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Creeds and Councils

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity

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Apostles' Creed, a brief summary statement of Christian belief, traditionally attributed, to the 12 apostles. According to legend, before setting out on their respective missions, each of the 12 apostles, contributed one clause. Like most Christian creeds, it contains three paragraphs, one for each person of the Trinity. The first paragraph begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty;" the second begins, "I believe in Jesus Christ;" the third begins, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." These three assertions correspond to the three questions that were addressed to candidates for baptism in the early Church.

Until the 15th century, it was believed that the Apostles' Creed was written by the apostles. It is now known, that the creed is not of Apostolic origin, but the title itself, suggests that each clause of the creed, can be traced to New Testament references and that the creed originated very early. Its immediate ancestor, is the so-called Old Roman creed, which is based on a Greek formula of faith, dating to the early 2nd century.

Today, it is widely agreed that the Apostles' Creed developed as the baptismal confession of faith. A similar, but not identical, confession appears in the baptismal liturgy, contained in *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (215?). Similar, but variant versions, are also found in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, such as Irenaeus and Tertullian, in which, they are called "rules of faith." A form, identical with what is now called, the Apostles' Creed, did not emerge until the early 8th century, in the writings of St. Pirminius.

The Apostles' Creed continues to be used as the baptismal profession of faith, in most Western Churches; Orthodox Churches, prefer to use the later Nicene Creed. In the Roman Catholic practice, the Apostles' Creed, is also recited in the daily office, before the first and after the last service, each day. In most Protestant Churches, it is used periodically, at Sunday worship. Anglicans and Lutherans, use it regularly, in morning and evening prayer.

Apostolic Succession, in Christian theology, the doctrine asserting that the apostles designated their successors, as bishops through prayer and the laying on of hands, and that bishops have, in turn, designated their successors, in the same way, ever since.

The doctrine addresses the problem of identifying the continuity of Christian faith and life amid the discontinuous and changing circumstances of history. The idea that

Church ministers were successors of the apostles, who were in turn, successors of Christ, can be traced to St. Clement I, before the end of the 1st century. The doctrine, however, was not formalized until the conflict with Gnosticism during the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries, when the Gnostics claimed a secret tradition traceable to the apostles. Church authorities, then began, to look to the succession of bishop to bishop, as the guarantee of orthodox teaching.

Apostolic succession, as the outward and visible sign of inward faithfulness to the Christian message, is considered essential to ecclesiastical life by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; and it is held in some form, by the Anglican and some Lutheran Churches. Most Protestant Churches, however, emphasize other links with the continuity of Christian faith, such as Scripture and creeds.

Apostolic Constitutions, formally Ordinances Of The Holy Apostles Through Clement, largest collection of ecclesiastical law, that has survived from early Christianity. The full title suggests, that these regulations were drawn up by the Apostles and transmitted to the Church, by Clement of Rome. In modern times, it is generally accepted, that the constitutions, were actually written in Syria, about A.D. 380, and that they were the work of one compiler, probably an Arian (one who believes that Christ, the Son of God, is not divine, but rather a created being).

The work consists of eight books. The first six are an adaptation of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, written in Syria, about A.D. 250. They deal with Christian ethics, the duties of the clergy, the eucharistic liturgy, and various Church problems and rituals.

Book 7, contains a paraphrase and enlargement of the *Didache* (*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) and a Jewish collection of prayers and liturgical material, including the *Gloria in excelsis*, as the liturgical morning prayer.

In Book 8, the first two chapters, seem to be based on, a lost work of Hippolytus of Rome, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*. Chapters 3-22, apparently are based, on Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* (formerly called, *Egyptian Church Order*) and contain an elaborate description of the Antiochene liturgy, including the so-called Clementine liturgy. This is a valuable source for the history of the mass.

Chapters 28-46, of book 8, contain a series of canons, and chapter 47, comprises the so-called *Apostolic Canons*, a collection of 85 canons, derived in part, from the preceding constitutions and in part from the canons, of the councils of Antioch (341) and Laodicea (c. 360). It includes a list of biblical books that omits the Revelation to John, but places the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the two letters of Clement in the canon of Scripture.

Athanasian Creed, one of the most widely used professions of faith, in Western Christendom. It is named after the Alexandrian theologian, Saint Athanasius; sometimes called, the Quicumque vult (Latin; “Whoever wishes”), from the first words of the Latin form. Erroneously ascribed to Athanasius, the creed may have been the work of a number of authors and may have been compiled from the decrees of several synods. Scholars place its composition in the late 4th century or first half of the 5th century. The creed reflects the state of theological development, corresponding to the time of the Council of Chalcedon (45l). It was first mentioned as a creed, around 542, by the theologian, Caesarius of Arles.

The creed is a theological exposition of the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation, with brief statements of the other doctrines, found also, in the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds, concerning the important events in the life of Jesus Christ. The beginning and ending of the creed, stress the necessity of believing the articles of faith, in order to be saved.

During the 13th century, the Athanasian Creed was placed on a par with the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds. It is accepted as authoritative, by Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Although it was approved by the leaders of the Reformation, many Protestant Churches do not use this creed today, and some of them do not accept it at all. The Athanasian Creed has been part of the Russian Orthodox liturgy, since the 17th century, but other Eastern Churches, do not generally consider it, a standard of faith.

Biblical Scholarship, professional study of the Bible, in which, all relevant intellectual disciplines are brought to bear on the task of interpretation. Biblical scholarship can be distinguished from other approaches to the Bible, such as the devotional one or that of pure literary appreciation, by the fact, that it attempts a critical assessment of the Jewish

and Christian scriptures in the light of all contemporary resources of knowledge.

Unlike the literature of various other religions, the Bible has always been subject to some measure of scholarly criticism and correction. This criticism, undoubtedly developed, because Jews and Christians conceive of religion as historical, as the product of definite historical events. Even though the great majority of the Old and New Testament writings are, in fact, anonymous, they have always been ascribed to particular human authors. It has therefore, been considered legitimate for other human beings to evaluate them. They have never been regarded, simply as a literature, transmitted directly from heaven or as so remote from the contemporary human condition, as to render them immune to critical study. This is in distinct contrast, for example, to the Islamic and Hindu scriptures. Despite its long standing, however, the notion of critical biblical study, has changed radically, over the years.

Pre-critical Scholarship

The earliest Jewish and Christian biblical scholars were concerned with reconciling the discrepancies caused by human authorship with their conviction, that the Bible was divinely inspired -- either through direct dictation, by God, to the human author or through suggestion to the author in dreams, visions, and other indirect presentations. Invariably, the divine element, tended to be stressed at the expanse of the human. The early rabbis, of Palestine and Babylonia, active from 200 to 500 A.D., whose discussions are preserved in the collections of Jewish tradition, called the Talmud (Hebrew, “instruction”), strove for consistency among the shifting perspectives of the Bible and between the Bible and Judaism itself, which they regarded, as a divinely guided interpretation of the Old Testament. To achieve this consistency, types of reasoning were employed that, by modern standards of textual explication, often seem convoluted and arbitrary.

In the Hellenistic Age (4th century to 1st century B.C.), Jewish scholar, Philo Judaeus made similar efforts, to demonstrate the correspondence of the Old Testament with the world view formed by Greek philosophers and scientists. To achieve this reconciliation, Philo used algorism, the interpretative process, in which, the superficial or literal meaning of a text is disregarded, in favor of some deeper (divine) meaning, that lies beneath it and is accessible, only to the initiate.

Most of the early Fathers of the Church used the same approach. They were convinced that the real meaning of the Old Testament, was what it had come to signify, through the New Testament and later, Christian interpretations. Early interpreters of the New Testament, tended to treat the Old Testament in its entirety, as a Christian book, in which, all that was done or said, had significance, only insofar, as it foretold or prefigured, that which was later fulfilled, in Christ and in the Church.

Today, some Christian commentators continue to think of the Old Testament, mainly in terms of the relevance to the Christian Church, as did the Second Vatican Council, at least in some parts of its decree, concerning Scripture. Such a position, creates a certain tension with what has come to be called, the historicocritical method, in which, the Bible is treated as a literary work, written by a human author and shaped by the literary forms and conventions of its time.

Beginnings of Critical Study

Some tentative approaches to the historicoliterary method were made in antiquity. Even when algorism prevailed, some commentators held, that there were better ways of accounting for a divinely inspired literature than the simple assumption, that it had been dictated, by God, to a human author. Philo's algorism, in fact, was in part, motivated by his conviction that parts of Scripture could not be taken literally. The interaction of God and humanity, in the production of Scripture, therefore, could take forms more subtle than the one Philo, usually assumed -- that is, revelation by divine possession, in the manner of the Greek oracles.

Among the Christians, Saint Augustine, in his commentary on the literal meaning of Genesis, (*De Genesi ad Litteram, 401-415*), displayed acute awareness of the apparent discrepancy between the contemporary scientific view of the world and that of the biblical authors. He, therefore, recognized the need to deal critically with the biblical view. In the East, scholar Theodore of Mopsuestia, was even bolder. He attempted to distinguish between the "prophetic spirit" (direct revelation), which was responsible for much of the Bible, and a "spirit of wisdom," which had influenced certain biblical writers (such as the author of Ecclesiastes), who, Theodore believed, were concerned with matters of opinion or of purely human observation.

