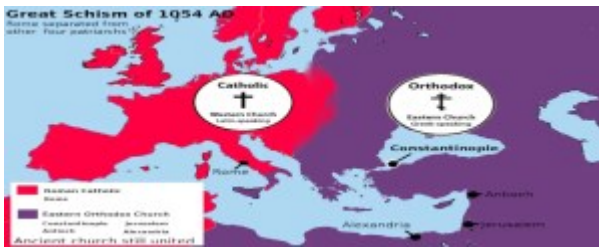


The Development of the Papal System



This is from chapter 6 of a book written in 1941 entitled, *"Our Priceless Heritage Christian Doctrine In Contrast With Romanism"* by Henry M. Woods, D.D, LL.D. I cannot find his bio on the Internet but I got the PDF file of the book from a source I trust, LutheranLibrary.org.

This history class about the origin of the papal system is the clearest and best one I have read so far! The author does a great job in my opinion.

What ts the meaning of the title, "Pope"?

The word pope is derived from the Greek, πάπας *papas*, *pappas*, Latin *papa*, meaning "father." In the early Church of both East and West, the title was applied to all bishops. In the Eastern branch of the Church the same word, with the circumflex accent, πάπας, was applied to all priests. The bishop of Rome did not obtain the exclusive use of this title until the time of Hildebrand (Gregory VII), 1073-1085. In other words, before Gregory VII, there was no real pope, as understood later, because *all bishops were called popes*. The student of history must be on his guard not to attach to the title as used in the early Church, the meaning it came to have in later centuries.

It has already been shown that St. Peter and the Apostolic Church had no thought of a pope. St. Paul well expressed the conviction of the apostles, when speaking of Apollos and himself he said, "Who are we, but ministers?" I Cor. 3:5.

The papal office was the product of selfish ambition in much later times. The bishops of Rome ignoring Christ's declaration, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and taking advantage of the political prestige their city had enjoyed for centuries as the *Mistress of the World*, schemed to secure the power and wealth that the Emperors of the Roman Empire enjoyed, and decade by decade pushed their false claims to secular and religious power until the people of Europe, ignorant of the true teachings of the Bible, and absorbed in their own worldly interests, gradually came to acknowledge them. Moreover, it should be remembered that Scripture and secular history afford no evidence that St. Peter was ever in Rome! Had he actually been in Rome, he would surely have spoken of it in his epistles. And St. Paul would almost surely have mentioned it, for he speaks of Luke, Mark and others, who were not so prominent as Peter, being in the capital. II Tim. 4:11,12,21, etc. Showing the nebulous basis for belief that Peter was ever in Rome, the only text which Cardinal Bellarmine cites to prove this supposition is I Peter 5:13,

where mention is made of *Babylon*. The natural interpretation of this is, that Babylon on the Euphrates river is referred to. This is the opinion of eminent scholars, among them Erasmus, a Romanist, who was considered the great scholar of his age; and of Dr. J. J. Dollinger, considered the great scholar of the Roman Church in the 19th century. Scaliger, who also had a reputation for profound scholarship, once declared that St. Peter's alleged residence and episcopate at Rome ought to be classed with "*absurd legends*."

No Pope in The Early Centuries

Is there trustworthy evidence that there was no pope, not only in the first century, but at the end of the third century?

There is clear evidence that there was no pope at the end of the third century. In A.D. 270 Stephen, bishop of Rome, reinstated in office certain unworthy ministers who had been forced to resign. A protest against Stephen's action having been made, Cyprian of Carthage called a meeting of bishops, *who reversed the decision of the bishop of Rome*. This could not have been done, had Stephen really been a pope. That there was no pope in the Church at that time is also proved by a declaration of Cyprian's to his brother bishops: "No one of us sets himself up as 'bishop of bishops,' or forces his colleagues to obedience by tyranny; for every bishop in the free use of his liberty and power, has his own right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another, than he himself can judge the other!" ¹

¹ In 1563 a statement was widely circulated from the Vatican, purporting to have come from Cyprian's writings, which acknowledged the bishop of Rome to be Universal Bishop. This statement, Archbishop Benson of Canterbury declared, came from a fraudulent document. He remarks, "Papal apologists have steadily maintained the grossest forgeries in literature. There never was a viler fraud than 'this, nor one so easy of detection.'" Life of Cyprian, Benson.

Again, the sixth Canon of the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, declared that the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria possessed the same authority over their dioceses that the bishop of Rome had over his. This pronouncement was reaffirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, 451, which also rejected as forgery a clause that had been interpolated into the 6th Canon, alleging "that the Roman Church had always had a primacy." Roman Catholic authorities, like Bishop Hefele, agree that this interpolation was *fraudulent*. Thus it is clear that there was no pope in A.D. 451!¹

¹ The African Church of the 5th Century was undoubtedly independent of the bishop of Rome's jurisdiction; for an African Council, of which Augustine of Hippo was secretary, decreed that "whosoever wills to appeal to those beyond the sea (that is, beyond the Mediterranean Sea, to Rome) shall not be received to the Communion by any one in Africa."

Was there any real pope in the 6th Century?

Not yet; for Gregory I, who was bishop of Rome from 590 to 604, denounced the Patriarch of Constantinople for assuming the title of Universal Bishop. Gregory declared that this title was "a mark of Anti-Christ, a name of blasphemy," and anyone who assumed it, "exalted himself above all other bishops." Later, Gregory stooped to accept the empty title for himself from the usurper Phocas, who murdered the Emperor and his whole family, and seized

the imperial throne. Gregory flattered the murderer and praised his horrible crime, in order to gain Phocas' support against the Patriarch of Constantinople; and his reward for the base act was the empty title, and the humbling of his rival, the Patriarch. In 596 Gregory sent Augustine (Austin) with 40 monks to England to try to bring Britain into union with Rome.

The Rise of Mohammedanism

What false religion arose in the 7th century, for which the grave errors of the Greek and Roman branches of the Church were largely responsible?

