

LESSONS FROM CHURCH HISTORY

by Frank Pack

Pack's examination of the characteristics of the New Testament church, discussing Jesus's mission and the church's establishment at Pentecost. He emphasizes the terms of admission to the early church and its simple organizational structure.

10 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 03 Foreward
2. 04 I. Characteristics of the New Testament Church
3. 05 II. The Great Apostasy
4. 06 III. The Midieval Church
5. 07 IV. The Beginnings of the Reformation (1)
6. 08 V. The Spread of Reformation
7. 09 VI. The Restoration No. 1
8. 10 VII. The Restoration No. 2
9. 11 Topic One
10. 12 The Reformation

03 Foreward

Foreward

FOREWORD This series of radio sermons was delivered over station WAPO, Chattanooga, Tennessee, upon the request of many who heard an extended series following this same line of thought at the St. Elmo Church of Christ in the spring of 1940. In publishing them, the right has been reserved to slightly revise them in order to avoid some repetition essential on the radio, and make better reading matter. Wherever possible the original form has been followed, and all the facts presented have been given. These are presented in the hope of enabling many to better understand present religious conditions and work for New Testament Christianity.

Frank Pack

04 I. Characteristics of the New Testament Church

I. Characteristics of the New Testament Church I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO, April 14, 1940)

Today we are beginning a series of sermons tracing the course of church history from the apostolic age down to the present. No study should be more profitable than a careful consideration of the facts of church history enabling us thereby to have greater insight into the present religious conditions of the world. Especially should we be interested in comparing our present situation with the New Testament example and noting the many changes which nineteen centuries have brought in the teachings of professed followers of Jesus.

Facts are the only things that shall have place in this study. We are not interested in accomplishing anything other than a careful, correct presentation of the movements of religious thought and doctrines through the centuries, so that all may understand the causes of present denominationalism. Every effort shall be made to deal with the issues and display the truth with regard to the teachings of Jesus. What is commonly called the scientific attitude, that of interpreting the facts which present themselves without bias and prejudice, shall be our attitude. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to accomplish certain very definite things. These are expressly indicated in the Scriptures so that all doubt with regard to His ministry might be dispelled. He came that He might destroy the works of the devil, (1) putting down the dominion of sin over the lives of men. He came to seek and save the lost (1 John 3:8), (2) and become the Way, the Truth, and the Life unto all mankind (Luke 19:10). (3) He came in fulfillment of prophecy that He might likewise fulfill the law of Moses and institute in its stead a new covenant founded upon better promises, and extending until the end of the world (John 14:6). (4) These facts bring very clearly to view just what our Lord sought to do in His earthly ministry (Matthew 6:17). The burden of His teachings were regarding the establishment and description of the characteristics of His kingdom upon the earth. The many parables found in Matthew, beginning with chapter 13, as well as in the other gospel writings, show how diligently Jesus taught the truths regarding the kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 16:8, Jesus told His disciples that He would build His church upon the great truth that Peter had confessed, namely, the fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In that passage He used the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably to signify that they were identical. The church simply means the group of people who have been called out of the world and to Christ. Paul speaks of our translation as that from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Colossians 1:18) Thus Jesus during His personal ministry continually taught and prepared for the establishment of His church, His spiritual kingdom. He made it very clear that this kingdom would not be worldly, nor would it exercise political sovereignty over the multitudes of earth. He stated that His "kingdom was not of this world." (John 18:36)

Twelve men were selected by the Master to be His special disciples, following Him through the three and one-half years of personal ministry and being witnesses to His sufferings and death as

well as His resurrection. He instructed them in order that they might properly represent Him and His teachings to future generations. However, knowing the limitations of human memory and our proneness to err, Jesus promised that these apostles would be guided from Heaven so that no mistake could be made in proclaiming the great doctrine of Christianity and the plan of salvation. In John 16:12-14 He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Their work and teaching was to be the pattern for all the ages to come. If we want to know today what the Lord would have us do in rendering humble and obedient service, we can find it by going to the spirit-guided writings of these representatives of the Lord. Thus the New Testament becomes our guide, our pattern in all matters of Christian faith and practice.

Before leaving His disciples Jesus prayed earnestly for unity among His followers, unity based upon the testimony of these very men. (John 17:20-23) Isn't it a sad condition when we note the earnest prayer of the Lord and contrast the divided and confused state of affairs among those who profess to follow Christ? I cannot believe, I will not believe, that Our Blessed Lord is responsible for the present confused conditions, nor do I believe that He is pleased with our parties and our divisions. Any effort to justify the religious division in the world from the Scriptures is a perversion of them and makes the Bible contradict itself, which, of course it does not do. It is rather the creeds, doctrines and opinions of men which divide the world and keep it divided. It is Christ and His will which unites men and which will bring an end to the partyism today.

After our Lord's resurrection from the grave he appeared unto His disciples in Galilee and said unto them, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Then the Great Commission was given to preach the gospel to the whole world. (Matthew 28:18-20) Luke adds that the disciples were to wait until the power should come from on high to guide them. (Luke 24:46-49) If we carefully note the works of these Apostles we shall be able to find out what New Testament Christianity was, and what the Lord wants us to do. We need to rebuild upon the New Testament pattern, for the only way we can have the unity for which our Lord prayed so earnestly is to come back to the word of God and rightly dividing it to follow implicitly the New Testament teachings.

Let us very briefly note some characteristics, therefore, of the early church. It was established in the world on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit-guided apostle led by Peter preached the facts and gave the commands of the gospel of Christ for the first time, So far as the Bible reveals, this is the very first occasion where the wonderful redemption through Jesus the Christ was proclaimed. Here Peter, in answer to the question, "Men and Brethren, what shall we do?" and, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38) Three thousand souls were baptized and added to them, and then the first congregation of believers in Christ, baptized into Christ, was established.

First, let us notice the terms of admission into the church. The terms of admission into the New Testament church are very clearly revealed, for these terms are the terms of salvation. Every case of conversion in the New Testament will show the working of these principles, for God is no respecter of persons, and there is but one gospel to proclaim. (Galatians 1:6-12) The gospel is

God's power to save the souls of men, and so far as the Bible reveals, God's only power. In New Testament times people heard the preaching of the word of God, with its facts showing the sinfulness of men, the righteousness of God through the gospel, and the judgment to come. Faith is based upon the hearing of God's word (Romans 10:17) without which no one could be well pleasing in the sight of the Almighty. (Hebrews 11:6) An individual must have enough faith to turn from evil and toward good, or as we say, he must repent. (Luke 13:2) No fact is more clearly taught in the Bible than the absolute necessity of repentance in order to be saved. In New Testament times an individual was not a fit subject for baptism until he had confessed with the mouth his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37), Having made such a confession, the final step which placed one in Christ was baptism, for as Paul in Galatians 3:27, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," Baptism, a burial in water of a penitent believer for the remission of his sins, signified the death of an old life, the burying of the old man (the man of evil) and the resurrection of the new to walk in newness of life. (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:8; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)

Second, the New Testament church had no man-made discipline or rule book. Its creed or statement of belief was the word of God. Paul in his last instructions to Timothy impressed upon him the all-sufficiency of the Word in this language, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) The things revealed in the Scriptures but testify to the Lord and give us the teachings needed to carry on His work. If I believe that Jesus is the Christ and place my life under His complete authority and will, whatever He commands me to do through the Word I shall do it, and thus it becomes the sufficient rule of faith and practice. What other creed do we need? What other rule book is necessary if the man of God will be completely furnished unto all good works by following the Scriptures?

Third, no elaborate organization characterized the early church. In fact, Jesus expressly states that in His kingdom, men will not be lords as the Gentiles are, nor will there be high and low stations in the work of Christ, but the greatest shall be the best servant, the one who does the most for all. (Mark 10:42-43) The trouble today with us is that we will not accept the simple way of Christ, but instead we wish to substitute like King Saul of old. But "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Christ is the head of the church, and likewise its supreme ruler. His will is absolute, and no man or set of men had then, nor have they now, any right to change one iota of the laws of the Lord. He made these for the kingdom of which He is ruler, and He alone can change them. He is the founder and the foundation of the church. (Ephesians 1:22-23 ; Colossians 1:18)

However, there is a simple organization of congregations in localities presented to us by the Scriptures. Each congregation of Christians had its plurality of elders, or bishops, these words used interchangeably. It was their specific duty to oversee the affairs of the church, to lead and guide in matters spiritual and to discipline those who were erring. (Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28) Certain qualifications are laid down by Paul and Peter regarding the elders. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4) However, at present these words are no longer used in their Scriptural meanings by many, nor do they signify the offices described in the Bible. The ecclesiasticism of men has changed the plan of God. Along with these elders or bishops, each congregation had its deacons, to care for the work

of charity and matters financial. They were to work under the direction of the elders, meeting qualifications also. (Acts 6:1-6 ; 1 Timothy 3:8-13) These elders and deacons formed the officials of the local congregation . The evangelists who preached the word had their special work to perform, but in the last analysis all were but brethren. No great distinction nor high and holy offices existed to separate the masses of the people from the "clergy" class. These classifications came into being much later.

Fourth, with regard to name, no distinguishing appellation was worn to separate one body of believers from another. The church was called also the "body of Christ" (Colossians 1:24), " the church of God," (1 Timothy 3:5) "the church of the living God " (1 Timothy 3:15) , "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28), "my church" (Matthew 16:18) by Jesus, "churches of Christ " (Romans 16:16). The members were called "disciples" and "Christians"(Acts 11:26), "saints" (Romans 1:7), "brethren" (James 1:2). These are not all the names used but enough to give us an understanding of the fact that no distinctive names were applied to the churches to indicate different sects or parties, but rather descriptive terms were used to show the relationships . Isn't it strange that there are so many different names worn by professed followers of Christ today, when these names in the Scriptures would be sufficient, and a basis of unity. The worship of the apostolic age was exceedingly simple in form, but marvelously spiritual. The ideal given in the New Testament is that of worship in spirit and in truth. Worship -must arise from our heart unto God, and so personal is it that no one else can do it for us. It must not only be according to the truth of God, but also the spiritual aspect must be present. The items ,of worship given in the Scriptures are very definite. Christians were to praise the Lord and exhort one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19 ; Colossians 3:16-17) Their singing was to worship God, not to display a beautiful voice, and fine technique. This constituted 'the music in New Testament times . They also read and studied the teachings of the apostles, thus receiving the proper instruction along lines spiritual. The worship was likewise characterized by prayer, for there is no subject more impressively taught in the Bible than prayer and our need of it.

