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History of Restoration: The New Testament Age

CHRISTIANS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

JUDAISM HAS often been noted for teaching that there is only one God and that all men should be brothers. A third concept is even more deeply embedded in Hebrew tradition: God works in history. History does not move in cycles, as the ancient Greeks believed. Nor, as the Romans thought, did it start with a golden age which has been in continual decline. For the Jews and the Christians, history has a definite direction, because God is using it to realize His goal for mankind. For Jews who escaped from Egypt and built a kingdom, history had begun with the Garden of Eden and would be consummated in the messianic age. For Christians too there is an intelligible meaning to the sequence of events.

Unification theology accepts the Biblical affirmation that God works in history and applies it in the most concrete fashion to the course of events which occurred after the death of Jesus. God did not cease His work because of the crucifixion. If history before the coming of Christ illustrates God's plan for the restoration of mankind, subsequent history records the ways He

is employing to fulfill it. By the crucifixion of the Messiah of Israel—and thus the hope of Israel—God's will was effectively thwarted. The two thousand years since have been a prolongation as well as an intensification of His original design.

Divine Principle suggests that there is a definite pattern to salvation-history. The New Testament age resembles the Old Testament age. As there are six periods in Jewish life from Jacob to Jesus, there are six parallel periods in the two thousand years from Jesus to the present. A pattern of correlation can be traced in the events and chronology of the two ages.

Christianity was once a new religion, and the epistles of St. Paul could be described, in Canon Phillip's words, as "Letters to Young Churches"; but the world into which the religion of Jesus was introduced was filled with fear, mistrust, bigotry, hatred and disillusionment. It took Christians about 400 years (from Christ's birth, about 4 B.C. to the Edict of Milan, 392 A.D.), a period comparable to the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, to obtain freedom of worship and a fair hearing for the New Testament. From the reign of Tiberius Caesar to the accession of the Emperor Constantine (14-323 A.D.), the followers of Jesus were misunderstood, maligned and persecuted. Immoral emperors like Nero hated Christians because of their high ethical standards and their obvious disapproval of the wantonness so common in a permissive society. Despots like Domitian thought of them as a threat to law and order because they placed obedience to God above loyalty to Caesar. Even good emperors like Marcus Aurelius defended persecution of Christianity because they felt it to be a primitive faith which fostered superstition among the masses and was alien to the ideals upon which a rational social order must be built.

For a variety of reasons, the early Christians were imprisoned and often executed. By the time churches had been established in most parts of the empire, Rome was already in decay. Because the social order itself was shaky, many Romans felt insecure and threatened. Anything new and different aroused fear and gave rise to anxiety. Violence is an inevitable by-

product of social disintegration; and the Christians provided a convenient scapegoat for a troubled and resentful majority.

The Apostolic Fathers and Greek Apologists spent their lives expounding the reasonableness and moral uprightness of the Christian faith. It was their task to defend the new religion against its detractors, Jewish or pagan. Especially at Alexandria, Christian scholars appeared who equalled the best of the Graeco-Roman philosophers. Origen, for example, was as learned and profound in his thinking as the Jewish Philo or Egyptian Plotinus. Because of the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Athanasius, Christianity gradually became as intellectually respectable as Stoicism or Neoplatonism.

The first four centuries saw Christianity spread from the insignificant Roman province of Judea to every part of the empire and far beyond. In spite of official hostility and mob violence at times, churches were formed by Saint Paul in present-day Turkey and Greece, while others whose names have been forgotten established Christian fellowships in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Italy, southern France and Spain. Coptic Christians of Egypt believe that St. Mark founded their church at Alexandria, and Jacobite churchmen claim that St. Thomas brought Christianity to them in southern India. Gregory the Illuminator, an Armenian aristocrat, converted his king and nation to the faith during the third century.

Persecution of the Christian minority, previously merely sporadic and local, reached full fury from 249 A.D. during the reign of Decius to 303 A.D. in the rule of Diocletian. The tide turned when Constantine in 312 A.D. saw a vision of a cross of light in the sky and the inscription "Conquer by this". He won his way to the imperial throne and the following year made Christianity one of the legal faiths of the empire. Constantine built many churches when he moved his capital to Byzantium and encouraged his officials to become Christians. His mother Helen became known for her piety and Constantine himself was baptized on his deathbed. With imperial patronage, Christianity

became securely rooted in Roman civilization and began to witness mass conversions. By order of emperor Theodosius, the Church became the state religion and all its rivals were outlawed.

As a result of growing differences of opinion among Christians on matters of theology and worship, efforts were made to unify and standardize the faith. In the second century, there were as many different kinds of Christians as there are denominations in contemporary America. Three methods were employed to counteract this confusing and divisive situation. Beginning with Ignatius of Antioch (35-115 A.D.) the bishop was made the unifying force in church life. Loyalty to Christ was considered synonymous with obedience to one's bishop. As the Syrian churchman insisted, "Where the bishop is, there is the Church." By establishing a regular clergy and placing them under the authority of a bishop, Ignatius believed the unity of the faith could be restored and the effectiveness of the church guaranteed. According to the argument put forward by the centralizers, Christ bestowed his authority to his twelve apostles and they transmitted their power to their successors, the bishops. Irenaeus of Lyons (circa 180 A.D.) emphasized the fact that there was a direct and uninterrupted chain of command from God to Christ and from the apostles to the bishops. Understandably, at that time (and ever since for that matter) some doubted that episcopal government provides the proper or apostolic means for insuring Christian unity.