The Arabian Mohammed (Hegira, 622), abhorring as a violation of true religion the worship of images, saints and the Virgin Mary, which was practiced by the Greek and Roman Churches, founded the religion of Islam for the worship of the one true God. This cult spread rapidly, and has ever since been an unrelenting foe of the Christian religion, and the greatest hindrance to its progress in Moslem lands. *Life of Mahomet*, Sir Wiliam Murr.

Even in the year 800 was not the Emperor called "Bishop of Bishops"?

Yes, the Emperor Charlemagne received this title and *wielded the power of Head of the Church*. Though, through ceaseless propaganda, the papal idea was steadily gaining ground, the bishop of Rome had not yet attained the position and power of Universal Bishop. Charlemagne tried Leo III, bishop of Rome, for grave crimes. The Emperor also summoned Church Councils, appointed bishops, and was called "Bishop of bishops," *exercising the power and performing the functions, which later belonged to the popes*. His acceptance of the crown from Leo on Christmas Day, was not an acknowledgment that the Bishop of Rome was his superior, but was a shrewd political move to confirm his authority over Italy and Southern Europe; for later, when dying, Charlemagne himself, and not the bishop of Rome, crowned his son Louis as his successor to the throne.

The Holy Roman Empire

The foundation for the Holy Roman Empire was laid by Pepin, the father of Charlemagne. Pepin, by usurpation and with the assistance of the pope, became King of the Franks in 751. In payment of his debt to the pope, he gave the pope the Exarchate of Ravenna together with the territory of Bologna and Ferrara which formed the nucleus of the *Papal States*.

The Holy Roman Empire began with Charlemagne who succeeded his father as King of the Franks and was crowned Emperor by the bishop of Rome, Christmas Day, 800. As already stated, he accepted the crown from the bishop of Rome, not because he acknowledged the bishop as his superior, but because he wished to secure his aid in gaining control over Italy and Southern Europe. The Emperor claimed to represent the Emperors of ancient Rome; the Empire was called "Holy" from its connection with the Church, and comprised the German speaking peoples of Central Europe, with other parts of Europe. Otto I, King of Germany, became Roman Emperor in 962. Later, representatives of the Hapsburg line of Austria, occupied the Imperial Throne. The Empire declined through the 17th and 18th centuries, until Francis of Austria finally abdicated as

its last Emperor in 1806.

The Great Schism In the Christian Church And Rise Of The Roman Catholic Church

When did the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church take place, and to what was it due?

The Great Schism¹ between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church began in the 9th century and was completed in the 11th century. It was due in large part to the arrogant claims and persistent encroachments of the bishop of Rome, to which the Eastern and senior branch of the Church naturally would not submit. There had long been a bitter rivalry between the two religious leaders of Rome and Constantinople, which finally culminated in their complete separation, the Latin Church being established over the West, and the Orthodox Greek Church, whose Head was the Patriarch of Constantinople, over the East: both claiming to be Catholic or universal, and Apostolic. Thus **the Roman Catholic Church, so far from originating in the apostolic age, really began with the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church.** The date of this final separation was July 16, 1054, during the reign of Henry III of Germany, called the Emperor of the "Holy Roman Empire." At that time Michael Caerularios, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Leo IX, bishop of Rome, completely severed ecclesiastical relations, and established separate Churches, which ever afterward were maintained as independent organizations.

¹ Roman Church historians also use the term "The Great Schism," to denote the split in the Roman Church caused by the conflicting claims of rival popes, which extended for 39 years, from 1378 to 1417. The contest became so acute and the scandal so widespread, through the unseemingly wrangling of claimants and their mutual imprecations, that although such action was contrary to the theory that the Pope alone could convoke a Council, a number of Cardinals met and issued a call for a General Council at Pisa in 1409 to compose the quarrels of the rival popes. This Council met and deposed two claimants to the papacy and elected Alexander V as pope, thus increasing the number of claimants to the papal throne to three. Later the General Council of Constance (1414-1418) was convened, which elected Martin V as the sole pope. This Council enacted the "Five Articles of Constance"; these asserted the Council's authority in all matters of faith and discipline, which all Christians, even the pope, were bound to obey, and in case of refusal to obey, all Christians, even the pope, were liable to ecclesiastical punishment and to civil sanctions. The legality of Martin V's election, and the existence of the papal office depended on holding that the Council of Constance was a legal body. But the "Five Articles" would make the Council supreme over the pope, and thus endanger papal absolute power. So by a mental somersault, more dextrous than honest, the papal candidate recognized the validity of the Council's action in electing him pope, but refused to recognize the Council's action, making the pope subordinate to a General Council!

The Eastern Branch of the Christian Church was older and for centuries was much more influential than the Western Branch of the Church

In order to get the true perspective of history it cannot be repeated too often that the Roman Catholic Church and her system of dogmas did not begin in apostolic times, but centuries later. In the early years of the Church the Eastern branch, as regards seniority and influence, *far surpassed* the Western or Latin branch, and maintained this leadership at least for several centuries. The great leaders of the early Church were mainly from the East,

as Irenaeus, Ignatius, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Origen, Athanasius, and many others, called the Greek Fathers. It was through the work of the Eastern branch that the Coptic Church was founded in Egypt, and the Church established in Armenia, Ethiopia or Abyssinia, and India. Another proof of the early leadership of the Eastern branch is seen in the personnel of the early Church Councils. This was *overwhelmingly Greek*. At the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, out of 315 members present, not more than 8 members represented the Western section of the Church. So also of the Council of Constantinople in 381; and that of Ephesus in 431, under the leadership of Cyril of Alexandria, the influence of the Greek or Eastern branch was largely predominant.

Showing that there was no real pope then, it should be remembered also that these Councils were convoked, not by the bishops of Rome, but by the Emperor in Constantinople, who acted practically as the Head of the Church. The Emperor summoned Councils, sometimes without informing, and sometimes against the wishes, of the bishop of Rome. As has been mentioned, even as late as the 9th Century, the Emperor Charlemagne acted as Head of the Church and was called "Bishop of Bishops." Thus the papacy and the bulk of the papal dogmas did not come into existence till hundreds of years after the age of the apostles. Many Roman Catholics of repute testify to this. Antonio Pereira of Lisbon declared that the papal doctrines as distinguished from Apostolic Christianity were introduced by *the false decretals* (i.e., not earlier than the 9th Century). F. W. Barkovitch wrote that "the decretals were full of principles *hitherto unknown* in the Church of Christ."