Upon each first day of the week, the day of the week on which Christ arose from the dead, the day He first appeared unto His disciples as the Risen Lord, the day on which the church was established, the day on which the terms of the gospel were first announced to man, and the church received its first converts, the disciples also met to break bread, to partake of the Lord's supper. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7 ; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34) The communion of the bread and fruit of the vine was in remembrance of the sufferings and death of the Master. The Lord's Supper both points back to the cross of Calvary, and forward to the coming of Jesus again, to receive His faithful, called and chosen. Thus the Lord's Supper became the central spiritual feast of early worship and this remains today, keeping ever before the Christian the price of his salvation and pointing him with hope toward the glorious consummation of the church in eternal life. So many today have failed to appreciate the Lord's Supper, and to remember Him at the beginning of each week. Therefore, there has come weakness spiritually and many sickly and ready to die. Upon the first day of the week at the time of worship, Christians were commanded to lay by in store of their means for the support of the church and the extending of charity to the needy.(1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7) God's plan was a plan of systematic, prayerful giving, without any coercion or assessing. We are to purpose in our hearts and so give.

05 II. The Great Apostasy

II. The Great Apostasy II. THE GREAT APOSTASY (Sermon Delivered over WAPO, April 21, 1940)

Having brought to your attention some of the main characteristics of New Testament Christianity, we are to progress one step further in learning what happened after the death of the last apostle. However, it is needful that we keep constantly in mind the New Testament as pattern for all Christian Work and practice. The apostles feared greatly that men would later desire to leave the simple and beautiful teachings of the New Testament and, therefore, their writings abound in words of warning to the Christians of that early age to watch and beware of false prophets who would lead the faithful astray if followed. Paul in speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus at Miletus warned them against corrupting God's order in these words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood . For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things , to draw away disciples after them . Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"(Acts 20:28-31). Likewise in writing to the Thessalonian church he stated, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they might all be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12) In giving his final exhortation to his son in the gospel, Timothy, the great apostle Paul urges him to preach the word in season and out of season, for, says he, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap unto themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

However, Paul was not the only New Testament writer who feared a departure from the faith. Peter likewise foresaw the certain disaster that would overtake Christianity if false teachers were allowed to pervert the gospel of Christ and substitute for the teachings of Jesus the doctrines of men. "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter 2:1-2) Time would fail us to bring to your attention all of the warnings to faithfulness in the N.T. but these will suffice to impress upon our minds the fear that the apostles all possessed of the danger of departure from the faith. The great apostasy from the New Testament did not occur overnight, but was rather the result of a long process of gradual development and modification of the truth. The apostasy manifested itself in several ways the chief of which we shall list:

1. The development of a visible religious hierarchy patterned upon the political hierarchy of the empire.
2. The gradual modification of New Testament doctrines.
3. The introduction of Jewish and pagan ceremonials and customs into the worship and practice of the church.
4. The formulation and enforcement of church decrees made by councils.
5. The creation and development of a human priesthood claiming the right to forgive sins and dominate affairs religious.
6. The assumption of both temporal and spiritual power by ecclesiastical authorities.

These are the main points of departure from the apostles' teachings as given in the Scriptures. In spite of our Lord's declaration regarding the fact that His kingdom would not have lords like the kingdoms of the Gentiles there crept into the church during the period following the apostolic age the idea that there should be a distinct and separate class known as clergy who only should have power to administer in affairs religious. Such distinction is not to be found in the Scriptures, nor the term clergy used therein. Borrowing from pagan and Jewish practices, the priestly class took charge of the church matters, even though the New Testament declares that all Christians are priests. (1 Peter 2:9) The heavy hand of persecution served to draw the believers closer together, and exhortations began to be made by the leaders that the members of the flocks should follow implicitly the orders of the clergy. While in the apostolic age a plurality of elders or bishops (the terms are used interchangeably) were to superintend and direct the affairs of the local congregation, during the sub-apostolic period the idea developed that only one man should act as bishop and others were to be subordinate to him. The chief churches with their bishops soon began to exercise jurisdiction over the smaller churches until the next step which we find historically is that the bishop in the chief city possessed complete authority over all the churches in the given area around that city. However, the great metropolitan centers of the Roman empire (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople) possessed political and cultural advantages over the smaller areas, so that the next step of development toward a complete religious hierarchy was the distinction between the metropolitan bishops and the bishops in lesser areas. The four greatest centers came to have the highest rank and were later known as patriarchs or archbishops, or higher bishops. Thus we have the Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt, the Patriarch of Antioch in Syria, the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Rome. As late as the time of Gregory the Great, however, in the latter part of the 6th century there was no bishop with the title of universal bishop or supreme head of the church. In fact, it was Gregory who denounced in scathing terms John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople for assuming such a title. However, in the year 606 Boniface III was crowned by Phocas, the emperor, as the universal head of the church, the first Pope of all the church at Rome. Thus the religious hierarchy of the apostate church was completed. The office of cardinal was later introduced as a means of assisting the Pope in administering the affairs of the apostate church and also electing the Pope. The New Testament pattern was left far behind, where individual congregations under several elders carried on their affairs according to God's will and now lorded it over God's heritage. A hierarchy had been

developed through these centuries above the level of the common members, consisting first of local priests, then the bishops, then the metropolitans and archbishops, and finally the Pope as the supreme head of the Apostate church. This development took nearly six hundred years to complete. These are the facts of history that cannot be successfully denied.

Let us not forget that our Master was the founder and is the foundation of the church of the New Testament, and is described therein as the head of the church; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23. Likewise it was this same Jesus who exhorted men to call no man father on earth, for one is our father even God. In the same place he exhorted his disciples to decline the title of Master, "for one is your master," said Jesus, "and ye are all servants." (Matthew 23:8-11) Certainly there was not the slightest hint of such arrogation of power as is represented in this great apostasy ever given in the teachings of Jesus. The very apostles, among them Peter himself, were exhorted to flee these things, and be greatest by being the best servant, for we have one Master, Christ, and one Father, God.

Another manifestation of this great apostasy was in the many modifications of doctrine that crept in, as well as the use of pagan and Jewish ceremonials in worship. Increasing formality and ritualism was evident in the worship of this sub-apostolic period. Instead of the simple meeting of Christians to break bread and worship Christ according to the commands of the New Testament, (Acts 20:7) there developed certain rituals regarding the worship. Forms were introduced borrowed from pagan and Jewish practices, and officials appointed to perform certain parts of the services that came to be regarded as essential. Certain prayers became essential and bodily postures were carefully regulated in the worship. Liturgies were written and followed scrupulously as the necessary order of worship. That they were not of divine origin is plainly evidenced by their late appearance, and their lack of agreement.

Following the Nicaean Council in 325 A.D., there developed the idea of sacrifice in connection with the Lord's Supper which had always been a spiritual feast, in memory of the sufferings and death of Christ. Along with the development of a human priesthood must always go the idea of offering the oblations and sacrifices of the people unto God. Thus the Lord's Supper came to be regarded as a sacrifice for sins, even though the Bible tells us that Christ made the one offering for our sins forever (Hebrews 7:26-27). Masses came to be said for various things, as for the benefit of the souls of the dead, and for protection and safety from dangers and evils. These things are certainly innovations since even the writers of that period did not agree among themselves as to the efficacy of the sacrifice of the mass. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial pointing backward to the cross of Christ, and forward to the time when He will come again and receive the faithful unto himself.

Likewise there developed certain sacred seasons which were regarded as more holy than other times of the year. These holidays and sacred times were partly borrowed from the pagan festivals, and partly were the incorporation of the old Jewish feast periods. Probably the most important of these feasts which developed in the fourth century was Easter. It came in the spring, although there was at that time no universal date for its observance. It grew up as a successor to the Jewish passover and heathen festivals of the vernal equinox. It was celebrated as the time of Jesus' resurrection, and came to be preceded by a time of fasting, in some places observed for as long as eight weeks. There also arose the celebration of Epiphany, or the time of Christ's circumcision,

and Christmas, the time of Christ's birth. However, the Bible says nothing either about when Jesus was born or circumcised, and no man living can tell the exact date of Jesus' birth. So the 25th of December has been arbitrarily fixed as the date of the birth of Jesus and has existed until the present. More and more religious holidays came to be celebrated in spite of the fact that the New Testament gives no set of holidays, but commands that every day be filled with good works and no day be regarded as above another. To observe days and seasons is contrary to the spirit of the New Testament, for therein we are commanded to live every day in God's service.