Despite these and similar efforts, it was not until the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries, that the Bible came to be examined, in a truly critical fashion. The Protestant Reformation had reintroduced serious study of the Bible after centuries of neglect, and the new critical methods that developed in historical and literary scholarship, during this period, were soon applied to biblical texts. Among the first biblical critics were 17th-century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, 17th-century Dutch Jewish philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, and French scholar, Richard Simon.

Types of Criticism

Anyone attempting to examine a Bible text should first be sure that the text as transmitted, is as accurate as possible, and should realize that translation is a form of interpretation, in which, the meaning of the text, must be determined before it can be expressed in other words. Even in the pre-Christian period, critics dealt with translated material, and they and later scholars, recognized that they had to go back to the earliest available form of the texts in order to determine their original meaning. Much early textual criticism, was therefore, devoted to establishing an accurate text. The Protestant reformers were anxious to see the Bible in the hands of the laity, and the translators of the 16th and 17th centuries searched for manuscripts to assure the best translations possible. From their examinations, and from newly discovered manuscripts in the 18th century, the methods of textual criticism developed

Textual Criticism

Determining what was originally written, whatever its meaning or relevance may be, is the concern of the so-called, lower criticism. The textual critic, has two means of establishing a text: external and internal criteria. The external criteria, comprise the physical properties of the manuscripts themselves -- their material, age, and the style of the script -- and the history of the manuscripts. (No autograph text of any biblical author has been found and it is unlikely, that any will be). The extant manuscripts of the Old Testament, date only from Christian times, hundreds of years after the time of its original composition. Nevertheless, the evidence of the ancient versions (the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate) and the pre-Masoretic fragments, that have survived, suggests that the standard Hebrew text, still extant, has been preserved with extraordinary fidelity. The New Testament, on the other hand, is the best-attested text, that survives from the Greco-Roman world. Complete and nearly complete New Testament manuscripts date from the 4th century, and numerous existing fragments, were probably copied within a century of the original composition of the text. Although literally thousands of variant readings are found among these manuscripts, 90 percent of them

involve only incidental matters (such as the substitution of one synonym for another) and present problems that can be solved with relative ease by the textual critic.

In any case, textual critics must depend for their judgments on the internal criteria, which constitute the grounds, on which, a given manuscript is determined to be authoritative or not. These are simply the commonsense principles, by which, one variant reading is judged more likely to be original than another. For example, a shorter variant, is generally taken, to be superior to a longer one, on the assumption that a copyist is more likely to amplify a text (for clarity or other reasons) than to compress it. Similarly, the more difficult of two or more readings is assumed to have the greater probability of originality, because a scribe's tendency would have been to explain away or resolve interpretative problems, rather than create them.

Historicoliterary Criticism

The so-called higher criticism, a further development in the critical study of the Bible, emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, mainly in Germany. By the end of the 19th century, higher criticism had aroused tremendous opposition from those who considered it an attack on the reliability of Scripture. To some degree, this opposition has not yet been overcome, although the great majority of biblical scholars regard higher criticism as an indispensable tool of biblical interpretation.

This historicoliterary method, emphatically raises questions of interpretation and relevance, because it is concerned with such problems as the following: Who wrote the book? On what sources did the author depend? Were the sources reliable? What happened to them in the process of transmission and editing? How has the message of the biblical word been altered through this process? In short, this approach asks the same questions about reliability and attestation, that would be asked by anyone attempting to establish the credibility of any statement, occurring in an ancient literary work.

Historicoliterary criticism has disturbed many people, because it revealed that some biblical accounts could not be literally true when evaluated in the light of historical or archaeological evidence, and that various biblical works could not be the product of those to whom they had traditionally been ascribed. Ironically, this form of criticism, is now under attack, by some critics who feel that the vitality of the biblical material under study, is often obscured, by scholarly examination.

Form Criticism

A further dimension of the historicoliterary method, is form criticism. This approach is based on the observation that literary statements can be made in different ways. The same event or spectacle, may be recorded, in the language of poetry or in that of straight factual reporting. Each form has its own sphere of relevance. Acknowledging the diversity of literary forms, in the Bible, blunts the objection that biblical narratives, frequently depart, from modern norms of sober reportage.

Once the literary forms have been identified, the critic then has to ascertain the historical situation, or Sitz im Leben (German, “life situation”), that gave rise to certain forms. This technique was first applied to the Old Testament, principally by pioneer German scholar, Hermann Gunkel. He tried to group the Genesis stories into etiological narratives -- that is, stories that he believed were constructed to explain the origin of features of an existing tradition. For example, he argued that Genesis 9:20-27, served to explain why the Canaanites were subject to the Israelites. Other passages, he suggested, were included in Genesis to account for names, as in Genesis 25:26, which describes the origin of Jacob’s name. He also considered such passages, as Genesis 28:10-19, as explanations of the cult legends attached to sacred sites, such as Bethel.

In New Testament exegesis, the same principles have been applied to the study of the formation of the Gospels, in the early Church. The individual Gospel stories, too, are independent narratives (variously called, conflict stories, pronouncement stories, or miracle stories, involving Jesus). Scholars therefore, attempt to understand the original function of these stories, in order to find out what they reveal, about the Church that produced them.

Redaction Criticism

Another aspect of the historicoliterary method that has passed from Old Testament to New Testament criticism, is redaction criticism, which examines the procedures and motivation of the editors, who worked on a text over a period of time. The Old Testament Torah, the Prophets, and even the Writings (particularly Psalms and Proverbs) have long been recognized, as the products not of individual writers, but of various authors whose work has been amalgamated. This has also proved true of the Gospels, Books of the Bible, once thought to have been, the work of a single and identifiable individual (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John), are now recognized as the

product of a school, a Church, a community, or a person working for the community, who took the common tradition that was available and adapted it, under the pressure of contemporary needs.

Redaction criticism, simply exposes layers in the tradition that stands behind a given text -- layers which reflect various stages in the history of the community of faith, that produced the text. The task of the interpreter, is to decide to which stage of development, the ultimate sense of the text should be assigned. Does one, for example, seek a prophetic message in the words of Amos, only insofar, as these can be reconstructed from the redacted work that now exists in the Bible or does one take the Book of Amos, for what it now is in its redacted state -- a prophecy of salvation (see Amos 9:11-15), rather than a prediction of inexorable doom? Most commentators prefer to deal with Amos in its earlier, un-redacted form. On the other hand, it is generally taken for granted, that the message of the Gospels, is to be sought in their final form, rather than in the original tradition, on which, they depend. In the case of the Old Testament, a special problem is created for Christians, by the subsequent development of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Greek Septuagint, which became the Bible for the New Testament and the early Church. Even Christian translators and interpreters of the Bible today, almost invariably prefer, to use the Hebrew, not only as the point of departure for their reconstruction of the biblical text, but also for determination of its meaning.

Structuralism

A recent development, in literary criticism, structuralism, stresses an approach to the text in its final, finished form, and thus, veers away from its history. It also explores the Bible's correspondence to the literatures of other cultures, as revealed in the common structures these literatures assume, in telling similar stories. Its relevance for interpretation, is significant. It attempts to arrive at a universal human psychology, and therefore suggests, that a text can have a meaning beyond the understanding of its author.

Christianity, the most widely distributed of the world religions, having substantial representation in all the populated continents of the globe. Its total membership may exceed 1.7 billion people.

Like any system of belief and values -- be it Platonism, Marxism, Freudianism, or democracy -- Christianity is, in many ways, comprehensible only “from the inside,” to those who share the beliefs and strive to live by the values; and a description that would ignore these “inside” aspects of it, would not be historically faithful. To a degree, that those on the inside often fail to recognize, however, such a system of beliefs and values can also be described in a way that makes sense, as well to an interested observer, who does not, or even cannot, share their outlook.

Doctrine and Practice

A community, a way of life, a system of belief, a liturgical observance, a tradition -- Christianity is, all of these, and more. Each of these aspects of Christianity has affinities with other faiths, but each also bears unmistakable marks of its Christian origins. Thus, it is helpful, in fact unavoidable, to examine Christian ideas and institutions comparatively, by relating them to those of other religions, but equally important, to look for those features, that are uniquely Christian.

Central Teachings

Any phenomenon as complex and as vital as Christianity, is easier to describe historically, than to define logically, but such a description does yield some insights into its continuing elements and essential characteristics. One such element, is the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ. That centrality is, in one way or another, a feature of all the historical varieties of Christian belief and practice. Christians have not agreed in their understanding and definition of what makes Christ, distinctive or unique. Certainly, they would all affirm, that His life and example should be followed and that His teachings about love and fellowship, should be the basis of human relations. Large parts of His teachings have their counterparts in the sayings of the rabbis -- that is, after all, what He was -- or in the wisdom of Socrates and Confucius. In Christian teaching, Jesus cannot be less than the supreme preacher and exemplar of the moral life, but for most Christians that, by itself, does not do full justice to the significance of His life and work.

What is known of Jesus, historically, is told in the Gospels of the New Testament of the Bible. Other portions of the New Testament summarize the beliefs of the early Christian Church. Paul and the other writers of Scripture believed, that Jesus was the revealer, not only of human life in its perfection, but of divine reality itself.

The ultimate mystery of the universe, called by many different names in various religions, was called “Father” in the sayings of Jesus, and Christians therefore, call Jesus himself, “Son of God.” At the very least, there was, in His language and life, an intimacy with God and an immediacy of access to God, as well as the promise that, through all that Christ was and did, His followers might share in the life of the Father in heaven and might themselves, become children of God. Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, to which early Christians referred when they spoke about Him as the one who had reconciled humanity to God, made the cross the chief focus of Christian faith and devotion and the principal symbol of the saving love of God the Father.