What four important events, occurring not far apart, mark the full development of the Papacy?

The four events are, the rise of the ambitious Hildebrand as Gregory VII, claiming supremacy, not only over the Church, but also over all civil governments; the assumption by him of the exclusive title of pope; the deprivation of the laity of the right to share in the government of the Church, including the election of their superiors; and the final separation of the Church into the Latin and Greek branches.

On what did Hildebrand mainly base his exclusive claims to temporal and spiritual power?

Hildebrand based his claims to temporal and spiritual power largely upon documents, later known to be *fraudulent*, viz.: the so-called "*Donation of Constantine*" which appeared in the 8th century. It purported to be an edict of Constantine the Great, bestowing on the bishop of Rome control of Italy and the West, and conferring on him and the Roman clergy the *same rights and privileges which the Emperor and the Roman Senate enjoyed*.

The "Isidorian or Spanish Decretals" appeared in the 9th century, and professed to be a code of Church laws, compiled by Isidore, bishop of Seville, who died in 636. These spurious decretals also magnified the power and privileges of the bishop of Rome and his clergy. They were brought to Rome and presented to the bishop of Rome by Rothad, bishop of Soissons in 860. A later compilation of letters, which purported to be ancient, and false decrees, called Gratian's Decretum, the work of an Italian canonist,

Gratianus, appeared about 1150-51. This Decretum of Gratian became the great authority on ecclesiastical law throughout the Middle Ages.

THUS BY FORGERY WAS FOISTED ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE WEST THE OFFICE OF POPE, WITH ITS CLAIMS OF TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POWER, AS THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP OF CHRISTENDOM!

The Papacy Based on Counterfeit Documents

Were these documents on which the papacy was founded, really proved to be false?

Competent authorities of the Roman Catholic Church testify that without doubt these documents, which refer to the rights and privileges of the papacy, were forgeries. The Roman Catholic writer Schick quoted Antonio Pereira of Lisbon, declaring that the Roman *dogmas, as distinguished from apostolic doctrine*, were introduced by *these false decretals*. Similarly, F. W. Barkovitch wrote, "The decretals are full of principles *hitherto unknown* in the Church of Christ." Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, called the decretals "*a honeyed poison cup*." The Roman Catholic writer Scherer declared, "He who knowingly lies and forges, as *Pseudo-Isidore*, forfeits all claim to the title of an *honest man*." By Pseudo-Isidore he meant, the forger of the "Isidorian Decretals." Cardinals Baronius, Bellarmine, and Fleury, as well as De Regnon of Panis, *all asserted that these documents were fraudulent*.

Even Pope Pius VI, 1789, rejected them as false. He said, "Let us put aside this collection of decretals *to be burned with fire!*"

Lord John Acton, professor of history in Cambridge University in 1895, whom Cardinal Vaughan declared to be an orthodox Catholic, wrote: "The passage from the Catholicism, or Universal faith of the Fathers, to that of the modern popes was accomplished by willful falsehood; and the whole structure of traditions, laws and doctrines, that support the theory of infallibility and the practical despotism of the popes, *stands on a basis of fraud*." Lord Acton was an honest man, an earnest seeker after the truth. Though all his life a member of the Roman Church, at least in name, he clearly saw and boldly asserted that modern papal teachings, like those of the Council of Trent, are based on fraud, and *do not represent the doctrines of the early Christian Church*. *North British Review*, October, 1869, page 130.

Nor only the office of Supreme Pontiff, but also its power and privileges were founded on fraudulent evidence

That leading scholar of the Roman Church, Dr. J. J. Dolhinger, wrote: "The Donation of Constantine and the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals were imposed upon the Church about A.D. 750 and A.D. 850. For 700 years they were considered authentic, but about the middle of the 15th century they were abandoned as spurious. The towering fabric of a factitious papal sovereignty, however, raised in part on their authority, remained to crush the spirit of truth, and to harass the natural liberties of man." Janus, pages 94, 95, 105, 106.

The distinguished historian Hallam wrote: "Upon these spurious decretals was

built the great fabric of Papal supremacy over the different national Churches,—a fabric which has stood after its foundations crumbled beneath it; for no one for the last two centuries has pretended to deny that *the imposture is too palpable* for any but the most ignorant ages to credit.” *Middle Ages*, edition 1869, page 348.

The general conviction held by sincere and profound students of history that the papal system was based on deceit and forgery was expressed by the French theologian Gratry in a letter to Dechamps. “Do you know, Monseigneur, in the history of the human mind any question, theological, philosophical, historical, or otherwise, which has been *so disgraced by falsehood, bad faith, and the whole work of forgers*, as the papal system? I say it again, ‘It is a matter utterly *gangrened by fraud!*” Gratry, Letter II.

Did later popes, knowing that their power and privileges were acquired by fraud ever relinquish any part of them?

No one ever heard of their doing so. Though the popes knew that the whole fabric of the papal system was built on forgery, and therefore they had no right to it, they still held tenaciously to it, and its emoluments.

Does the Word of God give any warrant for various grades of clergy? In the Apostolic Church do we read of popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, canons, monsignors, etc.?

The Word of God gives no warrant whatever for any of these grades, but rather warns against them. These various grades were copied from the different ranks of officials under secular rulers. Selfish ambition, love of wealth, pomp and display, led leaders in the Church to disregard our Lord’s words, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” and seek their own worldly advantage. The Saviour severely reproved the spirit of pride and self-seeking which actuated them, as wholly inconsistent with the humility and self-sacrifice of the Gospel. The standard set up for His followers was that by which He lived; “*Even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*” Matt. 18:1-4, 20:20-28, Mark 9:33-35, 10:42-45.

Are not the spirit and style of living of popes, cardinals, bishops, etc., wholly opposed to that of Christ and His apostles?