Likewise there arose the practice of worshipping the earlier heroes of faith and the apostles, venerating them as saints. When paganism was abolished many still felt that it was needful to approach God through various influential heroes of the past, and thus arose the invocation of the saints to intercede in behalf of the worshippers. One saint was approached for one thing and another for another, and thus became objects of prayer and devotion. While the apostles and martyrs were greatly revered, the Virgin Mary came to be the chief saint, even worshipped above our Lord himself. Virginity had been greatly enhanced by the growth of asceticism in the East and the particular relation of Christ and his fleshly mother led many to feel that she was closer to Him than any other saint. Thus the idea of hierarchy came to be applied to heaven itself. The Virgin Mary was greatly venerated and prayers and masses were said to her. Churches were dedicated to her and later such worship led to the erection of images which, by the way, the Eastern Church, never accepted, as smacking too much of idolatry. Instead of being able to approach God through Christ and Him alone, as taught in the New Testament (Colossians 3:17) it came to be thought in the Post-Nicaean period that Christ could not be approached except through one of the saints who would then intercede for the worshippers with Christ and Christ with God. However, the New Testament plainly teaches us that he is a high priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities and understands our problems because he was tempted in all points as we are. (Hebrews 4:15) In the apostolic age members of the church were called saints, Romans 1:7. No special group of holier men were set apart and regarded as the only saints, for all those consecrated and devoted to Christ were called by that name. The first great church council was held in the year 325 A.D. to condemn Arianism, which was a system of doctrines contrary to the divinity of our Lord. The bishops composing that council legislated for the church and thus we have the beginning in religious history of church councils and the decrees of these councils being bound upon the church as the law of God. It is interesting to note that for the first 325 years no such group met to legislate for the whole church in matters religious. The multiplicity of church decrees and councils brought about the downfall of New Testament Christianity then as it will do today. No man or group of men ever has had the right to make laws either for the government or the teaching of the church built by the Lord upon the rock. He is its head, its founder, the king over the kingdom, with the sole right to make the laws and He has already done that in his finished revealed will, the New Testament. Many were the discussions along the course of church history in later centuries as to which was the more binding, the decrees of church councils or those of the Popes. These often conflicted and sharp controversy arose several times on this important point. In the middle of the third century after Christ there developed a movement of asceticism, or mortification of the flesh in order to enhance the spirit in the "Christian" church. Led by Anthony in Egypt individuals withdrew themselves from the association with others and lived apart in the deserts where they might think and meditate and thus, as they thought, overcome temptation and save their souls. Forsaking marriage and the establishment of homes, they became hermits, and

after some years they formed themselves into communities of monks living together following certain rules of order. The beginning of formal monasticism was in the hermits of the deserts, and these monasteries and nunneries played a large part in the later development of Catholicism. While it is true that Christians are to practice self-control, nothing so extreme as this ascetic movement was ever required of early Christians in order to be saved. The Christians lived in the world, yet they did not partake of the worldiness and sins of the world.

During this period after the apostles' death we have the first case of pouring for baptism on record. Novatian in 251 had water poured on him as he lay in bed very ill, until his bed was thoroughly soaked. When later he came up to be selected as bishop in Rome they refused him because many claimed his baptism not valid. Every Bible student knows that New Testament baptism was immersion in water, for the remission of sins. Not until two hundred and fifty years afterward was there ever a case of pouring and much later before such practice was ever justified by decrees of a church council.

These departures are matters of record. Any individual carefully studying the New Covenant cannot find one word about these later practices. If we are to follow the Scriptures, speaking where they speak and being silent where they are silent, we should know these things and understand the difference between the departures and the things God has ordained. Not all departures have been outlined in this brief study, but the chief points have been emphasized that you may note the origin of many religious practices that are today relics of the apostasy. Let us know the truth that the truth may make us free.

06 III. The Medieval Church

III. The Medieval Church III. THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH (I) (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO, April 28, 1940) The Roman Empire fell apart following the fall of Rome, the capital city, in 476, and with its dissolution the leadership of the Mediterranean world was destroyed. As the political authority lessened, the world turned to some other power capable of leading during the Dark Ages. This was found in the bishops of Rome. From the time of Boniface III, the first recognized universal head of the universal church, the Popes loomed larger in the affairs of the world, both political and religious. The medieval period is essentially a church period, and the religious motive dominated in the life and government of the people. With the crowning of Charlemagne as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D. by the Pope begins the political supremacy of the Papacy. From this time the doctrine was held that no king or ruler had any authority over his people unless he had been crowned either by the Pope himself or his duly appointed representative. If princes refused to abide by the papal decisions they were robbed of their realms and their peoples absolved from serving them. The doctrine was based upon the idea that the pope as Christ's representative on earth should be looked to in every relationship for complete guidance. With the blending of the religious and political power, all religious decisions could be enforced by the political authorities. Thus when heretics were pointed out by the papacy, the civil governments of earth were called upon to use force in liquidating such groups. The blending of these powers served to keep the masses under the authority of the medieval church.

Let it not be thought that all kings and princes submitted without contest to this doctrine. Several famous discussions are recorded between monarchs and the Papacy. Among the most notable is that between Henry IV of Germany and Pope Gregory VII. Gregory was one of the most powerful popes ever to rule from Rome, and he believed very strongly in the absolute and complete power of the Papacy. Henry, feeling very keenly the threat to his own power, called the bishops of the Holy Roman Empire and proceeded to depose Gregory. The pope then exercised his power to absolve all his subjects from allegiance to him. Henry, thus reduced to dire straits, was forced to make a journey over the Alps in the dead of winter and approach the Pope in his palace at Canossa. After being forced to stand for three days outside the palace in the snow, clad in the garments of a penitent, he was admitted into the Pope's presence on bended knees. Having asked his forgiveness and pardon, Henry was reinstated as the king in Germany.

Another famous instance occurred later during the time of Pope Innocent III, who deposed John as King of England for opposing the Papal authority. These are but two of the many instances where there was conflict between the civil and religious authorities. One can readily see just how far the Papacy carried its aims of political domination. Down even to 1870 at the time of Italy's unification, the Pope ruled over the Papal States as a temporal sovereign. When at that time the Italian government took control of these states, the Pope in protest to their seizure of his realm retired to his Vatican Palace and became a voluntary prisoner. Only after the concordat with the Italian government made in 1929 did the Pope receive the control of a little strip of land around the Vatican known as Vatican City and thus again became a political ruler. The Papacy has always

desired temporal as well as religious power and no student can be disillusioned by any present promises into thinking that there are now no political desires connected with the Papacy. Our democracy was founded upon the idea of freedom of worship and a complete separation of church and state. These two institutions have entirely different spheres and the spheres of distinction are defined by the Constitution. Any tendency to bring church and state together must be viewed with alarm on the part of all lovers of freedom. This accounts for the recent protests of many Protestants who, have viewed with dismay the recent move of this government in sending an envoy to the Papal court as a representative of this government. If the head of one religious group is thus recognized, when being only a figure head as an earthly ruler, why not recognize every religious group in this country thus? The Papacy collected taxes from the people in Europe and thus supported its many activities. The threat of excommunication was often enough to bring many erring ones into line. Excommunication was not ordinarily against immorality but rather against those who protested the authority of the church officials. With this much of the political activities of the Pope in the Middle Ages before us, let us approach the question of the basis of papal authority. To substantiate the power of the pope over all affairs, the argument is advanced that Peter was the first Pope so appointed by our Lord and was selected as the visible head of the church on earth. Let us first note before entering into this discussion that the Scriptures teach Christ as the head of the church. (Colossians 1:18 ; Ephesians 1:22-23) The passage used to support the primacy of Peter is Matthew 16:3-20. Here Jesus in pronouncing a blessing upon Peter for his confession of faith said, "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The word Peter means a rock, and therefore, Gal 1;J; argue that our Lord said He was going to build the church upon Peter, the rock . Peter thus was the rock that Jesus was talking about, according to this argument. But any careful study of the original Greek will destroy such an interpretation. Certainly any further study of the rest of the New Testament would for ever destroy any idea of complete superiority on the part of one disciple over all the rest. This is just precisely what our Lord taught against when he rebuked them for their arguments over who would be greatest in the kingdom of God. See John 13. Two words are used for "rock" in Matthew 16:18 in the original Greek. "Petros " is masculine , and means a stone. This was the name applied to Peter. However, "petra" is feminine and signifies the rock upon which the church was to be built. -"Thou art Peter (a stone) and upon this rock (great ledge of rock, foundation block) I am to build my church." The foundation upon which the New Testament Church was built was not Peter, a man, or a set of men. The rock upon which the church is built was the great truth that Peter had confessed, namely, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Paul likewise bears this out in saying, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

It is claimed that there can be no salvation without submission to the Pope. Cardinal Gibbons declares, 'To be true followers of Christ, all Christians , both among the clergy and laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor.' Is it not strange that so important an office as Pope is never mentioned in the New Testament? Is it not important that even no hint is contained in the New Testament of any man being Christ's representative on earth as its head? Is it not significant that no rules are found in the Scriptures to guide in his selection or provide for his appointment? Is it not important also that Rome as the seat of church government is entirely left unnoticed in the Scriptures? Never did Peter even act as though he thought of himself as head over the church. No references are made during the early

writings of the church to any such idea, for there was no office in existence. As we have already shown, even a bishop of Rome, Gregory the Great, rebuked the bishop of Constantinople for assuming the title of universal bishop of the church. Thus without any scriptural teaching and no allusion to such in Jesus' instructions, I cannot accept the authority of the Pope in matters spiritual. No hint in the Scriptures is given of where our Lord ever delegated to any man or set of men the right to make laws for the church or to change the laws he has set down in the New Testament. It is dangerous to follow anything else than the word of Christ. The core of the medieval church doctrines may be found in the development of the sacramental system. Seven sacraments are listed by their theologians, namely, baptism, the holy eucharist, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony. These sacraments are the most important part of Catholic teaching, and we note them here because they were developed during this period of the medieval church.

Baptism has ever been the teaching of all true followers of our Lord, and likewise it has been performed for every member of the body of Christ. Its importance is attested in every New Testament conversion. It was in New Testament times a burial in water, for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16) and was performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Much later the practice developed of sprinkling people for baptism in the place of immersion. However, it was not until the Council of Ravenna in 1311 that sprinkling was made a part of canon law as the acceptable form of baptism. From 1311 sprinkling was the only form of baptism used, and thus to the present it has been continued by many who have never thrown off the council of Ravenna. Infant baptism was not a practice of the apostolic age, for the first reference that even hints of such was 190 A.D, and it is very vague. The baptism of the New Testament was a believer's baptism, a burial in water for the remission of sins. The Holy Eucharist is the Lord's Supper if we used Bible language, and was called by the theologians, the Bleued Sacrament. The doctrine of transubstantiation in connection with the Eucharist held that at the moment of consecration when the priest says, "This is my body," the bread changes into the literal flesh of Christ, and when the priest says, "This is the new testament in my blood," the fruit of the vine changes into the literal blood of our Lord. However, it was not universally accepted as a doctrine of the medieval Catholic church until the time of Gregory VII in the middle of the 11th century. The Scriptures represent the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast, in which we remember Christ in his death and sufferings and show forth that death until he come again. Thus he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The idea that at the pronouncement of a magic formula of words a miracle is worked and Christ's literal body and blood takes the place of the bread and wine is foreign to the early period of the church's history.