This love is, in the New Testament and in subsequent Christian doctrine, the most decisive among the attributes of God. Christians teach, that God is almighty in dominion over all that is in heaven and on earth, righteous in judgment over good and evil, beyond time and space and change; but above all, they teach that, “God is love.” The creation of the world, out of nothing, and the creation of the human race, were expressions of that love, and so was the coming of Christ. The classic statement of this trust in the love of God, came in the Words of Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount: “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26). Early Christianity found in such words, evidence, both of the special standing men and women have as children of such a heavenly Father and of the even more special position, occupied by Christ. That special position, led the first generations of believers to rank Him, together with the Father -- and eventually, “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father [sent] in [Christ’s] name” -- in the formula, used for the administration of baptism and in the several creeds of the first centuries. After controversy and reflection, that confession took the form of the doctrine of God as Trinity.

Baptism “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” sometimes perhaps more simply, “in the name of Christ,” has been from the beginning, the means of initiation into Christianity. At first, it seems to have been administered chiefly, to adults, after they had professed their faith and promised to amend their lives, but this turned into a more inclusive practice, with the baptism of infants. The other universally accepted ritual, among Christians, is the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, in which, Christians share in bread and wine, and through them, express and acknowledge the reality of the presence of Christ, as they commemorate Him in the communion of believers, with one another. In the form, it acquired as it developed, the Eucharist became an elaborate ceremony of consecration and adoration, the texts of which, have been set to music by numerous composers of masses. The Eucharist, has also

become, one of the chief points of conflict, among the various Christian Churches, which disagree about the “presence” of Christ, in the consecrated bread and wine and about the effect of that presence, upon those who receive.

Another fundamental component of Christian faith and practice, is the Christian community itself -- the Church. Some scholars question the assumption, that Jesus intended to found a Church (the word, *Church* appears, only twice, in the Gospels), but His followers were always convinced that His promise to be with them “always, to the close of the age” found its fulfillment in His “mystical body on earth,” the Holy Catholic (Universal) Church. The relation of this Holy Catholic Church to the various ecclesiastical organizations of worldwide Christendom, is the source of major divisions among these organizations. Roman Catholicism, has tended to equate its own institutional structure, with the Catholic Church, as the common usage of the latter term suggests, and some extreme Protestant groups have been ready to claim that they, and they alone, represent the true visible Church. Increasingly, however, Christians of all segments have begun to acknowledge, that no one group has an exclusive right to call itself, “the” Church, and they have begun to work toward the reunion of all Christians.

Worship

Whatever its institutional form, the community of faith in the Church, is the primary settings for Christian worship. Christians of all traditions have placed a strong emphasis on private devotion and individual prayer, as Jesus taught. But He also prescribed a form of praying, universally known, as the Lord’s Prayer, the opening words, of which, stress the communal nature of worship: “Our Father, who art in heaven.” Since New Testament times, the stated day for the communal worship of Christians, has been the “first day of the week,” Sunday, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. Like the Jewish Sabbath, Sunday is traditionally, a day of rest. It is also, the time when believers gather to hear the reading and preaching of the Word of God in the Bible, to participate in the sacraments, and to pray, praise, and give thanks. The needs of corporate worship have been responsible for the composition of thousands of hymns, chorales, and chants, as well as instrumental music, especially for the organ. Since the 4th century, Christian communities have also been constructing, special buildings for their worship, thereby, helping to shape the history of architecture.

Christian Life

The instruction and exhortation of Christian preaching and teaching concern all the themes of doctrine and morals: the love of God and the love of neighbor, the two chief

commandments in the ethical message of Jesus (see Matthew 22:34-40). Application of these commandments to the concrete situations of human life, both personal and social, does not produce a uniformity of moral or political behavior. Many Christians, for example, regard all drinking of alcoholic beverages as sinful, whereas others do not. Christians can be found, on both, the far left and the far right of many contemporary questions, as well as in the middle. Still, it is possible to speak of a Christian way of life, one that is informed by the call to discipleship and service. The inherent worth of every person, as one who has been created in the image of God, the sanctity of human life and thus, of marriage and the family, the imperative to strive for justice, even in a fallen world -- all of these are dynamic moral commitments, that Christians would accept, however much their own conduct, may fall short of these norms. It is evident already, from the pages of the New Testament, that the task of working out the implications of the ethic of love under the conditions of existence, has always been difficult, and that there has, in fact, never been a “golden age,” in which, it was otherwise.

Eschatology

There is in Christian doctrine, however, the prospect of such a time, expressed in the Christian hope for everlasting life. Jesus spoke of this hope, with such urgency, that many of His followers clearly expected the end of the world and the coming of the eternal kingdom, in their own lifetimes. Since the 1st century, such expectations have tended to ebb and flow, sometimes reaching a fever of excitement, and at other times, receding to an apparent acceptance of the world as it is. The creeds of the Church speak of this hope in the language of resurrection, a new life of participation in the glory of the resurrected Christ. Christianity, may therefore be said, to be an otherworldly religion, and sometimes, it has been almost exclusively that. But the Christian hope, has also, throughout the history of the Church, served as a motivation to make life on earth, conform more fully, to the will of God as revealed in Christ.

History

Almost all the information about Jesus Himself and about early Christianity, comes from those who claimed to be His followers. Because they wrote to persuade believers, rather than to satisfy historical curiosity, this information often raises more questions than it answers, and no one has ever succeeded in harmonizing all of it into a coherent and completely satisfying, chronological account. Because of the nature of these sources, it is impossible, except in a highly tentative way, to distinguish between the original teachings of Jesus and the developing teachings about Jesus, in early Christian communities.

What is known, is that the person and message of Jesus of Nazareth, early attracted a following of those who believed Him to be a new prophet. Their recollections of His Words and deeds, transmitted to posterity, through those who eventually composed the Gospels, recall Jesus' days on earth in the light of experiences, identified by early Christians with the miracle of His resurrection from the dead on the first Easter. They concluded, that what He had shown Himself to be by the resurrection, He must have been already, when He walked among the inhabitants of Palestine -- and, indeed, must have been, even before He was born of Mary, in the very being of God from eternity. They drew upon the language of their Scriptures (the Hebrew Bible, which Christians came to call, the Old Testament), to give an account of the reality," ever ancient, ever new," that they had learned to know as the apostles of Jesus Christ. Believing that it had been His will and command, that they should band together in a new community, as the saving remnant of the people of Israel, these Jewish Christians became the first Church, in Jerusalem. There it was, that they believed themselves, to be receiving His promised gift of the Holy Spirit and of a new power.

The Beginnings of the Church

Jerusalem was the center of the Christian movement, at least until its destruction by Roman armies in A.D. 70, but from this center, Christianity radiated to other cities and towns in Palestine and beyond. At first, its appeal was largely, although not completely, confined to the adherents of Judaism, to whom it presented itself as "new," not in the sense of novel and brand-new, but in the sense of continuing and fulfilling what God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Already in its very beginnings, therefore, Christianity manifested a dual relation to the Jewish faith, a relation of continuity, and yet, of fulfillment of antithesis, and yet, of affirmation. The forced conversions of Jews in the Middle Ages, and the history of anti-Semitism (despite official condemnations, of both, by Church leaders), are evidence that the antithesis could easily overshadow the affirmation. The fateful loss of continuity with Judaism has, however, never been total. Above all, the presence of so many elements of Judaism, in the Christian Bible, has acted to remind Christians, that He whom they worshipped as their Lord, was Himself a Jew, and that the New Testament did not stand on its own, but was appended to the Old.

An important source of the alienation of Christianity, from its Jewish roots, was the change in the membership of the Church, that took place by the end of the 2nd century, (just when, and how, is uncertain). At some point, Christians with Gentile backgrounds began to outnumber Jewish Christians. Clearly, the work of the apostle Paul, was influential. Born a Jew, he was deeply involved in the destiny of Judaism, but as a

result of his conversion, he believed that he was the “chosen instrument” to bring the message of Christ to the Gentiles. He was the one who formulated, in his Epistles, to several early Christian congregations, many of the ideas and terms that were to constitute the core of Christian belief. He deserves the title of the “first Christian theologian,” and most theologians who came after him, based their concepts and systems on his Epistles, now collected and codified in the New Testament.

From these Epistles and from other sources, in the first two centuries, it is possible to gain some notion of how the early congregations were organized. The Epistles, to Timothy and to Titus bearing the name of Paul (although many biblical scholars, now find, his authorship of these letters, implausible) show the beginnings of an organization based on an orderly transmission of leadership, from the generation of the first apostles (including Paul himself) to subsequent “bishops,” but the fluid use of such terms, as *bishop*, presbyter, and *deacon*, in the documents precludes identification of a single and uniform policy. By the 3rd century, agreement was widespread about the authority of the bishop as the link with the apostles. He was such a link, however, only if in his life and teaching, he adhered to the teaching of the apostles, as this was laid down in the New Testament and in the “deposit of faith,” transmitted by the Apostolic Churches.

Councils and Creeds

Clarification of this deposit became necessary, when interpretations of the Christian message arose, that were deemed to be deviations from these norms. The most important deviations, or heresies, had to do with the person of Christ. Some theologians sought to protect His holiness, by denying that His humanity was like that of other human beings; others sought to protect the monotheistic faith, by making Christ a lesser Divine Being than God the Father.

