and governments regarded missionaries as dangerous radicals who were liable to upset the natives and so ruin their trading chances (such criticism was especially directed towards the Baptist missionaries). For instance the East India Company refused to allow Carey to operate in the area which they controlled and so he had to go to a Danish controlled area. Moreover, nearly all missionaries were against slavery and tacitly sought its overthrow, which went clean against commercial interests of the day. In the end, through their education they produced natives with an enlightened social conscience who were subsequently to be in the vanguard of independence movements. Thus,

they cannot be called the agents of imperialism. Practical considerations led missionaries first to go to India, certain Pacific islands, Sierra Leone, the West Indies and the Cape of Good Hope. It was in Sierra Leone that the real breakthrough took place with the conversion of many ex-slaves who later went out as missionaries to their own countries. China was impenetrable except for certain ports, until mid century, and Japan until later still. By mid century too it was plain that in India more Christians came from among Hindus than from among Muslims and more from among the tribal peoples than from either. By the end of the century it was clear that it was in Africa and the Pacific that the most dramatic advances had occurred. Hinduism and Buddhism had not collapsed (both were adapting to the impact of Western culture). Islam had almost totally resisted Christian missions. It was from among the world's tribal peoples that most Christians were coming: and in the African grasslands a race with Islam promised to follow.

The first Roman Catholic missionary movement had almost burnt out when the Protestant movement began. The second came in imitation of the Protestants. This time the intellectual centre was in France, the Catholic power with strongest overseas commitment. New missionary orders were formed: the White Fathers, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Society of the Divine Word. Like the Protestants, the Catholic supporters identified themselves with anti-slavery agitation. Unfortunately, rivalry with Protestant missions was bitter.

If the church of the 19th century was losing on the home front with a steady alienation of the intelligentsia and the proletariat, it made startling gains on the mission

field. There are number of factors favouring this expansion:

- a) The Industrial revolution provided means of communication and transport. Most of the missionary nations were industrial nations that not only had the technical know-how but which were most interested in trade and commercial expansion.
- b) Pax Britannica ruled and the urge to explore virgin territory was great.
- c) Missions were involved from the start in the promotion of education and in this endeavour they got state-backing on the spot. Even anti-clerical French governments supported missionary-based education as a means of propagating French culture.
- d) The introduction of western trade and values threw old tribal societies off balance and so made them more open to the Gospel.
- e) Successive revival movements in the church at home gave spiritual impetus to preach the Gospel to the lost. The Roman Catholics for their part now had (following the promulgation of the doctrine of papal infallibility) an infallible church behind them, which gave them fresh impetus and zeal.
- f) Protestant missions in the 19th cent. were often the result of individual initiatives and not state control or church control. They were thus more mobile and adaptable.
- g) However, the movement neglected the home front and tended to send its best men onto the mission field.

However there were mistakes made which were later (in the 20th century) to cost them dear:

- a) The natives saw the missionaries as agents of western culture, although the missionaries would strenuously have denied it themselves.

b) Mostly it was the poor and outcast that were won for Christ (especially in India) and not the ruling classes or tribal leaders.

c) There was much evangelistic zeal, but not much thought about Church structure.

d) The missionaries tended to transplant Christianity with its Western form, as is witnessed by some of the architecture of the churches.

e) They tended to transplant denominationalism.

f) Most were slow to train indigenous ministries and an indigenous leadership.

g) It was indigenous Christians that were later to become the leaders of nationalist movements for independence, and in Jamaica, the leaders of anti-slavery uprisings. In each case, it was a new moral awareness that inspired them.

Some of the indirect results of the missionary movement were:

1) Ecumenicity. This arose from the idea of multi-denominational societies.

2) Feminism. This arose from the prominent role which women missionaries were able to play on the field, something that would have been unthinkable at home.

Some prominent missionaries of the 19th century were:

1. William Carey (18th cent) who was to have a major influence on 19th cent. missionary patterns.

2. Adoniram Judson in Burma.

3. Hudson Taylor in China.

A further development took place in the 20th cent. In the USA church attendance kept on rising until it reached 70% of the population in 1976. Not only has missionary

interest grown but the USA has become a world power. The consequence is that the USA has become the principal sending country for both Protestants and Catholics. In 1973 nearly 70% of all Protestant missionaries in the world had been sent out from USA.

The most spectacular expansion has however taken place in the Third World, especially in the Far East and South America. Never before in history has religion spread so vastly and so rapidly as Christianity has in the last few decades. It must be admitted that this has gone hand in hand with a revival of religion in general. But there are still many largely unevangelised areas, particularly the Muslim countries of the Near East, the Middle East and North Africa. The greatest growth has taken place among animistic peoples and among the deprived classes in the cities. The greatest growth has also taken place in the national church movements, but there has always been the danger there that unscrupulous people would use them for political ends (particularly in Africa).

### **Most recent statistics:**

Figures published recently in the ***Church Times*** reveal that:

At the turn of the century 34.4% of the world's population was Christian. Today there are 5.8 billion people living, of whom 33.7% call themselves Christians. In 1900 there were 200 million Muslims and 12 million Jews. Now there are 1.1 billion Muslims and 13 million Jews. The 225,000 atheists have become 222 million. Of the 1.9 billion Christians, 30 million are Anglicans and 266 million are Roman Catholics.

In 1900 the unevangelised were nearly half of the world's population, now they are 19.3%. The Christian

church is growing by 106,000 members every day, mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It loses 62,000 members per day (deaths and defections).

The current problem in mission strategy is how to present a Gospel that combines the social Gospel with the "spiritual" Gospel. Marxist theologians claim to have found the answer here but they are more Marxist than Christian. It is also an outworking of liberal theology (developed by Ernst Bloch), in particular that labelled *The Theology of Hope*. In the 60s it was represented by the theology of Jürgen Moltmann. Hence *The Theology of Hope* developed directly into the *Theology of Revolution*. The most recent development has been that of the charismatic denominations in England who are starting to send church-based missionaries out to Europe under their own authority, without any reference to a missionary society. Although Brethren missionaries always claimed they were independent, they in fact came under the general control of a missionary coordination centre in Bath. The house-church development is thus a new venture, which, if it succeeds, will return the church to the sort of situation prevailing in the Early Church.

Finally, mention must be made of missionary training organisations for young people, which often even have their own ships. Examples of this are YWAM (Youth with a Mission) and OM (Operation Mobilisation).

## THE CHURCH IN BULGARIA

The 19th century witnesses the rebirth of Bulgarian nationalism. With this went hand in hand freedom from the domination of the church by Greek clergy who had been appointed by the Turkish authorities in an effort to control the church by centralisation. It is almost as if the

Turkish authorities had appointed a group of Greek clerics to run the ministry of cults. Besides, nationalism and religion went hand in hand.

The precursors of the national movement in Bulgaria were **Paisij**, a monk of Mt Athos who wrote a *History of the Bulgarian tsars and saints* (1762) and Bishop Sofronii of Vratsa. After 1824 several works written in modern Bulgarian began to appear and in 1835 the first Bulgarian school was founded at Gabrovo. Within 10 years about 50 Bulgarian schools came into existence and five Bulgarian printing presses were at work. The literary movement led to a reaction against the influence and authority of the Greek clergy. The Turks had used the Greek Orthodox church as a means of effacing Bulgarian national religion which was closely linked to Bulgarian national consciousness. After the Turkish conquest of the Greek peninsula the Greek patriarch in Constantinople had become the representative of the Sublime Porte for all Christians in the Turkish empire. The independent Bulgarian patriarchate was suppressed by the Turks and that of Ohrid was subsequently made Greek. The Greek clergy monopolised higher ecclesiastical appointments and filled the parishes with Greek priests, whose schools, in which Greek was exclusively taught, were the only means of instruction open to the public. Greek became the fashionable language of the upper classes in many Bulgarian towns, and the Bulgarian language was written in Greek characters.

The slavonic liturgy was suppressed and in many places the old Bulgarian manuscripts, icons, testaments and prayer books were burned. Side by side with the struggle for political freedom went the struggle for cultural and ecclesiastical freedom. For 40 years the pioneers of Bulgarian nationalism fought for the establishment of an autonomous church. At one time they even secured from



the pope the appointment of an archbishop of the Uniate Bulgarian Church, causing Russia to urge the sultan to grant Bulgaria's wish for a national church, and in 1870 a decree was issued establishing a Bulgarian exarchate with jurisdiction over 15 dioceses, including Niš, Pirot and Veles in Macedonia. The first exarch was elected two years later, but he and his followers were at once declared schismatics and excommunicated by the patriarch in Constantinople.

## **PROTESTANTISM IN THE BALKANS**

The Reformation did not manage to penetrate the Balkans at all. Lutheran influence came via Austria and Calvinist influence via Hungary, but neither got any further than Slovenia and some areas of Croatia. Anabaptists from Austria penetrated into Slovenia in 1529. But most of these pockets were effectively wiped out by the Counter-Reformation. The Reformation never penetrated any of the Orthodox areas.

The Balkans had to wait until the 19th century for protestantism to be introduced. This occurred in Slovenia and parts of Croatia where the Baptist movement spread among German immigrants through missionaries associated with Oncken. It also occurred in the South where American Methodist and Congregational missions operating from Istanbul penetrated Bulgaria, Macedonia and ultimately Albania.

In the South, missionary activity started around the middle of the 19th century because the Balkans were in those days in the Ottoman empire. Thus it came within the sphere of interest of what was then called 'The West Turkey Mission'. Because the conversion of a Muslim was punishable by death, members of the mission de-

cided to evangelise nominal Christians and Jews. In Thessalonika alone, half the population was Jewish! (having previously fled from Spain) The most immediate result was the emergence of an evangelical wing in the Armenian Church. Gradually, however, their interest became centred on reaching Bulgarians, because they had responded so well to initial Bible distribution. However it subsequently transpired that most of them had bought Bibles, not to read them but as a sign of loyalty and patriotism, as a magic thing to drive away evil spirits and to assure God's good will! This was the first shock that the missionaries encountered. The mentality of people in the Balkans was very different from theirs! Nevertheless Bulgaria was regarded as a springboard to the evangelisation of the whole Slavic population of the Turkish empire. In their work, the missionaries enjoyed the protection of American consular officials and also the good will of the Turks who were keen to support any movement that was going to divide the Christians! In 1851 the West Turkey Mission divided Bulgaria into two areas of ministry: Northern Bulgaria was to be evangelised by the Methodist and Southern Bulgaria by the Congregationalists. But the going was hard: the techniques for producing conversions used in 19th century American revivalism did not have the same result in the Balkans. Because of the prevailing illiteracy, they decided to open schools, which later became highly effective evangelizing agencies. From pupils of these schools were to come future national Christian workers. Colportage was also widely used as it often developed into preaching, teaching and polemical debates with local priests. Centres were founded in Varna, Plovdiv, Monastir (Bitola) and Skopje.

The work in Macedonia was based on Monastir where a school was founded. In 1908 a preaching station was

opened in Korça (Albania), where a work had already been started through the activity of the Bible Societies and one Gerasim Qirias. His sister Sevasti opened the first Albanian girls' school there. The first two American missionaries, Kennedy and Erickson worked primarily in Korça and Elbasan, but had out-stations in Tirana, Durrës and some other places.

The Methodists of Jugoslavia also extended their work into Voivodina among Germans living there.

The weaknesses of this missionary work were:

1. The missionaries seriously underestimated the Balkan mentality.
2. In Bulgaria, Methodists and Congregationalists failed to combine and so the Church was weaker than it needed to be.
3. The Protestants never became a truly national church and could never entirely free themselves from the stigma of being foreign intruders.
4. There was an inability to come to terms with science and the modern views of the world. Those they won to the Lord were primarily peasants and not those who lived in towns.

### **Developments within the Orthodox Churches in the Balkans:**

1) **Serbia:** In 1880 the Bogomolci movement was founded by a priest called Nikolai. It mostly flourished among peasants and workers, with its power base in Voivodina. During WWII, the movement was discredited by the Germans and Velimirović, the then leader, emigrated to Canada. Later, when the Orthodox Church was infiltrated by the communists, and German (known as the "red patriarch") virtually became a communist agent, Velimirović and the Bogomolci left the mother

church. Today it is confined to house groups, meeting mostly in Vojvodina.

2) **Romania**: an evangelical movement started within the Romanian Orthodox Church in the inter-war years. It rapidly gained a large following and became known as the Lord's Army (*Oastea Domnului*). During the communist era it functioned as a underground movement. Today it is still a part of the Orthodox Church.

3) **Bulgaria**: following the collapse of communism, a split resulted within the Orthodox church. A large group accused the leadership of having been communist stooges and promptly left. Today it functions as a separate church and has warm relations with the Protestants.

## THE CHURCH IN THE USA

We have seen how the first part of the 18th Century was dominated by the Great Awakening, but the second part was dominated by the War of Independence.

In the first decade after American Independence, the Congregationalists were the largest denomination (750 churches), followed by the Presbyterians (500) and then the Anglicans (400) who were mostly to be found in the South. In the 1780s the Baptists began to overtake the Anglicans and were approaching 500 churches. They were a split off the Congregationalists and therefore Calvinists who wanted to see a higher standard of church membership. This involved the introduction of adult baptism. By 1800, as the colonists began to expand westward, we witness a shift of power away from the colonial three (Congregational, Presbyterian, Anglican) to the frontier big three (Baptist, Methodist, Disciples of Christ). This last group appeared on the scene in 1827 and within a few years overtook the Anglicans. The Methodists had by 1820 overtaken the Baptists and

remained the largest denomination until the 1920s. The new movement which resulted in the shift of power can be called 'revivalism' and thrived in the more unstructured atmosphere of the westward expansion. The Disciples of Christ, for instance (who later became the Church of Christ) wanted to get back to apostolic simplicity. One of their peculiarities was the belief that immersion in water was a necessary condition for salvation. Much later they divided on the question of the use of musical instruments in worship into Church of Christ instrumental and Church of Christ non-instrumental. The latter has really become a sect.

**The Second Great Awakening:** At the end of the 18th century Deism made rapid strides, particularly in the East. But a bit later the country was swept by a great new wave of revivalist enthusiasm. It was less sober in the West where it assumed a more highly-charged emotional form. It met the needs of men and women living in remote, difficult and often lonely places. In the wake of the Cane Ridge revival which was heavily influenced by the Shakers, the "camp meeting" assembled them in great companies in which religion gained intense personal significance. Frontier life was rude, raw and exciting. Some of the frontier people saw very little of churches or preachers except once a year at a big tent revival meeting. Just as the growing calves were rounded up once a year for branding, so the growing youth needed to be gathered in and saved, while the older people felt their need for a good "clean-up" in the yearly revival time. Sometimes religious fervour was accompanied by great emotional excesses such as "godly hysteria", falling, jerking, "the holy laugh", barking like dogs and such wild dances as David performed before the ark of the Lord. It explains the intensely

emotional quality that has persisted in American frontier Christianity.

Two visitors from England, who witnessed such scenes, not inaptly reported: "They have revived all the irregularities of the Corinthian Church, as though they had been placed on record to be copied, and not avoided".

As in England, the Evangelical Revival resulted in the formation of numerous societies: foreign missions, evangelism and social work.

After 1806 the revivals slackened, then picked up again some 20 years later under a newly converted Presbyterian lawyer named Charles Finney.

**Finney:** The American "Western Revivals" of 1825-32 saw the dawn of modern crusade evangelism and also the Higher Christian Life Movement. Much has been written on the extraordinary evangelistic labours of Charles G. Finney and the new methods and techniques he employed to convert people to Christ. But Finney came to the conclusion that the results of his "revivals" (i.e. evangelistic campaigns) were short-lived because he had failed to teach a certain doctrine of sanctification. So he introduced into the Christian world the idea that new converts must be taken very quickly from the campaign to the convention in order to stop them from falling away. Sanctification had to be accepted "by faith" as well as salvation. Entire sanctification is taught as a distinct second experience: a passive act by which it is received, whereby the Christian passes from Romans 7 to Romans 8. This was later to become classic Keswick teaching.

Finney did not believe that you had to wait for revivals in the classic sense, but that using a certain technique, revivals would happen automatically.

He was very interested in psychology and came to believe that the essence of human existence is not character, but *decisions*. For him, life was essentially a series of decisions (cf. Process Theology later) and therefore the Christian life had to be lived on this basis and Christians had to be encouraged to keep making decisions. The danger of this view is that if taken to an extreme, it can lead to manipulation: the work of the Spirit can be confused with the effects of psychological pressure. This was to be one of the potentially weak points of crusade evangelism.

It was under such men as Finney and later, Moody and Billy Graham that the camp meeting moved indoors and was held in chapels and large auditoriums.

These revivals produced satanic counter-attacks in the form of heresy. Numerous sects sprang up, especially the Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses.

**The third awakening:** The 1857-60 revival started again, this time among businessmen in New York in the wake of an economic crisis reminiscent of the Great Crash of the 1920s. It spread to Ulster (100,000 converts), Wales (100,000), Scotland (300,000) and England (300,000) by 1865. It gave rise to the modern missionary movement, Moody and Sankey, Salvation Army, Hudson Taylor and the CIM, Keswick Movement.

**Catholicism in America** did not really become an important factor until the major Irish immigrations of 1845-6 and the failure of German Catholic aspirations following the abortive revolutions of 1848. The Irish became urban populations whereas the Germans tended to settle in the country. Resentment started to build up against the Irish who by their numbers were endangering the Puritan ideals of American society, and various

secret organisations grew up, there were riots and a flood of propaganda. This all came to an end with the Civil War, but afterwards survived in the form of the Ku-Klux-Klan.

The slavery issue was also another extensive source of schism. At about the time of the revolution, liberal and humanitarian ideas led to a general condemnation of it. But the growth of the cotton industry stopped the progress of this movement in the south. The ensuing Civil War led to the division of denominations along the line between north and south. It was thus that the Southern Baptists were born as a reaction against the Northern Baptists. There were three main issues: slavery, doctrinal integrity and missions. The Northerners accused the Southerners of keeping slaves, whereas the Southerners accused the Northerners of liberalism (some of their missionaries were known to deny the virgin birth and the divinity of Christ). After the American Civil War, another split occurred: most black Baptists in the South separated from white churches and set up their own congregations. In the late 1860s, they rapidly set up several separate state conventions. In 1895 their three national conventions merged into the National Baptist Convention. With 8 million members, it is the largest black religious organization and is second in size to the Southern Baptist Convention.

**The Rise of Fundamentalism:** After the Civil War, the American Churches began to be agitated by the theory of evolution and by higher criticism of the Bible. Although liberalism spread, conservative Christianity managed to secure a much larger following than in Europe. This was particularly the case in the Bible Belt. Four outstanding leaders arose from this movement: D.L. Moody, the evangelist; R.A. Torrey, a gifted Bible teacher; Gresham



Machen, a Presbyterian theologian and A.C. Dixon, an evangelist who drew up a statement of faith called *The Fundamentals*. The term "fundamental" was officially born at a Bible conference at Niagara in 1895 where conservatives took their stand on 5 Fundamentals: a) The Inerrancy of Scriptures, b) The deity of Jesus Christ, c) The Virgin Birth, d) The substitutionary theory of the atonement, e) The Bodily resurrection and imminent (i.e. pre-tribulational) bodily Second Coming of Christ.