Confirmation, another sacrament, simply means that the baptized child at the age of understanding which enables it to participate in the service is confirmed by the bishop and thus given the right to partake of the communion and be a full member. This sacrament was made necessary when infant baptism began to be practiced widely.

Penance is everywhere in the New Testament substituted for the word repent in the Douay Version of the Scriptures. This simply means that in order to receive remission of sins one must confess those sins to the priest. Upon confession the priest imposes certain works of penance which when performed make the individual free from guilt of sin. The priest then can absolve the individual from the guilt of his sins. The sacrament is based upon the idea that the priest alone has

the power to forgive sins, and unless one comes and intercedes to God through the priest he has no forgiveness. The passage used to support this contention is James 5:16 which says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for the other, that ye may be healed." No hint is contained in this passage or elsewhere in the New Testament that one must make such confession to an official in the church known as a priest. The Scriptures teach that we are all priests as Christians, and therefore can approach God as such. See 1 Peter 2:9. One cannot be a loyal follower of the Catholic faith, however, and not make confession to the priest. Penance, with its works, must be practiced before forgiveness can be obtained. This brought to the fore the doctrine of justification by works alone.

Extreme unction is the sacrament that related to the last rites before dying. Before a faithful one dies he calls for the priest who anoints him with oil and says certain ceremonies over him which prepare him for dying. The language used to justify this practice is James 5:14-15. Oil was used extensively as a healing medium in that age, and would signify all the natural means used to aid in the recovery of the sick individual. We should make use of all our knowledge and skills in the treatment of diseases by the natural means, and couple with that the prayer of faith for recovery. It is right for us to pray for the sick, and to pray for his forgiveness, but no such rite as is indicated in extreme unction can be found in the Scriptures. Such a term is not used therein.

Holy orders is the sacrament dealing with the priesthood, as well as the monastic and convent vows. All those who desired to enter into the service of the church were required to take certain vows of devotion to the church and especially to refrain from marriage. No member of the clergy can ever marry and remain faithful to his vows. Also among some of the special orders of priests as well as the sisterhoods, there is an additional vow of poverty taken, which means that they will hold no property but will be paupers, living from the resources of the order. All are bound to obey implicitly the commands of their superiors and are to follow those vows until death. Any one who leaves the priesthood or convent after having taken these vows or holy orders is guilty of breaking a sacrament and therefore is under great condemnation. One must realize that it was not the universal and complete practice of all the clergy to remain unmarried until about the middle of the 11th century. It was Gregory VII who really enforced the ideal of clerical celibacy in 1074, after which date there was little or no deviation. Before this time many of the priests were married, and continued to perform their priestly tasks. The Eastern church continues to have married priests, although many of its highest officials are celibates. It may be said that the idea behind requiring celibacy is that the priests may be entirely devoted to the church and their work without any distractions. If that could always be true it might be a fine ideal, but there have been ages when the clergy became very corrupt, and unnatural relations were forced because of this binding law. No one is required to remain unmarried by the New Testament, even as no one is required to marry in order to minister in divine things. See 1 Cor. 7. The last of the sacraments is matrimony. The apostate church has always held rigidly to the ideal of oneness in marriage and emphasizes the sanctity of the marriage vows. According to its teachings there are no reasons for divorces to be granted by the church. It has always placed the weight of its influence against divorce and has proclaimed the marriage relationship as one of great importance and holiness. For its attitude I have admiration and praise. There is no way out of the marriage relationship that is honorable save the death of one of its members. If divorce is granted by the civil authorities, it always leaves one of the parties if not both stained and besmirched. While the Scriptures indicate that fornication

is a possible cause of divorce and breaking of the marriage tie allowed by God, even that makes the soul's salvation of one member an impossibility unless he repents and makes restitution as far as he possibly can. It seems a shame that we have allowed so much disorganization to arise in family relationships and have not fully emphasized the importance of marriage as more than a civil contract, as a moral and spiritual contract made before Almighty God.

These people are taught to marry in the church and if they do marry outside of their church to make sure their children are brought up in the . faith. Every loyal Christian should follow the same example, and be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, but if one is in that condition, to exert every influence to convert the unbeliever and to instruct the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Some valuable lessons can be learned by all of us from our friends on these points.

Protestants in general reject all the sacraments except two, baptism and the Lord's Supper . These two are mentioned in the New Testament although they are not called sacraments therein. One must recognize that these many doctrines were the result of gradual development through the centuries, with the scholars and theologians exerting profound influence to bring about the changes. Such men as Anselm and Thomas Aquinas in the medieval period helped to shape the train . of thought and develop doctrines that were to guide the church even to the present. The medieval period was essentially the apostate church pe riod, during which the hierarchy was supreme in power and heretics as well as dissenting voices were very few. Because of that we have developed these main points in this lesson, g1vmg to you some background for the later developments during the Reformation, which we shall discuss on next Sunday .

07 IV. The Beginnings of the Reformation (1)

IV. The Beginnings of the Reformation (1) IV. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE REFORMATION (1) (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO , May 4, 1940) In our last address on church history, we discussed the Medieval Church, showing the fundamental doctrine behind the power and authority of the Pope to be based upon the primacy of Peter as the first Pope, a fact unsustained by the Scriptures. It was pointed out that the Pope in the Middle Ages assumed authority over the religious affairs, and extended his sovereignty over the political affairs of Europe as well. This week we shall address ourselves to a study of the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe as well as some description of the forerunners of this great movement .

While the Papacy tightened its grip upon the church, and set itself against all reform of any kind, there arose some dissenting voices, who protested against the immorality among the clergy and spoke forth strongly against papal interference in political affairs. Earliest among these forerunners of the Reformation was John Wycliffe in England. Born in Yorkshire and educated in Oxford University, he became the greatest scholar of his day in England. Boldly he denounced the wealth and greed of certain high church dignitaries and taught that the church should be guided only by the Scriptures and not by the Pope and cardinals. Believing in the authority of the Bible, he translated the Latin Vulgate with the help of Nicolas of Hereford into the vernacular English between 1382 and 1384 . He taught that the clergy had no function other than that of service and helping humanity and his doctrines rapidly spread throughout England and the Continent in tract form. Excluded from Oxford in 1382 he retired to Lutterworth, where he died. Years after his death his enemies had his body dug from the ground and burned and his ashes scattered on a brook that flowed into Avon River. Wordsworth later celebrated this in his Ecclesiastical Sonnets by symbolizing the spread of his doctrines to all the world as the waters of the ocean washed all the shores with his ashes .

John Huss, another great harbinger of Reformation, was a disciple of Wycliffe, who lived in Bohemia. A priest of the apostate church, he was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Prague in the latter part of the 14th century. The teaching of Wycliffe fell into his hands and he readily accepted these views, fiercely denouncing in his fiery sermons the indulgences and the tyranny of the clergy of that period. For his boldness he was excommunicated from the church, which caused a wave of popular indignation in Bohemia. He was tried before the great Council of Constance as a heretic for denouncing the sale of the indulgences and the use of physical force by the Pope , and condemned to be burned at the stake. Although the Emperor Sigismund had promised him safe conduct to the council, he was burned because the emperor failed to keep his word. The third of the forerunners of the Reformation appears in the person of Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar who lived in Florence, Italy. From 1481 to 1498 as the abbot of the Monastery of San Marco he greatly influenced the current of religious thought in Florence. An idealist, who loved purity and abhorred the immoral practices so common in that age in both clergy and laity, Savonarola became famous as a preacher, attracting thousands to the great cathedral where he denounced their sins. Unfortunately, at that time Alexander VI was pope

in Rome, a diabolical character of the family of the Borgias whose life was as depraved as one could imagine. Alexander tried first to shut Savonarola's mouth by granting him a cardinal's hat and office. However, when he refused to be silenced, he was excommunicated. Even this failed to deter him in his preaching or destroy the faith of the populace in their hero. Finally the papal interdict was laid against all Florence. Savonarola's enemies triumphed over him, imprisoning him and condemning him to be burned at the stake. While differing in many ways from Wycliffe and Huss, the Italian monk had preached salvation apart from submission to the Roman hierarchy and the use of the Roman ritual. He had denied the authority of the Pope, and denounced corruption among church officials. For these things he was condemned as a heretic and burned in the great square before the cathedral where he had so eloquently preached.

None of these martyrs died in vain, for their example soon led others to think and consider the claims then made by the Roman church. Leo X was a great lover of art and as the Pope in the beginning of the 16th century desired very much to complete the building of St. Peter's Cathedral which his predecessor, Julius II, had begun. In order to make it the most beautiful building in the world he exhausted the papal treasury, and need arose for additional funds to carry on this work. He resorted to means that had never been used before by either pope, in order to raise money. The means he chose was the sale of indulgences. Leo sent John Tetzel, a Dominican monk, into Germany preaching the sale of indulgences, or the forgiveness of sins in return for the payment of money. Here he met the opposition of Martin Luther and thus began the great Reformation movement.