A second unifying force was the canonization of the New Testament. Whereas Palestinian Jews met at Jamnia in 90 A.D. to determine which books would be included in the Old Testament, the formation of our New Testament took place gradually and was never finalized in quite the same manner. Marcion (circa 160) rejected completely the authority of the Old Testament and prepared a New Testament made up of the Gospel of Luke, the epistles of Paul (excluding the Pastorals) and a work of his own called the "Antitheses". About 150 A.D. Tatian combined Matthew, Mark, Luke and John into a single narrative

which became the standard Gospel in the Syrian churches until the fifth century. Most Christians quite early accepted the authority of the four Gospels, thirteen Pauline epistles, Acts, I Peter, and I John but many doubted the value of Hebrews, James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude and Revelation. A number of churches treated as scripture the Epistle of Barnabas, the letters of Ignatius, Clement and Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, Acts of Peter, the Didache and the Gospel of Thomas. The church of Rome read 22 (not 27) books at their worship services; Clement of Alexandria had 30 books in his New Testament, including Hermas, Barnabas, Clement and the Apocalypse of Peter. Origen in the third century quoted Hermas and Barnabas as scripture. For two centuries the Eastern churches shied away from the book of Revelation and the Western churches from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Not until an Easter letter of Athanasius (367 A.D.) do we have a list of approved New Testament books like our own.

Much earlier the churches had employed a third method to counteract division; individually, they prepared statements of faith, excluding certain Christians from their ranks. The Apostles' Creed, for example, based on a baptismal oath in the church of Rome, was expanded to refute Gnostic and Docetic ideas popular in many Christian circles. The Nicean Creed was designed to combat Arian Christianity and later confessions of faith were adopted to eradicate Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Without exception, credal statements served to buttress the orthodoxy of the majority while expelling the minority as heretics and schismatics.

Beginning with the ecumenical council at Nicea called by the emperor Constantine in 325 A.D., assemblies of bishops convened to restore doctrinal and liturgical unity to the badly-divided Christian church. Seven of these are considered authoritative among the Eastern Orthodox. Roman Catholics continued the practice without the approval of the Eastern Christians and later without support from Protestants. Since the birth of the ecumenical movement, conciliar Christianity has been re-

vived but none of the meetings of the World Council of Churches is considered as important as the councils of Nicea or Chalcedon.

AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS

By the fourth century, Christianity had been built upon a solid foundation in the Roman Empire and was already spreading beyond the area governed by the Caesars. The next stage in Christian history is comparable to the 400 years the Bible assigns to the age of the judges of Israel. Just as early Christianity witnessed the growth of the power of local bishops, the imperial Church saw power being further centralized in the person of the patriarchs. A patriarch was the bishop of one of the chief cities of the Roman Empire. Christians looked for guidance, inspiration and authority to the influential bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch or Jerusalem.

Since there were comparatively few Christians in Palestine after the disastrous Jewish revolts of 70 and 135 A.D., the bishop of Jerusalem was a minor figure and was not recognized officially as a patriarch until 451 A.D. However, the fact that Christians regularly made pilgrimages to the Holy Land gave this ecclesiastic enormous prestige and the liturgical customs of Jerusalem were introduced into nearly every church. Antioch, besides being an influential imperial city, was known as the place where followers of Jesus were first called Christians and was famous for its school of Biblical studies. At the height of his power the patriarch of Antioch governed the Christians of Syria, Lebanon, southern Asia Minor, Cyprus, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Georgia, and south India. Alexandria, a noted university city (second only to Athens) was as well a commercial center. Its patriarch ruled Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Constantinople, the capital of the empire, contained the most important church; its bishop served as an advisor to the government and was known after 587 A.D. as the ecumenical patriarch.

Besides these four patriarchs in the East, the bishop of Rome was called the patriarch of the West. Though he em-

phasized the fact that he was the successor of Peter, the Roman bishop was largely overshadowed by the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople who had the ear of the emperor and reigned at the heart of the empire. Only recently have Christians in the West come to recognize the validity of Eastern Orthodox claims that for many centuries the focal point of Christian life and thought was in the East. The bishop of Rome, however, had several long-range advantages. In the pentarchy of patriarchs, he alone was far enough away from the center of imperial power to be able to act as a more or less independent agent. The patriarch of Constantinople was repeatedly subjected to the will of the emperors and empresses, was often embroiled in party politics, and fell prey to the practitioners of Byzantine statecraft of the most notorious sort. Because Antioch and Alexandria were committed to theological discussion, their patriarchs became involved in questions of orthodoxy and heresy which split their churches and weakened their authority. If the Roman Church had few prominent theologians, for that very reason she was able to preserve a reputation for untroubled orthodoxy. Furthermore, the Roman prelate soon found how easy it was to use the jealousy of Alexandria and Antioch toward Constantinople to his advantage.