It was at this time that eschatology became a big subject for discussion. Great conferences were held in which there was much emphasis on prophecy, separation from the world and the deeper life. The reaction of fundamentalism against liberalism led to new interpretations of the Bible, especially dispensationalism which was popularised by the Scofield Bible. Thus, American fundamentalism became linked to dispensationalism.

**Mass Evangelism:** D.L.Moody continued the crusade evangelism started by Finney. He was supported financially by several industrial magnates who were evangelicals, for example, Mr Dodge and Mr Colgate. This tradition was continued in the period between the two world wars. During this period came hard times for organised religion. The Roaring Twenties and the Great Slump produced a crisis in Christian belief. The cinema, the radio, the car and organised sport drew millions away from the churches. Only when the great depression struck, did people abandon the facile optimism of the earlier period. It had much the same effect on US society as WWI had had on European society.

Moody was one of those people who pioneered the "Gospel Song" which has become so much a part of North American hymnody. These songs contained much

repetition but no logical sequence. Another tendency was to repeat phrases in a sort of echo, a device which mirrored music hall usage at the end of the 19th century. The tunes were simple, popular melodies which usually included a refrain. They were quickly learned and easily memorized by the common people. In spite of texts which are light and lacking in lyrical beauty and despite tunes which are melodically trite and harmonically dull, the Gospels songs continue after a century of usage to be used by evangelical Christians around the world.

In the first half of the 20th century Moody was succeeded first by Chapman and then by Billy Sunday. The latter was a preacher known for his athletic style, in which he travelled back and forth across the platform, stomping, pounding, thumping, jumping and sliding (he had in fact been a professional baseball player). Legend had it that Sunday covered more than a mile, back and forth across the platform, in a single sermon. His crusades were meticulously organised by a whole team of specialists, who aimed to reach every section of the population.

As a result of the horrors of World War II, people were now prepared to listen to such conservative doctrines as sin and salvation. Thousands flocked to *Youth for Christ* rallies. Billy Graham crusades became a national phenomenon. Gospel Radio Programmes developed in a big way. Evangelicals became awakened to social concern.

## **EVANGELICALS IN ENGLAND**

In 1835 Finney joined Dr Asa Mahan at the newly founded Oberlin College (centre of antislavery agitation). There they developed their doctrine of sanctification. It was there that W.E. Boardman was influenced by them

and began the *Higher Christian Life Movement*. Soon, Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife Hannah, became involved in it. In 1873 the Boardmans travelled to England where they were soon joined by Pearsall Smith and his wife, who started to hold *Higher Life* conventions. Gradually Mr Pearsall Smith faded into the background and his wife became more prominent. She was married to a preacher who proved to be spiritually and emotionally unstable and who was repeatedly unfaithful. Two of her five children died of scarlet fever. One daughter abandoned her husband and ran off with an artist, another daughter married an outspoken atheist. Hannah herself suffered from painful arthritis.

The English Evangelicals, who had fallen on hard times under the impact of liberalism and the tractarian movement, were captivated by this new doctrine. In 1877 Bishop Ryle published his book entitled *Holiness* to counteract this doctrine. Spurgeon was also opposed to it.

Soon, the **Keswick Movement** was founded by Pearsall Smith, shortly before his moral downfall, in 1875. The teachings of the movement can be summarized as follows:

- a) A neglect of the doctrine of regeneration.
- b) Sanctification, separated from, and confused with, justification by faith.
- c) The Christian represented as being passive in his sanctification. Sanctification "by faith".
- d) The unavoidable suggestion that perfection is possible.
- e) The two-tier view of the Christian life: higher and lower, or spiritual and carnal Christians.
- f) When this two-stage theory of sanctification is read back into the Bible, the result can be exegetically disastrous. Jody Dillow's theory about Servant Kings is

really not dispensationalism gone wrong, but Keswick teaching misapplied!! Those believers who follow God's will for their lives will reign with Christ during the millenium whereas the others will have to put up with a consolation prize – heaven!

**Watchman Nee** was influenced by the Keswick movement through his contact with two English lady missionaries in China. Nee was also greatly influenced T. Austin-Sparks and the Brethren movement. He had no formal theological education but was an avid reader (Jessie Penn-Lewis, Robert Govett, D.M. Panton, G.H. Pember, John Nelson Darby, Theodore Austin-Sparks, Andrew Murray i Mme Guyon). From these writers he developed his theology which was characterised by: trichotomist view of man, Keswick second blessing, dispensationalism, partial rapture and spiritualising of the Old Testament. According to the theory of the partial rapture, obedient Christians (the overcomers) would be raptured prior to the great tribulation to reign in heaven during the millenium, whereas disobedient Christians would have to go through the great tribulation to reign on earth with Christ. The problem is that when all these ideas are filtered through a mind of someone who comes from a buddhist background, the result is a slight distortion. In his books (especially *Release of the Spirit*) he uses language that seems to suggest that he was a gnostic or a buddhist, which he was not. Maybe he was just trying to communicate to a public that was largely influenced by buddhism.

His prime concern was to create a national church that was free of foreign missionary influence, denominations and 'theology'. In China he founded a house-church movement called the Little Flock. As it turns out, this was providential for only a house-church structure could really

survive the rigours of communist rule. As a result, he had to work out a system of authority for these churches. He rejected denominationalism as dividing the body of Christ and sought to model his churches on NT patterns.

Opinions are sharply divided re. Watchman Nee. For some he is the first apostle of the last days, whereas for others he is dangerously misleading.

Two of his ideas are of particular interest to us because of their influence today.

1) In his theory of sanctification, he proceeds from a trichotomist (some would say even gnostic) view of man. He almost implies that only the spirit in man is good, the rest (body and soul) is of no account if not downright bad. In his theory, man does not cooperate with God, but God takes over man entirely (if that man is spiritual) thus obliterating his personality. As the mind is linked with the soul, we cannot comprehend anything of value with our mind. A teaching has to come by "revelation" or by "intuition". The will is also seen as part of the world, so only obedience that flows without effort from the spirit is acceptable to God. These ideas have been seized upon by the charismatic movement in order to justify the use of spiritual gifts and to disparage the use of reason. This attitude virtually leads to a Barthian view of Scripture: the Bible only becomes the Word of God when God speaks to me.

2) Nee had a very high view of the Church, so much so that he saw the local church as having absolute authority. It was seen as literally the incarnation of Christ. Therefore the elders are Christ's representatives and must be obeyed even in the smallest detail. This idea has been seized upon by the charismatic movement, in particular the "shepherding movement" to justify their pyramid structure of authority and what they call

"covering". Each member is covered by the other in the sense that they are responsible to a person above them. If a believer stands alone simply as an individual before God seeking His will for his life, then he is subject to Satan. Similarly a woman may not make a decision while her husband is absent, for the same reason.

3) A recent development in China is also of interest to us. Much of the opposition to Christian students comes from the movement "The Little Flock" which adheres to views espoused by their founder Watchman Nee. He taught, in an influential book entitled *Release of the Spirit* that the things of the flesh and the soul had to be utterly broken in order to set the Spirit free. University degrees, novels, anything not obviously to do with the Church, were labelled as "soulish" and had to be repudiated. Many Chinese students have rebelled against this extreme form of pietism and formed their own house churches. "We were very sad to encounter this attitude. It seemed obvious to us that we should live our lives on earth to show God's glory, not only in God's church but also in God's world. We saw nothing in the Bible which said that when we follow God, we had to be deliberately stupid."

One of Nee's former colleagues, Witness Lee, further developed his thought in a frankly sectarian direction that has spawned such movements as The Way, The Children of God and the Alamo Foundation. Lee has been accused of modalism, the divinisation of the believer and extreme ecclesiology.

### **Further evangelical developments in England**

During the first half of the 20th century, the Evangelicals were in decline. They were driven into a corner by the dominance of the High Church and liberalism in the Anglican Church.

In the second half of the 20th century there has been a huge decline in church attendance affecting all denominations in all parts of England. Church attendance has dropped from 45% of the population in 1851 to 11% in 1985. A recent survey revealed that whereas 79% of those interviewed admitted the existence of God, only 11% were church-goers. This decline can be attributed to a number of factors.

1. The secularist view of the elite, whose opinions are heard on television and read in the press;
2. The effect of two major world wars which destroyed whole communities and caused major social upheaval;
3. The lack of clear, confident, and consistent proclamation of the Gospel by Christians.

However, since the Second World War, things started to get better for the Evangelical cause. The influence of IVF in universities and also of Billy Graham Crusades have all served to increase the numbers of Evangelicals. There has also been a greater emphasis on evangelical scholarship. It is now claimed that approx. 25% of all Anglican parishes have an evangelical ministry, and that 25% of the Synod (where decisions are made) of the Anglican Church is evangelical. A half of all ordinands are Evangelicals and another half are all women. 14% of evangelical parishes are charismatic.

However, the Anglican church has recently been through some rough waters. The allowance of alternative and 'experimental' orders of service is seen by many as a capitulation to the Anglo-Catholics. The allowance of women priests (an Anglo-Catholic word for 'pastors') is seen by many as a capitulation to the Liberals. Recent archbishops have been a disappointment for Evangelicals. Runcie was a 'liberal' Anglo-Catholic whereas Carey was a 'liberal' Evangelical. Welby, although he claims to be an evangelical, loses no

opportunity to criticise them, particularly in regard to their rejection of women priests.

There have been two factors that have undermined evangelical unity in England. The first one was the demand by Free Church representatives, especially Martyn Lloyd-Jones, that Evangelicals should leave the Anglican Church. John Stott, a prominent Anglican Evangelical, disagreed with this. This produced a split amongst in organisations that had previously united Anglicans, Baptists, Brethren and Pentecostals.

The second cause of disunity among evangelicals has been the charismatic movement. It started in the Anglican Church where 14% of all parishes are now charismatic, some of which are Evangelical and some of which are High Church. The Anglican Church was by and large flexible enough to contain it. When, however, it reached the other non-Anglican churches, it often produced splits and the birth of the house church movement.

## THE PENTECOSTALS

**The origins of pentecostalism:** John Wesley is an important precursor of the movement: he taught that sanctification was a second work of grace, distinct from and following justification. One of his disciples, John Fletcher, actually called this experience "the baptism in the Holy Spirit". Both Finney and Moody claimed to have had the same experience.

However, the idea of seeking a second blessing really goes back to the English hyper-calvinists who were constantly trying to find out whether they were elect or not. This is why they sought a second blessing as a seal on their election.



From the early Methodists the stream runs directly through the **Holiness movements** of the 19th century. This expression denotes those movements that emphasised entire sanctification as a separate experience subsequent to conversion, whereby the Christian ceases to sin deliberately. These churches took up where it was felt that Methodism had been flagging. In camp meetings and higher life conventions, holiness teachers proclaimed the second blessing of sanctification as a cleansing of the heart from all sin, and sometimes called it the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The same discontent with Methodism produced holiness churches in which gifts of the Spirit became manifest. These were at first independent of each other but later coalesced into the church of the Nazarene. Belief in baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire as a third blessing became increasingly widespread, as well as renewed interest in spiritual gifts, particularly healing.

Many churches gradually abandoned these practices but they later resurfaced in the pentecostal movement, which moved through Methodism and into the Baptist denominations.

In 1901 Charles Parham started a Bible school at Topeka, Kansas, called Bethel Bible College. He set his (40) students the task of discovering what was the sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit. All concluded that it was "speaking in tongues". From that moment onwards all claimed to speak in tongues. He used no textbook but the Bible and drilled his students in Spirit Baptism teaching. He and his students then conducted evangelistic campaigns throughout Kansas, during which many of his hearers claimed to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and worked miracles of healing. In 1905 Parham founded the Houston Bible School. The

new movement caught on quickly and spread far and wide as it met the needs in a special way of the poor and deprived members of society. They relished its emphasis on enthusiasm and experience, its unstructured, lively, long, even interminable services where people danced, shouted "Amen" and clapped their hands as they momentarily forgot all their troubles. It was a protest against theological liberalism and formalism of many denominations. Kansas thus became the centre of this movement which held the doctrine that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence that a person had received the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit". This teaching gained scattered support in the southern states of the USA during the early 1900s. In 1906 William Seymour, a convert of Parham's and one of his students, was expelled from a Church of the Nazarene for extremism in his preaching and came to Los Angeles where he started a house meeting at which 7 spoke in (foreign) languages. The group then moved to Azusa street in Los Angeles where Seymour founded the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission. There was a revival there (a three-year long meeting), which became the launching pad for 20th century pentecostalism. Missionaries flocked to Azusa to get the gift to speak a foreign language and so spare themselves the trouble of having to learn a foreign language. However, there is no evidence that anyone really got this gift. The Azusa street meetings, were characterized by much confusion: dancing, jumping, up and down, falling, trances, slaying in the spirit, "tongues" jerking, hysteria, strange noises, and "holy laughter" One visitor described the meetings as 'wild, hysterical demonstrations.' The seekers would be seized with a strange spell and commence a jibberish of sounds." Parham was horrified and condemned the whole movement out of hand.

Splits in the Pentecostal movement occurred along the lines of:

a) glossolalia is seen as 2nd blessing, as opposed to 3rd blessing: Most of the Holiness churches either split over the new teaching on tongues being the evidence of spirit baptism, or else became Pentecostal in doctrine.

b) Jesus Only movement which refuses to recognise the Trinity. It holds a unitarian view of God and baptises in the name of Jesus only and expects everyone to speak in tongues as a result. The largest church of this sort is called the United Pentecostal Church.

c) The black-white divide. Churches divided along coloured lines. The largest Pentecostal denominations today in the USA are: the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ (negro), the Church of God, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

d) footwashing. A number of Pentecostal Churches also regard footwashing as being as obligatory as baptism and the Lord's Supper.

One of the most articulate advocates of the pentecostal point of view was RA Torrey whom PD Brunner has described as: "after Wesley and Finney, the most important figure in the pre-history of pentecostalism." In his book "The Holy Spirit – who he is and what he does" Torrey proposes seven easy steps to Spirit baptism: 1) Accept Christ as Saviour, 2) Renounce all known sin, 3) Make an open confession of this, 4) Obedience, 5) thirst, 6) asking, 7) faith.

**Pentecostalism in England:** As a result of the Welsh revival (1905-9) the Welsh Apostolic Church was founded in 1916. As the name implies they believed in the office of apostle and had a rigid authoritarian structure. British Pentecostalism got under way in 1907

through the collaboration of English-born Norwegian T.B. Barrat (who was directly influenced by the Los Angeles revival) and an Anglican vicar, Alexander Boddy. The movement started at Boddy's parish in Sunderland. Many of the other leaders were converts from the Welsh Apostolic Church. In the early 1920s this movement gave birth to the Assemblies of God (AOG) and the Elim Alliance. The chief difference between the two was that the Elim Church did not demand speaking in tongues as a sign of spirit baptism. Neither groups believed in the office of apostle. In fact Donald Gee, a prominent AOG leader said: 'To bestow NT titles of office upon men and women and then consider that by so doing we are creating apostolic assemblies parallel to those of the Primitive Church is very much like children playing at churches.' The vision of the founders of both churches Principal **George Jeffreys** (Elim) and **Smith Wigglesworth** (Assemblies of God) was that of a world-wide 'latter rain' that would herald the return of Christ to the world'. This revival would see the demise of denominations and the rise of the universal and Spirit-endowed church. This idea has recently been revived and gained wide currency even among such organisations as Campus Crusade. What people now seem to be looking forward to is not so much the second coming of Christ, but "the great revival". This is almost a post-millennial outlook.

**Restorationist Churches:** Much the same vision has characterised the more recent Restorationist Churches, which are also post-millennial in emphasis. This has grown out of the charismatic renewal movement in England (cf. Michael Harper and the Fountain Trust, Arthur Wallis). The movement is so called because they want to 'restore the kingdom' before Christ returns; they want to replace denominations with the kingdom of God that will fill the

whole earth before the Second Coming of Christ. The forerunners of this movement were the Brethren Movement, Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church and the Welsh Apostolic church. Whereas the charismatic movement has a large following inside the Catholic and Anglican churches, the Restorationist Churches have got their members from dissaffected members of the Brethren, Baptist and Free Evangelical Churches. Whereas Anglicans and Catholics had hoped that the charismatic movement would do what the ecumenical movement failed to do, the movement has in fact proved to be very divisive and one of its products has been the Restorationist Churches which are very exclusive.

### **Health and Wealth movement (Prosperity Gospel)**

This is an offshoot of Pentecostalism founded by Kenneth Hagin that started in the 60-ties in USA, came to Africa and from there to Europe. The pastors of such churches in the UK are mostly black.

## **THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN THE USA**

a) **In 1960 a new manifestation of Pentecostalism appeared** – Neo-Pentecostalism or the Charismatic movement. The aim was to work within existing denominations. The groundwork for this new upsurge of pentecostalism was laid by such magnetic personalities as David DuPlessis and Oral Roberts. A similar influence was exerted by the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship founded in 1951 by Demos Shakarian, a wealthy Californian dairy owner. The impact of such initiatives was eventually felt within the historic denominations. In 1956 a Presbyterian minister announced to his astonished congregation that he had received the "Baptism in the Spirit". In 1960 an Episcopalian minister, Dennis Bennett, announced the

same thing. His subsequent Pentecostal prayer meetings so disturbed his parish that he was forced to resign and moved to Seattle where a more sympathetic church received him.

b) **Penetration of the Catholic Church** started at Duquesne University in 1967 and spread to Notre Dame. It seems to have come into Catholicism in the wake of the Second Vatican Council when many Catholics were feeling thoroughly disorientated. Cardinal Suenens in Belgium was won to the cause and in 1975 10,000 Pentecostal pilgrims from 50 countries met in Rome to hear Pope Paul VI bless their cause. Many Catholic pentecostals organised themselves into sort of communes, the most well-known of which became the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which is one of some 40 such communities.