Luther was born in Eisleben, Saxony, and entered the priesthood as an Augustinian monk. He was transferred to the new university established at Wittenberg, as a professor. While there he made a visit to Rome to perform an especially meritorious penance of climbing the 28 steps of the Sancta Scala. However, after some thought and study he came to the conclusion that outward penance would not avail as a means of salvation before God. Returning to the university he lectured on Romans, Galatians, and the Psalms and already had formed his ideas with regard to the indulgences when Tetzel appeared in Germany. Immediately he began to oppose such teaching as contrary to the Bible and proclaimed Bible teachings on the forgiveness of sins. On October 31, 1517, he nailed his famous 95 theses, or objections to the indulgences on the door of the Schloss-Kirche in Wittenberg, and invited any one who desired to discuss these issues to a public disputation. At first the Pope paid little heed to the discussions in Germany, but later awakening to its importance summoned Luther to appear before the Diet at Augsburg. For his opposition to the indulgences he was excommunicated in 1520. In order to carry out this order the Pope appealed to the Diet of the Empire to support the excommunication, and thus Luther was summoned before the Diet of Worms. When asked to reconsider and retract his opposition, he answered, "Since your serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or the councils, because it is as clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages which I have quoted and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God-I cannot and will not retract; for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." Such fearlessness is what has made Luther one of the greatest characters in human history.

After such a bold declaration Luther retired, taken by some friends to a place of safe keeping, and for more than a year worked to translate the Bible from the Latin into the vernacular of the German people. This did more than any other thing to foster the cause of the Reformation and to encourage the return to the authority of the Bible. Certainly at the beginning Luther did not intend to begin a separate religious organization, but only to bring reformation within the J 5 church of that period . However, it did result in the separation, and the formation of the Church, called by Luther's name. In 1530 this church accepted the Augsburg Confession of Faith as their creed, thus beginning the long line of Protestant creeds formulated down through the centuries to the present. The fundamental article of the creed was that of justification by faith only, a doctrine by the way, unknown to the Scriptures. However, other doctrines taught which are commonly held by other religious groups and contrary to the New Testament teachings are; that the church has different branches, with each religious denomination as a separate branch, that the Ten Commandments are binding upon us today, that the mode of baptism is nonessential, baptism takes the place of circumcision, thus letting in the practice of infant baptism . This church, the outgrowth of Martin Luther's work, is the prevailing religion in parts of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and other European countries. For Luther's great work in presenting the Bible to the common people, but as a believer in New Testament Christianity I can only regard him as a great man, and his teachings as acceptable only wherein they conform completely to the New Testament. Wherever Luther fails to follow the New Testament he is an improper guide and as a follower of Christ I cannot accept his teachings. This may be said of all these reformers or any other teacher or preacher. Their words are of worth only when they "speak where the Scriptures speak ."

Another noted reformer was Ulrich Zwingli, who lived in Switzerland about the time of Luther and before the day of John Calvin. Born in Windhaus, he received his education in the Universities of Base and Berne and came under the influence of a teacher who impressed upon him the authority of the Scriptures and the worthlessness of the indulgences as a means of forgiving sins. Later coming to Zurich he espoused the cause of the Reformation, differing from Luther in that he accepted the Bible and believed in and followed it absolutely without any deviation from its teachings. He denied the sacrificial character of the mass, the saving power in good works alone, the value of saints as intercessors, the binding of monastic vows, and advocated marriage among the clergy. Instead of believing that the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper became the actual body and blood of Christ, he saw the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast, with the bread and fruit of the vine as simple symbols. This caused the break between Luther and Zwingli since Luther held to virtually the old view.

Zwingli's great successor was John Calvin, who came to Basel from France, where he prepared his famous Institutes of the Christian Religion. He believed very strongly in the legal rigid theocracy as represented by the law of Moses, rather than in the liberty of the gospel. Beginning with the absolute perfection of God and our absolute dependence upon His will he built up a system of theology with the divine decree at its center. The five points of his system are: predestination; total hereditary depravity, or that all persons are born totally lost in sin because of Adam's transgression; particular election, or that the number of the saved is so fixed by divine decree that it cannot be increased or diminished and particular individuals are elected either to salvation or damnation without any action on their own part. Irresistible grace and the everlasting perseverance of the elect so that they cannot be lost are likewise parts of the system. While Calvin

founded no particular denomination, his system has profoundly influenced the thought of the Protestant world. He influenced John Knox and therefore, was directly responsible for the founding in Scotland, of the church which gets its name from the Greek presbiteros, which defines the rule of elders or presbyters. In our country Calvinism was first planted by the New England Puritans when they settled in Plymouth in 1620. At the present time many Protestant groups that once held to the entire system of Calvinism have repudiated either some parts or the whole of it. To anyone reading the scriptures carefully there is no justification for the idea of God predestinating certain individuals to hell and certain to heaven regardless of what they did. Christ would have thus died in vain and the invitation to the "whosoever will to come" would have been meaningless. (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17.)

John Calvin was greatly interested in the political situation of his day in Switzerland. Through the pulpit he helped to reform the life in Switzerland and became the guiding spirit in a sort of theocracy at Geneva where he lived until his death in 1564. Calvin's doctrines were taken by John Knox to Scotland and resulted in the establishment of this particular church in that country.

Born in Scotland and educated in the University of Glasgow, John Knox was ordained a priest of the apostate church in 1530. However, after studying the church fathers he openly professed to be a Protestant in 1543, and thus was degraded from the priesthood. Through the influence of some noblemen, he was able to occupy the pulpit at St. Andrew's and sow the seeds of the Reformation in Scotland. The French captured him and sentenced him to two years as a galley slave, after which he returned to England and assisted in the English Reformation. When Bloody Mary ascended the throne in England he fled to the Continent and at Geneva helped in translating the famous Geneva version of the English Bible. He later was able to return to his native Scotland and there lived until his death preaching the doctrines of Calvinism.

It was upon his return from Geneva in 1555 that he stirred the nobles in Scotland to form the first covenant to defend the Protestant faith and three years afterward the religion of the apostate church was disestablished there. The first creed was written by Knox based upon the writings of Calvin. This church became the established church of Scotland in 1592 after much controversy over the form of church government, whether episcopal or congregational. The creed now regarded as Standard among nearly all of these folk is the Westminster Confession of Faith, formulated by the Westminster Assembly, which met in London in July of 1643 and continued its sessions for six years, meeting for 163 times. The name of this denomination is not derived from any man's name, nor does it describe any set of doctrines. It is rather descriptive of the form of church government. It is the anglicizing of a Greek noun-presbuteros, which means elder, therefore, signifies a church governed by elders, in the literal meaning of the term. They hold in general the Calvinistic teachings, also practicing three forms of baptism, the sprinkling of babies, conversion by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, our obligation to keep the Ten Commandments today and that it is not necessary to observe the Lord's Supper each first day of the week—all teachings out of harmony with New Testament practice and precept. These facts which we have briefly presented are offered as a first lesson in the Reformation Movement and should enable you to better understand the religious conditions as they exist, as well as the reason for their existence. Throughout this course of study let us never lose sight of our aim to compare these teachings and doctrines of men with the New Testament and note similarities and differences. The New Testament is the divine pattern, and in order to be acceptable to the Lord we

should follow its teachings .

08 V. The Spread of Reformation

V. The Spread of Reformation V. THE SPREAD OF THE REFORMATION (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO, May 12, 1940) No proper history of the Reformation Movement could be given without a history of Martin Luther. However, Luther was only the harbinger of more far reaching reformation in lands other than Germany. Already in this series the work of Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and John Knox has been reviewed, and their influences upon the subsequent course of religious history noted. One must remember throughout any study of the Reformation, that this movement was largely a protest against the corruption morally among clergy and laity, and an affirmation of the authority of the Scriptures over that of the Church represented by the Popes and Councils. Each reformer had certain peculiar problems to confront, which colored greatly his work and led to a more or less degree of release from the shackles of the Medieval Church.

Today we are concerned more with the spread of the Reformation to England and its development in the British Isles. No record of this period would be complete without the history of the foundation of the Church of England, which is called in America from the Greek "The Anglican Church. This Church as a separate religious institution came into existence during the reign of Henry VIII. The apostate church had been the state church of England before Henry's time, and early in his reign Henry VIII distinguished himself for condemning Luther in the latter's break with Rome. It was his attack upon Luther that won for him the title of Defender of the Faith. conferred by the Pope upon him, a title which the kings of England today continue to wear. However, Henry had married Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of the famous rulers of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella. Although she had borne him six children, only one had survived infancy and that was a princess later to become "Bloody" Mary, Queen of England. Henry VIII became much dissatisfied with his marriage and desired the Pope to annul it. This the Pope refused to do, whereupon Henry coerced Parliament, which at that time was much less powerful than today, to pass two extremely important laws. One forbade the people and clergy of England to make any further payments of money to the Pope, and the second, called the Act of Supremacy, proclaimed the King of England as the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England. Thus the beginning of this Church occurred due to a monarch's impatience with his former wife and desire to dictate to the Pope regarding his rights and privileges. Henry VIII really wanted to marry a beautiful young girl named Anne Boleyn, who was a lady-in-waiting at the court. This he did and she became the mother of the famous Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. This marriage did not satisfy him, and so several times more he married and removed his wives. Being a state church it is subject to the legislation of Parliament, and must receive Parliamentary approval in order to change its creed or canon law. The archbishops and bishops and other high ranking officials sit in the House of Lords in Parliament. The ecclesiastical head of the church is the Archbishop of Canterbury, followed in power by the Archbishop of York. The Anglican church is strong wherever the English have dominion. It was planted in America by the colonists in Virginia, and remained under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London until the time of the Revolutionary War. It severed its connection with the mother church at the time when the United States became free, and has since

been known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. The creed of the church is expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith and the Book of Common Prayer contains the rituals used in the services of the church. It takes its name from its form of church government, which is episcopal-rule by bishops, as opposed to presbyterian form of government or rule by elders of the local congregation. Each Episcopal bishop has jurisdiction over a certain territory which is known as his diocese. Besides observing religious holidays borrowed from the Roman church, Episcopalians have the altars, candles, vestments, crucifixes and rituals modelled after the Apostate church, sprinkle infants as baptism, and recognize confirmation as essential to one's admittance to membership in the church. Within the American Church there are two groups, one known as the High church and the other as the Low church. The High church has sisters, uses incense in its worship, has images in the churches, uses holy water, and follows an English version of the mass, as well as practicing auricular confession. The Low church practices none of these, yet both groups are under the same bishop in the same church.