In the West the bishop of Rome gradually assumed greater authority. While the eastern patriarchs saw their power decrease as a result of the Christological and Trinitarian controversies, Latin Christianity produced able theologians like Augustine and strong-willed administrators like Popes Leo I and Gregory the Great. The West was untouched by the Mohammedan invasions which devastated the Near East and threatened Constantinople. The patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem had to learn how to survive in a Moslem world and the ecumenical patriarch lost hundreds of thousands of his former adherents to the new religion of Islam. When the Byzantine emperor was preoccupied with foes, the bishop of Rome was free to exercise political as well as ecclesiastical power. Although a strong theoretical case can be made for the primacy of the ecumenical

patriarch, the primacy of Rome was assured for all practical purposes after the Moslem advance.

During the first eight centuries of Christianity, the monastic way of life was adopted by large numbers of believers. St. Anthony about 250 A.D. founded Christian monasticism when he gave up all of his possessions and retired to the Egyptian desert to live the life of a hermit. Pachomius (circa 320 A.D.) established the first Christian monastery in Egypt. Monasticism was favored by Jerome and Augustine. Martin of Tours founded the first French monastery about 362 A.D.; but western monasticism owes most to Benedict of Nursia who created the motherhouse of the Benedictine order at Monte Cassino in 529 A.D. Monasteries were soon common throughout the Christian world, among the most notable being the Byzantine community at Mount Athos in Greece and the Celtic ones of Ireland and Scotland. A Protestant church historian says of monasticism, "that not only the best men supported the institution; they were to be found in it."[1] *Divine Principle* compares these early monks to the ancient Israelite prophets who flourished at the time of the Judges.

UNITED CHRISTIAN EMPIRE (120 YEARS)

Just as the united kingdom of Israel and Judah under Saul, David and Solomon lasted 120 years, so a united Christian empire was created by Charlemagne which continued for about the same length of time. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul to serve as king of the Hebrew nation and Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor at St. Peter's Church on Christmas day, 800 A.D. Secular historians explain that the Roman bishop was greatly indebted to the Frankish ruler because of protection he had earlier received when disaffected Italian nobles threatened to drive the pope from his throne. From a purely political perspective, the papal act merely restored the empire to the West where it belonged before the time of Con-

[1] W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church,* Scribners, N.Y., 1959 revision, p. 128.

stantine. In fact, there had more than once been two Roman emperors, one for the East and a second for the West. Emperor Leo V at Constantinople recognized as much and treated Charlemagne as his equal.

Charlemagne was more than a successor to Augustus for he became the visible embodiment of a great ideal. A theocratic stamp had been placed on the empire. God's consecration had been given to a western emperor by the hands of His highest representative. To Charlemagne it seemed like the fulfillment of Augustine's dream in the *City of God.* Western Christendom was at last united in a kingdom of God of which the Frankish ruler was the earthly head. Church and state resembled two sides of the same shield, one leading man to temporal happiness, the other to eternal blessedness.

Charlemagne himself realized the religious as well as political nature of his mission, though he was also coached in his role by the scholar Alcuin who compared him to King David. Speaking to Pope Leo, the Frankish monarch declared:

> My part it is, in accordance with the aid of divine piety, to defend on all sides the holy church of Christ from pagan incursion and infidel devastation abroad, and within to add strength to the Catholic faith by our recognition of it. Your part it is, most holy father, having raised your hands to God, like Moses, to aid our arms, in order that by your intercession, God granting and leading us, the Christian people may everywhere be always victorious over the enemies of its holy name.[2]

Charlemagne's kingdom was interpreted in the same way that Byzantine theologians explained the role of the Eastern Roman Empire. They referred to the desirability of a symphony between church and state. Spiritual and civil authorities should

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[2] H. Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire,* Harper Torchbook, N.Y., 1964, p. 60.

work in harmony, each supporting the other.[3] But the Holy Roman Empire represented a new ideal for the West. As an empire it was to unite western Europe. As an instrument for the diffusion of civilization it was to protect and promote the ideals of Latin culture. Most importantly, the emperor was expected to be the guardian and patron of the Christian faith.

Charlemagne's empire did not last but the dream behind it persisted for many centuries. Charles V who reigned during the Protestant Reformation believed that it was his task as a Hapsburg to realize the ideal represented by Charlemagne. Even Napoleon consciously modelled himself upon the pattern set by the earlier Frankish ruler (though when it was his turn to be crowned by the Pope, he yanked the crown from the pillow and crowned himself).

DIVIDED CHRISTENDOM

When King Solomon compromised his devotion to Yahweh by allowing his foreign wives to worship their own gods, and neglected to fulfill the unifying purpose of the temple, the seeds were sown which resulted in the breakup of his united kingdom. Likewise, Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire was split asunder in deadly rivalry between what later became modern France and Germany.