In response to both of these tendencies, early creeds began the process of specifying the Divine in Christ, both in relation to the divine in the Father and in relation to the human in Christ. The definitive formulations of these relations, came in a series of official Church councils, during the 4th and 5th centuries -- notably the one at Nicaea in 325, and the one at Chalcedon, in 451 -- which stated the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures of Christ in the form, still accepted by most Christians. To arrive at these formulations, Christianity had to refine its thought and language, creating in the process, a philosophical theology, both in Greek and in Latin, that was to be the

dominant intellectual system of Europe for more than a thousand years. The principal architect of Western theology was Saint Augustine of Hippo, whose literary output, including the classic Confessions and The City of God, did more than any other body of writings, except for the Bible itself, to shape that system.

Persecution

First, however, Christianity had to settle its relation to the political order. As a Jewish sect, the primitive Christian Church shared the status of Judaism in the Roman Empire, but before the death of Emperor Nero, in 68, it had already been singled out as an enemy. The grounds for hostility to the Christians were not always the same, and often opposition and persecution were localized. The loyalty of Christians to "Jesus as Lord," however, was irreconcilable with the worship of the Roman emperor as "Lord," and those emperors, such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, who were the most deeply committed to unity and reform, were also the ones who recognized the Christians as a threat to those goals and who therefore, undertook to eliminate the threat. As in the history of other religions, especially Islam, opposition produced the exact contrary of its intended purpose, and, in the epigram of the North African Church father, Tertullian, the "blood of the martyrs" became the "seed of the Church." By the beginning of the 4th century, Christianity had grown so much in size and in strength, that it had to be either, eradicated or accepted. Emperor Diocletian tried to do the first and failed; Constantine the Great, did the second and created a Christian empire.

Official Acceptance

The conversion of Constantine the Great, assured the Church a privileged place in society, and it became easier to be a Christian, than not to be one. As a result, Christians began to feel that standards of Christian conduct were being lowered, and that, the only way to obey the moral imperatives of Christ, was to flee the world (and the Church, that was in the world, perhaps even of the world), and to follow the full-time profession of Christian discipline, as a monk. From its early beginnings in the Egyptian desert, with the hermit, St. Anthony, Christian monasticism spread to many parts of the Christian empire, during the 4th and 5th centuries. Not only in Greek and Latin portions of the empire, but even beyond its eastern borders, far into Asia, Christian monks devoted themselves to prayer, asceticism, and service. They were to become, during the Byzantine and medieval periods, the most powerful single force in the Christianization of non-believers, in the renewal of worship and preaching, and (despite the anti-intellectualism, that repeatedly asserted itself in their midst) in theology and scholarship. Most Christians today, owe their Christianity, ultimately, to the work of monks.

Eastern Christianity

One of the most influential acts of Constantine the Great, was the decision in 330, to move the capital of the empire from Rome to “New Rome,” the city of Byzantium at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The new capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul), also became the intellectual and religious focus of Eastern Christianity. While Western Christianity became increasingly centralized, a pyramid the apex, of which, was the Pope of Rome, the principal centers of the East -- Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria -- developed autonomously. The emperor at Constantinople, held a special place in the life of the Church. It was he, for example, who convoked and presided over the general councils of the Church, which were the supreme organ of ecclesiastical legislation, in both faith and morals. This special relation between Church and State, frequently (but with some oversimplification) called Caesaropapism, fostered a Christian culture, in which, (as the great Church of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople, dedicated by Emperor Justinian, in 538, attests) the noblest achievements of the entire society blended the elements of Christianity and of classical antiquity in a new synthesis.

At its worst, this culture could mean the subordination of the Church to the tyranny of the state. The crisis of the 8th century, over the legitimacy of the use of images in Christian Churches, was also a collision of the Church and the imperial power. Emperor Leo III, prohibited images, thus precipitating a struggle, in which, Eastern monks became the principal defenders of the icons. Eventually, the icons were restored, and with them, a measure of independence for the Church. During the 7th and 8th centuries, three of the four Eastern centers were captured by the dynamic new faith of Islam, with only Constantinople, remaining unconquered. It, too, was often besieged and finally fell to the Turks, in 1453. The confrontation with the Muslims was not purely military, however. Eastern Christians and the followers of the Prophet Muhammad, exerted influence on one another in intellectual, philosophical, scientific, and even theological matters.

The conflict over the images was so intense, because it threatened the Eastern Church at its most vital point -- its liturgy. Eastern Christianity was, and still is, a way of worship and on that basis, a way of life and a way of belief. The Greek word, *orthodoxy*, together with its Slavic equivalent *pravoslavie*, refers to the correct form for giving praise to God, which is finally inseparable, from the right way of confessing true doctrine about God and of living in accordance with the will of God. This emphasis gave to Eastern liturgy and theology, a quality that Western observers, even in the Middle Ages, would characterize as mystical, a quality enhanced by the strongly Neoplatonic strain, in

Byzantine philosophy. Eastern monasticism, although often hostile to these philosophical currents of thought, nonetheless, practiced its devotional life under the influence of writings of Church fathers and theologians, such as St. Basil of Caesarea, who had absorbed a Christian Hellenism, in which, many of these emphases were at work.

All these distinctive features of the Christian East -- the lack of a centralized authority, the close tie to the empire, the mystical and liturgical tradition, the continuity with Greek language and culture, and the isolation as a consequence of Muslim expansion -- contributed also, to its increasing alienation from the West, which finally produced, the East-West schism. Historians have often dated the schism, from 1054, when Rome and Constantinople exchanged excommunications, but much can be said for fixing the date, at 1204. In that year, the Western Christian armies, on their way to wrest the Holy Land from the hand of the Turks, attacked and ravaged the Christian city of Constantinople. Whatever the date, the separation of East and West, has continued into modern times, despite repeated attempts at reconciliation.

Among the points of controversy between Constantinople and Rome, was the evangelization of the Slavs, beginning in the 9th century. Although several Slavic tribes -- Poles, Moravs, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, and Slovenes -- did end up in the orbit of the Western Church, the vast majority of Slavic peoples became Christians in the Eastern (Byzantine) Church. From its early foundations in Kyyiv, Ukraine, this Slavic Orthodoxy permeated Russia, where the features of Eastern Christianity, outlined above, took firm hold. The autocratic authority of the Muscovite czar derived some of its sanctions from Byzantine Caesaropapism, and Russian monasticism took over the ascetic and devotional emphases, cultivated by the Greek monasteries of Mount Athos. The stress on cultural and ethnic autonomy meant, that from its beginnings, Slavic Christianity had its own liturgical language (still known, as Old Church Slavic, or Slavonic), while it adapted to its uses, the architectural and artistic styles imported from the centers of Orthodoxy, in Greek-speaking territory. Also, in the Eastern Church, were some of the Balkan Slavs -- Serbs, Montenegrans, Bosnians, and Slavic Macedonians; the Bulgars, a Turkic people; Albanians, descendants of the ancient Illyrians; and Romanians, a Romance people. During the centuries-long rule of the Ottoman Turks, in the Balkans, some of the local Christian populations were forced to embrace Islam, as, for example, some of the Bosnians, some of the Bulgarians, and some of the Albanians.

Western Christianity

Although Eastern Christianity was, in many ways, the direct heir of the early Church, some of the most dynamic development took place, in the western part of the Roman Empire. Of the many reasons for this development, two closely related forces deserve particular mention: the growth of the papacy and the migration of the Germanic peoples. When the capital of the empire moved to Constantinople, the most powerful force, remaining in Rome, was its bishop. The old city, which could trace its Christian faith to the apostles Peter and Paul, and which repeatedly acted as arbiter of orthodoxy when other centers, including Constantinople, fell into heresy or schism, was the capital of the Western Church. It held this position when the succeeding waves of tribes, in what used to be called, the "barbarian invasions," swept into Europe. Conversion of the invaders to Catholic Christianity, meant at the same time, their incorporation into the institution, of which, the bishop of Rome was the head, as the conversion of the king of the Franks, Clovis I, illustrates. As the political power of Constantinople over its western provinces declined, separate Germanic kingdoms were created, and finally, in 800, an independent Western "Roman Empire" was born, when Charlemagne was crowned Emperor by Pope Leo, III.

Medieval Christianity in the West, unlike its Eastern counterpart, was therefore, a single entity, or at any rate, strove to be one. When a tribe became Christian in the West, it learned Latin and often, (as in the case of France and Spain) lost its own language, in the process. The language of ancient Rome, thus became, the liturgical, literary, and scholarly speech of western Europe. Archbishops and abbots, although wielding great power in their own regions, were subordinate to the Pope, despite his frequent inability to enforce his claims. Theological controversies occurred during the early centuries of the Middle Ages in the West, but they never assumed the proportions that they did in the East. Nor, did Western theology, at least until after the year 1000, acquire the measure of philosophical sophistication, evident in the East. The long shadow of St. Augustine, continued to dominate Latin theology, and there was little independent access to the speculations of the ancients.