This movement has now given birth to a group within the Catholic Church who call themselves Evangelical Catholics.

c) **The Jesus Movement**: In the second half of the 1960s the emerging charismatic movement spread rapidly among the drop-out generation who were disillusioned with a society which justified the Vietnam war. The Jesus Movement caught attention for only a short time but made a lasting impact on that generation. Eventually they became a denomination: Calvary Chapel. The Jews for Jesus Movement also grew out of this as there had been many young Jews among the drop-out movement in California. The idea behind this mission and the movement Prayer for Israel is that the conviction that if the Jews are converted, then Jesus will return. The return of Jews to Israel is seen as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, and so they encourage this also. A previous

generation had thought that if the complete the evangelisation of the world, this would bring back the King. The Bible, however, makes clear that Israel as a nation will not accept the Messiah until the very last moment, after having gone through the Great Tribulation. It is at this time that the great return to the land of Israel will take place.

d) **John Wimber and 'power evangelism'**: A recent phenomenon in the charismatic camp has been the advent of John Wimber and 'power evangelism', which sees the necessity of healing going hand in hand with evangelism. In this he was very much influenced by Francis McKnutt's book on Healing. Initially he tried to team up with Calvary chapel, but soon parted after disagreement on spiritual gifts. He also rejected their dispensationalism in favour of kingdom theology. Wimber's movement eventually became a denomination: Vineyard Fellowships, which emphasise the importance of church planting. However, he was never happy with the charismatic label and disowned the Toronto Blessing movement. He downplayed the importance of speaking in tongues to the detriment of other gifts. He believed that women should not be in church leadership. In this he considerably influenced Terry Virgo, amongst others.

f) **Pragmatic evangelicalism**: the church growth movement started in the 1990s under the leadership of Donald McGavran. Today it has become primarily a methodology based on marketing principles designed to grow successful churches. The hallmark of the movement is that the church seeks to conform to contemporary culture and let it set the agenda musically etc. These pragmatists have made common cause with charismatics and practically dominate the church-growth

landscape today. Prominent names associated with this movement are: John Wimber, C. Peter Wagner, Robert Schuller, Bill Hybels and Rick Warren. The primary characteristic of this movement is a rejection of traditional church structures and a return to a first century pattern of apostles, prophets and elders.

Needless to say, most of these movements have widely impacted England. The past fifty years have witnessed the progressive “pentecostalisation” of church life in England. The Alpha course (organised by Nicky Gumbel, vicar of Holy Trinity, Brompton, in London, which has a membership of over 4,000) has served to promote this trend right across the denominational spectrum, and even abroad. It is undoubtedly an effective evangelistic tool, but there is a catch: in one of the lessons of the Alpha course, participants are told to attend a day away in the country during which baptism in the spirit is sought and in particular the gift of tongues which is held to be a sign of Spirit baptism. Needless to say, there are many other courses of this type (for instance: Christianity Explored) which are not charismatic in emphasis, but they never seem to be given wide publicity.

Many previously independent charismatic movements have now developed into denominations with their own church-based missionary societies. No longer do they meet in rented premises (like schools), but in purpose-built mega-church buildings. An example of this is the denomination called *New Frontiers*, founded by Terry Virgo. In this denomination, which is Calvinistic, women are not allowed in leadership positions, whereas in another prominent charismatic grouping, Ichthus Fellowship (led by Roger Forster) which is arminian in



theology, women leadership is encouraged. Roger Forster's denomination later abandoned him and he is now only the pastor of the remaining Ichthus church.

Charismatics really want to get back to the time of the early church even before the NT was finalised – they are people of the Spirit, but not so much people of the Book. Some of them at least therefore feel free to make their own rules, not on the basis of the NT but on the basis of 'further revelations'.

### **CATHOLICISM IN THE 19th & 20th CENTURIES**

The 19th cent was a traumatic time for the Vatican: on three occasions the pope was forced to flee the Vatican:

1) In 1798 during the French Revolution, 2) In 1808 when Napoleon's armies invaded Italy, 3) In 1848 when he was expelled but rescued by the French.

In 1870 (same year that papal infallibility was proclaimed), due to Italian desire for one state, the pope lost all his political power. This happened during the pontificate of Pius IX (1846-78), which was the longest in history.

After the downfall of Napoleon (the final phase of the French Revolution) there was a sharp right-wing reaction in Europe and yet also the growth of a liberal movement. These two tendencies were reflected in the Church but it was the conservative tendency that triumphed because of the hard line pursued by the Vatican which dominated the Church as never before.

**The triumph of conservatism:** The right-wing reaction came about because everyone was afraid of the spread of the ideas pertaining to the French revolution. After the death of Napoleon, the Russian tsar immediately invited the princes of Europe to join with him

in a Holy Alliance against revolution. The alliance's three leading members: Russia, Austria and Prussia, had all been ruled (before the French Revolution) by monarchs much influenced by the Enlightenment. Their successors had no wish to see any more enlightenment or any more revolution. To safeguard themselves against either, they pledged themselves to stand together as 'members of a single Christian nation'. The Index reappeared and so did the Inquisition. The Jesuits were re-established. The monarchs restored by the Congress of Vienna surrounded themselves with conservative statesmen like Metternich, the Austrian minister whose main concern was to keep the ghost of the French Revolution from rising again. He saw Jacobins and liberals under every bed and radical students in every disturbance. To prevent radical ideas he used the secret police, censorship of books and watchdogs at the universities.

The Habsburgs controlled Europe from the Baltic to Sicily. The Prussian king toyed at first with the idea of giving a constitution to his subjects, but soon changed his mind when Karl Sand, a young theological student, assassinated an agent of the Russian tsar. The king reacted by issuing the **Karlsbad Decrees** which tightened control of the secret police and forced liberals everywhere into hiding. In Spain, all liberals were arrested and the Inquisition was restored. In France the Bourbon king Louis Philippe and his successor Charles X both veered to the right in order to be on the safe side. In England the Six Acts were passed in 1819 which were the most repressive laws issued for generations. These were designed to limit people from assembling or producing seditious literature for the purpose of fomenting revolution.

**The Catholic reaction:** In the Catholic Church special missions were organised at the end of which the works of

Voltaire were solemnly burned and the people took an oath to maintain religion and legitimate government. These were often commemorated by the erection of wayside crosses, which can still be seen today. In 1814 the Jesuits were re-established as an order and other new orders sprang up. Many intellectuals became Catholic converts. The past was idealised in some works of the Romantic movement which painted the Reformation as the worst thing that could ever have happened because it destroyed the unity of Christendom. Chateaubriands' book *Le genie du christianisme* reflects this point of view.

**The phenomenon of liberalism:** The Liberals drew their support from the rising Middle Class and professional classes. They wanted a parliamentary system of government based on a written constitution that would guarantee personal rights including freedom of religion. They opposed the Church's control over such things as marriage and education. **Lamennais** in France developed an extremely radical view of the new role of the Church in a post-revolutionary society and so became the founder of liberal catholicism. He objected to the idea of the Church being used as a convenience by the ruling powers (espec. Napoleon). He wanted a Church completely separate from the State, freedom of education, freedom of the press, and the vote for everyone. He wanted the church to go it alone and cease its reliance on the secular authorities. The bishops rejected his idea, so he appealed to the Pope. In 1832 the Pope replied with the encyclical *Mirari Vos*, which completely rejected Catholic liberalism. Rome saw in liberalism two main errors; a rejection of all supernatural revelation and rejection of the unique validity of catholicism. The Pope thus virtually canonised the existing social order as having permanent and even

divine validity. To prove his point, he denounced the Polish uprising and backed the Russian tsar who suppressed it.

All this set the clock back in France but in Belgium it was a different story: there Catholics and Liberals joined forces to oust the Dutch king, whose rule had stood for oppression in 1830 and in 1831 drew up a very liberal constitution

In Switzerland in 1847 the **Sonderbundkrieg** broke out. This came about because radicals in the government of the Protestant cantons wanted to draw Switzerland into a closer unity and dictate terms. The Catholic cantons reacted by recalling the Jesuits to Lucerne and forming the Sonderbund in 1843, which was a violation of the Federal Treaty of 1815. The cantons of Neuchâtel and Appenzell Innerrhoden, which both had a strong Catholic minority population, officially declared their neutrality in the conflict and refused to provide troops for the Confederation.

War broke out after the closure of monasteries and convents in Aargau in 1841,<sup>[2]</sup> and the seizure of their properties. The Catholics wanted to protect their interests against a centralization of power. After a series of skirmishes which cost the lives of only a few hundred troops, the Catholics surrendered. In 1848, a new Swiss Federal Constitution ended the almost-complete independence of the cantons and transformed Switzerland into a federal state. The Jesuits were banished from Switzerland.

In 1872 in Prussia the pietistically inclined iron duke, Bismark, urged on by radicals, conducted a campaign (the so-called *Kulturkampf*) against the Catholic church: he was afraid that the Catholics (who composed one third of the population of his empire) in Silesia, the Rheinland and Alsace Lorraine threatened the unity of his empire.

Neither Bavaria nor Austria were affected. Thousands were imprisoned and many left the country. The problem was only solved when a more moderate pope and a more moderate Kaiser came to power and signed a concordat.

**The 1848 Revolution and its aftermath:** After 1830 there came a wave of political liberalism which came to a climax in the revolution of 1848. After violent conflict the liberals were able to drive the monarchs out of many capitals and forced Metternich to flee Vienna, but Austrian armies reoccupied Vienna and put down revolutions in Bohemia, Italy and Hungary and the Prussian king recaptured Berlin. Events in Italy did nothing to change the tune of the Vatican. The pope had refused to back the Italians against Austria, which occupied Northern Italy (Südschweiz). Garibaldi entered Rome at the head of a liberal army and the pope had to flee. He was reinstated by the French in 1850. Liberals, in the mean time had taken over the northern Italian state of Piedmont and under Camillo Cavour, the prime minister, introduced a number of laws offensive to the Church. Cavour wanted to unite the whole of Italy under Piedmont. He seized the papal states, leaving only the city of Rome for the pope. The pope's army was decisively beaten at the battle of Castelfidardo in 1860. Neither France nor Austria intervened to save the pope. In the face of this, the pope decided on a policy of intransigence. He would try to recapture the papal states again. He issued his *Syllabus of Errors* which was his final 'no' to Catholic liberals. The (issued in 1864) listed some 80 errors which were condemned including rationalism, naturalism, and socialism that would subject a family to the State, liberal capitalism which had no

other end but material gain. Most surprising of all he condemned freedom of religion.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> cent nationalism and republicanism predominated. Mazzini led a campaign to unite the various states of Rome into just one country, which meant that the pope would lose control of the Papal states. The pope denounced this new Italian nationalism and called on all Catholics to reject it. He threatened Italians with excommunication if they participated in the political life of the state. In 1849 Garibaldi took Rome, but Napoleon III of France sent an army to get it back. In 1870 the French army withdrew and the Italian king Victor Emmanuel III declared a united Italy. The pope retreated behind the walls of the Vatican, now a virtual prisoner. For the next 60 years there was a stand-off between the Vatican and the Italian state. In 1929 Mussolini solved the problem by signing the Lateran Pact with the pope which created the Vatican State. Now for the first time sacred and secular power were separate in the Holy city.

**The First Vatican Council** (1870): In France, Gallicanism continued to rear its ugly head and the pope clamped down on this by siding exclusively with the ultramontanists. He encouraged priests to appeal directly to him even over the head of their bishop. In Rome he established national seminaries for each country. Many orders were encouraged to establish their headquarters in Rome. In this way the pope was able to dominate them and use them as his agents. He also adopted a new life style, walking out among the people, encouraged the cult of the "Holy Father". A new personal devotion to the pope developed. The archbishop of Rheims called it "idolatry of the papacy". Matters finally came to a head at

the First Vatican Council of 1870 at which the doctrine of papal infallibility was propounded.

This seems to have been due more to the vanity of the pope himself than to any particular grouping within the church. Even before the council convened, many sensed that this was the topic that was going to come up as a definitive answer to the liberals and as a defence against liberalism.

**Döllinger** was the leader of the German intellectuals who had opposed the ultra-montane movement as an antihistorical conception of Church order alien to modern concepts of liberty and in fact nothing but a medieval creation based on notorious forgeries. In his book *The Pope and the Council*, Döllinger presented the history of the papacy as a history of usurpation of power over the church. In France similar sentiments were expressed by Maret and Darboy, archbishop of Paris, but in more moderate form. In Croatia, Strossmayer sided with Döllinger and also wrote a book condemning papal infallibility.

During the council even the moderates tried to urge upon the pope the necessity of defining infallibility with reference to church councils or tradition, but he would have none of it, saying: "Tradition, tradition. I am tradition!". Sixty bishops of the minority, whose consciences would not let them subscribe to the definition, and unwilling to make a public issue, quietly packed their bags and left. The remaining 535 voted in favour. Henceforth the Pope did not need to consult a council when proclaiming a new doctrine.

The council was brought to an abrupt halt by the news that the Italian army was about to capture Rome!

Döllinger was excommunicated for his insubordination and this led to the formation of the **Old Catholic Church**

in German speaking Europe. They called it 'Old' because, in their opinion, as a result of the First Vatican Council, virtually a new Catholic church had been created which bore little resemblance to the previous one. They adopted the declaration of Utrecht as a basis for faith and thus allied themselves with discontented Jansenists (the Church of Utrecht) who had left the Roman Church in 1724. They also rejected the Council of Trent and especially the doctrine of transsubstantiation. Today they have approximately 350,000 members and are very prominent in Switzerland

In 1854 he had issued a papal Bull making the doctrine of the **Immaculate Conception** a dogma.

Both Augustine and Aquinas had denied this doctrine. It was Duns Scotus (a Franciscan) that first propounded it. Controversy developed between the Franciscans and the Dominicans, with the Vatican refusing to take sides. As a result, the doctrine was not even discussed at the Council of Trent. It was, however, revived in the 19th century, in order to bolster up papal infallibility. It is significant to note that the dogma was promulgated, not on the basis of either Scripture or Tradition, but of consensus: a majority vote among those who were consulted.

In 1950 Pius XII, without the backing of the council, defined and enforced the doctrine of the **Assumption**. The doctrine states that the dead body of Mary was assumed into heaven without experiencing corruption. This doctrine is not known before the 4th century, but was later held by John of Damascus. It is significant that the person of Mary was not even discussed at Vatican II, as if the Catholic church had decided that things had gone quite far enough.



Both these doctrines arise from an inadequate view of Christ's humanity. In this, monophysitism has undoubtedly played an important role. As Jesus is not seen as fully human, the vacuum is filled by Mary. A denial of Christ's humanity leads to mariolatry (the cult of Mary), whereas a denial of His divinity leads to the doctrine of the mass (a repetition of Christ's sacrifice).

Another question with which the Church had to deal was that of **social action**. The industrial revolution had brought great numbers of people off the land and herded them into congested areas of smoky factories and dingy streets in a way that made the average person susceptible to mass suggestion and mass action. In 16th century the poorest class had comprised one fifth of the population. In the initial phases of the industrial revolution, there was appalling squalor and appalling exploitation, especially of child labour (boys and girls under 18 regularly made up half the labour force). Initially two forces were at work: exploitive capitalism and extreme socialism, both of which tended to dehumanize the worker and absorb him in a mass movement where he lost his identity.

The Catholic Church was very slow in coming to grips with the problem. Lammenais and a few other enlightened Germans correctly analyzed the problems, but the rest were antiquated and merely wanted to get back to the medieval guild system.

**The Salesians** (Society of S. François de Sales): In 1855 Giovanni Bosco founded the Congregation of the Salesians in Turin. The aim of this order was to educate boys from poor backgrounds. This educational system

was founded on principles of reason, kindness and the Christian faith, and was known as the 'preventative system'. As far as possible, Silesians tried to avoid punishing and tried to gain love before inspiring fear. This was in contrast to the often brutal methods commonly used by the Christian Brothers!

By 1880 it was pretty clear that the working class in France had been lost to the Church. It was only after this that any sort of Catholic social action began, and this was limited mostly to Belgium, Holland and Germany. In 1891 the pope issued his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which has been called the Magna Carta of social Catholicism. In 1912 the JOC (Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique) was founded in Belgium.

**Stand taken against modern thought:** Yet another problem facing the Catholic Church was its attitude to modern thought, including theological liberalism. Although a large majority of Europeans still professed some form of Christianity, a significant minority repudiated it and a large number were drifting away. The Modernists proposed the solution of accommodating the Church to modern thought, but the Vatican was in no mood to give them a hearing. Pope Pius IX had succeeded in putting down the liberal Catholic movement and Vatican I had ratified a general policy of hostility to modern culture. The Modernist movement, strongest in France began in 1890, was condemned in 1907 and came to an end in 1910. It was only vindicated in 1965 at Vatican II. The approach of the movement was basically threefold:

1. Accommodation to liberal theology.
2. Attack on the scholastic system as being totally incompatible with biblical thought.

3. Attack on various legends and half-truths that had been concocted to bolster up Catholic claims. An insistence on real historical method.

In France, the movement was connected with Duchesne and Loisy. Loisy tried to defend Catholicism, especially NT history, against the views of Harnack and Sabatier in much the same way as Ritschl had done, but the pope reckoned that they gave away too much and in 1910 issued the encyclical *Pascendi* which condemned modernism as heretical. Henceforth, all priests had to take an anti-modernist oath and subscribe to Thomist philosophy.

**The Second Vatican Council** (1962-65): In 1959 Pope John XXIII had announced his intention of holding this council. The Church needed to come to terms with the modern world, a decision that had been shelved since the 19th century. The pope's new life-style prefigured what was to come. The goals of the Council were stated to be: the Renewal of the Church, the Unity of all Christians, and dialogue with the world. At the Council a head-on collision occurred between the modernists and the conservatives, as embodied by the Curia.

At first the Curia tried to dominate everything by being in charge of the drawing up of documents, but then the liberal bishops managed to short-circuit this by getting in on these committees. However, the liberals were thwarted again by the new Pope, Paul, who in a desire to appease the conservatives, modified documents at the last minute that had been submitted for the vote. If they protested they then risked having the whole text quashed. One such change occurred in the document on The Church: the pope intervened to reverse the

emphasis on the importance of college of cardinals in decision making – papal supremacy and independence were reasserted. In another document *On Ecumenism* a less conciliatory tone towards the Protestants was imposed at the last moment.

At least five major changes in the Catholic Church came out of the Council:

1. **Liturgical**. The mass was to be translated from Latin into the various national languages, and great participation of the laity was to be encouraged.

2. **Authority**. The Church was to be less of a rigid hierarchical structure made up of those who gave orders and those who obeyed. Now there was to be greater participation by the laity and lay ministry was to be given greater recognition.

3. **Ecumenism**. The ultimate goal of ecumenism was no longer viewed as the return of individual Protestants to the Catholic Church but the reunion of all separated brethren in a sort of commonwealth, (presided over by Rome). Catholics were to engage in common prayer with Protestants and cooperate with them in social action.

4. **Scholasticism was thrown out** and emphasis placed on dynamic historical development of ideas. This really let the door open for liberalism.

5. **Dialogue with the modern secular world**. The church's role is henceforth seen in terms of service to the world and mediation.

Mary was proclaimed Mother of the Church. A move by Polish Catholics to have her proclaimed Co-Mediatrix was not taken up. A proposal to devote the world to Mary gave rise to heated discussion.

Vatican II hit the Catholic world like a shock wave. The average Catholic was left in a state of complete

bewilderment. Many liberals looked on the formulations of the Council as mere words – the authoritarian structure was still there and the pope was still at the top (his powers of consultation with the bishops was purely optional). When he issued his encyclical *Humanitae Vitae* on birth control, he was criticized by many for not having consulted his bishops. Cardinal Suenens, one of the architects of Vatican II, put himself at the head of this protest movement. In Holland the Dutch Catholics set up a National Council to which they referred instead of the Vatican, but this was abolished by the pope. To date, the toughest battles have been fought on the questions of morality and papal infallibility.