The spirit and style of living of popes, cardinals, etc., is as far removed from the simplicity and self-sacrifice of Christ and the apostles, as their unscriptural dogmas are different from His Gospel. The popes claim a Kingdom of this world; Christ said: “My Kingdom is not of this world.”

The popes live in a large and expensive palace;
Our Lord “had not where to lay His head.” Matt. 8:20.
The popes affect pomp, and ride on men’s shoulders.
Cardinals affect “thrones” and call themselves “princes”;
Christ said: “I am among you as he that serveth.” Luke 22:27.
The popes have men kiss their feet;
The Lord of heaven and earth washed men’s feet. John 13:5.
Popes wear a triple crown of gold;

Our blessed Redeemer wore a crown of thorns!
Popes and bishops arrogate to themselves lordly power;
St. Peter exhorted: "Be not lords over God's heritage."
Popes and prelates seek much wealth;¹
St. Peter enjoined: "*Not for filthy lucre.*" I Peter 5:2.

¹ Quoting von Bezhold, Mussolini wrote: "The Church of Rome had become a slave of profound commercialism, had been bound over to the God Mammon, to the money that undermines all faith. The Curia had become a *gigantic money-making organization*; the saying that in Rome everything was for sale was by no means an exaggeration; for with money one could buy anything, from the smallest prebend to a cardinal's cap, from permission to use butter on fast days, even to absolution for murder and incest." Mussolini's *John Huss, the Man of Truth*.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. V, pp. 118D, 119A.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII, p. 14B.

Bryce, pp. 219, 220

In style of living there is hardly a feature in which they do not disobey the command, "*Be not conformed to this world.*" Rom. 12:3.

Toward the end of the 14th century, in Edward III's reign, the pope's annual revenue from England was *five times greater than the King's income*. In addition, the Church owned about one-third of England's territory. Cardinal Wolsey was reported to be one of the richest men in Britain. His banquets and entertainments were far more lavish than those of King Henry VIII. The Church owned about one-fifth of France, one-third of Germany, a large part of Spain and of Italy, beside parts of Austria, Poland, and other countries. The great wealth of the religious Orders, especially of the Jesuits, and their *constant absorption of lands and money at the expense of the poor people*, was assigned as one of the chief causes of the revolution in Spain, which established the Republic. These well-known facts of history prove the correctness of the statement that the Roman Curia—the Vatican—had become "a gigantic money-making," instead of a "soul-saving," organization.

What were the main causes of the so-called Dark Ages?

Beside the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, and the destruction caused by vast hordes of barbarians who poured like a devastating flood over Europe—the Goths, Vandals, Huns, etc.—the chief causes of the Dark Ages were moral and spiritual, due to the substitution of the papal system for the pure Gospel, and to false leaders in the Church. These men, attracted by the rich prizes of wealth, power and pleasure, which the high offices of the Church offered, thought of self and not of Christ. They departed farther and farther from God's Word and the apostolic faith, and turned more and more to the world and to "the weak and beggarly elements" of human tradition. They substituted a *pope for Almighty God; a sinful human priest for the Divine Saviour; mechanical rites and sacraments for the Holy Spirit; a bartering of papal indulgences for the free grace of God; and "dead works" of human merit* instead of vital godliness; these grave errors, together with the deception of the people by false miracles, and wonder-working shrines and relics, produced their natural result,—gross darkness and widespread moral corruption. Isa. 60:2, Jer. 2:13, Gal. 6:7.

Papal Control Brought Moral Ruin

Though the Christian Church was not originally papist, did not the popes gain control and hold it for a long time? What was the result?

Yes, just as is seen now in political parties in the State, the popes gained control of the Church, and held it for centuries, until they brought the Church to the verge of ruin. But all the time that vice and misrule were rampant, Christ still had His loyal servants who kept the faith, and handed it down to later generations. That the Church was brought to the brink of destruction, hear the testimony of Cardinal Baronius, among many who might be quoted.

"A few years before the heresies of Luther and Calvin, there was neither justice in the ecclesiastical courts, nor discipline in the morals of the clergy, nor knowledge of sacred things, nor respect for holy things; in short, there was scarcely any religion left!" Baronius, *Concio*, 28.

Erasmus, a Roman Catholic, wrote:

"I have made up my mind to spend the rest of my life in retirement from a world which is everywhere rotten. Ecclesiastical hypocrites rule in the courts of princes. The Court of Rome (Papacy) has clearly lost all sense of shame, for what could be more shameless than these Indulgences?"

Again,

"All sense of shame has vanished from human affairs. The very height of tyranny has been reached. The pope and Kings count the people, not as men, but as cattle in the market." Erasmus' *Letters*.

Savonarola at Florence declared,

"The scandal begins at Rome and goes throughout the whole.¹ The bishops are worse than Turks and Moors. The priests sell the sacraments; they traffic in the Mass; in short, everything is done for money. At Rome it has become a saying, 'If you will ruin your son, *make him a priest!*' "

¹ "All know the condition to which the Catholic Church had sunk at the beginning of the 16th century. An insolent hierarchy with an army of priests behind them, dominated every country in Europe. The Church was like a hard nutshell round a shriveled kernel. The priests, in parting with their sincerity, had lost the control over their own appetites, which only sincerity can give. Religious duty no longer consisted in leading a virtuous life, but in purchasing immunity for self-indulgence, by one of the thousand remedies which Church officials were ever ready to dispense at an adequate price. The spiritual organization of the Church was corrupt to its core. It was impossible to conceal the contrast between the doctrines taught in Catholic pulpits and the creed of which they were the *counterfeit*." Prof. J. A. Froude's *Calvinism*.