Religiously the two parts of the imperial church of the Caesars gradually divided. The patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome came to treat each other as enemies rather than fellow servants of the same Christ. Customs between East and West had differed for centuries. Eastern Christendom used leavened bread for Communion, had a married clergy, and refused to have statues in the churches. Western Christendom used unleavened sacramental bread, insisted on a celibate priesthood, and venerated statues of the saints. None of these differences was of crucial importance until the popes claimed that they were successors of St. Peter and therefore the rightful head of the

[3] C. Manschreck, *A History of Christianity in the World,* Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974, pp. 111-112.

entire church. Finally, the legates of Pope Leo IX in 1054 laid a sentence of excommunication on the altar of Constantinople's patriarchal church Santa Sophia. Patriarch Michael Cerularius replied by pointing out that since Pope Leo had just died his legates had no power. According to the Orthodox historian Nicolas Zernov, the momentous excommunication of the senior Greek prelate was offered in the name of a dead pope; its contents displayed the exceptional ignorance and prejudice of the hot-tempered Cardinal Humbert, and the act has never been approved or repudiated by the popes even to the present day.[4] Be that as it may, Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism were now separated. According to *Divine Principle,* the Western church from henceforth became the object of God's dispensation in the Abel position, as Judah had in the period of the divided Hebrew kingdom. The aspect which distinguished the Hebrew tribe from others was that through them, God would send the Messiah; similarly, though God continued to work on other levels where possible, His direct will for the expansion of providence shifted to the Roman Church.

Meanwhile the papacy improved greatly its political and financial position. Throughout the Dark Ages and the medieval period, the Vatican was equal to most secular sovereigns. During the reigns of Gregory VII (1073-1085) and Innocent III (1198-1216), the papacy reached the height of temporal and spiritual power. The bishops of Rome believed they were vicars of Christ and acted accordingly. Since they were convinced that St. Peter had given them the keys to heaven and hell, they ordered kings to do their bidding or face the terrible consequences of excommunication. When Henry IV of Germany was placed under an anathema in 1076, Pope Gregory made the penitent monarch stand in the snow for three days, barefoot and thinly clad, before he would pardon him.

However, in the long run the ambitions of the papacy proved detrimental to the Roman Catholic cause. A recent

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[4] N. Zernov, *Orthodox Encounter,* James Clarke, & Co., London, 1961, p. 27.

church historian remarks:

> The great struggle of the Middle Ages was the struggle for independence and sovereignty. It was a struggle between titans, church and state, and in the end, after multitudinous ups and downs it might be said that the church won. But it was a Pyrrhic victory, for the papal primacy and implied infallibility on which the church built its case suffered from what Augustine identified as the essence of all sin—the attempt on the part of man to imitate the liberty and omnipotency of God.[5]

As Israel and Judah were warned by the prophets to repent of their sins, so monks and saints of the Catholic Church denounced the greed, pride and sensuality of many of the powerful ecclesiastics. Dominic, a Spaniard (1170-1221), founded the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) to reform the church through preaching and teaching, especially in university towns. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) formed the Minor Brethren bound together by love and practicing the utmost poverty to go out into the world two by two, preaching repentance, singing, and caring for lepers and outcasts. Church historians praise Francis as the highest and most inspiring representative of medieval piety.[6]

Intellectually too, the Middle Ages produced noteworthy achievements. Anselm, Abelard, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus but particularly Thomas Aquinas, labored to reconcile the claims of faith and reason. All of the Scholastics taught in the newly-created universities to show that there was nothing incompatible with being a Christian and accepting the rediscovered philosophy of Aristotle or the scientific learning introduced to the West from the Arab world. The religious philosophy of Aquinas proved to be the most influential

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[5] C. Manschreck, *Ibid*, p. 121.

[6] W. Walker, *Ibid*, p. 232.

Scholastic achievement, gradually becoming normative in Roman Catholic circles and in our own day revived by Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson.

During the Middle Ages, mysticism was cultivated by Hugo of St. Victor, Meister Eckhart, John Tauler and Thomas a Kempis. Through meditation and self-discipline, the mystics sought to transcend ordinary human experience and bring themselves into direct union with God. Most influential among the numerous medieval mystics were Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi. At a time when Christianity often degenerated into external ceremonies or simple obedience to the will of the local priest, the mystics rediscovered the reality of the God of heart.

When the Israelites refused to heed the prophets, God used the Assyrians as the rod of His wrath. In a parallel way, He employed the Mohammedans to chastise a corrupt papacy. Though the popes organized seven great Crusades to wrest the Holy Land from the Arabs and later the Turks, in the end the Moslems remained in control of Jerusalem. The failure of the crusades damaged papal prestige and resulted in widespread skepticism. Christians asked why the pope would send the faithful to die for an impossible cause. Why did Christ allow his own homeland to be held by infidels? Some of the crusaders recognized the superiority of Moslem culture and many of the scholars in the universities began teaching ideas derived from Islamic philosophers like Averroes or Avicenna. For the first time the West was able to judge itself in the light of a very different and in some ways more advanced civilization.

PAPAL EXILE AND THE RENAISSANCE

Unification theology suggests that there are many direct parallels between the fate of Israel and Judah at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians and the calamities which befell the Catholic Church after the close of the Middle Ages. When the hierarchy refused to follow the direction indicated by dedicated monks and friars, the papacy was forced to undergo its own type

of Babylonian captivity. Since the Church had so often and so disastrously meddled in politics, the powerful king of France ordered the papal court to move from Rome to Avignon where he could keep his eye on it. For seventy years (sixty-nine recorded years) the popes were little more than vassals of the French monarchy (1309-77). It was a period of humiliation for the Vatican and dismay for the Church as a whole.