Since Vatican II there has been a big decline in the number of vocations (in the USA as high as 30%), and in church-going. Many priests have left the church (a rise of 30% from before the Council), which reflects a calling in question of the traditional role of the priest.

One of the most promising signs of renewal in the Catholic Church, according to some, has been the remarkable growth of the charismatic or neo-pentecostal movement. In 1960 a new brand of pentecostalism appeared which was not sectarian, but not until 1967 did it make any inroads into Catholicism. It started at Notre Dame university in USA and spread all over the country. In Europe it gained cardinal Suenens to its ranks. In 1975 pope Paul blessed their cause. Unlike classic pentecostalism, it is not strict on doctrinal matters, and so can "embrace" Catholicism.

Another recent issue inside the Catholic Church has been social justice in South America. Whereas previously the Church had been hand in glove with the

forces of reaction, now a new departure has been in evidence. Both Cardinal Silva Henriquez of Chile and Dom Helder Camara in Brazil have spoken out against right-wing tactics. Dictators have escalated offensives against dissident clergy. Many priests and nuns have been imprisoned, tortured, lynched or executed. One of the most divisive issues now facing the church is the ordination of women to the priesthood. The Church has so far stood very firm on this issue.

Pope Paul VI went even further than Vatican II. He demanded a "simplification" of Catholic worship and relegated the saying of the rosary to the realm of private devotions. His successor, John Paul I would no doubt have gone even further had his life not been tragically (some say, criminally) cut short.

**The conservative reaction:** Pope John Paul II was known to be very conservative and one gets the impression that he was very unhappy with the implications of Vatican II and has even tried to put the clock back. To this end he appointed his men to certain key ecclesiastical positions. He also encouraged mass rallies.

**Veritatis Splendor** (1993): This new papal encyclical contains a reaffirmation of papal infallibility and even extends it to areas of conduct. It is a condemnation of moral relativism and an unambiguous confirmation of the church's stance on moral issues such as birth control and its refusal to permit RC theologians to debate or question matters of doctrine.

Later Cardinal Ratzinger issued an encyclical entitled *Jesus Dominus* (no doubt with the full backing of the pope) in which he reversed the Vatican's attitude to

"separated brethren" and to other religions. According to him, the Protestants are not part of the true church and other religions contain downright error. The pope himself issued a similar statement more recently.

**Opus Dei:** this was a movement founded in Spain during Franco's rule, in order to combat 'liberalism'. The members of this movement aimed to infiltrate and influence the universities. From small beginnings in 1928 it has grown to be the largest lay order within the Catholic Church: it now has 80,000 members (more than a quarter of which are in Spain). By comparison, orders such as the Jesuits and Franciscans only have 30,000 members each. Because of its ideals, it is a very effective organisation through which a conservative like pope John-Paul was able to try and reverse some of the 'damage' done by the Second Vatican Council and the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968). In many ways it is like the Jesuit movement.

There are other recent militant movements within the Catholic church, such as the *Knights of the Holy Sepulchre* (18,000) founded in 1923 by Von Papen, and the *Opus Angelorum* founded in 1947 (now numbers 1 million in Austria + Germany).

**The paedophilia scandal:** The Catholic church has been rocked by the paedophilia scandal, especially in Southern Ireland where the church has simply lost credibility. In fact it has been said that the three pillars of Southern Irish society have collapsed: the economy, the church and politics. Added to this has been the phenomenon of widespread immigration which in some cities is as high as 20%. These factors have all combined to make Irish society much more receptive to evangelism

if carried out sensitively and with due regard to traditional Irish culture.

### **PROTESTANTISM IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE**

Shortly before the French Revolution, the Methodist Church had planned to set up a base in the Channel Isles from which to evangelise France. These plans were delayed until 1815 when things had calmed down. Charles Cook began to work in France where a vigorous branch of the Methodist Church was established as a result of his efforts.

Another important development took place in Switzerland in 1816 where Robert Haldane, a wealthy Scotsman, began to preach and expound Romans to the students at the university of Geneva, some of whom subsequently became important names in French Protestantism: Merle d'Aubigné, César Malan, Adolphe Monod and Louis Gaussen. These men initiated a veritable revival in Switzerland which also spread to France. Shortly afterwards there appeared in the canton of Vaud a wealthy lady named Mme de Krüdener who had come from Paris to spread the Gospel. Methodist preachers also arrived. Two other Swiss names of note were: Alexandre Vinet, a great theologian, and F.L. Godet, famous for his commentaries. Adolphe Monod went on to become the greatest French Protestant preacher of the century and his brother Frederick did a similar work, founding the union of Evangelical Churches in France.

In Holland, the most prominent evangelical was Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a Calvinistic theologian who was also a politician (Prime Minister 1901-5). He emphasized the common grace of God to all people. In 1880 he opened the Free University of Amsterdam (free



from all Church and State control). Six years later he broke away from the reformed Church with 100,000 people and formed the Re-reformed Church. He firmly opposed higher Criticism and advocated a consistent Christian approach to all aspects of life.

## THEOLOGY IN THE 20TH CENT

**Harnack** (1851-1930) was the most important theologian of the first decade of the 20th century. Anxious to communicate Christianity to the men of his age, he was nevertheless guilty of compromise. Harnack was a specialist in historical theology. He believed with Ritschl that the Gospel had been corrupted by the alien influence of Greek philosophy, but that the process had started in the New Testament with Paul. The simple religion *of* Jesus had been changed, especially by Paul, into a religion *about* Jesus, which in turn was transformed into the dogma of the incarnation of the Son of God.

According to Harnack, the essence of Christianity lay in three central truths which he found in the teachings of Jesus: the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and the infinite value of the individual human soul. Christianity was about the religion of Jesus, rather than the religion about Jesus, the essence of which was filial and individual trust in the divine fatherhood. Ultimately the kingdom of God is the "treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God". The accounts of the teaching of Jesus as being about the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, claimed to be scientific and objective. In fact the authors were filtering out those features of the Gospel accounts (such as the supernatural) which they found unpalatable.

Though a liberal in theology (he clashed with his former pupil, Karl Barth, on this) he was very conservative in his dating of the NT documents.

His principal book *Das Wesen des Christentums* was a best-seller in its day. Harnack was knighted in 1914 and offered the post of German ambassador to USA in 1921 (which he refused). The final post he occupied was the chair of theology in Berlin 1889-1921. The appointment was opposed by the faculty because of his liberal views, but upheld by the Prussian cabinet and the emperor. These liberal views were that he doubted the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel and other NT books and his rational interpretations of biblical miracles, including the resurrection. Because of this he was never permitted to give exams to the students. So although suspect, his views became popular because of the support of the rationalistic Prussian establishment. It was a question of the State backing someone over the heads of the church.

**Barth** (1886-1968) The Theology of Crisis which came into prominence after WW1 was closely connected with the name of Karl Barth. WW1 itself played no small part in preparing the way for such a theology, for it marked the end of the prevailing idea of inevitable progress through intellectual enlightenment and moral endeavour. As Niebuhr had put it, the old theology was in an impasse, for it had claimed a "God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross". As early as 1892 Johannes Weiss (1863-1914), a NT scholar from the Ritschlian tradition, had said that his studies of the Gospels had convinced him that the kingdom which Jesus had proclaimed was an eschatological reality to be revealed in the near future by

a sovereign act of God. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) developed this idea to an unhealthy extreme: he argued that Jesus was wholly dominated by the imminent end of the present world order, and that he attempted to force its arrival by his death. The end did not come and so he was a heroic failure. Ritschl's idea had been the result of his evolutionary background of the 19th century, one altogether alien to the apocalyptic context of first century Palestine.

Barth came to the conclusion, against the background of a world gone mad, that the true and living God who revealed himself in the Bible was completely different from the God who had been argued into existence by the philosophers. Only if men acknowledged their bankruptcy could they hope to approach him and hear his voice. It was in this frame of mind that he published his commentary on Romans which dropped like a theological bombshell.

Although he was Swiss and from a Calvinist background, he did most of his theological training in Germany. It was also in Germany that he mostly taught as professor (Göttingen, Münster and Bonn). In 1919 he published his book *der Römerbrief* (The Epistle to the Romans) which was a co-operative effort between himself, Brunner and Bultmann). His participation in the Barmen Synod of 1934 led to his dismissal, when he returned to Switzerland where he became professor at the university of Basle. It was here that he wrote his most famous work: *Kirchendogmatik* which was translated, along with many of his other works, into numerous foreign languages. Among the theological influences that he absorbed there were: Kant, Hegel, Kirkegaard and J. Weiß. Although he appeared to many to be evangelical in his emphases, he was in fact an existentialist and brought with him many preconceptions from classic

liberal theology. Many well-meaning Christians were fooled by this particularly in the 1930s and afterwards lived to regret it.

Towards the end of his life, Barth was criticised by the liberals for being too evangelical and by the evangelicals for being too liberal.

He appears to come as a welcome relief from the liberal theology of the 19th century which put man in the centre of the universe. But what he replaces this by is not Biblical theology but existentialism. The weakness of his theology can be seen if we look at the following points:

1) His new Dialectical Theology (also known as Crisis Theology or Neo-orthodoxy): he approaches the Bible with the preconceptions of a man who has been heavily influenced by Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger. He interprets the Bible in terms of the Hegelian dialectic. The acrobatics of the dialectic (right and wrong can be combined in one system to produce a synthesis) enable him to end up with universalism (ultimately all men will be saved) and pluralism (both Catholics and Protestants are right).

Barth sees God himself as being a supreme contradiction, for though in him was both darkness and light, he overcame the darkness. Each Christian is faced with the same struggle but he fails and therefore needs redemption. This is pure gnostic dualism.

Jesus is the supreme example of the dialectic for he is both man exalted and God in his humiliation. For Barth, the value of a historical event is that it reveals a philosophical idea: humiliation of the Son is not just a historical event but part and parcel of the essential character of God.

2) According to Barth, God's revelation is limited to the Person of Jesus. The rest of the Bible is a collection of the fallible testimonies of men to the hidden revelation of

God. Therefore the Bible cannot be called the Word of God or His revelation. Only Christ can be called this. But if this is the case, how do we know that the NT is an accurate record of it? Barth comes to his conclusion on the basis of the theologies that have influenced him: Lutheran christomonism, existentialism and hegelianism.

3) Natural Theology is dismissed as of no importance: Because only the Bible contains the Word of God, everything else must be tested by it. He thus presented a major challenge to the Nazi interpretation of Christianity to fit the mood of the times. This a similar reaction to that of Luther when confronted by the claims of the Catholic Church. He has no time for Natural Theology because he sees it as a human attempt to bipass divine revelation. However, it is clear that the Bible does talk about both natural theology and divine revelation.

4) He takes as his starting point the idea that everyone is in a covenant relationship with God. Sin is an attempt to break away from this relationship, which is ultimately doomed to failure because God will have the last word, thanks to what he has done in Christ.

From all this, we can see that Barth is playing around with philosophical concepts and has no interest in history because (he implies) history cannot be known with certainty. Although he has many good things to say, in the end it is his unbiblical speculation that proves to be his undoing. Barth can therefore be called the Origen of the 20th century.

**Tillich** (1886-1965), since 1933 exiled in the USA from Germany, really takes us back to the beginning of the 19th century. He believes that Christianity must be expressed in terms of the philosophy of the day, so as to reach the man of the world. According to him, philosophy

poses the questions to which theology gives the answers. He is only interested in answering questions that non-Christians are asking. He claimed to take apologetics seriously by adapting the Christian message to the modern mind without losing its distinctive character. Unfortunately he did not succeed, and philosophy got the better of him, so that what he ended up with did not bear much relation to Christianity but was more like Buddhism. He denies that there is any biblical norm of divine truth which theologian must pass on from age to age. In other words he is a Hegelian who says that Christianity is correct to the extent to which it expresses the *Zeitgeist*, or philosophy of the times.

**Bultmann** (1884-1976) of Marburg also believed that the forms in which the Gospel is presented must take account of contemporary man's understanding of his own existence. That is why he insisted on the need to demythologize the Gospel – to rid it of its Hebrew world view (3-storey universe, supernatural beings coming and going from earth). By "myth" Bultmann meant any attempt to express in images that which transcends the world. He came to be very sceptical about the historical reliability of the Gospels as reports of facts, and was extremely pessimistic about the extent of our historical knowledge of Jesus. Bultmann arrived at these conclusions, having started out from certain presuppositions of **form criticism**: according to this theory much biblical material circulated in oral form before it was written down; every type or form of material in the Bible was determined by the typical situation (necessity in Israel or in the Early Church). i.e. preaching, argument, teaching. Hence, the Gospels reflect the theology of the Early Churches rather than the facts about Jesus. So, according to him, the Early Church

proclaimed the Risen Christ of their own experience rather than the actual historical facts about Jesus.

19th century liberalism confidently reconstructed a portrait of the "Jesus of history", Jesus as he really was, who turned out to be a good liberal Protestant. Bultmann rejected this liberal quest and replaced it by an extreme form of historical scepticism about Jesus, which is really an existentialist version of Christianity. It give Christianity an existentialist interpretation and in so doing reduces the NT message to a close approximation to the teaching of the secular existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger. He therefore demythologizes Christianity of its obsolete world view but in eliminating the supernatural he turns theology into anthropology. Whereas Augustine had given a neo-platonic view of Christianity and Aquinas an aristotelian one, they did at least accept the ultimate authority of Scripture. Bultmann, however, did not accept this as an a priori.

Some of Bultmann's former pupils have sought to pay more attention to the Jesus of history than Bultmann did, but they did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. They are E Käsemann of Tübingen, G. Bornkamm of Heidelberg of E. Fuchs of Marburg. If the word was made flesh, as we believe, this means that we must take the historical part of the Gospel accounts seriously. Käsemann believed that Jewish apocalyptic is the key to the thought of the apostle Paul, whereas Hans Conzelmann of Tübingen denies that Jesus was an apocalyptic figure (Son of Man, Messiah, Son of God). According to Fuchs, Jesus was a historic person, but he did not preach repentance or the imminence of the kingdom of God. The important thing for him is to have Jesus's faith in God's future. Gerhard von Rad and

Martin Noth were form critics and OT specialists. According to them the Bible is neither history nor literature, but represents the confession of faith of the community of Israel. However both of them did restore the status of the OT at a time (the postwar period) when theology was still suffering from Nazi denigration of the Jews and the Old Testament in general.

**Redaction criticism** came into vogue: the study of how each individual Gospel-writer or editor shaped the material that came to him in such a way as to reveal *his own special theological emphasis*. Another tendency is to say that in the Bible we find not one theology but *many theologies*

**Bonhoeffer** (1906-1945). His great desire was to communicate the Gospel to an age, which he reckoned had become totally alienated from "religion". By religion he meant: salvation seen as escape into another world – with the result that this world is devalued and neglected; preoccupation with one's own piety, Christians living in a ghetto, speaking a totally different language, on an island being slowly eroded by the advance of the tide of secularism. All this means pietism or bourgeois religiosity, which he saw as childish Christianity and urged such Christians to grow up. Bonhoeffer therefore proposes "religionless" Christianity (an expression originally used by Barth to mean man-made religion), meaning Christianity shorn of all these things, radical Christianity (particularly suited to the crisis times of Nazi Germany). Only this sort of Christianity in fact stood up to the claims of Nazism and was prepared to suffer for it: the pietists and the church leadership mostly failed abysmally.



Central to Bonhoeffer's thought is the Lutheran **Theology of the Cross**. This insists that during the incarnation, God was nowhere else but in Christ. This is almost an anti-Trinitarian viewpoint. In the light of this, he totally rejected natural theology and held to God's absolute self-disclosure in Christ. He thus concentrates on the immanence of God. The danger here is that God's transcendence is lost and Jesus the man is worshipped instead of the Triune God. Bonhoeffer was also greatly influenced by the personalist philosophy of Martin Buber which virtually implied that personality was in itself divinity (for man is made in the image of God). Christ is God in the sense that He was a perfect Man. Therefore "we see God in other people". He also says that Jesus was the "man for others", and that we are to follow his example. This is almost "salvation through actions" (an existentialist tenet). We therefore see in Bonhoeffer 3 currents of thought coalescing:

1. The Lutheran idea of Christ in the sacrament (therefore God is confined to a body). This is a hang-over from Catholicism.
2. The 19th century presupposition that Jesus was only a man.
3. The existentialist ideas of salvation through action, and of personality being divine (cf. Martin Buber).

Bonhoeffer taught theology in Berlin but then went to Union Theological Seminary in NY where he became disenchanted with liberalism and was attracted to Barth's theology. He held a pastorate in London and then moved to USA. After Hitler's coming to power, the Confessing Church invited him to return to Germany and head an unofficial seminary. When this was closed by the authorities, he continued the same work underground. He then joined Admiral Canaris in the Abwehr where he

worked as a double agent, often visiting Sweden to confer with Bishop Bell whom he persuaded to propose that the British government support the conspirators and sign a separate peace with Germany. His arrest in 1943 arose from his involvement in smuggling 14 Jews to Switzerland. It was only subsequently that it was discovered that he had some connection with the July bomb plot. He was imprisoned and executed in Flossenbürg concentration camp in April 1945, just before the Americans arrived.

In the 1960s the **God is Dead School** came into prominence. Van Buren meant by the expression that the *word* God is dead; language about God has ceased to have any meaning. **Thomas Altizer** was more radical in his assertion (inspired from Nietzsche, Hegel and Blake) that God died when Christ died on the cross. But if God is dead, somehow he is represented by Jesus. This idea was more recently taken up by **Dorothea Sölle** (1929-2003) who maintained that God has totally withdrawn from this world and placed history in the hands of man.

**Pannenberg** of München was one of the most important theologians of the 70s. He sharply disagreed with Bultmann and his followers: to deny the resurrection is to approach the question with an unwarranted preconception: Dead men do not rise. The saving acts of God do not belong exclusively to "redemption history" but must be understood within the wider context of history as a whole, all of which is related to God. Pannenberg reacted against Karl Barth in taking the historical Jesus very seriously. In fact, he says, the historicity of Jesus is the basis of our faith. Only on this basis can we decide whether Jesus was divine or not and go on to put our

faith in him. Of course, examination of historical facts can only lead us to a high degree of probability; it cannot prove anything absolutely, but that is where commitment and faith takes over.

**Pittinger and Process Theology.** Process Philosophy states that the real person (the real "I") is not an entity or an individual who happens to pass through time but the series of experiences that make up the process of my life. Change and becoming is ultimate. This fits in well with an evolutionist viewpoint. When this is adapted to theology, it means that all the emphasis is placed on God as immanent and therefore active in the world. Hence, they say, He cannot know the future because He is bound to time and space. Against a God who is impassive, Pittinger opposes a God who suffers with us (an idea held by the previous pope). God is almost dependent upon the universe which is eternal. So we end up with a sort of pantheism. God's transcendence is neglected. It starts off by being a healthy reaction against Greek thought which pictured God as being remote and unchanging (almost like an idea), but ends up by going too far in the other direction. This also the view of A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947).