Chancellor John Gerson, of the University of Paris (died 1429), after declaring that the papacy was founded on fraud, and that the ecclesiastical rulers put up the Church for sale, said, "The present day Church is not apostolic, but apostate, from which one must *flee far, far!*"

God Raised Up The Protestant Reformation To Save True Religion

At the time when piety and virtue all seemed *lost*, and the powers of evil *triumphant* in the world, an all-wise and merciful Providence interposed to save true religion. Truly "man's extremity is God's opportunity!" At the beginning of the 16th century, Europe was sunk in spiritual death under the iron yoke of the papacy. "That haughty and dissolute power, like the ancient Assyrian King, boasted of his supremacy which none could withstand. (Isa. 10:13, 14.) In the language of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "Everything was quiet, every heretic exterminated; and the whole Christian world supinely acquiesced in the enormous absurdities inculcated by the Romish Church." At the Lateran Council which closed in 1517, an orator ascended the platform, and amid the thundering applause of a vast assembly, proclaimed in the presence of the pope: "There is an end of resistance to the papal rule and religion; *opposers exist no more*; the whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its Head, to *Thee!*" That very year the Almighty's appointed time had come, and as in the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, God spoke through an obscure monk; a voice that resounded through Germany, Italy and the whole of Christendom, *shaking the very foundations of the papal power* and arousing nations from the slumber of centuries!"

God's Faithful Witnesses Down The Ages

Who were some of the sincere believers who kept the true faith alive, and often sealed their witness with their blood?

The Cathari (early "Puritans"), Paulicians, Nestorians, Wyclifites, Hussites, Waldenses, etc. Though the faith of some of these may have been incomplete, as they groped their way in ecclesiastical darkness, yet the germ of truth was held. As in Elijah's time, God never left Himself without a witness. In spite of cruel persecutions, there still remained the faithful "7000," who had *not bowed the knee to the Baal of papacy, of sacerdotalism, and the worship of Mary, saints and images*. I Kings 19:18, Acts 14:17.

Is the accusation of the Church of Rome, that these Christian bodies in different centuries and the Protestant Church since the Reformation, are all schismatics who have separated from the true Church, founded on fact?

No. Holy Scripture shows plainly that these bodies of Christians, and the Protestant Church, are in no sense schismatics because they have kept the true faith of Scripture, and what they separated from was an apostate Church. The Church of Rome is the *real schismatic*, because it departed far from the faith; the Papal Church forced the break with the Eastern Church by its unreasonable demands, and Rome is now the schismatic, because it forced the Protestant Reformation by its false doctrines and moral corruption. Protestants were obeying our Lord's command when they withdraw from the apostate Church, for He said: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate!" II Cor. 6:14-18, Rev. 18:4.

The Cathari were falsely charged with Manichaeism, and wild stories were told of secret immorality, which candid Inquisitors admitted had no foundation in

fact. They strongly opposed sacerdotalism for they knew its emptiness. St. Bernard said of the Cathari: "If you interrogate them, nothing could be more Christian; as to their conversation, nothing can be less reprehensible, and what they speak they prove by their deeds. As for the morals of the heretic, he cheats no one, he oppresses no one, he strikes no one. He eats not the bread of idleness, for his hands labor for his livelihood. Their strict morality was never corrupted, and 100 years after St. Bernard, the same testimony is rendered to their virtues. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, vol. 1, page 102.

In a venerable document called, "The Noble Lesson," written about the year 1170, the Waldenses gave faithful testimony to the truth of the Gospel and against the anti-Christian system of Papal dogmas. The document declares: "Antichrist is the falsehood of eternal condemnation, covered with the appearance of the truth and righteousness of Christ. Its essence is a vain ceremonial; its foundation, false notions of grace and forgiveness; its tendency, to lead men away from Christ. The Papal system defrauds God of the worship due to Him, by rendering it to creatures, saints, images, and relics. It defrauds Christ by attributing justification and forgiveness to Antichrist's authority and words, to the intercession of saints, to the merit of men's works, and to the fire of purgatory. It defrauds the Holy Spirit by attributing regeneration and sanctification to the mechanical operation of the two sacraments baptism and the Eucharist."

The Roman Church Not the Mother Church of Christendom

Protestants are often urged to return to "Mother Church." Is the Roman Catholic Church the true Mother Church?

No. The Roman Catholic Church is not the Mother Church of Christendom, nor is it the Mother Church of Protestants in any sense. We have already seen that the Eastern branch of the Church was older than the Latin branch, as is proved by statements of the Book of Acts. If the name Mother Church is properly applied, it should be given to the *Church at Jerusalem*, and after it, the *Church at Antioch*. Acts 11: 22-26, 15:2. The Eastern branch of the Church was far more influential than the Church of Rome for centuries, as is clearly proved by the personnel of the early Councils of the Church, which were *overwhelmingly Eastern*. Moreover as we have already seen, the Roman Church cannot be considered the Mother Church because it departed far from the apostolic faith, its chief doctrines being wholly opposed to the teachings of the Bible. Either in the apostolic age, or soon thereafter; missionaries from Jerusalem and Antioch, planted Christian Churches in various eastern countries, as the Armenian, the Coptic in Egypt, the Ethiopian in Abyssinia, etc. These churches were independent and had no connection with Rome. When the Jesuits went to India, they found primitive Nestorian Churches there, which recognized the patriarch of Babylon at Mosul as their chief, and as the pastor of the universal church. They did not recognize the pope of Rome, of whom they knew nothing. These primitive churches were later led to enter the pale of the Roman church. Ranke, *History of the Popes*, Vol. II, page 81.

ENGLAND, FRANCE AND GERMANY RECEIVED THE GOSPEL FROM THE EAST, NOT FROM ROME

Was the Church of Rome the first to carry the Gospel to France, Great Britain, and Germany?

No. Tertullian, Eusebius, and other Church historians testify that the Gospel was brought to France and Britain by missionaries sent directly from the East, long before the papacy was thought of. The same is true of Germany. Cardinal Baronius records that the Gospel was carried to Britain in the apostolic age; so also do the learned Mosheim, and the Roman writers, Dod and Lingard. It should be carefully noted that Britain's connection with the Church of Rome did not begin till 500 years later, when Gregory I, bishop of Rome, sent Augustine (Austin) with about 40 colleagues to try to bring the English Church into union with Rome. This was in A.D. 596. Irenaeus, a native of Asia Minor, and a student of the venerable Polycarp of Smyrna, preached the Gospel in France and was in charge of the work in Lyons, where he died A.D. 202. Many believe that the Culdee Church in North Scotland and the Orkney Islands, as well as the founders of what later became the Waldensian Church, may be traced back to apostolic times, and for centuries the Culdees maintained their independence of Rome. The Waldenses, though long harried and martyred by papal persecutions, have never submitted to the papacy. Thus it is clear that Britain, France and Germany did not owe their conversion to Christianity to the Church of Rome, but as the eminent jurist Blackstone wrote, "the ancient Church of Britain, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the bishop of Rome, and all his pretended authority."