Along in the latter part of the sixteenth century there appeared some very interesting religious groups known generally by a name which simply means rebaptizers. They refused to admit any person into their churches that had not been rebaptized after their 'Catholic baptism in the Apostate church. From these later grew up the churches which call themselves after John the Baptizer. There are some of their historians that have claimed they could trace a line of these particular churches back through the centuries to the New Testament times. However, the better informed scholars among them make no such claim. In fact, there is no religious group today that can trace itself back to New Testament times by a chain of successive churches. Those of the Apostate church cannot since they have radically changed their worship and doctrines from the New Testament patterns. However, I shall quote from the Christian Review of Jan., 1855, the outstanding quarterly of its day, with regard to such a claim. It states, "We know of no assumption more arrogant and more destitute of proper historical support, than that which claims to be able to trace the distinct and unbroken existence of a church substantially and then the denomination after John is given from the time of the Apostles down to our own." Armitage says, "Little perception is required to discover the fallacy of a visible apostolic succession, in the ministry but visible church succession is precisely as fallacious, as for exactly the same reasons." Thus it appears that prior to the 16th century no such thing existed as this particular church, at least as far as we know it. The modern Baptists had their origin in the Anabaptists mentioned above, who rejected infant baptism and rebaptized all who received this rite in infancy. A small separatist congregation that fled from England to escape the persecutions of James I settled in Holland in the early seventeenth century. Under their leader, John Smyth, they came to the conclusion that infant baptism was unauthorized by the Scriptures, and also was contrary to them. The baptism they had received from the church of England was not, therefore, valid. They introduced believers' baptism, and repudiated their church organization, and the ordination of ministers. Thus they organized the first church of that denomination known in church history about the year 1607. Lofton says, "John Smyth founded a church upon believer's baptism, and a regenerate church membership; but, organically speaking, this was the 'beginning of the present denomination though begun with an unscriptural form of baptism." Most authorities claim that Smyth sprinkled himself and the others of his congregation, while some contend that he was immersed. However, this latter group of scholars are greatly in the minority. The first church of this Baptist denomination organized in England, was founded by Thomas Helwys in 1611, calling itself a General Baptist church. Later,

other groups wearing the name of Calvin were organized in the British Isles. The first church of this denomination established in this country was by Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island in 1639. All of them practice immersion as the mode of baptism, and cling to the principle of congregational independence. While they are willing to cooperate with one another in conventions and associations, each congregation forms an independent unit of self-government. They have also held to the principle of the separation of church and state. The main bodies in this country are listed as follows: the Southern Convention, made up of Southern churches who separated from the Northern churches over the question of slavery and kindred subjects before the Civil War; the Northern Convention, as well as such groups known as Primitive Baptists, holding the old Calvinistic doctrines of election and predestination; the Free Will Baptists holding the doctrine of the free will of man as opposed to the Primitives, and the Fundamentalists, which among other things, believe in Premillennialism. They believe in the impossibility of falling from grace after one has been a member of the church and received grace, they practice close communion at the Lord's table, and do not observe the Lord's Supper regularly each week. They do not regard Pentecost as the beginning day of the church, and vote upon all their members before admitting them to the fellowship of the church. Along with other religious groups they believe in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit to save souls and use instrumental music in their worship. These distinguishing features are nowhere noted in the Scriptures as characteristics of the New Testament church. No discussion of the Reformation can be complete without presenting John Wesley and the story of Methodism. Probably no other reformer exerted a greater influence outside of Luther upon human thought in modern times than John Wesley. Born in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, where his father was a rector, Wesley was educated at Oxford University and later becoming a fellow and lecturer at one of its colleges. In 1728 he was ordained to the priesthood of the Church of England. It must be remembered that at this time the Church of England had drifted to a low ebb spiritually, and nothing but mere form and ritual characterized its services. While at Oxford he became associated with a group of students who spent certain evenings in reading the New Testament and in prayer. Besides, they engaged in many works of charity, such as visiting the poorhouses, and consoling the sorrowing and suffering. One of the rules of this little group required that they frequently "interrogate themselves whether they have been simple and recollected; whether they have prayed with fervor, Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday noon; if they have used a collect at nine, twelve, and three o'clock; duly meditated on Sundays from three to four on Thomas a Kempis (who wrote the Imitation of Christ), or mused on Wednesday and Friday from twelve to one on the Passion." For their strict rules or methods they were nicknamed "Methodists," which name the religious followers of Wesley wear until this day. The first group began meeting in 1729, composed of John and Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, and William Morgan. George Whitefield later joined them, but John Wesley was the dominant figure of the group from its beginning and so continued to his death. Wesley did not intend to found a new religious group, but only to reform the Church of England, and inject the spiritual elements into its cold forms. He considered himself a member of the communion until his death. He and Whitefield began their famous open air revivals by first preaching to the miners around Bristol in 1739 following his famous Aldergate experience. The Aldergate experience was the time usually given by Wesley as his conversion, when a peculiar feeling came over him and he felt a change. He was a great believer in heart-felt religion, and his revivals for a period of over fifty years were great meetings of religious fervor.

Wesley was a tireless worker, travelling an average of forty miles on many of his preaching days, and speaking two to four times each day. His notes on the Scriptures are still read and he is responsible for a very admirable translation of the New Testament from the Greek. The Church of England looked with disfavor upon Wesley's attempt to reform its worship, and, therefore, denied him the use of its churches. Even at Epworth where his father lived and preached, he was refused entrance, but being undaunted he stood by his father's tombstone and preached to the people gathered in the churchyard. The first Methodist society was formed in Bristol, England, in 1739. From this place the movement spread rapidly throughout England, Scotland, and to America in 1766. Phillip Embury and Strawbridge were among the first laborers in this country for the Methodist denomination. Division later arose in its ranks regarding the form of church government, the majority clinging to the episcopal form of rule by bishops, but others rejecting the episcopal government. Those who rejected the rule by bishops called themselves Protestant Methodists, the others Methodists Episcopal. Recently the Northern and Southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal church united with the Protestant Methodist church to form a United Methodist church in America. Methodists practice three forms of baptism, sprinkling, pouring or immersion, and also baptize babies, although they do not teach this latter practice necessary to the child's salvation. They receive their pastors by appointment through their conferences. The creed of the Methodist church is the Discipline which contains the church laws and rules of action, as well as the articles of faith. Also, a ritual book containing the necessary rituals for various services is a companion volume. The Discipline is revised periodically by the church authorities as new laws are made to guide Methodists.

These facts have been brought to your attention in this series because we have felt that truth should be stated with regard to the course of church history. It is our trust that a better understanding of present religious conditions will be brought about because of such a series. Sometimes individuals ask, "How did so many religious groups come into being?" The study of this kind will reveal to you their origin and the circumstances which brought their rise, as well as their divergence from New Testament teachings. The great men which the Reformation produced were all men who desired to exalt the authority of the Scriptures. Not all the errors into which some of their followers have fallen can be laid to their charge. The sacrifices which men like Luther, Knox, Wesley, and others made in behalf of teaching the Scriptures excite our admiration. It likewise is a shame that we today have probably not developed so intensely our love for truth nor desire pains takingly to study the glorious things of God's word. However, let us take courage by their lives and face forward in this day when Christianity is challenged. Let us also realize that they were fallible men, and made mistakes. Only wherein they have followed Jesus and His teachings are they proper guides for humanity. As Paul admonished, "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ." We should not worship men, nor should we endeavor to follow any man. We should exalt Christ and His will above all else, and strive day by day to fulfill what He would have us to do. His commands are to be implicitly obeyed, and anything else can only bring God's displeasure upon us. The Reformation should teach us the great mistake of manmade creeds, and the failure to follow only the teachings of Jesus. The creeds made by these various leaders became walls to separate their followers from other believers. We can unite when we are willing to do always those things well pleasing in the sight of God, recognizing the value of an obe

09 VI. The Restoration No. 1

VI. The Restoration No. 1 VI. THE RESTORATION, No. 1 (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO, May 19, 1940) For the past two Sundays we have discussed briefly the Reformation Movement in church history, noting first the work of Wycliffe, Huss, and Savonarola in denouncing the corruption in the Papacy of that period. Their work was followed by Luther who proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith, rejecting the Pope's power to forgive sins, and expounding the principle that individuals have the liberty to study the Scriptures for themselves unhampered by the decrees of the clergy. Calvin proclaimed the sovereignty of God and his co-laborer, John Knox, carried the torch of Reformation to England and Scotland. Later John Wesley spoke out against the formality of the Church of England, and plead for a return to personal piety and more consecrated living.

However, one can readily see that not one of these great leaders conceived the idea of restoring the New Testament patterns of simple apostolic Christianity. Their ideal was that of reforming existing organizations, and most of them, like John Wesley, claimed to have done nothing more than vitalized the older religious group. While the Reformation did much to clear away the accumulations of the centuries which obscured New Testament practices, it failed to re store the New Testament patterns and, therefore, we find that instead o f a r e turn to the New Testament each religious group crystallized its e lf into a denomination entrenched behind elaborate creeds and stat ements of belief. The nineteenth c e ntury dawned with more than 150 warrin g g ro u ps and parties fighting against each other and with th e Bibl e buried far beneath their theolo gical sp e culations and dogmas. Thus the time was ripe for a restoration movement to be launched. In order to understand properly any great movement, social or religious, we must analyze the causes and circumstances surrounding its origin. Certain definite conditions existed in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries led to the development of this Restoration Movement.

1. Dissatisfaction with human creeds. During the centuries following the birth of the Reformation Protestant religious groups had formulated elaborate credal statements, which increasingly became the cause of much discussion and confusion . At best they represented only the opionions of some leading clergymen who forced such upon the masses of the people. Setting at naught the authority of C hrist, they served to keep Christendom divided into warrin g parties. Many sober minded individuals, loving liberty, objected to these conditions, believing that the Bible should be the guide. Trials for heresy were common. Each applicant for the ministry was tried not upon his knowledge of the Scriptures, but rather upon whether he would uphold and teach the creeds of each religious group. Thanks to an enlightening that has come today, many have ceased to emphasize these creeds very much and the needed proper step would be to cut loose altogether from them and be governed by the Scriptures.