**Moltmann** of Tübingen is another prominent figure (cf. *Theology of Hope*, 1965). He criticised the Marxist explanation of Christianity: it was not a tool for oppressing others. In fact it had itself begun as an oppressed movement, so it was important to get back to primitive Christianity and to recover its vision and driving force, which essentially eschatological. The modern church, under the influence of Greek philosophy, has lost this perspective. He argues that hope still lies ahead and that the people of God are a pilgrim people – one with

the poor and the oppressed (who will inherit God's new earth). Salvation involves a faith that is socially relevant. In the cross, Jesus identified himself with those who were abandoned, and challenged the status quo. Moltmann seeks to restore eschatology to the centre of theology. He calls the church to live in an eschatological perspective, not one which is a prisoner of the past. He rightly sees all Christian theology against an eschatological perspective. But his particular interpretation of eschatology happens to be post-millennial. Mission is seen as the transformation of the world in anticipation of the promised new creation; it is basically to build the kingdom of God now, with all its social ramifications like social justice, peace etc. But in reacting against a merely spiritual salvation, he goes too far in the other direction and ends up with not just a social Gospel but a **political Gospel**. According to him, the Church, in order to accomplish "mission", must be renewed, but by renewal he means: Jesus, with all his revolutionary demands, must be seen as head of the Church, not the establishment. The Church must serve to liberate man from racial differences and every other form of slavery. It must be *ecumenical* and it must be *political*; it must take sides with the oppressed and the humiliated. This "theology of hope", as he calls it, has been very influential both in the World Council of Churches and in Liberation Theology.

The movement has now gone into decline chiefly because of lack of money, the deaths of colourful and controversial characters and the passing of the cold war era which had provided a certain excitement.

### **Liberation Theology**

It is essentially a South American phenomenon and a Roman Catholic movement. It started off by being an

analysis of the South American situation by radical Catholics; the basic problem is oppression which can only be countered by liberation. A moderate view which was issued at the Second Latin American episcopal conference soon became submerged under a stampede in a more radical direction. The Marxists were pleased to jump on this band wagon also, of course. Liberation theology played a significant role in uniting Nicaragua behind the Sandanista movement, which came to power after deposing the dictator Somoza. Liberation theology really builds upon the Marxist analysis of the Latin American situation. Salvation is reinterpreted in terms of *political* liberation.

Most of its exponents are South Americans. They are only interested in what the Bible says about social justice. (For instance, both the OT and the teaching of Jesus forbid private property – we have not understood this because we read the Bible through capitalist eyes.) We must not begin with theology or with the Bible but with our own place in the world (cf. Marx – "things as they are") and our own attempts to change it. In other words, we are only prepared to listen to the Bible in so far as it agrees with Karl Marx. The Bible is thus being used as a convenient tool with which to advance the cause of communism (disguised as social concern).

**Hans Urs von Balthasar** (1905-88) was a Catholic theologian of immense erudition and seen by some as great as Karl Barth, with whom he did indeed a friendship. However, he does not seem to have made any startling new contribution to theology beyond saying that Christianity has an aesthetic side that should be taken into account (*The Glory of the Lord: Aesthetics*, published in 1961) As a conservative Catholic he was worried by such people as Karl Rahner and Hans Küng.

### **Karl Rahner (1904-84) and anonymous Christianity.**

Both Cyprian and the Fourth Lateran Council had quite clearly stated that outside the Church there is no salvation. Rahner, who was a Jesuit, sets out to explain statements by the Vatican that even people outside the Catholic Church can be saved. He says that anyone who is true to himself has experienced Christ's grace without knowing it and is therefore an "anonymous Christian". All that is required is "*moral* commitment", not religious commitment. Since men can be saved without reference to the Christian Gospel, then the Church must abandon its religious concerns in favour of the vital and pressing social concerns of the day. This sort of thinking influenced the World Council of Churches and Liberation theology. However, the weakness in Rahner's position is that he takes an exceptional possibility (that someone who has not heard the Gospel may be in a state of grace) and makes it into the norm – so the church is to treat all men as if they were anonymous Christians. His starting point is human experience and not God's revelation. As everyone is made in the image of God, we all have a God-consciousness (whether we like to call it that or not): it is how we respond to this that determines our eternal destiny. As one Catholic writer put it, Rahner had the misfortune to get carried away when he said this, and yet this is precisely the line that the present pope seems to be taking.

The formal principle of the Catholic Church is *sola ecclesia* (the church itself determines the nature and development of Christian doctrine), but her material principle is salvation by sincerity, or soteriological inclusivism (the notion that people, particular members of other religions or none, can be saved through the work of Christ by sincerely living up to their lights, without explicit

knowledge of, or faith in, Christ). What this means in fact is that evangelicals involved in the Evangelicals and Catholics Together movement are not dealing with a partner interested in genuine dialogue and the search for truth, but with a predominant group within Rome which seeks to redefine the whole concept of authority and the most basic doctrines of the Christian faith – and to take others in their direction. (Alan Howe, *CRN Journal*)

**Teilhard de Chardin** (1881-1955): was a Jesuit who tried to present Christianity in terms of evolutionary thought. Because of his unorthodox ideas he was forbidden by the Church to continue teaching as a geologist, so he moved to China where he worked as an archeologist (1926-46), specialising in primitive man. He then moved back to France but was forbidden to teach on philosophical subjects by the Catholic Church, so in 1951 he moved to USA where he eventually died. During his lifetime he was restrained by his order and forbidden to publish his works. When he died, his friends, however, did so. There are three possible approaches to evolution: a) to refuse it, b) to say that Christianity and Evolution are both saying the same thing, c) to re-interpret Christianity in terms of evolution. It is this third radical approach that Teilhard adopted. As in Process Theology, God is identified with the dialectic. Matter is seen as conscious with God at its highest level. Christ's body is seen as the equivalent of the cosmos itself. It is a pantheistic system which in many ways reminds one of hinduism. Sin is defined in evolutionary terms (immaturity, a wrong turning). Augustine had reinterpreted Christianity in terms of neo-platonism, Aquinas in terms of Aristotle, and Teilhard in terms of evolution.

**Hans Küng** (1928- ): he is a Swiss theologian who studied in Lucerne, Rome and Paris. His theological work has been dominated by three main concerns: apologetics, ecumenism and reform in the Catholic Church. His doctoral thesis was on the subject of Justification by Faith, which he sees as the same doctrine as what the Protestants believe. In his work, he compares the work of Karl Barth with the dogmas of the Council of Trent. He gives the historical Jesus and the NT Gospel priority over against Catholic tradition but he also sees the need to be open to critical rationality and liberal attitudes of the modern world. He thereby assumes that both Protestants and Catholics accept Barth's teaching (universalism).

Küng was appointed theologian to Vatican II, but he was disappointed with its results. He wrote another book calling in question papal infallibility and seeing the Pope's role as being defined by that of Peter, who was a pastor (shepherd and servant). He strongly disagrees with the present pope's reactionary theology and regards himself as "his holiness' loyal opposition". He also maintains that dogma should be decided by the Church Council and not exclusively by the Pope. For this, he got a criminal record with the Vatican Security Bureau and was deprived of his professorship of Catholic theology at Tübingen, but the State created a special professorship for him. Today his main passion is that of communicating the Gospel to those who do not go to church.

In the Anglo-Saxon world the Anglican theologian **NT Wright** also approaches the doctrine of justification by faith from an ecumenical perspective (he has an ecumenical agenda): he wants to destroy what is separating Catholics and Protestants and reduce the Gospel to an acceptance of Jesus as Lord, without the necessity of believing the Gospel. He also wants to rid



Christianity of any taint of anti-semitism, which is commendable. A weak point in NT Wright's theology is that he fails to distinguish between biblical Judaism and rabbinical Judaism which Paul opposes in his epistles and which is precisely the difference which divides Protestants and Catholics. Rome had been profoundly influenced by rabbinical Judaism.

**Open theism**: is really a development of Process Theology and takes as its point of departure arminianism and seeks to develop it at the inevitable expense of the classic doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Its main proponent has been Clark Pinnock. Needless to say, his theology has been warmly welcomed by the charismatic camp. In an effort to recover the doctrine of a God who is dynamic, Pinnock goes so far as to say that God does not know the future, because he reacts or adapts to us. Some would object that he ends up with God made in the image of man.

The weakness of the doctrine is that it fails to take account of different levels of knowledge in the mind of God. If God is the ruler of the universe, then it follows that he knows the beginning from the end, but there is no reason why this should interfere with the dynamic character of his dealings with us. The doctrine is a failure to appreciate a super-mind that goes beyond our puny conceptions.

Here is a most revealing quote from one of the proponents of this point of view: "to be evangelical also entails being characterized by an irenic, Christlike spirit of love toward those with whom we disagree and a cautious openness to the reform of tradition *as the Spirit leads us* to fresh understandings of the Word that are even more faithful to the entirety of God's revelation."

*(The Word made Fresh: A call for a renewal of the Evangelical Spirit)*

**The Church and Israel.** The most recent trend in theology is the reestablishment of a link between Christianity and Judaism. In stark contrast to Harnack who had said that the Jewish Scriptures should be expunged from the canon of the Church, some theologians are now starting to take seriously the irrevocability of God's promises made to Israel. In this connection mention should be made of Rosenzweig (1886-1929) and P. Beauchamp (1924-2001).

## **THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

It was founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, but it arose out of three earlier movements, the stimulus for which came from a World Missionary Conference of 1910 which was held in Edinburgh. These movements were:

1. *The Faith and Order* movement which worked towards the reunion of divided denominations.
2. *The Life and Work* movement which was concerned with relation of Christian faith to social, political and economic questions.
3. *The International Missionary Council*.

So far six general assemblies have taken place, which is where all important decisions are made. These were held at Amsterdam (1948), Evanston, Illinois (1954), New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), and Vancouver (1983), Canberra (1991), Harare (1998) and Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006). It was at Uppsala that the more radical decisions started to be taken, especially under the influence of Karl Rahner: faith in Christ was absent in a mission document and all the accent was placed on social action. Some would even claim that by

preaching the Gospel to people, you are putting them in mortal danger because if they reject it, they go to hell, whereas previously they could not be held accountable and would by default go to heaven. Even more extreme statements were issued at the Bangkok conference on World Mission. Both The Eastern Orthodox and the Evangelicals objected. This led the Evangelicals to organise their own conference on Mission at Lausanne in 1974. They issued a much stronger statement on evangelism, and yet they were influenced by the world council in that they put a greater emphasis on the Third World and social involvement.

However, Evangelicals remain suspicious of the World Council of Churches because:

1. The deity of Christ is left undefined, though lip service is paid to it.
2. The Gospel has become emptied of its original meaning.
3. The Bible is not really accepted as inspired and its teaching taken seriously. It is used as a source book to back up whatever theory the WCC is propounding.
4. Universalism has become standard doctrine.
5. World history is interpreted in Marxist terms though in Christian vocabulary.
6. Right wing abuses of human rights are regularly condemned, but left wing abuses are conveniently swept under the carpet.

Recent developments: The World Council of Churches has not only drifted towards a unified church but a fusion of world religions. The Vatican with its longstanding compromise with paganism is in the forefront of this tendency. Roman catholic mysticism, with its roots in Greek philosophy, is probably in a transitional stage towards its final synthesis with world religions

## THE CHURCH IN A TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY

### 1) The German Church in the Third Reich

It is impossible to understand the ideas of Hitler and the Third Reich without reference to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900):

The main creed of the 19th century was belief in progress. It is typical of the 19th century, which became intoxicated by the sudden and rapid advance of natural sciences. The industrial revolution also served to confirm to men of that time that progress was inevitable. Its philosophical basis was laid by Hegel. Its scientific proof was supposedly provided by Darwin, and its economic proof supposedly provided by Marx. It was left to Nietzsche to provide us with the *moral* and *religious* implications of the theory.

In fact it is impossible to understand certain aspects of the 20th century without reference to Nietzsche.

He was born in Prussia, the son of a Lutheran minister. He had a brilliant mind and became a professor at the university of Basle on the recommendation of Ritschl. In the Franco-Prussian war he served as a hospital orderly. Afterwards he returned to teaching, retired in 1879. In 1889 he became insane.

He had been awakened by the work of Charles Darwin and what he took to be the nihilistic implications of evolutionary theory. He reckoned that this sounded the death-knell for Christianity and so for Christian morality. He advocated the idea of the superman, which was not a restoration of the divine image in man, but the end of an evolutionary process.

Four things seemed to have set him off:

1. The theory of Darwin, in particular the idea of the survival of the fittest in the battle for survival. This idea deeply influenced European morality by seeming to justify ruthless competition (capitalism), ruthless class warfare (communism), and ruthless nationalism (Nazi doctrine).

2. The fear that Europe was going decadent and not going to survive.

3. He wanted to find an excuse for overthrowing Christian morality and thus overthrowing God

4. He was sickened by the hypocrisy that he met amongst so-called Christians. They would parrot one thing in church on Sundays and appear to live virtuous lives, but in reality it was all a sham. This was then a revolt against the nominal Christianity of Prussian society.

Nietzsche makes psychology the basis of his approach to all problems. What he is implying is that his psychological insight has revealed to him that the weak, who ought to be eliminated in the struggle for the survival of the fittest, have evolved a system of Christian morality in order to survive and defeat the strong men, the noble savage, the blond beast. Such people are holding up progress and must be eliminated so that the strong may evolve into the superman. The weak must be subjugated by those who are strong. The European, says Nietzsche, has disguised himself in morality, because he has become a sick crippled animal. He therefore wants the European to throw off his shackles and let evolution take him where he should go. It is only in the realm that is beyond good and evil that real life begins. Religion is a neurosis which makes use of this illness. But why the European? Because Nietzsche was a European.

Nietzsche goes on to say: 'What thinker still needs the hypothesis of God?'

He goes on to praise amorality in the service of evolution. Anything is justified so long as it forwards the progress of the evolutionary process. War has to be accepted as something positive, for 'war is the father of all good'. Man must strive again to become a beast of prey, the magnificent blond beast greedily roaming after booty and victory...the animal must emerge again and go back to the jungle.'

Nietzsche states that nothing is true and everything is permitted. Nothing is true because all depends on the needs of the species which changes according to the demands of evolution. But even Nietzsche does not believe this. For instance he believes in a number of absolute truths himself: in heredity, for instance, and he certainly considers his psychology to be infallible. He claims there is no law – i.e. he wants to escape from conventional morality, but he wants to replace it by a new morality, for it is impossible to act without any code of behaviour. Thus man becomes his own god. This sort of thinking sounds familiar – 'you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.'

Nietzsche was always a great admirer of Napoleon, whom he saw as a sort of superman. In fact the prevailing worship of Napoleon had already shown that the admiration of warlike heroism reached a new peak as Christian faith lost hold over Europe. It was able to return because it was precisely on this point that Christianity failed to convert the European: to be a hero remained a supreme aim even in the Middle Ages when the strange ideal of chivalry combined Christianity with the idealization of battle.

Nietzsche's beliefs about heredity were rather alarming. He believed that the only way to arrive at the emergence of the superman was by breeding. Education could not do it. Therefore the deliberate breeding of a

master race and the suppression of breeding of others, the sterilisation of criminals and the annihilation of millions of misfits, was all advocated. The spectre of the Nazi gas chambers looms behind such statements.

It is the theory of evolution plus Nietzsche's application of it that led to the nightmare of the Nazi regime in Europe.

Nietzsche stated that God is dead. This is obviously not the statement of a straightforward atheist. The phrase refers rather to a loss of faith. Nietzsche recognises that Christianity has lost its hold over the majority of Europeans, especially over the majority of intellectuals, and that this is the most significant fact in the 19th century. As European civilisation had been based on the concept of God, the disappearance of faith must necessarily leave a void at the very heart of our civilisation. Instead of God, there is nothing. This is the basis of atheistic existentialism which was later to catch up with theology.

In the most horrible backlash ever to strike Europe, the German Nazi party, over 50 million people died. Hitler and the misery that he brought mankind, has no equal in history. We wonder why it happened in a civilised, democratic country, which also gave birth to Martin Luther and was the cradle of the Reformation. It happened because the moral guardians of Germany, the Lutheran Church, were riddled with liberal theology, abdicated their moral responsibility, ceased to preach absolute right and wrong, love and justice and all the moral certitudes which society needs. Into the moral chaos and lack of certainty came the firm voice of Adolf Hitler, and the people followed.

Hitler came to power in 1933 and in two years established more state control than Mussolini had been

able to do. But the Nazis were unable to win the full allegiance of the army and churchmen, and the support of workers and rural villagers was only lukewarm. Although Hitler had been born and reared a Catholic, he abandoned whatever Christian principles he had in favour of the secular philosophies of the day. But he never formally cut his ties with the church nor was he excommunicated. Hitler's hatred for the church was primarily political: he envied the power Catholicism had over its adherents, and despised Protestantism for its lack of unity and of authority. However, he courted both churches in his rise to power. Hitler regarded Christianity much as the Marxists did: a prop for old people, an opiate that would wither away. He despised Christianity as weak, and spearheaded a conscious return to paganism (having been influenced by Nietzsche) and associated values. The Nazis believed that the Arians were descendants of the supermen mentioned in Genesis 6 who had survived the flood. Hitler believed that the nordic race were descended from them and that in order to regain their ancient occult powers, it had to be purged of foreign elements and that through eugenics this racial purity could be regained. He therefore advocated a rejection of Christianity and a return to the pagan religion of the Nordic races.

Hitler declared that even the Christian faith was a Jewish plot. He said: "The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew". Hitler's long-term aim was the total and permanent destruction of Christianity. It is clear that Hitler was consciously in league with dark satanic forces, and on many occasions he exhibited the marks of demon possession, especially in the frenzy of his speeches.



According to Ernst Röhm, first leader of the SA, the Nazis were out to "lift the world off its hinges", to destroy the power both of the proletariat and the middle classes, and to found a new order of society with the commands of the demonic voices that spoke through Hitler. On one occasion he told Rauschning: "I will tell you a secret. I am founding an Order, and in the Ordensburgen (a sort of elite Nazi finishing school) there will stand as a statue for worship the figure of the magnificent, self-ordaining God-Man (i.e. Hitler himself)". Hitler at this point checked himself with the remark that these were matters of which even he must not permit himself to speak. On another occasion, Himmler confided that Hitler had detailed him to draw up a new religion for Nazi Europe. It would be a blend of ancient Germanic paganism, Eastern mysticism, and a bastardised Christianity in which Hitler would take the place of Christ. The real Christian church would be suppressed and eventually totally discredited. It is therefore clear that Adolf Hitler was the clearest type of the Antichrist that has yet appeared.