At the end of 70 years of exile in Babylon, Cyrus permitted the Hebrews to return to Palestine. This joyous homecoming was accomplished in three stages over a period of 140 years. When the 70 years of papal captivity finally ended, Western Christianity had to recover its self-respect and sense of mission. Urban VI became the pope at Rome and Clement VII was crowned pope at Avignon. When the two anathematized each other and divided western Christendom, a council of reform-minded cardinals at Pisa denounced both and elected Alexander V to the office. For six years Roman Catholics found themselves with three popes. From 1414-1418 A.D. a council was held at Constance, deposed them all, and selected Martin V to occupy the papal see. The schism was over at last.

Avignon and the Great Schism marked the end of the medieval papacy. Loyalty to the pope as the symbol of a unified West was replaced by allegiance to the sovereign of one's particular national state. Henceforth it was more important to be an Englishman, Frenchman, Spaniard or Italian than to be a Catholic. For good or ill, the dream of a united Europe bound together by common Christian traditions and respect for Latin civilization had become for many an illusion and for some a nightmare. Whereas earlier western man was first of all a Christian, now he thought of himself first as a citizen and the subject of an earthly monarch.

The Councils of Pisa and Constance had taken upon themselves the right to criticize the pope and when necessary depose him. For the first time, canon lawyers argued that a general council of the church was superior to the bishop of Rome. An issue had been raised which would vex Catholicism for cen-

turies. Traditionalists would seek to restore the papacy to the place which Gregory, Innocent and Boniface had taken for granted. Against heavy odds and despite numerous defeats they would work for a reversal of conciliarism in favor of a forthright declaration of papal infallibility—a victory achieved at the Vatican Council in 1870. Out of the same agonizing reassessment of the church and its role in society, a second group of Catholics would seek to decentralize and simplify the church. Vatican Council II in large part represents the triumph of this attitude.

The Renaissance too signals the passing of the medieval ideal. Whereas the Middle Ages promoted asceticism and otherworldliness, man now delighted in the beauty of nature and glorified physical pleasures. We live in this world, men said, and our chief aim in life is to enjoy its satisfactions. The revival of classical learning restored the Greek ideal of man. Michelangelo's "David" symbolized the beauty of the human body. Rubens' paintings depicted a world of sensuous enjoyment totally different from the Franciscan model of the saint dedicated to Lady Poverty. Boccaccio and his ribald love stories were in; Benedict and his monks at Monte Cassino were out. Medieval man thought of life as a pilgrimage through a vale of tears on the way to the happiness of heaven; Renaissance man believed that a good God had created the earth to be enjoyed to the fullest.

While *Divine Principle* recognizes the evils which the new worldliness produced, it emphasizes the positive contributions of the Renaissance. The revolt against medievalism represented a philosophy of life affirmation. Man discovered the value of the individual, the significance of earthly existence, the importance of freedom and the inspiring beauty of nature. The objective of divine providence is to restore man and the world in their totality. If man's earthly life is neglected, his restoration would be incomplete.

Professor Roger L. Shinn of Union Theological Seminary has advocated the celebration of the secular:

> One aspect of the new humanism is its profound appreciation for the secular—that is, an appreciation for the history in which we live as a realm of real possibilities and opportunities, not simply as a meaningless process or a preparation for a life to come. The ethos is that of a rejoicing in this world rather than a resigned endurance.... The Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the romantic movement, the industrial revolution, and more recently the anticolonial and racial revolutions all mark stages in this victory of freedom. They are the *Heilgeschichte,* the salvation-history of the secular spirit.[7]

PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND ADVENT

A. The Protestant Reformation

Four centuries before the outbreak of World War I, Martin Luther, converted in a thunderstorm he mistook for the second advent, arose to nail his 95 theses on the door of the Roman Catholic Church and thus the door of history. Though the Reformation did not accomplish as much as he wanted—one of his desires was to throw James and Revelation out of the Bible—as a result of Protestantism, Christianity was able to have a greater impact on the world. For *Divine Principle* the period he heralded parallels the time of preparation that Malachi 400 years before Christ proclaimed, a time to make way for the great day of the Lord.

During the post-exilic period, Judaism encountered many foreign ideas, incorporated some into its theology and spurned the remainder. The Hellenism and Hebraism of pre-Maccabaean times in Israel paralleled the Hellenic and Hebraic revivals of the Renaissance and Reformation. Though both were necessary, in their relationship to each other the humanistic and secular Greek revival was Cain to the theocentric, Biblical, Hebraic revival which, for *Divine Principle,* was of an Abel-type inspiration.

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[7] R.L. Shinn, *The New Humanism,* Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1968, p. 50.