2. The prevailing theology of the day being Calvinism, the dogma of total hereditary depravity was widely held. It taught that a man was born in sin, totally dead spiritually, so that it required an

irresistible and miraculous work of the Holy Ghost to lift the depraved soul from the grave of sin. Men were taught that they were powerless to come to God, they must wait upon his good pleasure, and the only thing meanwhile they could do would be to agonize and mourn and weep, knowing that if their prayers were heard and they had some mysterious and overpowering experience they were of the elect and if not, they were of the non-elect and lost because God would not have them. This doctrine, as you can readily see, makes God a monster who arbitrarily chooses to save each person without regard to his life and character, and likewise makes man but a toy in the hand of the Almighty. If God didn't choose to save you personally, you would be lost in the fiery pit of hell. To many reasonable, logical individuals these things seemed so foreign to the Scriptures when they read that God was no respecter of persons. Thus indifference and infidelity were widespread over the country, due to such teachings which misrepresented God.

3. Religious Sectarianism and Division. The entire face of the religious world was characterized by bitter strife between warring factions. Instead of religious cooperation and unity they continued to justify their divisions by stating that the Lord's church, the vine, must have different branches representing one branch as one sect or party, and another branch, another sect or party--a direct perversion of the Scriptures. The branches instead of bearing the same fruit, according to that application, would have a different sort of fruit on each branch. Have you ever seen a vine like that in the natural world? Catholics fought against Protestants and each Protestant group fought bitterly another. Individuals who read our Lord's prayer for unity were made ashamed of the conditions and desired that something other than this sort of thing exist.

4. General Decadence in Morals. With such conditions there was an accompanying ignorance of the Holy Scriptures, and a general decline of morals as well as the growth and development of schools of new thought and infidelity. Such conditions are best illustrated by the events of the French Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century, which clearly showed how far some of these destructive ideas of anti-religion had carried the people. Many sympathizers on this side of the Atlantic utilized the opportunities to spread doctrine of an anti-religious nature in America. Such conditions form the background upon which the Restoration Movement was enacted. This movement as any other movement in history did not spring up overnight, but gradually developed by the circumstances of the times. It is contrasted with the Reformation in the sense that it endeavored to go back beyond all existing forms and proclaim the only true basis of unity to be the New Testament patterns of apostolic approval. Among some of the earlier individuals becoming dissatisfied with partyism was a man named James O'Kelly, who lived in North Carolina after the American Revolution. He was a leader in the Methodist societies formed in this country, but the separation of this country from England after the Revolution entailed a separation also of the Methodist churches here from those in the mother country. While Asbury and Thomas Coke led the fight for an episcopal form of government in American Methodism, O'Kelly led the fight for a congregational form of government. Being defeated in this he and his followers withdrew and called themselves "Republican Methodists." The keynote of this group was sounded at a meeting held in Surrey County, Virginia, in 1794, when one member arose and stated to the members of the group, "This Bible is the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and by it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply." Accepting the Bible as their only creed, they thus laid aside the name of Methodist, as being divisive and without any reference in the Scriptures, and desired only to

wear the name Christian. They emphasized the following points: 1. The name Christian to be used to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names, since it best described the people of God: 2. The Lord Jesus Christ, the only head of the Church: 3. The Holy Bible as the only creed, Christian character and piety as the only test of fellowship; 4. Right of private judgment and liberty of conscience are privileges to all.

While this was the first group thus laying aside everything but what the Scriptures expressly command, there was another man, in the state of Vermont who became distressed greatly at the rampant sectarianism of his day and desired to see all such cease. Although he had never heard anything of any other individual, who desired to return to the New Testament, nor had he met O'Kelly, Dr. Abner Jones left the Baptist faith and led in organizing congregations of simple Christians, wearing only that name and accepting the Bible only as their rule of faith and practice. This occurred about the year 1800, some six or seven years after the action of O'Kelly. Jones had beheld the trials of heresy which were instituted against individuals who refused to support the particular creeds, and felt that these man-made documents should not take precedence over the authority of the Bible.

I think you will want to note one very important point about all of these men who endeavored to go back beyond all organizations and recapture the New Testament patterns and spirit. Each began his work without any knowledge of any other man on earth who had similar points of view. Each simply desired to be led by the Scriptures. This desire enabled them to state the fundamental principle that the Scriptures should guide in all matters of Christianity. Isn't it significant that all these individuals by simply studying the New Testament plan came out years later at the same place and that without know one another? The New Testament brings unity.

Next, we need to note the work of Barton W. Stone and his views in the early part of the 19th century. Born during the last days before the Revolutionary War, he lived in Maryland far removed from the cities of those pioneer days, but grew up to love books and learning. Later entering school in North Carolina, he came under the influence of the religious teaching of the day, which held that if you were of the elect, by agonizing and mourning you would have a miraculous working of the Holy Ghost and thus know you were called, and if not, all your agonizing would avail nothing. So all were called upon to agonize and mourn for their sins and look for a religious experience. Although having had no so-called "divine call to preach," Stone had the desire to preach, but was doubtful as to whether he should enter the ministry since he had not experienced any such overpowering gift of the Holy Spirit. Some older minister, however, assured him that the desire to save souls was evidence enough that he was called of God. Thus he entered the service of the Presbyterian church, though not fully ordained, and worked for a while in North Carolina. But having a strong desire to go to the West, he left and went out to Kentucky, which became the scene of much of his great labors. In the fall of 1798 he accepted the call to preach for the Cane Ridge and Concord churches in Kentucky. Knowing that he would be examined on the Confession of Faith as a prerequisite to his ordination he studied it, only to find difficulty in accepting the doctrine of the Trinity as set forth therein. When asked the question by the examiner "Do you receive and adopt the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine in the Bible?" he replied, "I do as far as I see it consistent with the word of God." While no one objected to his answer, one can easily see that he believed creeds should conform to the Scriptures or be set aside.

However, the main point that led to Stone's change was his failure to believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, and election. These things in Presbyterianism of that day so puzzled him. As he preached, he would ask himself, "How can people repent, if God won't let them? How can they believe when the doctrine holds that man can do nothing of himself, even believe?" Following his conscience he decided that he would no longer preach anything except what the Bible directed and declared "that God loved the whole world, and sent his Son into it to save all men upon the condition of their faith and obedience ; that the gospel was the means of salvation, although unless believed and obeyed would mean nothing; that God required men to believe and had given sufficient evidence in His word to produce faith in all men if they would only give heed to it; that sinners were able to believe this testimony and also to act upon it by coming to Christ and obeying His commands; that God was ever ready and willing to save those who would accept Him. Others along with Stone preached these same things and made a profound impression upon the people since they used the Scriptures and exalted the authority of the Bible.

Suspended from the Presbytery for their exaltation of the Scriptures against the creed, they formed the Springfield Presbytery. This presbytery published a book in which they stated their objections to the Confession of Faith, and then proceeded to proclaim the truths above stated over that section of the country. They later came to see that they should wear no other name but Christian, since this was used in the Scriptures. It was this Springfield Presbytery that formulated one of the most important documents ever written in religious history, unique because of its declarations. This document is called "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery." This writing was drawn up after the members became convinced that they should no longer subscribe to any human creed, but allow the Scriptures and a following of them to be entirely sufficient. It is drawn up in the form of a will and signed on June 28, 1804. Remember that they knew very little of any other activities along this line. Note these statements and see if you could object to them. "The Presbytery of Springfield, sitting at Cane Ridge in county of Bourbon, being through a gracious providence in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily, and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing that it is appointed to all delegated bodies to die, and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain, this, our last will and testament, in manner and form following, namely:

"1. We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the body of Christ at large; for there is but one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

"2. We will that our name of distinction, with its reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage and His name one.

"3. We will that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever, cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus .

"4. We will that each particular church as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will offering, without a written call or subscription, admit members, remove offences; and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.

"5 . We will that people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell." (2)

Nothing like this had ever been seen before, so original was it in form and content . Thus in this unique language, they protested against the increasing spirit of partyism, and declared themselves henceforth to be guided only by Scriptural truths. Stone and his followers continued to labor in those regions of Kentucky for years afterward. One by one they cut all cords that bound them down and stepped out completely on the side of the New Testament patterns. Being later convinced that scriptural baptism was by immersion, Stone was immersed and until his death preached and proclaimed the truths of scriptural authority and the Bible as sufficient. These facts are interesting in the light of the present . I am sure that few now believe in the old creeds as then formulated, yet creedmaking has been the source of much confusion religiously, and continues to be. The Scriptures after all ought to be a source of unity, otherwise they are not what God intended them to be and God failed. I am now willing to admit that. God gave the Scriptures to guide us into all truth and thoroughly furnish us to every good work.