At first the Catholics were for this new movement but in 1937 the Pope issued an encyclical condemning "this new heathenism", after Catholics had suffered increasing restrictions. About 8,000 priests were sent to concentration camps, of which about 250 did not survive. About 3,000 pastors were imprisoned of which 21 were killed for the sake of the Gospel. In contrast, very few theological professors opposed Nazism; they just did nothing. Hitler reacted cautiously to this in order not to alienate too many Catholics. In particular the Nazis were reluctant to move against prominent churchmen. In 1941 such was the protest led by Bishop Galen of Münster that Hitler shelved his euthanasia programme. In 1944 some Catholics together with some liberals were involved in the July bomb plot.

The Scholl brother and sister distributed a remarkable tract just after the battle of Stalingrad and distributed it widely in Munich university:

"Who has counted the dead, Hitler or Goebbels? – to be sure, neither. In Russia thousands fall daily. It is the time of harvest and the reaper is in full swing among the ripe corn. Grief enters cottages in the homeland and no one is there to wipe dry the tears of the mothers, but Hitler lies to those whose dearest treasure he has robbed and driven to senseless death.

Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. If he says peace, he means war, and if in the most sacrilegious way he uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the stinking gate of hell, and his power is debased. Certainly one must conduct the battle against the National Socialist terror-state with every rational means, but whoever today still doubts the real existence of demonic powers has widely misunderstood the metaphysical background to this war. Behind the concrete, behind material perceptions, behind all factual, logical considerations stands the irrational, i.e. the battle against the demon, against the emissaries of the Anti-Christ . . . "

The Protestant church since 1918 (stunned by the defeat), remained suspicious of the new republic which seemed to them to be dominated by socialist and Catholic politicians. Protestants saw Nazism as a means of reasserting their cause. The constitution of 1919 provided for the separation of church and state but the church still retained a privileged status. Protestants were naturally drawn to Nazism as a reaction against an unfavourable status quo. Many Protestants, particularly theological conservatives, overlooked the anti-semitic

and pagan side of Nazism, and praised Hitler's anti-communism and call for "positive Christianity". In the 1930s there arose in the church a frankly pro-Nazi faction. The main attraction of Nazism for Protestants was its anti-communism.

In 1933 there was increasing pressure for centralised state control of the Church, which started with nomination of a Reichsbischof and ended up in 1935 with the appointment of a ministry of church affairs. The Reichsbischof had been Ludwig Müller who was leader of the "**German Christians**" who tried to be more Nazi than the Nazis, but Hitler (who despised religion) was unimpressed, as he listened to extremists in his party who wanted to total abolition of Christianity. This "positive Christianity" was largely steered from Berlin by church officials who were stooges of the Nazi Party.

The nazification of theology resulted in the disarding of the Old Testament, a rejection of the Jewish context of Christianity, the aryanising of Jesus, the downplaying or denial of the cross and atonement as symbols of weakness and defeat, and the recasting of Jesus as a heroic figure. All these tendencies reflect the heavy influence of Nietzsche's philosophy. The major issue that split the church was: was Christianity to be accommodated to the spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*) or not? The German Christians accepted this accommodation, with alarming results. Their slogans were: "The Swastika on our breasts, the Cross on our hearts"... "Christ has come to us through Adolf Hitler...we know today the Saviour has come...we have only one task, be German, not Christian" (Pastor Leutheuser). A Nazi version of Silent Night ran as follows: "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright. Only the Chancellor steadfast in fight, watches over Germany by day and night, always caring for us..."

What the Nazi government envisioned for Germany was clearly set out in a 30 Point programme for the "*Nationale Reichskirche*" drawn up during the war by Rosenberg, an outspoken pagan, who among his other offices held that of The Führer's Delegate for the entire intellectual and philosophical education and instruction for the National Socialist Party. A few of its thirty articles convey the essentials:

1. The National Reich Church of Germany categorically claims the exclusive right and the exclusive power to control all churches within the borders of the Reich: it declares these to be national churches of the German Reich.

5. The National Church is determined to exterminate irrevocably . . . the strange and foreign Christian faiths imported into Germany in the ill-omened year 800.

7. The National Church has no scribes, pastors, chaplains or priests, but National Reich orators are to speak in them.

13. The National Church demands immediate cessation of the publishing and dissemination of the Bible in Germany . . .

14. The National Church declares that to it, and therefore to the German nation, it has been decided that the Führer's *Mein Kampf* is the greatest of all documents. It . . . not only contains the greatest but it embodies the purest and truest ethics for the present and future life of our nation.

18. The National Church will clear away from its altars all crucifixes, Bibles and pictures of saints.

19. On the altars there must be nothing but *Mein Kampf* (to the German nation and therefore to God the most sacred book) and to the left of the altar a sword.

30. On the day of its foundation, the Christian Cross must be removed from all churches, cathedrals and

chapels . . . and it must be superseded by the only unconquerable symbol, the swastika.

The Nazis were very clever at adapting for their own purposes religious-sounding vocabulary and stirring music, by which they prostituted the Protestant religious heritage of Germany. The Nazis were also extremely clever at giving religious overtones to their propaganda. The subtlety of Satan can be seen in all this.

Many Protestants became alarmed at the increasing meddling of the Party in Church Affairs and set up an alternative church government structure known as the **Confessing Church** (founded by Pastor Niemöller). In 1934 it issued its theological basis known as the **Barmen Declaration** (largely written by Karl Barth. This was directed mainly against the heretical distortions of the "German Christians"). It was significant that most of the 139 delegates were either pastors or laity. There were no professors or church officials present. The Confessing Church was harassed by the Gestapo and repudiated by most Protestant leaders. A few of its members, such as Bonhoeffer, were conscious of their political responsibility and reluctantly became involved in the anti-Hitler plot. But the conservatism and nationalism of most people deterred them from standing up publicly for democracy and individual rights.

Much of the theology of Barth and Bonhoeffer was born in the crisis times of the Third Reich and extreme formulations (overemphasis on the transcendence of God – Barth; rejection of bourgeois Christianity – Bonhoeffer) must be seen in this light.

The Catholic Church did not have an untarnished record during this terrible time. This was particularly the case where nationalism went hand in hand with

faschism. In France, the Vichy government was conservative and Catholic, and yet actively participated in the deportation of Jews to their deaths. In Slovakia, the fascist government was led by a priest Josip Tiso (self-styled Vodca or Führer), who also deported Jews from March 1942 until the Vatican intervened in October of that year. In Croatia, Ante Pavelić ran a self-consciously Catholic regime devoted to ridding a multi-ethnic state of Jews, Roma and Orthodox Serbs (though not Protestants or Muslims). His sadistic methods shocked even the Nazis. Nor did the Catholic church condemn the forced conversion of the Orthodox Serbs which was part of Pavelić's programme (kill one third, deport one third and convert one third). A significant number of Catholics in Slovenia who were sickened by Croatian atrocities, protested to the Vatican, but the Vatican did nothing. Similar protests from Polish church leaders to the Vatican about Nazi atrocities produced no result.

### **Marx and Marxism**

Karl Marx (1818-83) was born in Germany to Jewish parents who had become Lutherans in order to avoid victimisation by the authorities. He studied philosophy at university and then became a journalist. In 1848, the year of revolutions, the authorities expelled him from Germany and he took refuge in England. Friedrich Engels, son of a wealthy German industrialist who had factories in England, soon became his ardent supporter and financed him. In that same year, together with Engels, he wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. In England he divided his time between stirring up agitation among the workers and writing *Das Kapital* in the British Museum, of which volume 1 appeared in 1867. Volumes 2 and 3 were never completed and had to be edited by Engels after his

death. Economic crises occurred in 1857 and (after his death) in 1886 but in neither case did they produce the expected proletarian revolution. Marx came to concede that communism might come through non-violent democratic means over a long period of time. In the 1870s Marx, while retaining his revolutionary ideas, adopted more and more the life-style of a bourgeois victorian gentleman. In his final years, Marx expected the final crisis to be produced by a war between the great powers, because wars were the consequence of capitalism. In 1883 he died and Engels became his official interpreter, because he possessed all the papers that Marx had left behind.

**Marxism** According to Marxists, man is not what he ought to be, because he is alienated from (that is: he does not own) the world, his work and himself. He is alienated from these three entities because he is the slave, through the force of economic circumstances, of someone else (that is: of whoever owns the means of production), for whoever owns this holds the trump card that determines everything else. Because of his seemingly hopeless situation, man has even made himself the slave of an imaginary person (God) onto whom he projects his frustrations and longings.

This sorry state of affairs is due to the economic situation prevailing, that is: capitalism. Change the economic system (the substructure of society) to communism (where everyone owns everything or more specifically, the means of production) and you will solve all the other problems, all these alienations. Only then will man be able to realise his true humanity and to evolve into the superman (or 'the new man'), and to overcome all his limitations (even finally death).

Communism, towards which history is striving, means the abolition of private property, and thus of human self-

alienation, as expressed today in religion, family, state, all of which are infringements on man's personal freedom.

In this communist society, all our needs will be provided and we shall be able to do exactly what we want.

**How will this happen?** It will happen through the outworking of the dialectic (the programme which governs the course of history). Marx maintained that history is programmed and that he had discovered what the programme was (the class conflict). History had gone through several phases (contradictions) and it is now evolving into communism, which is the final stage of society in which all previous contradictions will have been solved. Marx himself tried to prove in *Das Kapital* that capitalism (the present phase in Western Europe) has inherent contradictions that will eventually lead to its downfall. At the beginning of his career, he advocated the violent overthrow of capitalism by a revolution of the proletariat (the industrial working class), but he later conceded that this could come about gradually by peaceful and democratic means (especially in England). But for even this to happen, man must be educated to a Marxist world view (the basis of which is the theory of evolution).

Marx also claimed to have discovered the secret of society: the substructure (economic system) determines the superstructure. As people in a capitalist society behave in a capitalist way, so people in a communist (utopian) society will automatically behave in a communist way.

### **The main ideas inherent in Marxism**

a. It is a materialistic philosophy. That is, a philosophy which says that matter is all there is in the universe. Matter has always been here, it is an explanation in itself,



it is absolute, it is God. Man, who is its highest product (via the theory of evolution of course) is consequently deified. Spirit is merely an evolved form of matter.

Now of course there are other possible explanations of the universe:

B. it is not absolute, therefore it owes its existence to someone else. This is the Judaeo-Christian viewpoint.

C. It is neither absolute nor created. Therefore it is absurd. This is the atheist existentialist viewpoint.

Marx without any explanation opts for the first possibility, and so his theory becomes a sort of pantheism (as indeed is Hegelianism).

b) Matter is not static but evolving by means of the interaction of matter against itself to produce progress onward and upward (the Hegelian dialectic reduced to exclusively material terms). Marx claimed to have discovered in which direction it is evolving (communism) and what its dynamic is (the class war). This is why Marxism calls itself dialectical materialism. The proof of this is seen in Darwinism. It has been said that Darwinism would never have been accepted by society unless the ground had already been prepared by Hegel's philosophy which dominated the 19th century.

c. It is a theory of history and sociology. According to Marxism, society has gone through various phases. These have been: primitive communism/the fall/slavery /feudalism/capitalism/ socialism/communism.

d. It is an economic theory that claims that the substructure of society (which is defined as the mode of production, i.e. the economic system prevailing) determines every other aspect of society (i.e. every institution in society, which Marx calls the superstructure: religion, ethics, laws and the institutions of the predominant class).

It is also a theory of plus-value (i.e. of exploitation of the worker by the capitalist boss who pockets some of the value of the article manufactured as profit and pays the workman a mere subsistence wage). Marx simplifies the economic reality in order to make his point: the worker is being exploited. Marxism is in essence a heart cry against industrial society rather than capitalism as such.

e. Marxism is essentially atheistic. Marx says that man can never be his own master as long as he owes his existence to someone else: and in particular to God. God keeps man under and is always reminding him of his sin. If only God is denied, then man can come into his own. If God is dead, then there is no sin, no satan and no guilt. Atheism is essentially an effort to deculpabilise man, to make him responsible for the world, so that he can change it through his own efforts. According to Marx, religion is a reflection of the capitalist mode of production (man projects his frustrations and yearnings onto an imaginary person).

**The origins of Marxism.** It is in essence an amalgum of:

a. A Jewish world view which Marx inherited, which saw salvation in collective and material terms, whereas what was being stressed around him was a Christian pietist view of salvation couched in individual and other-worldly terms.

b. German 19th century philosophy (hegelianism emptied of idealism) and radicalism (that of the Young Hegelians whose aim was to smash society). Hegel's dialectic is essentially a watered-down, pagan, version of the doctrine of the Word (Logos) in the Bible.

c. Primitive capitalism as observed in early 19th century England.

d. Revolutionary French thought as well as the more radical conclusions of the 18th century French Enlightenment plus Rousseau's optimistic view of human nature.

Why is it, then, that Marxism has become associated with a totalitarian system? After all, Marx insisted originally that his ideas only constituted a method, not a total world view. The reasons are as follows:

1. Marx was a violently anti-clerical radical before he ever elaborated his theory. His subsequent interpretation of economics was very much coloured by his radical attitude which caused him to adopt certain materialistic philosophical presuppositions.

2. After the death of Marx, marxism evolved into a total world view under the influence of such people as Engels and Karl Kautzky. Hard-line interpreters of Marx triumphed over soft-line interpreters such as Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg. As a total world view, marxism inevitably came into conflict with Christianity, sooner or later.

3. Marxism eventually triumphed in Russia which had always virtually been a totalitarian society. It was the bolsheviks under Lenin who triumphed over the moderate marxists (mensheviks) and thus classic marxism became associated with the violent Russian revolutionary tradition of the 19th century as epitomised by Lenin, who was also violently anti-clerical. Lenin is closely associated with the doctrines of the central (if not permanent) role of the Party and of Imperialism (the blocking of Western interests in the Third world in order to hasten the fall of capitalism). In other words, Leninism is not content to let the dialectic take its course but seeks to intervene in order to bring about violent revolution, whether the time is ideologically ripe or not. Later Stalin triumphed over Trotzky and left his stamp on communist

theory in the form of his doctrine of Socialism in one country. Many elements of marxist theory that were originally meant to belong to a transitional phase of society (eg. the Party, the State), have become permanent and institutionalised, particularly when applied to Russian society. From Russia, Marxism has since been exported in its Russian form, which is called Marxism-Leninism. This been largely due to political circumstances. Hence, marxism has become closely linked with the national interests of the Soviet Union power and the imposition of a Russian-type society.

Marxism, as interpreted today by most people, is not content to be an economic theory. It insists on being a total world view which demands absolute allegiance. This is because it has been influenced by certain philosophical presuppositions and it is this element that brings it into conflict with Christianity sooner or later.

## **2) The Church in Russia**

The 19th century saw the growth of a number of important new tendencies in Russian society:

1) The growth of Western liberal thought among the intelligentsia which alienated them from the church and provided a seed-bed for revolution.

2) The Slavonic revival as represented by such people as: Komiakov, Dostoyevski and Soloviev. Komiakov reacted against western influences (as epitomised by Ukraine) in Orthodoxy. He said that true Orthodoxy was to be found not among the leaders of the church, but among the common people. One of Komiakov's fellow slavophiles, Ivan Kireevskij, translated the works of the Greek Church Fathers. This work was carried out in the monastic community at Optino. It was the monks there that revived the hesychastic movement of silent prayer.

This monastic revival had initially centred on Mt Athos in Greece where a monk named Paissy (Velichkovskii) laid emphasis on continual prayer and obedience to an elder or *starets*. He translated into slavonic material which had been previously collected by Nikodemos of Dionysiou and entitled the *Philokalia* (1782). Paissy eventually moved from Mt Athos to Neamț in Romania. From there his teachings reached Russia and sparked off the monastic revival.

Discussions raised by the new (hesychasm) movement and also its exaggerated claims led to the patriarch of Constantinople and the Holy Sinod of St. Petersburg condemning the teaching. In the end the Russian government sent a gunboat to Mt Athos to deport 833 Russian monks who had been involved in this controversy and who were regarded as trouble makers.

This was the age of the *starets* and the greatest of them was Seraphim of Sarov who was later canonised (1905). Rasputin was also a member of this movement.

All this went hand in hand with the growth of Russian nationalism and colonial expansion into Central Asia.

3) The Russian Orthodox Church was involved in missionary outreach to pagan peoples within the tsar's empire. The Siberian Altai mission translated the Scriptures into several local languages: Telegut, Chuvash, Tatar, Tungus and Yakut. This translation work was to be later continued by IBT led by Boris Arapović in Stockholm. An Orthodox diocese was established in Alaska with its own language, Aleut. There were also Orthodox missions in China, Korea and Japan.

4) The 19th century also saw the beginning of the evangelical faith in Russia, although the Molokan sect can claim to be its precursor.

In 1805 Tsar Alexander I (1801-25) gave sectarians permission to worship according to their conscience.

Alexander was apparently converted through contact in the West with Mme de Krüdener. The BFBS was encouraged to send in its representatives and before long 250 branches were established. Unfortunately when Alexander 'died' (in actual fact he was kidnapped), his successor, Nicholas I (1825-55), was not sympathetic to the new faith which he saw as revolutionary and likely to shake the foundations of religion and the state.

A German Baptist missionary movement started in Georgia and in 1867 their first convert was baptised. Georgia was the Siberia of the day, to which many members of Russian sects (like the *Molokany* and *Duhobory*) had been exiled and it was these people who were most open to the Gospel.

In the middle of the century under Alexander II (1855-81) the Russian Christians came to be known as the Stundists. This was because they attended the *Bibelstunde* of the German colonists. They became very active, despite persecutions, and spread especially in the Ukraine where many German and Dutch settlers were to be found, especially Baptists and Mennonites.

During this period, Frederick William **Baedecker** (1823-1906) was converted through **Lord Radstock** in England. He returned to Leningrad where he settled and won many of the aristocracy to the faith. He also specialised in visiting convicts. One of his converts, Col. Pashkov, was forced into exile because of his evangelical stand.

Persecution was due to the fact that under the influence of the Orthodox Church, the State forbade the winning of disciples. The threat of revolution led to a clamp-down on all unorthodox groups and evangelical Christians suffered accordingly.

In time the Baptists in the Caucasus and many of the Stundists in the Ukraine came together to form the

Russian Baptist Union. Radstock's followers who followed a Brethren pattern, formed the Evangelical Christian Union.

The first Russian NT was published in 1821. Further printing was discontinued during the reign of Nicolas I, at the request of the Orthodox Church. The first Orthodox translation of the NT was not printed until 1862 and the whole Bible in 1876. In 1879 the Baptists were legally recognised, though officially they were forbidden to proselitise.

Tsar Alexander III (1881-94) appointed one man as his minister of religious affairs, Podebonostev who ruled from 1880 to 1907. Under him there was widespread suppression of anything that was not considered Orthodox. One million Jews were forced to flee the country between 1881-82. But the revolution of 1905 assured his downfall. Quite a number of priests had been discontented with the church and wanted a council of representatives to replace Podebonostev. This eventually came about under Kerensky in 1917 as a result of a socialist revolution.