The image of cooperation between Church and State, symbolized by the Pope's coronation of Charlemagne, must not be taken to mean that no conflict existed, between the two in the Middle Ages. On the contrary, they clashed repeatedly, over the delineation of their respective spheres of authority. The most persistent source, of such clashes, was the right of the sovereign, to appoint bishops in his realm (lay investiture), which brought Pope Gregory VII and Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, to a deadlock, in 1075. The Pope excommunicated the emperor, and the emperor refused to

acknowledge Gregory, as Pope. They were temporarily reconciled, when Henry subjected himself, in penance to the Pope at Canossa, in 1077, but the tension continued. A similar issue was at stake in the excommunication of King John of England, by Pope Innocent III, in 1209, which ended with the king's submission, four years later. The basis of these disputes, was the complex involvement of the Church in feudal society. Bishops and abbots administered great amounts of land and other wealth, and were thus, a major economic and political force, over which, the king had to exercise some control if he was to assert his authority over his secular nobility. On the other hand, the papacy could not afford to let a national Church, become the puppet of a political regime.

Church and State did cooperate, by closing ranks against a common foe in the Crusades. The Muslim conquest, of Jerusalem, meant that the holy places associated with the life of Jesus were under the control of a non-Christian power; and even though the reports of interference with Christian pilgrims were often highly exaggerated, the conviction grew, that it was the will of God for Christian armies to liberate the Holy Land. Beginning with the First Crusade, in 1095, the campaigns of liberation did manage to establish a Latin kingdom and patriarchate in Jerusalem, but Jerusalem returned to Muslim rule, a century later and within 200 years, the last Christian outpost, had fallen. In this sense, the Crusades were a failure, or even (in the case of the Fourth Crusade of 1202-04, mentioned above), a disaster. They did not permanently restore Christian rule to the Holy Land, and they did not unify the West either, ecclesiastically or politically.

A more impressive achievement of the medieval Church, during the period of the Crusades, was the development of Scholastic philosophy and theology. Building, as always, on the foundations of the thought of St. Augustine, Latin theologians turned their attention to the relation between the knowledge of God, attainable by unaided human reason and the knowledge communicated by revelation. Saint Anselm took as his motto, "I believe in order that I might understand" and constructed a proof for the existence of God, based on the structure of human thought itself (the ontological argument). About the same time, Peter Abelard was examining the contradictions between various strains in the doctrinal tradition of the Church, with a view toward developing methods of harmonization. These two tasks dominated the thinking of the 12th and 13th centuries, until the recovery of the lost works of Aristotle made available, a set of definitions and distinctions that could be applied, to both. The philosophical theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas sought to do justice to the natural knowledge of God, while at the same time, exalting the revealed knowledge in the Gospel, and it wove the

disparate parts of the tradition into a unified whole. Together, with such contemporaries, as St. Bonaventure, Aquinas represents the intellectual ideal of medieval Christianity.

Even by the time Aquinas died, however, storms were beginning to gather over the Western Church. In 1309, the papacy fled from Rome to Avignon, where it remained until 1377, in the so-called Babylonian Captivity of the Church. This was followed by the Great Schism, during which, there were two (and sometimes, even three) claimants, to the papal throne. That was not resolved until 1417, but the reunited papacy could not regain control, or even respect.

Reformation and Counter Reformation

Reformers of different kinds -- including John Wycliffe, John Huss (Jan Hus), and Girolamo Savonarola -- denounced the moral laxity and financial corruption, that had infected the Church, “in its members and in its head” and called for radical change. Profound social and political changes were taking place in the West, with the awakening of national consciousness and the increasing strength of the cities, in which, a new merchant class came into its own. The Protestant Reformation, may be seen, as the convergence of such forces as the call for reform in the Church, the growth of nationalism, and the emergence of the “spirit of capitalism.”

Martin Luther was the catalyst, that precipitated the new movement. His personal struggle for religious cer-tainty led him, against his will, to question the medieval system of salvation and the very authority of the Church, and his excommunication by Pope Leo X, proved to be an irreversible step toward the division of Western Christendom. Nor, was the movement confined to Luther’s Germany. Native reform movements, in Switzerland, found leadership in Huldreich Zwingli, and especially in John Calvin, whose *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, became the most influential summary of the new theology. The English Reformation, provoked by the troubles of King Henry VIII, reflected the influence of the Lutheran, and then, of the Calvinistic reforms, but went its own “middle way,” retaining Catholic elements, such as the historic episcopate alongside Protestant elements, such as the sole authority of the Bible. The thought of Calvin, helped in his native France, to create the Huguenot party, which was fiercely opposed by, both Church and State, but finally achieved recognition with the Edict of Nantes, in 1598 (ultimately revoked, in 1685). The more radical Reformation groups, notably the Anabaptists, set themselves against other Protestants, as well as against Rome, rejecting such long-established practices, as infant baptism, and sometimes even such dogmas, as the Trinity and denouncing the alliance of Church and State.

That alliance helped to determine the outcome of the Reformation, which succeeded where it gained the support of the new national states. As a consequence of these ties to the rising national spirit, the Reformation helped to create the literary monuments -- especially translations of the Bible -- that decisively shaped, the language and the spirit of the peoples. It also gave, fresh stimulus to biblical preaching and to worship in the vernacular, for which, a new hymnody came into being. Because of its emphasis on the participation of all believers in worship and confession, the Reformation developed systems for instruction in doctrine, and ethics, especially in the form of catechisms, and an ethic of service in the world.

The Protestant Reformation did not exhaust the spirit of reform within the Roman Catholic Church. In response, both to the Protestant challenge and to its own needs, the Church summoned the Council of Trent, which continued over the years, 1545-63, giving definitive formulation to doctrines at issue and legislating practical reforms in liturgy, Church administration, and education. Responsibility for carrying out the actions of the council, fell in considerable measure, on the Society of Jesus, formed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. The chronological coincidence of the discovery of the New World and the Reformation, was seen as a providential opportunity to evangelize those who had never heard the Gospel. Trent, on the Roman Catholic side, and the several confessions of faith, on the Protestant side, had the effect of making the divisions permanent.

In one respect, the divisions were not permanent, for new divisions continued to appear. Historically, the most noteworthy of these, were probably, the ones that arose in the Church of England. The Puritans objected to the “remnants of popery” in the liturgical and institutional life of Anglicanism and pressed for a further reformation. Because of the Anglican union of throne and altar, this agitation had direct -- and, as it turned out, violent -- political consequences, climaxing in the English Revolution and the execution of King Charles I, in 1649. Puritanism found its most complete expression, both politically and theologically, in North America. The Pietists of the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches of Europe, usually managed to remain within the establishment, as a party instead of forming a separate Church, but Pietism shaped the outlook of many among the Continental groups, who came to North America. European Pietism, also found an echo in England, where it was a significant force in the life and thought of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement.

The Modern Period

Already during the Renaissance and Reformation, but even more in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was evident, that Christianity would be obliged to define and to defend itself, in response to the rise of modern science and philosophy. That problem, made its presence known, in all the Churches, albeit in different ways. The condemnation of Galileo Galilei, by the Inquisition on suspicion of heresy, was eventually, to find its Protestant equivalent, in the controversies over the implications of the theory of evolution for the biblical account of creation. Against other modern movements, too, Christianity frequently found itself on the defensive. The critical historical method of studying the Bible, which began in the 17th century, seemed to threaten the authority of Scripture, and the rationalism of the Enlightenment was condemned, as a source of religious indifference and anticlericalism. Because of its emphasis on the human capacity to determine human destiny, even democracy could fall under condemnation. The increasing secularization of society, removed the control of the Church from areas of life, especially education, over which, it had once been dominant.

Partly a cause and partly a result of this situation, was the fundamental redefinition of the relation between Christianity and the civil order. The granting of religious toleration to minority faiths and then the gradual separation of Church and State, represented a departure from the system that had, with many variations, held sway, since the conversion of Constantine the Great and is, in the opinion of many scholars, the most far-reaching change in the modern history of Christianity. Carried to its logical conclusion, it seemed to many to imply, both a reconsideration of how the various groups and traditions, calling themselves Christian, were related to one another and a re-examination of how all of them, taken together, were related to other religious traditions. Both of these implications, have played an even larger role, in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The ecumenical movement has been a major force for bringing together, at least toward better understanding, and sometimes, even toward reunion, Christian denominations, that had long been separated. At the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church took important steps toward reconciliation, both with the East and with Protestantism. That same council, likewise expressed, for the first time in an official forum, a positive appreciation of the genuine spiritual power, present in the world religions. A special case, is the relation between Christianity and its parent, Judaism; after many centuries of hostility, and even persecution, the two faiths have moved toward a closer degree of mutual understanding, than at any time, since the 1st century.

The reactions of the Churches, to their changed situation, in the modern period, have also included an unprecedented increase, in theological interest. Such Protestant theologians as, Jonathan Edwards and Friedrich Schleiermacher, and such Roman Catholic thinkers as, Blaise Pascal and John Henry Newman, took up the re-orientation of the traditional apologias for the faith, drawing upon religious experience, as a validation of the reality of the divine.

The 19th century was pre-eminently the time of historical research into the development of Christian ideas and institutions. This research indicated to many, that no particular form of doctrine or Church structure could claim to be absolute and final, but it also provided other theologians with new resources for reinterpreting the Christian message. Literary investigation of the biblical books, although regarded with suspicion by many conservatives, led to new insights into how the Bible had been composed and assembled. And the study of the liturgy, combined with a recognition, that ancient forms did not always make sense to the modern era, stimulated the reform of worship.