THE REFORMED OR PROTESTANT CHURCH BEGAN AT PENTECOST, NOT AT THE REFORMATION

Did the Reformed or Protestant Church begin, as some allege, at the Reformation in the 16th century?

It did *not*. Though the name "Protestant" began at that time, to distinguish it from the papal body, Protestant doctrine, which is the true criterion by which to judge any Church, began at Pentecost; for Holy Scripture shows plainly that Protestant doctrines were the original apostolic doctrines. The Protestant Church of the Reformation did not originate new teachings; it was simply a revival, a continuation of the primitive apostolic church, with the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Mediator and Head, the Holy Spirit as its Teacher and Sanctifier, and the Word of God as its divine law and sole rule of faith. The Reformation merely swept away the grave errors which false leaders had introduced and reinstated those precious doctrines which Christ had originally given to save the world. After several centuries, through false leadership and gradual corruption the Christian Church entered the tunnel of the Dark Ages, when the popes gained control; but at the Reformation the Church emerged again into the sunshine of God's saving grace; never again, please God, to be eclipsed or obscured. The Reformers rightly called the Church's reappearance LUX EX TENEBRIS, the "Light shining out of Darkness!" And the motto of the Scottish Church, symbolizing the re-publication of God's precious Word and the Church's trial by fire, applies also to the noble martyrs of every Reformed Communion, who witnessed for God in the face of persecution and death, "The Bush that burned, but was not consumed!" Ex. 3:2, Rev. 2:10. The English speaking world will never forget

"the noble army of martyrs"—Ridley, Latimer, Anne Askew, Wishart, Margaret Wilson, and a host of others, *who died for their Protestant faith!* These martyrs met death with such calmness and courage that some of the vast crowd of spectators were by their noble example won for Christ. Latimer said to his companion Ridley, just before they were burned at the stake October 15, 1555: "Fear not, BROTHER: WE SHALL THIS DAY LIGHT SUCH A CANDLE IN ENGLAND AS SHALL, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, NEVER BE EXTINGUISHED!" Bishop Hugh Latimer once quaintly said: "The most diligent prelate in all England is *the Devil*. He is never out of his diocese. His office is to hinder religion, maintain superstition, and set up idolatry! Where the devil is resident, then away with books and up with candles! away with Bibles and up with beads! away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea at noonday!"

Why was the Reformation Church called Protestant?

Because in 1529 at the Diet of Spires (Speyer), Germany, the name was given to Martin Luther's followers to distinguish them from the followers of the pope. Romanists have stated that this name is purely negative, but this is a mistake; standard lexicons show that it means not only to protest against what is false and wrong, but also positively to profess and declare that which is true and right. The Protestant body protested against the Church of Rome's grave errors, and her unchristian attitude toward those who did not submit to her demands; and it also proclaimed the true Gospel, and their right to worship God according to conscience and the Word of God, under the imperial government of Charles V. Opposed to Rome's false dogmas of a pope and indulgences, Luther and the brave Reformers proclaimed Christ as the only Head and Lord of the Church, and salvation not by dead works of human merit, but by faith in Christ's redeeming blood,—*"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."** This glorious life-giving truth the Holy Spirit had revealed to the prophet Habakkuk 600 years before Christ; Habakkuk passed on this sacred treasure to St. Paul; St. Paul to Augustine; Augustine to Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bernard to Martin Luther. Here is the only true apostolic succession,—not a magical something, supposed to be mechanically conveyed by men's hands, but a spiritual succession of godly men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, who received and handed down THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF GOD'S FREE GRACE AND SALVATION IN CHRIST THE SON OF GOD ALONE! Heb. 2:4, 10:38, Rom. 5:1.

Concerning the character of Luther, Prof. Froude of Oxford says: "Luther himself was one of the grandest men that ever lived on earth. Never was anyone more loyal to the light that was in him, braver, truer, or wider-minded in the noblest sense of the word. The share of the work that fell to him, Luther accomplished most perfectly. In an age when the absolutism and intolerance of popery dominated Europe, Luther stood for liberty of conscience. He said, "the Papists must bear with us, and we with them. If they will not follow us, we must not force them. Wherever they can, they will hang, burn, behead, and strangle us. I shall be persecuted as long as I live, and most likely killed! But it must come to this at last,— *everyone must be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and answer for his belief to his Maker.*"

* JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST—This was the central truth of Luther's preaching. If we inquire what was the faith which chiefly

inspired the Reformers, we shall find that the main article was the doctrine which as preached by Luther had given rise to the whole Protestant movement. Conterini wrote a treatise on it, which Pole speaks of in highest praise: "You have brought to light the jewel which the Church kept half concealed." Pole was of opinion that the Scripture, taken in its profoundest context, preaches nothing but this doctrine. He esteemed his friend, happy that he had been the first to promulgate "this holy, fruitful and indispensable truth." We see in the following passage how distinctly he taught this doctrine. "The Gospel is no other than the blessed tidings that the only-begotten Son of God, clad in our flesh, hath made satisfaction for us to the justice of the Eternal Father. He who believes this enters into the Kingdom of God. He enjoys the universal pardon; from a carnal, he becomes a spiritual, creature; from a child of wrath, a child of grace. He lives in a sweet peace of conscience."

Berard wrote: "Thou art as strong to justify as thou art to pardon. Wherefore whosoever smitten with compunction for his sins, hungers and thirsts after righteousness, let him believe on Thee, who justifieth the ungodly; and being justified by faith alone, he will have peace with God!"