The Reformation, besides the basic action of moving the Bible out of the hands of the priests and its Latin garb by means of some courageous men and the timely invention of the printing press, can be understood as the rediscovery of certain basic scriptural ideas applied to every area of life. Protestants asserted the sole authority of the Bible as their guide in matters of faith and conduct, the priesthood of all believers, justification by faith, the rights of private conscience and the sanctity of the common life. Each of these affirmations was a protest against the medieval interpretation of Christianity; each was a call for the thorough reorientation of the church. A modern Roman Catholic historian states it thus:

> Since the needed reform of the Church so ardently desired by the majority of Christians did not take place at the proper time, there occurred in the second decade of the sixteenth century that appalling catastrophe which is usually, but not correctly, designated as the Reformation; for the original desire to improve conditions in the Church ended in downright revolution.[8]

Hus, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others believed that only a complete renovation of Christian life and thought could enable the Church to carry out the mission God intended for it. If the final result was to wreck the organizational and institutional unity of western Christendom, that was not the Reformers' goal. Roman Catholics responded to the Protestant revolt, as they termed it, with a counter-Reformation of their own. Many abuses were corrected in order to stem the tide which threatened to engulf the Catholic world. France, Spain, Italy and Poland remained loyal to the pope only because of the efforts of reform-minded bishops and the zeal of new Catholic orders like the Society of Jesus. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was un-

[8] K. Bihlmeyer & H. Tuchle, *Church History,* Newman Press, Westminster, 1966, vol. III, pp. 1-2.

able to bring Protestants back into the Roman church but it checked the worldliness of the upper clergy which had disgusted so many of the laity.

B. Two Currents in Modern History

Desiderius Erasmus, one of the Catholic humanists and an early supporter of Luther, believed that man's reason was a good guide to happiness here and hereafter. Neither the Protestants nor the Catholics had much sympathy for such a view, so the Age of Reason which appeared in the 18th century owed little to the papacy or the Reformers. Following the Protestant revolt and the terrible wars of religion came the period called the Enlightenment. Largely limited to the bourgeois and educated classes, it espoused rationalism, liberalism, humanitarianism and the scientific outlook. Voltaire was its most famous spokesman, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, two of its celebrated disciples.

Peter Gay gives the gist of the Enlightenment philosophy:

> The men of the Enlightenment united on a vastly ambitious program, a program of secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom, above all, freedom in its many forms—freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom to realize one's talents, freedom of aesthetic response, freedom, in a word, of moral man to make his own way in the world. In 1784, when the Enlightenment had done most of its work, Kant defined it as man's emergence from his self-imposed tutelage, and offered as its motto *Sapere aude*—'Dare to know': take the risk of discovery, exercise the right of unfettered criticism, accept the loneliness of autonomy.[9]

And Voltaire's "Écrasez l'infame" (crush the infamy) directed toward the Catholic Church, has been resounding against

[9] P. Gay, *The Enlightenment,* Knopf, N.Y., 1967, p. 3.

the Christians ever since, albeit often for different motives.

The Enlightenment had little immediate, direct influence on the churches, Catholic or Protestant. Conservatives would agree with Gay that the Enlightenment signified "the rise of modern paganism". Yet the long-range, indirect effect of this movement was enormous. The Enlightenment believed in reason rather than revelation. It eschewed dogma in favor of ethics. Because it was sure of natural law it doubted the existence of the miraculous.

Deism was the name given to Enlightenment views in regard to religion. The deists exercised some influence in the Church of England, more in the British Presbyterian churches and among the American Congregationalists. But this direct impact upon the clergy was of minor importance by comparison with the enthusiasm with which the Enlightenment was taken up by the secular universities. The historian of ideas can trace a straight line from Voltaire to Bertrand Russell.

As the rationalism popular in some circles extended the current of the Renaissance, German Pietism and the Methodist revivals of the Wesleys carried the current of the Reformation.

Once the Protestants had won the right to exist, much of their energy was directed toward the careful formulation of rigorous doctrinal orthodoxy and the achievement of cultural respectability. They set about proving to the world that they were not just wild rebels but were staid, stable citizens. As a result, the fire of early Protestantism seemed to die down. Faith became interpreted as adherence to correct doctrine and the Protestant churches looked like bastions of conventionality.

With Pietism, however, a sudden burst of enthusiasm made the churches of Europe and North America more vital. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) was disturbed by the decay into which Protestantism had fallen and to remedy the situation he recommended associations within German Lutheranism for the promotion of experiential Christianity. These colleges of piety would foster devotional reading of the Bible. Faith is not simply knowledge but a living power out of which an actual experience

of Christian renewal proceeds. Inner spiritual phenomena and individual experience are more important than questions of dogma.

Besides Spener's movement, other notable leaders appeared emphasizing the need for an experience-centered faith. Count Zinzendorf welcomed a group of Czech Protestant refugees to his estates, became impressed by their personal devotion and dedicated the rest of his life to a promotion of their ideals. John and Charles Wesley formed a Holy Club at Oxford out of which grew the revival preaching which produced Methodism. George Fox (1614-1691) earlier founded the Society of Friends which believed in direct guidance by an inner light. This was also the time of Swedenborg (1688-1772), who applied his learning as a Scandinavian scientist to an exploration of the wonders and mysteries of the spiritual world. Through his monumental writings many have been helped to experience the immediacy of God's presence. Spener, Zinzendorf, Fox, the Wesleys and Swedenborg differ markedly but they agree that Christianity should be a spirit-centered religion based on direct personal experience.