The ambivalent relation of the Christian faith to modern culture, evident in all these trends, is discernible, also in the role it has played in social and political history. Christians were found on both sides of the 19th century debates over slavery, and both used biblical arguments. Much of the inspiration for revolutions, from the French to the Russian, was explicitly, anti-Christian. Particularly, under 20th-century Marxist regimes, Christians have been oppressed for their faith, and their traditional beliefs have been denounced, as reactionary. Nevertheless, the revolutionary faith has frequently drawn from Christian sources. Mohandas K. Gandhi maintained, that he was acting in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and Martin Luther King, Jr., the martyred leader of the world movement for civil rights, was a Protestant preacher, who strove to make the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, the basis of his political program.

By the last quarter of the 20th century, the missionary movements of the Church, had carried the Christian faith throughout the world. A characteristic of modern times, however, has been the change in leadership of the “daughter” or mission Churches. Since World War II, national leaders have increasingly taken over from Westerners in Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant Churches, in the Third World. The adaptations of native customs pose problems of theology and tradition, as, for example, African polygamists attempt to live

Christian family lives. The merger of denominations, in Churches, such as the United Church of Canada, may alter the nature of some of the component groups. Thus, change continues to challenge Christianity.

Christianity: Aspects of the Christian religion

Aspects of the Christian religion

Christian philosophy

It has been debated whether there is anything that is properly called, Christian philosophy. Christianity is not a system of ideas, but a religion, a way of salvation. But as a religion becomes a distinguishable strand of human history, it inevitably absorbs philosophical assumptions from its environment and generates new philosophical constructions and arguments, both in the formation of doctrines and in their defense against philosophical objections. These two topics cannot be kept, entirely separate, however, for philosophical criticism, from both within and without the Christian community, has influenced the development of its beliefs.

History of the interactions of philosophy and theology

Influence of Greek philosophy

As the Christian movement expanded beyond its original Jewish nucleus into the Greco-Roman world, it had to understand, explain, and defend itself, in terms that were intelligible in an intellectual milieu, largely structured, by Greek philosophical thought. By the 2nd century A.D., several competing streams of Greek and Roman philosophy -- Middle Platonism, Neoplatonism, Epicureanism, Stoicism -- had to a great extent, flowed together into a common worldview, that was basically, Neoplatonic, though enriched by the ethical outlook of the Stocis. This constituted the broad intellectual background for most educated people throughout the Roman Empire, functioning in a way, comparable, for example, to the pervasive contemporary Western secular view of

the universe as an autonomous system, within which, everything can, in principle, be under-stood scientifically.

Some of the Neoplatonic themes, that provided intellectual material for Christian and non-Christian thinkers alike, in the early centuries of the Common Era, were a hierarchical conception of the universe, with the spiritual on a higher level than the physical; the eternal reality of such values as goodness, truth, and beauty and of the various universals that give specific form to matter; and the tendency of everything to return to its origin in the divine reality. The early Christian Apologists, were at home, in this thought-world, and many of them used its ideas and assumptions, both in propagating the Gospel and in defending it, as a coherent and intellectually tenable system of belief. Their most common attitude, was to accept the prevailing Neoplatonic worldview, as basically valid and to present Christianity as its fulfillment, correcting and completing, rather than replacing it. Philosophy, they thought, was to the Greeks, what the Law was to the Jews -- a preparation for the Gospel; and several Apologists agreed with the Jewish writer Philo, that Greek philosophy must have received much of its wisdom from Moses. Tertullian (c. 155/160-after 220) and Tatian (c. 120-173), on the other hand, rejected pagan learning and philosophy, as inimical to the Gospel; and the question has been intermittently discussed by theologians ever since whether the Gospel completes and fulfills the findings of human reason or whether, reason is itself, so distorted by sin, as to be incapable of leading toward the truth.

Greek philosophy, then, provided the organizing principles, by which, the central Christian doctrines were formulated. It is possible to distinguish between, on the one hand, first-order religious expressions, directly reflecting primary religious experience, and on the other, the interpretations of these in philosophically formulated doctrines, whose articulation both, contributes to and is reciprocally conditioned, by a comprehensive belief-system. Thus, the primitive Christian confession of faith, “Jesus is Lord,” expressed the Disciples’ perception of Jesus, as the one through whom God was, transforming present to them and to whom their lives, were accordingly oriented, in complete trust and commitment. The interpretive process, whereby the original experience developed a comprehensive doctrinal superstructure, began with the application to Jesus, of the two distinctively Jewish concepts of the expected messiah and the Son of man, who was to come on the last day and also, of the son of God metaphor, which was commonly applied, in the ancient world to individuals, whether kings or holy men, who were believed to be close to God. It continued, on a more philosophical level with the use, in the Gospel According to John, of the idea of the Logos, drawn both, from the Hebraic notions of the Wisdom and the Word of God and

from the Greek notion of the Logos, as the universal principle of rationality and self-expression. As Jesus, son of God, became Christ, God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, he was identified with the Logos.

Christianity: The belief in the oneness of the Father and the Son

The belief in the oneness of the Father and the Son

Faith in the Son also brought about a oneness with the Father. The Son became the mediator of the glory of the Father, to those who believe in Him. In Jesus' high priestly prayer (in John, chapter 17) says: "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one." In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to address God as, our Father."

The Father-God of Jesus, after Jesus' death and Resurrection becomes -- for His disciples -- the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., 2 Corinthians 1:3), who revealed his love, through the sacrifice of His Son, who was sent into the world. Faithful Christians, can thus become, the Children of God, as noted in Revelation 21:7: "I will be His God and He shall be my son." For Christians, therefore, faith in God, is not a doctrine to be detached from the person of Jesus Christ.

Medieval theologians, often spoke of a "Beatific Vision," a blessed vision of God. They did so, on the basis of their own mystical experience, that constituted the fulfillment of salvation in the Kingdom of God, which the Son will deliver to the Father.

In the history of Christian mysticism, this visionary experience of the transpersonal "Godhead," behind the personal "God" (as in the works of the medieval mystic Meister, Eckhart) -- also called, an experience of the "trans-deity," the "divine ground," "groundlessness," the "abyss," and the divine "nothingness" -- constantly breaks through, and is renewed. Occasionally, this experience of transpersonal divine transcendence has directed itself against the development of a piety, that has banalized the personal idea of God so much so, that the glory and holiness of God, has been

trivialized. The attempt of the 20th-century theologian, Paul Tillich, to reduce the Christian idea of God to the impersonal concept of “the Ground of Being,” or “Being itself,” pointed toward an understanding of the pre-personal depths of the transcendence of Godhood.

Nevertheless, in the Christian understanding of Christ as being one with the Father, there is a constant possibility, that faith in God, will be absorbed in a “monochristian” -- i.e., that the figure of the Son, in the life of faith, will overshadow the figure of the Father, and thus, cause it to disappear, and that the figure of the Creator and Sustainer of the world, will recede behind the figure of the Redeemer. The history of Christian piety and of Christian theology, has constantly moved, in this field of tension. Thus, the primacy of Christology, and of the doctrine of justification in Reformation theology, led to a depreciation of the creation doctrine and a Christian cosmology. This depreciation accelerated the estrangement between theology and the sciences, during the period of the Enlightenment. This was subsequently distorted, into a form of materialism. On the other hand, some 20th-century dialectical theologians, among them Karl Barth, in opposing materialism and humanism, sometimes evoked a monochristic character, that strongly accented the centrality of Christ, at the expense of some cultural ties.

Christianity: The Holy Trinity

The Holy Trinity

The basis for the doctrine of the Trinity

The central Christian affirmations about God are condensed and focused in the classic doctrine of the Trinity, which has its ultimate foundation in the special religious experience of the Christians in the first communities. This basis of experience, is older than the doctrine of the Trinity. It consisted of the fact, that God came to meet Christians, in a threefold figure: (1) as Creator, Lord of the history of salvation, Father, and Judge, as revealed in the Old Testament; (2) as the Lord who, in the figure of Jesus Christ, lived among human beings and was present in their midst as the, “Resurrected One;” and (3) as the Holy Spirit, whom they experience, as the power of the new life, the miraculous potency of the Kingdom of God. The question, as to how to reconcile the encounter, with God, in this threefold figure with faith in the oneness of God, which was the Jews’ and Christians’ characteristic mark of distinction from paganism, agitated

the piety of ancient Christendom, in the deepest way. In the course of history, it also provided, the strongest impetus, for a speculative theology, which inspired Western metaphysics, for many centuries. In the first two centuries of the Christian Era, however, a series of different answers, to this question, stood in juxtaposition. At first, none of the Christian theologians had considered them, speculatively.

The diversity, in interpretation of the Trinity, was conditioned, especially through the understanding of the figure of Jesus Christ. According to the theology of the Gospel, According to John, the *divinity* of Jesus Christ, constituted the departure point, for understanding His person and efficacy. The Gospel, According to Mark, however, did not proceed from a theology of incarnation, but instead, understood the baptism of Jesus Christ, as the adoption of the *man*, Jesus Christ, into the Sonship of God, accomplished through the descent of the Holy Spirit. The situation became further aggravated, by the conceptions of the special personal character of the manifestation of God, developed by way of the historical figure of Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit was viewed, not as a personal figure, but rather as a power, and appeared graphically, only in the form of the dove, and thus receded, to a large extent, in the Trinitarian speculation.