This truth was also powerfully proclaimed by that shining light of the English Church, Richard Hooker; "Let it be counted as folly, or phrensy (delirium), or fury, or whatsoever; it is our wisdom and comfort; and WE CARE FOR NO KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORLD BUT THIS; that MAN HATH SINNED, AND GOD HATH SUFFERED; THAT GOD HATH MADE HIMSELF THE SIN OF MEN, AND THAT MEN ARE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!"

Why A Reformation?

Why was the Protestant Church also called Reformed?

Because under the misrule of the popes, the Church had become so corrupt, that it must either be *reformed or perish*.

Do papal historians acknowledge that there was great corruption in the Church and urgent need of reformation?

While some Roman Catholic books do not candidly present the facts and keep the laity and youth of the Church in ignorance of true history, yet outstanding papal writers have plainly presented the shameful corruption of the Church and the urgent need of reformation.

Pope Adrian VI (1522, 1523) acknowledged, and instructed his nuncio at the Diet of Nuremberg to acknowledge, that the revolt of Germany against the Church had been provoked by the immoralities and abominations of bishops and clergy, and especially of the "HOLY SEE" ITSELF.

He said: "For a long time many abominations have existed near the Holy See; everything has been turned to evil. From the head corruption has spread to the members; from the pope to the prelates; we have all gone astray; there is none of us that hath done well, no, not one." Reinaldus, vol. II, page 363.

Cardinal Caraffa, who became pope Paul IV, said: "A reformation is now so

necessary that it cannot be omitted *without mortal sin.*”¹

¹ The moral and spiritual corruption which forced a reformation pervaded all grades of the clergy and religious orders. Outrageous criminals, pleading “the benefit of the clergy” purchased exemption from the punishment which justice and the public welfare demanded. The great abbeys in England in the reign of Henry VII were notoriously corrupt, but probably not worse than those of other reigns and of other countries. A picture of their profligate brutality given by Cardinal Morton cannot for decency’s sake be publicly described. The original account of these abbeys, presented in the Cardinal’s report, called Morton’s Register, is still preserved in the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Library at Lambeth, London.

Cardinal Baronius, the historian of the Vatican, wrote concerning the deplorable condition of the Church in the 10th century: “How DEFORMED, HOW HIDEOUS WAS THE ASPECT OF THE CHURCH OF ROME WHEN IT WAS GOVERNED SOLELY BY SHAMELESS PROSTITUTES, WHO AT THEIR PLEASURE CHANGED THE POPES, DISPOSED OF BISHOPRICS, AND WHAT IS STILL MORE TERRIBLE, PLACED IN THE HOLY SEAT OF ST. PETER THEIR PARAMOURS AND BASTARDS!” *Ann. Eccles –ann. 912.*

Baronius called Boniface IV, who was bishop of Rome in 896, and pope, “a monster of vice.” Confirming Baronius’ statements, another papal historian, Du Pin, remarks, “In such terms as these does the Cardinal lament the sad state of the Church during the 10th century”; adding, that “no one may suppose that the Cardinal wrote as an enemy of the Church.”

St. Bridget testified against the Pope

“The Revelations of St. Bridget,” who died 1373, declared by Pope Benedict XIV authentic, states, “*The pope is a murderer of souls; he destroys and flays Christ’s flock, more cruel than Judas, more unjust than Pilate. All the Ten Commandments he has changed into this one, Money, money! The pope and his clergy are forerunners of Antichrist, rather than servants of Christ.*”

The Bohemian chronicler A. di Cescky Brod, wrote: “Among the ecclesiastics there was no discipline; among the bishops, public simony; among the monks disorder without end; among laymen, no abuse that the ecclesiastics had not already practiced.” Mussolini, *John Huss, the Man of Truth.*

A Roman Catholic Archbishop testifies to the gross impiety of the Roman See

Gilbert Genebrard, Archbishop of Aix-la-chapelle, who died 1587, declared: “During nearly 150 years *about 50 popes have been apostates, –apostatical,* rather than apostolical. That is to say, about one-fifth of all the popes who have ever sat in the papal chair are hereby charged with grievous criminality.” Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, page 209.

Concerning the godlessness and immorality of the papacy, Froude the historian, remarks, “No imagination could invent, no malice could exaggerate, what the papal court really became under Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X.”

Leo X scoffed at religion, saying to Cardinal Bembo, “All know how well *the fable of Christ has served us and ours!*” Krueger, page 166; Schick, page 241.

Did the Presbyterian Church begin with John Calvin in Switzerland in 1536, or with John Knox in Scotland in 1560?

No. The Presbyterian Church began in the age when St. Peter called himself "a fellow-presbyter," and St. Paul enjoined, "Ordain presbyters in every city." Calvin and Knox merely republished the Bible doctrines of saving grace, which had been buried under a mass of Romish sacerdotalism and superstition, viz.: the Divine Sovereignty, the Kingship of Christ as the only Head of the Church, His one atoning sacrifice for sin, the New Birth and Sanctification by the Holy Spirit and the parity of the Christian ministry. These apostolic doctrines they proclaimed, as well as the principles of civil and religious liberty, just as Luther republished the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone. The name was new, but not the doctrines and polity.

John Calvin in one brief sentence expressed a well-nigh perfect summary of the true purpose and aim of all human life—TO KNOW AND DO THE WILL OF GOD! This purpose and aim was fulfilled in his own noble life and character. Few leaders of men have appeared in history whose life was as pure and devoted to God and humanity, and whose influence for good was as profound and far-reaching as that of Calvin. He may be considered the outstanding theologian and Bible expositor of the Reformation.

"Calvinism has ever bore an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity. It is enough to mention the name of William of Orange, or of Luther,—for on the points of which I am speaking, Luther was one with Calvin,—of your own Knox, and Andrew Melville, of Coligny, of our English Cromwell, of Milton, of John Bunyan. These were men possessed of all the qualities, which give nobility and grandeur to human nature—men whose life was as upright as their intellect was commanding, and their public aims untainted with selfishness; unalterably just where duty required them to be stern, but with the tenderness of a woman in their hearts; frank, true, cheerful, humorous, as unlike sour fanatics as it is possible to imagine any one, and able in some way to sound the keynote to which every brave and faithful heart in Europe instinctively vibrated!"