Another in this tradition was Friedrich Schleiermacher, who with Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling developed spiritually constructive philosophical systems to counter mechanistic and materialistic theories. One of Schleiermacher's greatest contributions to the history of theology was his effort to go beyond Hegel who overemphasized the intellectual side of religion and Kant who was inclined to reduce religion to morality alone. For Schleiermacher the heart of religion is an intuitive sense of dependence upon God which is more important than simply correct doctrine or proper behavior. We have an immediate awareness of the divine in the depths of our being. Man has an intuitive consciousness of oneness with God. Religion is not merely theoretical knowledge or just moral action but man's feeling of absolute dependence on God. We can *feel* our oneness with the

universe and our kinship with God.[10]

In addition, at this time, and in this vein, Romanticism did much to provide an atmosphere conducive to the revival of Catholicism among men of letters, artists and ladies of fashion. Chateaubriand became the spokesman for aesthetic Roman Catholicism and John Henry Newman sparked a High Church revival in Anglicanism. American Protestantism gained many new members because of the passionate preaching of evangelists like Lyman Beecher, Charles G. Finney and Dwight L. Moody.

C. Industrial Revolution

Europe and America were completely transformed by the transition from a stable agricultural society to modern industrialism. The machine age bettered economic conditions for large numbers of people and greatly improved man's physical environment in preparation for the New Age, according to *Divine Principle*. Protestantism generally favored capitalism, the rising middle class, the factory owner and industrialist. European Catholicism was ordinarily more sympathetic to the landed aristocrats and the peasants. This meant that preachers were inclined to view what was happening as a sign of God's favor and human progress, while priests lamented the alienation of modern man and his flight from God.

In the United States Protestants and Catholics gradually switched positions. When waves of immigrants from Europe swept into Boston, New York, Chicago and St. Louis, the older Protestants bewailed the sins of the city, extolled the virtues of the small town and looked back nostalgically at the old-time religion. Catholics, on the other hand, thought of the blue collar worker, local policeman and party boss as symbols of an American type of Catholicism ever-faithful to the parish, the priest and the pope. Industrial America became the stronghold of Roman Catholic power whereas Protestantism came to rely on the suburbanite, the farmer and the small businessman.

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[10] For appreciative evaluations of this theologian, see Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, pp. 386-410, and Robert W. Funk, ed., "Schleiermacher as Contemporary," *Journal for Theology and Church* #7, Herder and Herder, N.Y., 1970.

A few Protestants, however, refused to abandon the cities. William Booth (d. 1912) and his wife Catherine in London felt called to bring the gospel to all those cast off by respectable society. Through difficult struggles, they brought dramatic change in the lives of thousands. Booth mobilized them into a Salvation Army which has continued to minister to that class of society unreached by most churches.

D. Democracy and Imperialism

European social critics, whether of the left or right, begin their analysis of modern civilization with the French Revolution of 1789. Leftist commentators praise the way the masses of France rose up with righteous indignation to eradicate the absolutist Bourbon monarchy, behead the decadent aristocracy, outlaw a corrupt church and proclaim the universal rights of man. On the other side, men point to the atheism of the revolutionary ringleaders, the wanton destructiveness of the street mobs and the Reign of Terror which finally led to the dictatorship of Napoleon. Both sides agree, however, that the storming of the Bastille signifies the beginning of a new world.

For Unification theology, the French Revolution was the descendent of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment; the American Revolution, of the Reformation. Parisian revolutionaries were deliberately opposed to everything traditional Christianity stood for and determined to found a secular state. The American tradition was quite the opposite.

While some dissenters in England were having their ears cut off for listening to Puritan sermons, a radical Separatist group of 101 persons came across the Atlantic in a ship with less living space than a contemporary one-bedroom apartment. Producing the first democratic government since the time of ancient Greek city-states, the United States was founded on the basis of religious toleration. A century after Alexis de Tocqueville, another Frenchman realized the importance of America:

> And, as a matter of fact, America is today the area in the world in which, despite powerful opposite forces and currents, the notion of a Christian-inspired civilization is more part of the national heritage than in any other spot on earth. If there is any hope for the sprouting of a new Christendom in the modern world, it is in America that the historical and ethico-social ground which could become a soil for such a sprouting may be found. . . .[11]

Historians have recognized two traditions of Christian philosophy behind the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. On the one side were John Adams, John Hancock, and Roger Sherman raised in the Calvinist tradition. The Congregationalists of New England and the Presbyterians of the middle Atlantic states believed that since all men are corrupted by original sin, the less power an official has, the less sin he can commit against his fellowman; from this come checks and balances. On the other side stand men no less pious. Thomas Jefferson, though often denounced from the pulpit, was connected with the Deists; he, with Franklin, thought that since man is created good he is endowed with certain inalienable rights. Political liberty is a right guaranteed by nature and nature's God.