Christology, branch of Christian theology, that deals with the person of Christ. Because Christology seeks to explain the saving work of Christ, by explaining who the person, Jesus was, in traditional Christian theology, it logically precedes soteriology, the doctrine of Christ's saving work. In the actual history of the Church, however, Soteriology preceded Christology, because the belief in Jesus' saving role, led to claims about who He was. Christology is not the formulation of revealed propositions, as much as it is, the Christian response to the phenomenon of Jesus.

In the New Testament

In the opinion of modern biblical critics, Jesus did not teach, explicitly, that He was the Christ (the anointed One, or Messiah); rather, He implemented a Christology, through His Words and Works. The German scholar, Gunther Bornkamm, has postulated, that Jesus presented God's offer of salvation, through His teaching and actions, thereby evoking, the messianic hope of His followers and the anger and fear of His opponents. After Jesus' death on the cross, the hopes of the disciples, were vindicated, by their

experience of Jesus' resurrection, and they responded, to what they believed, God had accomplished, through Jesus, by formulating an understanding of who Jesus was.

The earliest Christians, expressed their explicit Christology with titles and mythological patterns, borrowed from the religious environment of 1st-century Palestine, where both Hebraic and Hellenistic Greek conceptions of God, history, and destiny, were at work. Especially important in a consideration of New Testament Christology, is the pervasive eschatological consciousness of the period; many modern scholars think, that Jesus Himself, shared in this consciousness of living at the end of time.

Four early patterns of christological thinking can be discerned within the New Testament. The earliest of these, has two focuses -- looking backward to Jesus' earthly life, as that of an eschatological prophet and servant of God, and forward to Christ's coming again, as the Messiah, the Son of man (see Acts 3:13, 20-21). In a second two-stage christological formulation, the earthly Jesus, was also seen as the prophet-servant of the last days, but at the same time, He was declared to have become Lord, Christ, and Son of God, at His resurrection and exaltation (see Acts 2:22-24, 36).

In the third pattern, these post-resurrection titles were applied, retrospectively to Jesus, in His earthly period, in order to articulate the intrinsic connection, between Jesus' earthly ministry and His role, as savior. A "sending formula" developed, with God as subject, His Son as object, and a statement of saving purpose, as in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (see also, Galatians 4:4). At first, the moment of sending, was identified with Jesus' baptism by John: "**. . .** and a voice came from heaven, `Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). In the nativity stories of Matthew and Luke, however, the moment of sending, is pushed back to Jesus' conception or birth. This is not yet, a Christology of pre-existence and incarnation, nor of metaphysical divinity; it expresses, only the role the man, Jesus, was to play in salvation history and God's initiative, in that role.

In the fourth pattern, expressed in the christological hymns of the Hellenistic-Jewish Church, Jesus was identified with the Divine Wisdom, or Logos. Philosophical Hellenistic Judaism had conceived of the Logos, as the personified agent of the divine being, the agent of creation, revelation, and redemptive action. The earthly Jesus, was now seen as the incarnation of this pre-existent wisdom or Logos (see Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:1-18). Early Christians appropriated this Jewish speculation

in order to emphasize, that the God they encountered, in Jesus, was not an unknown God, but was the same God, they had previously encountered in creation, in human religious experience, and in Israel's salvation history. In the Johannine writings, Jesus' Father-Son relationship with God, is projected back into eternity, and this equation of the Son with the incarnate Logos results in the use of the predicate "God" for the pre-existent Word (see John 1:1), the incarnate Son (see John 1:18), and the risen Christ (see John 20:28). But "God" in this context, is carefully nuanced: The Son is not God-in-Himself. Rather, through the Son, God "goes out of Himself," communicating Himself in the action of creation, revelation, and salvation. Consequently, "Son of God" and "Son of man," which were originally terms, expressive of Jesus' role in salvation history, acquire a metaphysical import and come to denote His Divine Being.

In the Early Church

From Ignatius of Antioch, in the 2nd century, through the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, Christian thinkers wrestled with the logical problems, presented to the Greek mind, by the christological thinking of the New Testament: If the Son is God, yet distinct from the Father, how can God be called "one?" If Jesus is divine, how can He also be human? The 2nd-century Docetists (Greek *dokein*, "to seem") maintained, that the humanity of Jesus was apparent, rather than real, for in Greek thought, the deity was held incapable of change or suffering. Against them, Ignatius insisted on the reality of Jesus' flesh. The outcome was the addition to the creed of the Words, "born of the Virgin Mary, to safeguard Jesus' humanity.

A second controversy raged around the endangered concept of the unity of God. Concerned with preserving this unity, the Modalistic Monarchians (or Sabellians) asserted, that the one God had revealed himself in three successive manifestations: Father, Son, and Spirit; the Dynamic (Adoptionist) Monarchians, however, viewed Jesus, as a man upon whom, the power of God had descended. In the 4th century, Arius and his followers contended that the pre-existent Son, was not identical with God, but was the first of God's creatures. He was *homoiousios* (Greek, "of like substance") with God, a kind of clone or demigod. At the Council of Nicaea, in 325, Arianism was condemned, and the creed was expanded: The pre-existent Son, was declared to be "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being (Greek *homoousios*, "of the same substance") with the Father."

Questions regarding the nature of God's incarnation, in Jesus, also proved, troublesome. The theologians of Alexandria, Egypt, tended to emphasize the divinity of

Jesus, at the expense of His humanity, and their frequent opponents, those of the school of Antioch, Syria, emphasized Jesus' humanity, at the expense of His divinity. On the Alexandrian side, Apollinarians argued, that in the human Jesus, the Logos had replaced His mind or spirit. This view amounted to a denial of the full humanity of Christ. Apollinarianism was condemned af the First Council of Constantinople, in 381. From the Antiochene school, emerged the 5th century heresy of Nestorianism. Nestorians held, that two separate persons were united in the incarnate Christ, and they reject-ed the Alexandrian title of Theotokos (God-bearer) for Mary. For Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, and his followers, Mary had been the mother of the human Jesus, but not of the divine-human Son. In response to the challenge of Nestorianism, the councils of Ephesus, in 431, and Chalcedon, in 451, affirmed the title, Theotokos. At Chalcedon, the incarnation was defined, as being of "two natures, one person" -- a formula, that has remained standard Christian orthodoxy. The Chalcedonian definition itself, however, led to further disagreement; an extremist faction, within the Alexandrian school argued, that the incarnate Son had but a single, divine nature, and in this view, again, Jesus' humanity was compromised.

Modern Criticism of Chalcedon

Orthodox Chalcedonian Christology has been assailed, on various grounds. Modern theologians have noted its dependence on a pre-critical understanding of the Gospels. The christological pluralism of the New Testament, is not recognized by the Chalcedonian formula, which is supported solely, by the Gospel of John and the conception of the virgin birth, expressed in Matthew and Luke. Another criticism, articulated by the German New Testament scholar and theologian, Rudolf Bultmann, hinges on the fact, that the Chalcedonian conception of Christ, is based on antiquated mythologies (Jewish messianism and apocalypticism and perhaps, Gnosticism) and on an obsolete metaphysics, in which, the terms *person*, *nature*, *and substance* are understood, in ways that are fundamentally different, from the way these terms are understood, today. The use of Chalcedonian Christological definitions, in interpreting the Gospel portraits of Jesus, has tended to restrict the access of modern Christians, to the man Jesus, in His historical actuality. Thus, Bultmann has advocated, "demythologizing" the New Testament and reinterpreting the mythological elements, that lie behind early Christological formulations, in order to make the proclamation (kerygma) and Christ's saving work, meaningful to modern persons. Some theologians advocate using alternative christological models to explain the doctrines of pre-existence and incarnation, preferring the New Testament metaphor of God's "sending" His Son to the later, entirely intellectualized Christology of the Council of Chalcedon. A few contemporary Roman Catholic theologians, such as Edward Schillebeeckx and Walter Kasper, have chosen to begin their christological inquiry "from below," rather than "from

above;" they start with the fully human Jesus and then go on to discover and confess, the saving presence of God, in Him.

Church and State, relationship between the organized Church and the government of a country, especially with regard to the extent of their powers, within each other's sphere of activity.

The problem of Church and State has come into relatively sharp focus in the tradition of Western Christianity, although the phrase designates a basic issue, potentially present, in many societies and religious traditions. At root, is the tension between different authorities, one representing claims made in the name of political regimes, the other representing claims made by religious institutions. This pattern of dual authority structures, and the variety of relationships between them, have been explored more fully in Western Christian history, than elsewhere.

In the Roman Empire

Christianity developed slowly, as a distinctive movement. As a Jewish splinter group, it existed uneasily, within the Roman Empire. When its independence from Judaism was established, its claim to be the only means of salvation, brought it into sporadic conflict with imperial authority. For several centuries, as the Christian movement grew throughout the empire, regional Churches were periodically persecuted, and individual Christians suffered martyrdom. Finally, about 313, with the Edict of Milan, Christians gained full rights of religion, under the empire. During the reign of Constantine the Great, a decade later, the Church gained privileged status. Accordingly, in its first three centuries, the Christian movement was pre-occupied with retaining religious identity and securing social integrity. Thereafter, the Church, which had suffered at the hands of the state, was united with it. At this point, the relationship between Church and State, developed differently, in the chief branches of the empire.

In the Byzantine Empire

In the East, centered in Constantinople, Christians developed a posture of relative subordination, to the state. As long as the Church was free to pursue its interest in eternal salvation, it could maintain the integrity of its religious position. At the same time, however, the Church supported the emperor, who also claimed to represent divine authority. By accepting these claims, the Church in turn, endorsed Caesaropapism, that is, subordination of the Church to the religious claims of the dominant political order.