"The battle fought in Scotland was in reality the battle between liberty and despotism; and where, except in an intense and burning conviction that they were maintaining God's cause against the devil, could the poor Scotch people have found the strength for the unequal struggle which was forced upon them? Enlightenment you cannot have enough of, but it must be true enlightenment; and in the passion and resolution of brave and noble men there is often an inarticulate intelligence deeper than what can be expressed in words. It was thus "the Covenanters fought the fight and won the victory." Froude's *Calvinism*.

John Knox, the hero of the Reformation in Scotland, was born at Haddington in 1505. Educated at the University of Glasgow, he was much influenced by George Wishard, who was burned at the stake as a martyr for his Protestant faith in 1546.

When the French captured the castle of St. Andrews, where Knox had taken refuge, he was condemned to the galleys as a common criminal. Eighteen months later when released, he went to England, preached at Berwick and Newcastle, and in 1564 visited Calvin in Geneva. Returning to Edinburgh in 1559, he bravely contended for the faith with Queen Mary, who was determined to force Romanism on the Scottish people. In 1560 Knox's Confession of Faith was

adopted by the Scottish Assembly without change, and later his "History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland" was published in 6 volumes. Knox's great constructive work was the firm establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Knox was a man of vigorous intellect, of great faith, courage and firmness of character. Queen Mary once said she "feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the armies of England." Knox died peacefully in Edinburgh in 1572, the year marked by the brutal massacre of the Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day.

Can one trace in history the gradual departure from apostolic doctrine and the introduction of the grave papal errors, which undermined the Christian Church and destroyed the original Christian faith?

Yes. Roman Catholic writers themselves have supplied abundant evidence by which the downward course of the Church under papal misrule can be traced, as it abandoned the simplicity and purity of apostolic times, and sank deeper and deeper into the mire of superstition and ungodliness; for as the papal system grew, *vital religion declined*.

In the 8th century (about A.D. 788) the worship of *saints, angels, and the Virgin Mary* came to be a common practice of the Church; and about the same time *images, the crucifix, etc., were introduced*.

So-called "holy water" was borrowed from paganism about the year 1000.

The enforced celibacy of the clergy, monks and nuns, was introduced about 1074-9.

Mechanical praying by rote with rosary beads, as in Buddhism, followed in 1090.

The sale of papal indulgences, which caused *unspeakable scandals throughout Europe*, was formally recognized about 1190.

The errors of Transubstantiation and the Mass became fixed dogmas at the Fourth Lateran Council under pope Innocent III in the year 1216.

Auricular Confession of sin to a priest, instead of to God, also in 1215.

The false dogmas of Purgatory and Masses for the dead became fixed about 1438.

Tradition, and the 14 books called the *Apocrypha*, were made canonical by the *Council of Trent* (1546-1563).

The invention of Papal Infallibility was adopted by the Vatican Council in 1870. Thus, as history plainly shows, radical departures from the apostolic faith, extending from the 8th to the 19th centuries, have *destroyed the precious system of saving truth* delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church, so that now only an empty name and dead form is left in the Roman body. So far was the Roman Catholic body from being the original Christian Church and its doctrines being the same as those taught by the apostles, as Rome alleges, history shows that the papacy and the bulk of papal dogmas did

not come into existence until *hundreds of years after the apostolic age*. The list of radical changes given above shows plainly that melancholy process of decay, how the original powerful doctrines of God's saving grace have been *totally changed or buried*, under a mass of *sinful superstitions, which have led men far away from Christ and righteousness*.

TAKE WARNING FROM THE APOSTASY OF THE ROMAN CHURCH!

The apostasy of the Church of Rome presents a solemn warning to the Reformed Church of the ruin which is sure to come when leaders presume to depart, even a little, from the Church's God-given guide, the Holy Scriptures. For the command of God is explicit and repeated. "WHAT THING SOEVER I COMMAND YOU, OBSERVE TO DO IT. THOU SHALT NOT ADD THERETO, NOR DIMINISH FROM IT." To disobey this plain command is fatal; it places one in rebellion against God, and cuts him off from salvation.

No tradition of men or human opinion may be substituted for the Word of the living God. The Church's safety, as well as the salvation of the individual, depends on whole-hearted obedience to the whole Word of God, and in humble constant dependence on the Holy Spirit of God. In view of the delusions of Modernist unbelief and of destructive criticism of the Bible, which are leading many to make shipwreck of their faith, God is "solemnly warning us of the Protestant Church",

"This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth—turn not from it to the right hand or to the left!" Deut. 6:6,7, 8:3; Josh. 1:7,8.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption."—Eph. 4:33.

"Remember—and repent; or else I will come and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." Rev. 2:5.

"Take ye heed, *watch and pray!*" "Let him that thinketh he standeth, *take heed lest he fall!*" Mark 13:33, I Cor. 10:12.

All chapters of Our Priceless Heritage Christian Doctrine In Contrast With Romanism

- [Chapter I The Church of God](#)
- [Chapter II The Church's Rule of Faith](#)
- [Chapter III The Church's Head and Foundation](#)
- [Chapter IV The Church's Object of Worship](#)
- [Chapter V Apostolic Succession](#)
- [Chapter VI The Development of the Papal System](#)
- [Chapter VII The Sacraments Part I](#)
- [Chapter VII The Sacraments Part II](#)
- [Chapter VIII The Mediator and the Forgiveness of Sins](#)
- [Chapter IX Confession of Sin, Penance, and Indulgences](#)
- [Chapter X The Future State, Purgatory, and Masses for the Dead](#)
- [Chapter XI The Celibacy of the Clergy](#)

- [Chapter XII Pilgrimages, Incense, "Holy Water," Rosaries, Relics, Etc.](#)
- [Chapter XIII The Relation of Church and State](#)
- [Chapter XIV Religious Liberty and Persecution – Part I](#)
- [Chapter XIV Religious Liberty and Persecution – Part II](#)
- [Chapter XV Summary](#)