10 VII. The Restoration No. 2

VII. The Restoration No. 2 VII. THE RESTORATION, No. 2 (Sermon Delivered Over WAPO, May 26, 1940) No more perfect description of true Christianity can be found, than that contained in the New Testament, outlining as it does the teachings of Jesus, the great fundamentals of the gospel, the establishment of the church, the spread of the church, and the missionary endeavors of these early Christians, followed by the description of our Christian obligations. New Testament Christianity is the standard by which all else is to be measured, since it was guided by the apostles who gave their inspired teachings and directed by their labors the early Christian activities. Certainly if any part of church history has the sanction of God it is this age. In studying the Restoration plea-the plea to go back beyond all human organizations, creeds, and councils of men, and brush aside the accumulations of centuries of man-made religion, it is especially essential that we clearly keep in view the characteristics of the New Testament church. In this study we have noted that it came into being on the Day of Pentecost, and with the preaching of Peter on that day, the gospel was first announced and the terms of entrance into the church accepted for the first time. Of great importance is the fact that the early church did not have any centralized authority on earth, and possessed no great organization such as was found in the Gentile world. Each group of Christians was independent one of the other, and while possessing the same faith nevertheless was guided by elders or bishops, Acts 20:28, and deacons, Acts 6:1-6, each congregation having a plurality of such officers. These with the evangelists formed the principal officials of the church. The worship of these early Christians was exceedingly simple, not characterized by elaborate ritual, nor a sacerdotal class, but rather was built upon the spiritual element of glorifying Christ the Savior. They met upon each first day of the week, the day of His resurrection, and sang hymns and psalms of praise unto God, likewise speaking and exhorting one another through them, Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17. They also continued in the apostles' teachings, given by inspiration, and in prayer, and in the partaking of the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7. They also laid by of their money and earthly possessions upon the first day of the week that the work of the Lord might be carried on and charitable deeds performed for the help of the needy. The church was not split into many sects and parties, but as members of the body of Christ, recognized no other founder, but the institution was called by divinely appointed names that gave glory unto God-such as the church of the Lord, the Churches of Christ, the Church of the Living God, the General Assembly of the Church of the Firstborn. The members of this blood-purchased institution wore the name of Christian and were exhorted to glorify God on this behalf. Christ being the founder and head of the church had only the authority to make its laws, and never delegated this to any man or set of men so far as the Bible reveals. Therefore, he alone had the power to state the terms of admission. He declared these to be (a) faith based upon hearing God's truth, Romans 10:17; (b) repentance, Luke 13:3; (c) confessions, Romans 10:10; and (d) baptism, a burial in water, Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27.

Remembering these great characteristics of the New Testament church let us consider the plea of the Restoration and its development in the 19th century. The Restoration began with the

pioneering work of James O'Kelly in North Carolina, who with his followers declared themselves henceforth to be guided only by the New Testament. He was followed by Abner Jones in Vermont and New Hampshire, who, unknown to O'Kelly, made virtually the same plea for religious dependence upon the New Testament for all matters in the church. However, by far the most important thus far discussed was Barton W. Stone and his association with the Springfield Presbytery. This led to his renunciation of the Calvinistic creed of faith and, therefore, to his break with the Presbyterian church. We read last Sunday the excerpts from the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery in which it willed its own death and declared henceforth its members should be guided by the Scriptures. This occurred in the year 1804.

Two other great leaders came several years later than these above mentioned, and arrived at the truths of the Restoration by much the same process that these earlier proponents of the plea had done, that is, by study of the Scriptures and following their directions. These two were Thomas Campbell, the father, and Alexander Campbell, the son.

Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander, was born in County Down, Ireland, of parents who originally had been Catholic, and had become members of the Church of England. Being an exceptional child he early decided to give himself to the ministry, but because he disliked the cold formality and worldliness of the Anglican Church, he became a candidate for the Presbyterian ministry. Having studied in Glasgow, he continued his studies in the divinity school of the Seceders, a branch of the Presbyterians. Due to a breakdown in his health Thomas Campbell was later forced to leave his family behind and come to America. It happened that the Presbyterian Synod was in session at his arrival in Philadelphia, and he presented himself to it as a duly ordained Presbyterian minister of the Anti-Burgher group-one of the divisions of Presbyterians at that time. He was received and sent to Washington County in western Pennsylvania to labor. Upon his arrival he found so many Presbyterian churches without the benefit of the communion services that he began to make ready to assist them in this. However, he had one fault which got him into trouble with the church authorities, and that was that he believed that the Bible was the only true and sufficient guide for man religiously. Strange as it may sound, that very faith made one of their leaders prefer charges against him stating that he did not support the creed of the church-but taught the Bible. He was censured by the presbytery and he carried his case to the synod, believing in the righteousness of his plea to unite the various factions of Presbyterianism, and in a masterful speech declared his conviction not "to teach anything as a matter of faith or duty but what is already expressly taught and enjoined by divine authority." However, the synod likewise censured him for his stand, and being persecuted, he withdrew from the Presbyterian church and preached as an independent. Gathering around him those who agreed with his principles, he met at the home of Abraham Altars, and in the speech made the famous declaration which has since become a sort of slogan for those who plead for restoration-"Where the Scriptures speak we speak, where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." This group of followers banded themselves into the Christian Association of Washington on August 17, 1809, and proceeded to draw a statement with regard to their purpose. This was the famous Declaration and Address. In the beginning it stated that the association was formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men. It also prescribed the time of meetings and the means of supporting the work. However, the Address is the most important part of the work, The introduction, written by Thomas Campbell, is a

masterpiece of clear thinking. Exhorting to religious unity he said, "Oh, that ministers and people would but consider that there are no divisions in the grave, nor in that world which lies beyond it; there our divisions must come to an end, there we must all unite. Would to God we could find it in our hearts to put an end to our short-lived divisions here, so that we might leave a blessing behind us, even a happy and united church. What gratification, what utility in the meanwhile, can our divisions afford either ministers or people? Should they be perpetuated until the day of judgment, would they convert one sinner from the error of his way, or save a soul from death? Have they any tendency to hide the multitude of sins that are so dishonorable to God and so hurtful to His people? Do they not rather irritate and produce them? How innumerable and highly aggravated are the sins they have produced, and are at this day producing, both amongst professors and profane. We entreat, we beseech you then, dear brethren, by all those considerations, to concur in this bleued and dutiful attempt." (2)

1. Unity of the Church-"That the church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, and manifest the same by their tempers and conduct."

2 Christian Fellowship-"That although the church must necessarily exist in distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ hath received them to glory."

3. Terms of Communion-"That in order to do this, nothing be enjoined upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything be admitted as of divine obligations, in their church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament church either in expressed terms or approved example."

4. New Testament Sufficient-"That although the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inseparably connected, making together but one perfect and entire revelation of the divine will for the salvation and edification of the church and, therefore, in that respect cannot be separated; yet as to what directly and properly belongs to their immediate object, the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline and government of the New Testament church and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline and government of the Old Testament church and the particular duties of its members."

Repudiating the right of men to make laws for the church this group set out to follow expressly the teaching of the New Testament. Certainly when we consider that these things were written in 1809 before the time of the Restoration plea in its fullness it is amazing.

Thomas Campbell states in his Address, "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church, or be made a term of communion among Christians that is not as old as the New Testament." Regarding admission to the church he states, "That it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge or a distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the church; neither should they for this purpose be required to

make a more extensive profession than their knowledge; but that on the contrary, their having a due measure of scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice, and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in, and obedience to Him in all things according to His word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into His church."

Alexander Campbell and his mother and family came soon from Scotland to join Thomas and thus in Western Pennsylvania began the work of the Campbells. Alexander had been educated in Glasgow University and was an exceptional student. When his father revealed unto him his stand on religious matters the son was very much impressed and joined hands with his father in pleading for the authority of the Scriptures. Later becoming convinced that immersion was the scriptural form of baptism he with his father were baptized in Buffalo Creek on June 12, 1812.

Alexander and his father did not seek to do anything more than teach the Scriptures, and thought since the Presbyterian had rejected them they would cast their lot with the Baptists, where they remained until several years later, at which time the Baptists withdrew from them for refusing to uphold anything except the word of God. Alexander Campbell rapidly became the leading champion of the Restoration, advocating the principles his father set forth in the paper, the "Christian Baptist." He became one of the foremost Bible scholars of his day and also distinguished himself as a great debater. Always desiring the truth, he held several discussions with leading religious advocates. His chief debates were: the debate with Robert Owen on the Evidences of Christianity; the debate with Bishop John B. Purcell on Roman Catholicism; and the discussion with N. L. Rice on the Design of Baptism, infant Baptism and the Work of the Holy Spirit. Robert Owen was a foremost socialist thinker of his day who had established a utopian community in Indiana. Challenging the American ministers to defend the integrity of the Scriptures he found a ready opponent in Alexander Campbell. The debate is noteworthy for containing Campbell's twelve-hour speech delivered at several meetings on the Christian system. The debate with Purcell, bishop of Cincinnati, was held in 1837, in Cincinnati on the Roman Catholic religion. It was a wonderful discussion since Purcell was one of the foremost Catholic scholars. Concerning Campbell, Archbishop Purcell later said, "Campbell was decidedly the fairest man in debate I ever saw, as fair as you can possibly conceive. He never fought for victory, but seemed always fighting for the truth, or what he conceived to be the truth. He never misrepresented his case nor that of his opponent, never tried to hide a weak point, never quibbled." Such a statement from his opponent is a real tribute to Campbell's fair and honest effort to find the truth.

Alexander Campbell was interested in Christian education and founded Bethany College in order to train the young in the ways of Christian thinking and living. He kept the issues of his religious journal before the people to provoke thought and have a better understanding of the Restoration and its ideals brought to their attention. He did not found a denomination, nor was he the head of any church. He did not formulate any creed, nor did he erect any organization. His whole desire was to find out what New Testament Christianity was and to try to bring about the same thing in his day. His life was filled with much useful service and preaching in the interest of undenominational Christianity.

Let it be clearly understood that the Campbells and Scott, Smith, along with many other early Restorers, were simply men, and like the reformers are only to be followed as they followed Christ

and His teachings. We all have the Scriptures and are required to speak where they speak, and remain silent where they are silent. The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ are pleading that all the lines which divide men may be wiped out, and the creeds which are man-made may be abolished, in order that all might unite on the word of God. No sort of superficial union will please the Father, for the only real unity can come when we cast aside the doctrines of men and do the commandments of Him who is our Master. The churches of Christ are not following the Campbells or any other man or set of men. It is the whole desire of this group of undenominational Christians to work for the unity for which Christ prayed so earnestly. "For the truth shall make you free" with freedom that is liberty indeed. At the close of this series we bid you consider, whether you are lending your life and influence to the practice of the truths of the New Testament or are you fostering the parties of men? Let us "speak where the Scriptures speak and be silent where the Scriptures are silent."

11 Topic One

Topic One

12 The Reformation

The Reformation

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