In 1894 Nicholas II (1894-1917) came to power but he did nothing for reform. He was a mystic who procrastinated, and gradually came under the evil influence of Rasputin (whose name means 'debauched'). Rasputin disgraced the Church by his insidious influence at court. He was a *starets* and wandering monk and belonged to a group that practiced intense asceticism and were credited with the gift of healing. One of these had been a man called Seraphim of Sarov who was eventually canonised. In fact it was at the service of canonisation in 1905 that Rasputin made his famous prophecy regarding the birth of a son to the Tsar. Later he came to have an unhealthy hold on the royal family because he was able to keep in check the haemophilia of

the Tsar's son. During the WWI, because he intercepted all telegrammes from the generals at the front, he virtually directed the battles, with disastrous results! It is clear that Rasputin was demon-possessed monk who was instrumental in the downfall of the Royal family which had previously rejected the Gospel in favour of the superstition of the Orthodox Church of the time.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century anti-semitism was tolerated and even encouraged by the tsarist governments. In 1803 a virulently anti-semitic work was published in France by an agent of the tsarist secret police: *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which maintained that the world was the victim of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy.

When the revolution came, Kerensky's provisional government allowed the Orthodox Church to assemble a council to which clergy and laity were elected from the various dioceses and in August 1917 it approved a new constitution for the Church under which the patriarchate would be re-established, bishops would be elected by the dioceses and the laity would participate in the administration of the Church at all levels. Tihon was elected metropolitan of Moscow. So far from clinging to the ancien régime, the church had taken the opportunity to reform itself democratically. But in October of that same year the Bolsheviks came to power, which changed the whole situation. The church, far from being, as the Communists claimed, the tool of the ruling classes, was actually alienated from them, and was a church of the people.

In January 1918 the separation of church and state and the secularisation of education were decreed. The property of the Church was confiscated and it was deprived of legal existence. Only where the local authorities allowed, would the church continue to be able to make use of its places of worship.



In February 1918 the patriarch Tihon responded by excommunicating the government leaders. Church officials organised demonstrations and armed resistance, and called for the restoration of the monarchy. The Council of People's Commissars then ordered the separation of church and state and recognised equality before the Law of all religious groups and permitted them freedom of worship 'so long as they do not disturb public order or interfere with the rights of citizens.' It completely disestablished the Orthodox Church and banished every vestige of religion from state and private schools. Churches and sects were denied the rights of a person in law.

In 1918, under the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Russia withdrew from the war and a period of civil war followed (1918-21) during which the Whites battled it out against the Reds. As the Whites were divided into different groups, each with its own agenda, they eventually lost: Trotsky's Red Army eliminated them one by one.

During the famine of 1921-2 which followed the civil war Tihon addressed an appeal to foreign churches for relief funds, but money received was appropriated by the government that did not want the church to have the credit of bringing help to the hungry. Moreover all church property was confiscated for the purpose of famine relief, but Tihon would not allow the surrender of consecrated objects. The result was violent protests, trials and shootings. At this juncture, a group of priests declared their opposition to Tihon's orders and founded the **Living Church**. Tihon died in 1925 after a year's imprisonment, to be succeeded by the metropolitan Sergei.

In 1923 the Sobor (Council) of the Church as a whole accepted the pro-soviet line of the Living Church, cut all counter-revolutionary links, assured the government of its

unconditional loyalty, and recognised previous Soviet legislation. But even this failed to restore the church in the eyes of the state.

In 1925 the League of the Militant Godless was formed to spread anti-clerical propaganda and atheism via radio, lectures and museums of atheism.

In 1927 Sergei (1925-45) was released from prison and made a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet State. Many thousands left the church in opposition to this declaration and founded the **True Orthodox Church**.

In 1929 the previous right (in theory) of the Church to engage in propaganda was abolished. The church was henceforth not allowed to engage in social, charitable or educational work, hold prayer meetings, Bible study, women's or young people's meetings or even give their members material aid. They were free only to worship in church buildings. The State established complete control over church elections and preachers.

The 1930s were years of intense persecution. Thousands of clergymen were imprisoned or liquidated during the collectivisation of agriculture and Stalin's purges. Recent figures have revealed that 136,900 churchmen were arrested and 8,500 killed. These were crucified on their church doors, shot, strangled or thrown into freezing rivers where they froze to death. In fact, between 1917 and 1940 120,000 members of the Orthodox clergy were arrested, of which 96,000 were shot. 200 Lutheran pastors were also shot. Of the entire civilian population, 20 million died in labour camps and a further 15 million were arrested and killed. By 1939 the Russian Orthodox Church as an institution was on the verge of collapse. The rigid application of anti-religious laws, atheistic propaganda and Stalinist terror had almost wiped out the Lutheran and ravaged the Baptist and

Evangelical denominations. Large numbers of Russian Mennonites emigrated to the Americas in the 1920s.

Only when the Second World War came did the state change its tactics towards the church and permitted the actual election of a new patriarch. This was because Stalin realised the value of the Church's contribution to public morale in the war, and how it could help integrate the territories acquired during the war and be used as a tool to support Soviet foreign policy views later on.

Accordingly, **the Living Church** (Renovationist) was dissolved in 1943 and the Patriarchal church allowed to revive. Some of the True Orthodox people returned but others remained underground. In 1945 the Orthodox Church enjoyed its best position since the revolution but it was still closely supervised by the state. From 1953 onwards the Orthodox Church was used by the State to promote Soviet Peace initiatives and to praise conditions in the USSR.

But what about the fate of the Evangelicals in the 20th century?

Only after the revolution of 1905 did they experience any sort of freedom from persecution. World War I provided the opportunity for Russian prisoners of war in Germany to hear the Gospel. About 2,000 converts among them were organised into a Bible school. They returned to Russia just when a new freedom for evangelism was beginning. By 1917 it is estimated that the Evangelicals had grown to 150,000 and over the next 7 years, their numbers increased five-fold. The period after the Revolution in 1917 until the Stalinist clamp-down in 1928 was a remarkable time of freedom and evangelistic expansion. The Baptists grew to over 4,000 congregations and adopted the motto 'Christ for the pagans and Muslims living in the USSR'. They were able to print over 25,000 Bibles, concordances and

hymnbooks. The youth movements of the two evangelical unions, the Baptist Youth League and the Evangelical Youth League (*Bapsomol* and *Hristomol*) flourished, and in many places, especially in the villages they were reported to have outstripped the Communist Youth League (*Komsomol*). Plans were even seriously put forward for the building of an evangelical city in Sibiria as a contribution to the development of the region: one proposed name was Evangelsk. It was during this time that a second wave of the Pentecostal movement began in 1921 and by 1928 there were 350 groups. The first wave had occurred in 1913 but this had been largely unitarian (Jesus Only).

During the years immediately after the Revolution, the Communists were engaged in both fighting a civil war and in breaking the back of the Orthodox church. It was only later when the success of the evangelical movement became apparent, particularly among the young people, that the Communist State started to take action against them. In 1928 the Law on Religious Associations virtually deprived the evangelicals of any freedom to evangelise. The great Stalinist purges of the 1930s virtually finished off the Evangelicals as a denomination. Many were killed or deported along with millions of others, and the rest were driven underground. Relief only came with the Second World War as a result of Stalin's desperate search for support of his war effort from all sectors of the population.

Stalin accordingly allowed the formation of a Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in 1944. This included Pentecostals and Mennonites. Pentecostals had to agree not to speak in tongues in church services and not to seek to influence others to have the same experience. Not unnaturally they were not too happy with this compromise. Evangelisation began again and by

1948 there were over 4,000 registered congregations with 350,000 baptised members. But a fresh purge began in 1948 which lasted until the death of Stalin in 1953. Many church leaders were imprisoned for up to 25 years. That same year, 650,000 Russian Germans, previously deported to Siberia, were released and allowed freedom of travel within the Soviet Union. The Christians amongst them used this opportunity to travel widely and evangelise. The Evangelical community grew as a result to 512,000 baptised members in 5,400 churches.

Then came Krushchev's anti-religious campaign (1957-64) which was a systematic attempt to cripple and eventually abolish the influence of the Church. In 1961 alone 300 Baptist churches were forcibly closed and by 1964 more than half of both the Evangelical and Orthodox churches had been closed. In 1962, 355 books on scientific atheism with a total circulation of 5,422,000 copies were produced. This wave of persecution also affected Romania and Bulgaria particularly harshly.

One of the results of Krushchev's campaign was to cause a split among Evangelicals over whether they should continue to submit to State restrictions on their activity or not. At the height of the persecution in 1960 the AUCECB sent around to all their churches a letter giving specific directives to bring their local church practice into conformity with the government's existing laws. The two most serious prohibitions were against children attending services and any propagation of the faith. The letter said: 'There have been instances of baptising persons younger than 18 years of age, giving material aid from the congregations' treasury, holding Bible studies and similar meetings...meetings for preachers. All this must now be eliminated in our congregations.' Whereas previously the Church had presented a united front to the State against these demands or at

least ignored them, now the Baptist leadership had been undermined by the State and was making the same demands as the State had been making. Many could not tolerate this and a split ensued

From this split arose the Official Evangelical Baptists (AUCECB) and the Unofficial Evangelical Baptists (CCECB). The Unofficials (the Initsiativniki) refused to register and submit to State restrictions on their evangelistic activities. Their strength lay in the countryside rather than in the towns (cf. pictures of Christians with enormous families, quite uncharacteristic of town dwellers). They were the ones most persecuted by the authorities who tried to force them to register and submit to State control. In fact all the leaders of the CCECB were either imprisoned, exiled or in hiding.

The Pentecostals for their part spread fairly evenly between the Official and Unofficial Baptist Church and also have their own registered and therefore restricted Pentecostal denomination. They are equally divided between uniates (Jesus Only) and others. Except in the Western regions, foot-washing is practiced during the Lord's Supper.

After the demise of Communism, the Church enjoyed an unprecedented time of opportunity. Western Christians have sought to provide help wherever they could. However, new enemies to the Gospel emerged. These were extreme nationalism and the resurgence of Islam in the south of what used to be the USSR.

On 23rd June 1997 the state Duma (parliament) passed a law (subsequently ratified by the president, Boris Jelzin) severely restricting the freedom of religious minorities and foreign missionaries, which, critics say, is a return to the Soviet era.

The bill aimed to clamp down on the activities of sects and cults which had mushroomed in Russia since

religious repression ended in 1990. But it also affected smaller churches, particularly Protestants such as Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists.

The bill was approved overwhelmingly by the lower house of parliament, the State Duma.

For the first time in modern Russia, it established the primacy of the Russian Orthodox Church as "an inalienable part of Russian historical, spiritual and cultural heritage." Other traditional beliefs such as Islam, Judaism and Buddhism are accorded respect.

All religions had to apply for registration. To have full rights, they needed to prove that they had existed for more than 50 years in half of Russia's provinces.

Sects had to get a document from the local authorities saying that they have existed for at least 15 years – impossible for those that were not recognised during communist times.

Those that failed the test were banned from owning property, publishing literature or organising worship in public places. Foreign missionaries, against whom the Orthodox Church has been waging a fierce campaign, could not function unless invited by an accredited religious body.

The law replaced a more liberal text which was blamed for allowing in cults such as Aum Shinri-kyo, which carried out a gas attack on the Tokyo underground, and the Moonies.

The new text cemented the warm relations between the Orthodox Church and the Communist Party – the dominant force in parliament – which, despite its atheist origins, saw the priesthood as an ally in turning back the tide of Western influence.

Lev Levinson, secretary of the presidential chamber of human rights, said that Russia was now ruled by a spirit of "clerical bolshevism". He added: "This is very dan-

gerous and a step backwards for freedom of conscience."

There is no doubt that some destructive sects now operate in Russia, including satanists. But Mr Levinson said that underground cults would continue unaffected, as they never intended to operate openly.

The Orthodox Church regards Baptists, who have been persecuted by the Tsars and communists, with equal severity, as dangerous because of their commitment to evangelism and the support which they get from America.

Recently a consignment of Russian-language Bibles from America was burned by militant churchmen as "Baptist propaganda".

The Catholic Church is also regarded with ancient animosity, but it is allowed to operate on the understanding that it does not proselytise.

Since the passing of this new law, several incidences have been reported of this law being put into effect. We hear of KGB officers acting according to the will of the Orthodox Church interrupting evangelistic campaigns, removing tents, confiscating literature and arresting believers.

Peter Peters preaching recently in the West said: "It appears that once again we are standing on the threshold of a new persecution in our land. They have already started with house searches and prohibition of worship services."

In former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, the same policy is beginning to be imitated by the various governments.

A recent report by an Orthodox professor of church history, Prof. Georgij Mitrofanov of St. Petersburg, said that even after the fall of communism, people still failed



to go to church: Russia was still a nation of baptised heathen. If they did go to church, they saw it as a place where one could meet business acquaintances, and for a fee get their car blessed, their baby baptised and their dead buried. What more could you ask of a priest? As for the Orthodox clergy, a good third of them had had no theological education whatsoever. The Orthodox church which is still paranoid about foreigners and foreign influences is always trying to find enemies to blame for the troubles of the nation: Jews, Freemasons, Ecumenicals, Protestants, Catholics. He concludes that Russia needs to hear the Gospel all over again. The statistics he gave seem to differ little from those of the communist period.

## **POSTMODERNISM**

We have seen that the 20<sup>th</sup> century can rightly be called the “totalitarian” century. In the aftermath of totalitarianism, people came to distrust any system that claimed to have a total answer. The end of WWII also saw the end of the philosophical era known as 'modernism' – the absolute belief in human progress and its ability to solve the problem of human need. Following the devastation of the first half of the 20th century, wholehearted moves were made to throw out anything that lay claim to such absolute priority or ultimate truth. Thus, modernism gave way to postmodernism.

Three crucial factors in a definition of postmodernism are:

- A profound distrust of any philosophy that claims to have a monopoly on the truth – called 'meta-narratives' by Jean François Lyotard
- A deep commitment to relativism
- Philosophical pluralism.

Postmodernism is thus a philosophy, but when applied to theology, the result is devastating. The theory of deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida proposes the impossibility of communicating meaning in a text and hence the inability of God to communicate through his Word. It is hard to see how a theory so totally at variance with biblical presuppositions, could have anything to do with theology. To doubt man's word is one thing, but to doubt God's word is quite another. Besides, deconstructionism has to do with the reader's interaction with the text and not with the text itself. And yet, because it is in the fashion, some scholars feel that they have to apply these methods to biblical hermeneutics. The results have, not surprisingly, been disappointing.

The postmodernist movement has also had theological and ethical ramifications: its anti-establishment ideas (which it falsely associates with Christianity) appear conducive to, and strongly associated with, the feminist movement, racial equality movements, gay rights movements, and most forms of late 20th century anarchism.

## **THE RISE OF PLURALISM**

The rise of multiculturalism and the revival of hegelianism have produced relativism, political correctness and pluralism, especially in the USA, possibly as a result of a reaction against extreme fundamentalism (The USA is a country of extremism: on the one hand it is a country of extreme prudishness and on the other hand 95% of all internet pornography comes from the USA). There a liberal minority has succeeded in imposing its agenda on the rest of the population. In the universities theology has to include other religions also. Anyone who wants to study Christian theology now has

to go to a seminary. The same situation prevails in schools and in society: Christianity is increasingly marginalised. In England a primary school was recently fined by the ministry of education for not actively promoting homosexuality. Independent schools were recently informed that government funding would be withdrawn if they taught creations as a possible alternative to the theory of evolution. However this is not the case in Croatia where an agreement between the government and the churches has prevented this.

### **THE FEMINIST AND HOMOSEXUAL DEBATE**

It is only in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that major Protestant church bodies have begun to accept women as regular preachers and pastors, and only much more recently that homosexuality has been seriously countenanced among clergy, or that the idea of same sex marriages has been taken seriously. In both cases the factor in society that has led to promotion of these causes is egalitarian humanism which certain denominations have then felt that they should copy. A notable exception has been the Lutheran church of Latvia which in 1995 revoked its previous decision (1975) to ordain women. Because of this and its hard line against the marriage of homosexual couples, it has been isolated by the World Lutheran Council and aid has been withdrawn.

Now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women pastors are increasingly tolerated and homosexuality condoned. It is all part of the liberal agenda. What is surprising is that churches and organisations previously known to be evangelical have also espoused such

causes and that this has propelled them, sometimes unwhittingly, in a liberal theological direction.

When women priests were ordained for the first time, some 400 clerics left the church of England and when Anglo-Catholics were refused any guarantees that would not have to serve under a woman bishop, a further 600 left. Most of these were High Church people who integrated into the Catholic Church. This gap leaves the field open for even more women: it is reckoned that over 50% of ordination candidates in the Church of England are now women. One third of current clergy in the C of E are women. The Anglican Church is at present in a critical situation: The full-time clergy of the C of E have diminished in the past century from 24,000 to 9,000. Parishes are amalgamated, and churches crumble and are closed.

In 2013 Pope Francis used his first encyclical entitled *Lumen Fidei* (Light of Faith) to reaffirm the importance of sex between husband and wife and emphasise the central role of the family in society. There was no sign of any change in the Catholic Church's hardline on homosexual unions or any other controversial issues in this encyclical.

## THE FUTURE

The number of Christians in the world continues to grow and they now constitute the largest single world religion, comprising more than one third of the world's population. However this growth is uneven: it is most spectacular in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In Europe however it is a different story with traditional Christianity in sharp decline. The biggest success story has been

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that of the pentecostal and charismatic churches which now have over 500 million adherents. In fact it has been predicted that that the church of the 21st century will increasingly be young, poor, non-white and Pentecostal.