Imperialism like democracy was a by-product of the modern age. As a result of the explorations of adventurers like Columbus, Vasco da Gama and John Cabot, Christendom awakened to the realization that there existed a world far greater than western Europe and the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. For the man of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the discovery of North and South America, the trip around the southern tip of Africa and the reopening of regular trade routes to the Far East were as important as our successful moon landings. Soon after the explorer came the conqueror. Beginning

[11] Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History,* Scribners, N.Y., 1957, p. 161.

with the Spanish and Portuguese, great trade empires were set up by several western European nations. The largest of these were organized by the French and British. Colonies all over the world provided raw materials and new markets for the mother countries benefiting from the Industrial Revolution.

Christianity prospered as a result of the imperialist expansion of the Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, Dutch and Germans. With the conqueror came the cross. However, the motivation was more often mercantilism than Christianity. The Spanish and Portuguese came for gold but gave little in return. The development of those areas reflects this. In North America where the focus was religious (however imperfect), Christian progress has been phenomenal. Then when America sent her missionaries abroad, they were not to colonize but to Christianize.

But World War I sounded the death knell for the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and German empires, and World War II wrote "finis" across the empires of the Dutch, French and British. For western Europe the age of imperialism had come to an end. About a hundred independent nations were created out of lands over which the French tricolor and Union Jack had flown for a century or more.

However, at the same time that resurgent nationalism dismantled the western empires, a new imperialism swept eastern Europe. Russia built a slave empire out of the previously sovereign nations in the Baltic, the Balkans, Poland, Czechoslovakia and half of Germany, and became the self-declared foe of democracy and Christian religion. Leo Tolstoi, there as the wheel began to turn in that direction, was said to have asked a prophetic question when confronted with a belligerent socialist student who had tried to tell him Christ did not exist. Deeply saddened, he said, "Is this what the children of the future have to face?"

E. Missionary Movement

When Latourette wrote his history *Christianity Through the Ages,* he observed of the Church:

> As a religion it has had a wider geographic spread and is more deeply rooted among more peoples than any other religion in the history of mankind. Both that spread and that rootage have been mounting in the past 150 years and especially in the present century.[12]

The nineteenth century was a great Protestant era. In addition to sweeping changes in the outward conduct of life, the century witnessed two outstanding religious developments: the organization of Protestant missionary activity on a worldwide scale and the rapid expansion of the Sunday School movement.

Missionary work characterized Christianity from the very outset. After the apostolic age, Roman Catholics evangelized the barbarian tribes which invaded the empire and the Eastern Orthodox converted Russia. Nestorian Christians took their faith from Syria to Mesopotamia to China, and Monophysite Christians established the church in Ethiopia. Jesuits in particular were noted for their missionary zeal and St. Francis Xavier was a virtual apostle to the Far East. Franciscans labored valiantly to Christianize the Indians of Latin America.

Despite opposition, the missionary movement came to full force. Extreme Calvinists among the Baptists and Disciples of Christ declared that God had already predetermined His elect, so what was the use of sending out missionaries? Some questioned the use of church funds for such a purpose.

However, others were of a different mind. One group of students at Williams College, caught in a thunderstorm, took refuge at the side of a haystack; during the storm they came to a decision. They would be personally responsible for sending the

[12] K.S. Latourette, *Christianity Through the Ages,* Harper & Row, N.Y., 1965, p. ix.

gospel to India. Six years passed and in 1812 these "new world" Christians set sail to eventually establish the first outposts of American missions to the East in Bombay, Ceylon and later Burma. Resulting from the "haystack meeting", the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed by Congregational clergymen of Connecticut and Massachusetts.[13]

Their counterpart in England had already been started in 1795. The interdenominational London Missionary Society sent the famous missionary David Livingstone to Africa. During the 19th century the majority of Catholic missionaries were French and the majority of Protestants were British and American.

Robert Raikes organized the first Sunday School in England in 1780. Soon the idea spread across Europe and North America. The Sunday School became a normal feature of Protestant religious life in the nineteenth century. In 1907 the World Sunday School Association was created. With the secularization of the public school and the separation of church and state, Christian education became one of the major problems facing the churches.

The church's global mision served to integrate Christians of all races and lands. While direct evangelism was the main purpose of missionary activity, no less significant has been the impact made upon non-western cultures by the Christian colleges and hospitals set up in Asia and Africa.

President Henry P. Van Dusen of Union Theological Seminary stated:

> By any appropriate calculus—numbers of conversions, increase in membership, adventure into new areas, launching of new enterprises, founding of new churches and societies—this (the 19th century) was the epoch of Christianity's greatest vitality and most remarkable advance. Christianity had become at last,

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[13] Gerald C. Brauer, *Protestantism in America*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1965, pages 133-134.

> a world religion. More than that. It had validated its claim to be a universal faith, embracing men and women of every race and culture and stage of civilization. . . .[14]

In the tangible advances made by the 19th century, *Divine Principle* sees a pattern of preparation for the messianic age. Both the hearts of people and their physical environments have been constantly improved so that men might be ready for the long-awaited second advent. Scientific and technological development filled men with hope. The future seemed bright with promise.

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[14] Henry Van Dusen, *World Christianity,* Scribner's, N.Y., 1958, p. 51.

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