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## **BYZANTINE EMPERORS**

### ***FIRST PERIOD: UNIVERSAL ROMAN EMPIRE (330-641)***

324-37 Konstantin I.  
 337-61 Konstancije II.  
 361-63 Julijan Apostat  
 363-64 Jovijan  
 364-78 Valent  
 379-95 Teodozije I.  
 395-408 Arkadije  
 408-50 Teodozije II.  
 450-57 Marcijan  
 457-74 Leon I.  
 474 Leon II.  
 474-75 Zeno  
 475-76 Basilisk  
 476-91 Zeno (again)  
 491-518 Anastazije I.  
 518-27 Justin  
 527-65 Justinijan I.  
 565-78 Justin II.  
 578-82 Tiberije II. Konstantin  
 582-602 Mauricije  
 602-10 Focije  
 610-41 Heraklije

### ***SECOND PERIOD: ROMANO-GREEK EMPIRE (641-1204)***

641 Konstantin i Herakleona  
 641 Herakleona  
 641-68 Konstans Pogonat  
 668-85 Konstantin IV.  
 685-95 Justinijan II. Rinotmet

695-98 Leontije  
 698-705 Tiberije III. 705-11 Justinijan (again)  
 711-13 Filipik Bardan  
 713-15 Anastazije II.  
 716 Teodozije III.  
 717-41 Leon III. Isaurijski  
 741-75 Konstantin V. Kopronim  
 775-80 Leon IV. Hazar  
 780-97 Konstantin VI.  
 797-802 Irene  
 802-11 Nikefor I.  
 811 Staurakije  
 811-13 Mihajlo Rangabe  
 813-20 Leon V. Armenski  
 820-29 Mihajlo II. Amorijski  
 829-42 Teofil  
 842-67 Mihajlo III. Pijanica  
 867-86 Bazilije I.  
 886-912 Leon VI. Mudri ili Filozof  
 912-13 Aleksandar  
 913-59 Konstantin VII. Porfirogenit  
 920-44 Roman I. Lekapen  
 959-63 Roman II.  
 963-69 Foka  
 969-76 Ivan I. Cimisk  
 976-1025 Basilije II. Bulgarokton  
 1025-28 Konstantin VIII.  
 1028-34 Roman III. Argir  
 1034-41 Mihajlo IV. Paflagonski  
 1041-42 Mihajlo V. Kalafat  
 1042 Zoe i Teodora  
 1042-55 Konstantin IX. Monomah  
 1055-56 Teodora (again)  
 1056-57 Mihajlo VI. Stratiotik  
 1057-59 Izak I. Komnen  
 1059-67 Konstantin X. Duka  
 1068-71 Roman IV. Diogen  
 1071-78 Mihajlo VII. Duka  
 1078-81 Nikefor III. Botaniat  
 1081-1118 Aleksije I. Komnen

1118-43 Ivan II .Komnen  
 1143-80 Manuel I. Komnen  
 1180-83 Aleksije II. Komnen  
 1183-85 Andronik I. Komnen  
 1185-95 Izak II. Angel  
 1195-1203 Izak III. Ange  
 11203-04 Izak II. (again) i Aleksije IV. Angel

### ***THIRD PERIOD: The Divided Empire***

(Latins in Byzantium, Byzantines in Nicea and Trabizond, Turks in the East) (1204-1461)

1204 Aleksije V. Duka  
 1204-22 Teodor I. Laskarski  
 1222-54 Ivan III. Valacski  
 1254-58 Teodor II. Laskarski  
 1258-61 Ivan IV. Laskarski  
 1259-82 Mihajlo VIII. paleolog  
 1282-1320 Andronik II. paleolog  
 1328-41 Andronik III. paleolog  
 1341-91 Ivan V. paleolog  
 1347-54 Ivan VI. Kantakusen  
 1376-79 Andronik IV. paleolog  
 1390 Ivan VII. paleolog  
 1391-1425 Manuel II. paleolog  
 1425-48 Ivan VIII. paleolog  
 1449-53 Konstantin XI. paleolog

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### **ROMAN EMPERORS**

14-37 Tiber  
 37-41 Kaligula  
 41-45 Klaudije  
 54-68 Neron

69-79 Vespasijan  
 79-81 Tit  
 81-96 Domicijan  
 96-98 Nerva  
 98-117 Trajan  
 117-138 Hadrijan  
 138-161 Antonin Pije  
 161-180 Mark Aurelije  
 180-192 Komod  
 191-211 Septim Sever  
 235-238 Maksim Traks  
 238-244 Gordijan III.  
 244-249 Filip Arabski  
 249-251 Decije  
 253-260 Valerijan  
 260-260 Galije  
 268-270 Klaudije Gotski  
 270-275 Aurelijan  
 275-276 Tacit  
 276-282 Prob

## **REORGANISATION OF THE EMPIRE:**

### ***TETRARCHY (284-310)***

285-305 Dioklecijan + Maksimijan  
 305-311  
 Tetrarhija (ostavka Dioklecijana i Maksimijana)  
 Maksencije + Maksimin I. Daja  
 Galerije (u. 311) + Konstancija I Klor (u. 306)  
 312-337 Konstantin + Licinije (u. 325)  
 337 Konstans I. (u. 350). +  
 Konstantin II. (u. 340) +  
 Konstancije II.  
 350 Konstancije II.  
 361-63 Julijan  
 364 Jovijan  
 365 Valentinijan I. (u. 375) + Valent (378)  
 378 Teodozije I + Gracijan (u. 383) + Valentinijan II.  
 383-88 Usurpacija Magnusa Maksima  
 383-95 Teodozije I.  
 425-54 Valentinijan III.



475-76 Romul August  
 476 End of the Western Roman Empire

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### **Holy Roman Empoire**

(= revived Roman Empire))

### **Framkish Dynasty (Carolingian)**

(empire = Frech/German/Southern Italian)

800-14 Charlemagne

814-40 Ludwig the Pious

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## **HUNGARIAN, VIKING AND SARACEN INCURSIONS**

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### **Saxon Dynasty**

919-36 Henrik I.

936-73 Oton I.

973-83 Oton II.

996-1002 Oton III.

1002-24 Henrik II.

1024-39 Konrad II.

1039-56 Henrik III.

1056-1106 Henrik IV.

1106-25 Henrik V.

1125-37 Lotair III.

### **Hohenstaufen Dynasty**

1152-90 Fridrik I. Barbarossa

1190-97 Henrik VI.

1209-18 Oton IV.

1220-50 Fridrik II.

1218-91 Rudolf I. Habsburški

1298-1308 Albert I. Habsburški

1308-13 Henrik VII.

1314-47 Luj IV.

1355-78 Karlo IV.

1411-33 Žigmund

1438-39 Albert Hapsburški

### **Habsburg Dynasty**

*First German Empire*

1452-93 Fridrik III.

1493-1519 Maksimilijan

1519-56 Karlo V.  
 1558-64 Ferdinand I. Habsburški  
 1564-1576 Maksimilijan II.  
 1619-37 Ferdinand II.  
 1637-57 Ferdinand III.  
 1658-1705 Leopold I.  
 1705-1711 Josef I.  
 1711-1740 Karlo VI.  
 1740-1742 međuvlade  
 1742-1745 Karlo VII. Bavarski  
 1745-1765 Franjo Stefan  
 1765-1790 Josef II.  
 1790-1792 Leopold II.  
 1792-1806 Franjo II.  
 1804-15 Napoleon I.

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1871 Bismarck and the Second German Empire (Das zweite Reich)

1939-45 Hitler and the Third German Empire (Das dritte Reich)

## ROMAN POPES

Lin (67-79)  
 Anklet (79-91)  
 Klement (92-101)  
 Evarist (101-109)  
 Aleksandar I. (109-115)  
 Sikst I. (115-125)  
 Telesfor (125-136)  
 Hugin (136-140)  
 Pije I. (140-155)  
 Anket (155-166)  
 Soter (166-175)  
 Eleuterije (175-189)  
 Viktor I. (189-199)  
 Zefirin (199-217)  
 Kalikst I. (217-222)

Urban I. (222-230)  
 Potian (230-235)  
 Anteros (235-236)  
 Fabian (236-250)  
 Kornelije (251-253)  
 Novacijan 351 *antipope*  
 Lucije I. (253-254)  
 Stjepan I. (254-257)  
 Sikst II. (257-258)  
 Dionizije (259-268)  
 Feliks I. (269-274)  
 Eutihijan (275-83)  
 Gaj (283-296)  
 Marcellin (296-304)  
 Marcel (308-309)  
 Eusibije (309-310)  
 Miltiad (311-314)  
 Silvester I. (314-335)  
 Marko (335-337)  
 Julije I. (337-352)  
 Liber (352-366)  
 Feliks II. 352-65 *antipope*  
 Damaz I. (366-384)  
 Ursinije 366-7 *antipope*  
 Siricije (384-99)  
 Anastazije (399-401)  
 Inocent I. (401-417)  
 Zosim (417-418)  
 Bonifacije I. (418-422)  
 Eulalije 418-419 *antipope*  
 Celestin I. (422-432)  
 Sikst III. (432-440)  
 Leon I. Veliki (440-461)  
*Kalcedonski koncil 451*  
 Hilarije (461-468)  
 Simplicije (468-483)  
 Feliks III. (483-492)  
 Gelazije I. (492-496)  
 Anastazije II. (496-498)  
 Simah (498-514)

Laurentije 498-505 *antipope*  
 Hormisdas (514-523)  
 Ivan I. (523-526)  
 Feliks IV. (526-30)  
 Bonifacije II. (530-532)  
 Dioskur (530) *rival pope*  
 Ivan II. (533-535)  
 Agapet (535-536)  
 Silvrije (536-537) *deposed*  
 Vigilije (537-555)  
 Pelagije (555-561)  
 Ivan III. (561-574)  
 Benedikt I. (575-579)  
 Pelagije II. (579-590)  
 Grgur I. Veliki (590-604)  
 Sabinijan (604-606)  
 Bonifacije III. (607)  
 Bonifacije IV. (608-615)  
 Deusdedit (Areodat I) (615-618)  
 Bonifacije V. (619-625)  
 Honorije I. (625-638)  
 Ivan IV. (640-642)  
 Severin (640)  
 Ivan IV. (640-642)  
 Teodor I. (642-649)  
 Martin I. (649-655)  
 Eugenije (655-657)  
 Vitalijan (657-672)  
 Adeodat II. (672-676)  
 Don (676-678)  
 Agato (678-681)  
 Leon II. (682-683)  
 Benedikt II. (684-685)  
 Ivan V. (685-686)  
 Konon (686-687)  
 Teodor i Pascal (687)  
*Rival popes*  
 Sergije I. (687-701)  
 Ivan VI. (701-705)  
 Ivan VII. (705-707)

Sisinije (708)  
 Konstantin (708-715)  
 Grgur II. (715-731)  
 Grgur III. (731-741)  
 Zaharije (741-752)  
 Stjepan II. (752-757)  
 Pavao I. (757-767)  
 Konstantin II. 767-768 *antipope*  
 Filip (768) *antipope*  
 Stjepan III. (768-772)  
 Adrian I. (772-795)  
 Leon III. (795-816)  
*crowns Charlemagne (800)*  
 Stjepan IV. (816-817)  
 Pascal I. (817-824)  
 Eugeije II. (824-827)  
 Valentinije (827)  
 Ivan 844 *antipope*  
 Grgur IV. (827-844)  
 Sergije II. (844-847)  
 Leon IV. (847-855)  
 Benedikt III. (855-858)  
 Nicola I. (858-867)  
 Adrian II. (867-872)  
 Ivan VIII. (872-882)  
 Marin I. (882-884)  
 Adrian III. (884-885)  
 Stjepan V. (885-891)  
 Formoz (891-896)  
 Bonifacije VI. (896)  
 Stjepan VI. (896-871)  
 Roman (897)  
 Teodor II. (897)  
 Ivan IX. (898-900)  
 Benedikt IV. (900-903)  
 Leon V. (903)  
 Kristof 903-904 *antipope*  
 Sergije III. (904-911)  
 Anastazije III. (911-913)  
 Lando (913-914)

Ivan X. (914-928) *deposed*  
 Leon VI. (928)  
 Stjepan VII. (929-931)  
 Ivan XI. (931-935)  
 Leo VII. (936-939)  
 Stjepan VIII. (939-942)  
 Marin II. (942-946)  
 Agapet II. (946-955)  
 Ivan XII. (955-963)  
*crowns Oto I. (962)*  
 deposed 963  
 Leon VIII. (963-965)  
 Benedikt V. (965-966)  
 Ivan XIII. (965-972)  
 Benedikt VI. (973-974)  
 Benedikt (974-983)  
 Bonifacije VII. (974) *deposed*  
 Benedikt VII. (974-983)  
 Ivan XIV. (983-984)  
 Bonifacije VII. *again* (984-985)  
 Ivan XV. (985-996)  
 Grgur V. (996-999)  
 Ivan XVI. 967-968 *antipope*  
 Silvester II. (999-1003)  
 Ivan XVII. (1003)  
 Ivan XVIII. (1004-1009)  
 Sergije IV. (1009-1012)  
 Grgur 1012 *antipope, deposed*  
 Benedikt VIII. (1012-1024)  
 Ivan XIX. (1024-1032)  
 Benedikt IX. (1032-1045)  
*1046, deposed*  
 Grgur VI. (1045-1046) *deposed*  
 Silvester III. 1045 *antipope,*  
*rejected*  
 Klement II. (1046-1047)  
 Damaz II. (1047-1048)  
 Leon IX. (1048-1054)  
*East-West Schism*  
 Viktor II. (1054-1057)

Stjepan IX. (1057-1058)  
 Benedikt X. (1058-1059)  
*deposed*  
 Nikola II. (1059-1061)  
 Aleksandar II. (1061-1073)  
 Honorije II. 1061-1072 *antipope*  
 Grgur VII. Hildebrand (1073-1085)  
 Klement III. 1080-1100 *antipope*  
 Viktor III. (1086-1087)  
 Urban II. (1088-1099)  
 Pascal II. (1099-1118)  
 Teodorik 1100 *antipope, rejected*  
 Albert 1102 *antipope, deposed*  
 Gelazije II. (1118-1119)  
 Grgur VIII. 1118-21 *antipope, deposed*  
 Kalikst II. (1119-1124)  
 Honorije II. (1124-1130)  
 Inocent II. (1130-1143)  
 Anklet II. (1130-1138)  
 Viktor 1138 *odstupio*  
 Celestin II. (1143-1144)  
 Lucije II. (1144-1145)  
 Eugenije III. (1145-1153)  
 Anastazije IV. (1153-1154)  
 Adrian IV. (1154-1159) (englez)  
 Aleksandar III. (1159-1181)  
 Viktor IV. 1159-1164 *antipope*  
 Pascal III. 1164-8 *antipope*  
 Inocent III. (1179-80) *antipope, deposed*  
 Lucije III. (1181-1185)  
 Urban III. (1185-1187)  
 Grgur VIII. (1187)  
 Klement III. (1187-1191)  
 Celestin III. (1191-1198)  
 Inocent III. (1198-1216)  
*IV. Lateranski Koncil*  
*Dogma of Transsubstantiation*  
 Honorije III. (1216-1227)  
 Grgur IX. (1227-1241)  
 Celestin IV. (1241)

Inocent IV. (1243-1254)  
 Aleksandar IV. (1254-1261)  
 Urban IV. (1261-1264)  
 Klement IV. (1265-1268)  
 Grgur X. (1271-1276)  
 Inocent V. (1271)  
 Adrian V. (1276)  
 Ivan XXI. (1276-1277)  
 Nikola III. (1277-1280)  
 Martin IV. (1281-1285)  
 Honorije IV. (1285-1287)  
 Nikola IV. (1288-1292)  
 Celestin V. (1294) *resigns*  
 Bonifacije VIII. (1294-1303)  
 Benedikt XI. (1303-1304)  
 Klement V. (1305-1314)

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## **PAPACY IN AVIGNON**

### **1307-1378**

Ivan XXII. (1316-1334)  
 Nikola V. 1328-1330 *antipope*  
*odstupio*  
 Benedikt XII. (1334-1342)  
 Klement VI. (1342-1354)  
 Inocent VI. (1352-1362)  
 Urban V. (1362-1370)  
 Grgur XI. (1370-1378)

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## **PAPINSTVO AGAIN U RIMU**

Urban VI. (1378-1389)  
 Klement VII. 1378-94 *antipope*  
 Bonifacije IX. (1389-1404)  
 Benedikt XIII. 1394-1423 *antipope, deposed*  
 Inocent VII. (1404-1406)  
 Grgur XII. (1406-1409)  
 Aleksandar V. (1409-1410)  
 Ivan XXIII. 1410-15 *antipope,*  
*deposed*  
 Martin V. (1417-1431)  
 Klement VIII. 1423-9 *antipope,*



*odstupio*

Eugenije IV. (1431-1471)

*deposed*

Feliks V. 1439-49 *antipope*,

*odstupio*

Nikola V. (1447-1455)

Kalikst III. (1455-1458)

Pio II. (1458-1464)

Pavao II. (1464-1471)

Sikst IV. (1471-1484)

Inocent VIII. (1484-1492)

Aleksandar VI. (1492-1503)

Pio III. (1503)

Julije II. (1503-1513)

Leon X. (1513-1521)

*Condemns Luther*

Adrian VI. (1522-1523)

Klement VII. (1523-1534)

Pavao III. (1534-1549) *Council of Trent 1545-63*

Julije III. (1550-1555)

Pavao IV. (1555-1559)

Pio 1559-1565)

Pio V. (1566-1572)

Grgur XIII. (1572-1585)

Sikst V. (1585-1590)

Urban VII. (1590)

Grgur XIV. (1590-1591)

Inocent IX. (1591)

Klement VIII. (1592-1605)

Leon XI. (1605)

Pavao V. (1605-1621)

Grgur XV. (1621-1623)

Urban VIII. (1623-1644)

*Condemns jansenism*

Inocent X. (1644-1655)

Aleksandar VII. (1655-1667)

Klement IX. (1667-1669)

Klement X. (1670-1676)

Inocent XI. (1676-1689)

Aleksandar VIII. (1689-1691)

Inocent XII. (1691-1700)

Klement XI. (1700-21)

*bull Unigenitus*

Inocent XIII. (1721-1724)

Benedikt XIII. (1724-1730)

Klement XII. (1730-1740)

Benedikt XIV. (1740-1758)

Klement XIII. (1758-1769)

Klement XIV. (1769-1774)

*Jesuits disbanded*

Pio VI. (1775-1799)

Pio VII. (1800-1823)

*Jesuits once again allowed*

Leon XII. (1823-29)

Pio VIII. (1829-1830)

Grgur XIV. (1831-1846)

Pio IX. (1846-78)

*dogma of the immaculate conception*

*First Vatican Council (1869-70)*

*dogma of papal infallibility*

Leon XIII. (1878-1903)

*Rerum novarum 1891*

Pio X. (1903-1914)

Benedikt XV. (1914-1922)

Pio XI. (1922-1939)

Pio XII. (1939-1958)

*dogma of the Assumption*

Ivan XXIII. (1958-1963)

*Second Vatican Council (1962-5)*

Pavao VI. (1963-1978)

Ivan Pavao I. (1978)

Ivan Pavao II. (1978-2005)

Benedikt XVI. (2005-2013)

Francis I. (2013-

## **Synods held in Carthage**

251 problem of apostates

255 baptism of heretics condemned

256 rejection of pope Stephen  
 348 rejection of re-baptism  
 397 the canon of Scripture upheld  
 411 suppression of the donatists  
 418 Pelagius condemned  
 419 appeal to Rome  
 424 appeal to Rome

## CHURCH COUNCILS

### *Ecumenical*

I. Nicejski	325
I. Carigradski	381
Efeški	431
Kalcedonski	451
II. Carigradski	553
III. Carigradski	680-81
II. Nicejski	787
IV. Carigradski	869-70

### *Roman Catholic*

I. Lateranski	1123
II. Lateranski	1139
III. Lateranski	1179
IV. Lateranski	1215
I. Lionski	1245
II. Lionski	1274
Vienne	1311-12
Constanza	1414-18
Basel/Ferrara/ Firenze	1438-45
V. Lateranski	1512-17
Tridentski	1545-63
I. Vatikanski	1869-70
II. Vatikanski	1962-65