This pattern, was most fully evident, at the height of Byzantine rule, at the end of the 1st millennium of Christian history.

In Western Europe

A significantly different pattern emerged in Western Christianity. Because of the decline of Western imperial authority, culminating in the Fall of Rome in the 5th century, the Church became a relatively independent authority in temporal and eternal matters. Thus, in the Western Christian tradition, a framework existed that would support a great variety of relationships between Church and State -- or ecclesiastical structures and political ones -- throughout the course of European history.

At the beginning of this period, the “two swords” doctrine (spiritual and temporal) was enunciated by Pope Gelasius I. According to this doctrine, the Church and the State were coequal, in status. By the 13th century, Pope Innocent III, made extreme claims to the effect, that the Holy Roman Emperor (State) was subordinate to the Pope (Church), because of the relative significance of the different jurisdictions, given the two institutions. Whereas, temporal power was concerned with physical bodies, the Church, and specifically the Pope, was concerned with souls. Shortly after this high point of claims on behalf of the Church, however, several emperors and kings, dominated the papacy. In the development of Western Christianity, high theoretical claims, made by either Church or State, did not necessarily reflect, actual power relationships.

The decline of centralized imperial authority in Western European society, was related to the emergence of new nation-states, which asserted political independence within, and finally from, the Holy Roman Empire. In this process, repeated struggles pitted centrifugal national interests against the centralized claims of the Roman Church, led by the Pope.

The Reformation

From this perspective, the religious upheavals of the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation, reflected the political tensions between emerging national groups and centralized imperial authority, as well as the many other social and economic forces, at work, in late medieval Europe. In general, Protestant religious groups, particularly the Lutherans and Calvinists, aligned themselves with local and national political authorities in northern Europe, thus encouraging the emergence of modern national communities. This meant, that the same Church-State issues, already raised in the struggles between

Pope and Emperor, were transferred to the level of national communities. The temporary solution to religious conflict, was the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which stipulated, that each political entity should establish, either Lutheranism or Roman Catholicism as a “religious monopoly.” The religions, thus established did not, of course, need to agree across jurisdictions. Large groups of Christians were held in contempt, by both national Protestant and Catholic regimes, particularly Anabaptist groups, such as the followers of Menno Simons, who resisted, in the name of true faith, the correlation of religion and political region. In retrospect, this arrangement was no long-term solution to the Western dilemma of how religious and political claims were to be corrected.

In general, the national religious establishments, of Europe, remained formally intact, well into the 18th century, when the French Revolution disrupted that order. Indeed, to this day, the Church of England stands largely on the foundation, built in the English struggles of the 17th century. The exclusivity of the national establishments eased, however, in the 17th century, and the principle of effective religious toleration, was widely established, during the 18th century.

The United States, as a new nation, undertook an experiment in the separation of Church and State, although not so forthrightly as is sometimes assumed. The principle of religious establishment was brought across the Atlantic by the English, French, and Spanish colonists. Most of the 13 colonies had some kind of religious establishment, at the time of the American Revolution. Indeed, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut retained Church establishments as states, well into the 19th century -- although on a relatively circumscribed basis. An important concept in the early history of the U.S., was the agreement that the federal government should recognize religious freedom. Thus, the Bill of Rights, in James Madison’s phrase, “drew a line” between Church and government, rather than erecting what Thomas Jefferson called, the “wall of separation” between Church and State.

In the Modern Period

Only in the middle decades of the 20th century, however, were the religious clauses of the U.S. Constitution, extensively interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court, as the basis for a religiously pluralistic society. Indeed, disentangling, thoroughly ecclesiastical, from civil affairs has proved difficult, as controversies over a host of different issues, indicate. Examples of these controversies include the question of whether religious bodies -- their properties and profits -- should be taxed; whether religious observances should be

permitted in public schools; whether government should support chaplaincies; and whether religious groups should exercise an influence on public questions and policies.

A general pattern seems to have emerged in European societies, in which, even where a political group has been legally established; Churches are free to develop their own programs. In Eastern European countries such as Poland, for example, this pattern often rests on an uneasy truce with the political regime of the day. Other nations, such as India, have often emphasized, separation of religion and politics in formal terms, although religious leaders and groups (both innovative and traditional) often play, an active role in politics (as is also the case, in Japan).

Where separate authority structures exist, many relationships are possible. At one extreme, is the subordination of politics to religion, as in a “hierocracy,” or rule of priests, as the guardians of divine mysteries. The other extreme, entails subordination of the religious institutions to the political regime, as in Caesaropapism. Between these extremes, are various relationships, ranging from an Erastian, or state-dominated, Church to a theocratic political order, in which, rulers are closely monitored by guardians of the dominant religious tradition, as in Iran in the early 1980’s.

In some respects, the pattern in contemporary secular societies, differs significantly, from the pattern of traditional societies. On the one hand, religious bodies have lost the power, to assert exclusivity, over religious belief and practice. Equally important, governments have increasingly concerned themselves, with aspects of individual and collective life, traditionally considered, the province of religion, for example definition of life and death.

In sum, the phrase “Church and State” represents a framework for understanding how religion and government are related when these different institutions make formal claims within the same society. The substance of this interaction exists, in most societies. Where the respective claims of religion and politics have not been clearly focused in separate institutions, religious and political struggles have been no less real. Thus, the specific reference of the phrase, “Church and State” is to Western Christian history and experience. But, often by extension and certainly by analogy, the concept is useful, in understanding other cultures.

Creeds (Latin, *credo*, “I believe”), authoritative summaries of the principal articles of faith of various Churches or bodies of believers. As religions develop, doctrines that were originally simple, are subject to elaboration and interpretation that cause differences of opinion. Detailed creeds become necessary to clarify the differences between the tenets of schismatic branches and to serve as formulations of belief when liturgical usage -- for example, the administration of baptism -- requires a profession of faith.

In the Christian Church, the Apostles’ Creed was the earliest summation of doctrine; it has been used with only minor variations, since the 2nd century. In addition to the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed are in common use in the Roman Catholic liturgy. In the Orthodox Church, the only creed, formally adopted, was the Nicene Creed, without the insertion of *filioque*, in connection with the procession of the Holy Spirit.

With the Reformation, the establishment of the various Protestant Churches, necessitated the formulation of new creeds, which, because of the many differences in theology and doctrine, were much longer than the creeds of the ancient Church. The Augsburg Confession is accepted by Lutherans throughout the world, as is the Smaller Catechism of Martin Luther. The Formula of Concord, accepted by most early Lutherans, now finds more limited acceptance. The doctrines of the Church of England are summarized in the Thirty-nine Articles, and those of the Presbyterians, in the Westminster Confession. Most Reformed Churches of Europe subscribe to the Helvetica Posterior, or Second *Helvetica Confession*, of the Swiss reformer, Heinrich Bullinger, and most Calvinists, accept the Heidelberg Catechism.

Criticism, Literary, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of works of literature in light of existing standards of taste, or with the purpose of creating new standards. There are two approaches to literary criticism. Theoretical criticism is the study of the principles governing fiction, poetry, and drama with the aim of defining the distinct nature of literature. Practical criticism is the threefold act of reading and experiencing a literary work, judging its worth, and interpreting its meaning.

Classical Antiquity

Literary criticism in the Western world, may be said, to have begun with the Greek philosophers of the 4th century B.C. Plato, in his book, *The Republic*, asserted that poets are divinely inspired, but he regarded poetry as a mere imitation of the transitory actual world. Aristotle, on the other hand, in his book, *The Poetics*, argued that poetry is a creative art, representing what is universal in human experience. The Roman poet, Horace, in his work, *Ars Poetica* (1st century B.C.), recommended the imitation of classical models. Horace maintained, that the function of poetry, is to please and instruct. The essay, *On the Sublime* (1st century A.D.), attributed to the rhetorician, Longinus, was another important Latin critical work. It stresses the rhetorical methods, by which, spiritual moral, or intellectual value, in poetry, can be achieved.

Middle Ages and Renaissance

The great poetic works of the Italian poet, Dante, together with his writing on the use of the vernacular, *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (1304-1305), have influenced literary criticism to the present time -- especially the work of the Anglo-American poet and critic, T.S. Eliot, who, in his *Selected Essays* (1932), elaborated on Dante's imaginative allegorical method. Most critical writing of the Middle Ages (5th century to 15th century), insisted that literature be "passionate and lively" in its expression of philosophical and moral truths. In his *Defence of Poesie* (1595), the most important single work of criticism of the English Renaissance (16th century and 17th century), the courtier-poet, Sir Philip Sidney, sought to defend poetic literature, from the charge leveled by the Puritans, that it was immoral and licentious.

Neoclassicism

In English literature, the stylistic trend between the Restoration (1660) and the advent of romanticism, at the beginning of the 19th century is referred to as, neoclassicism. The term, *neoclassical* is derived from the convictions of the leading poet-critics, of the age, that literary theory and practice should follow the models established by the major Greek and Latin writers. These critics held, that writers should emphasize types, rather than individual characteristics; adhere to "nature," by aspiring to order and regularity; and strictly observe the unities of time, place, and action in dramatic composition. Major critical statements were made by John Dryden (*Essay of Dramatic Poesie*, 1668), Alexander Pope (*Essay on Criticism*, 1711), and Samuel Johnson, whose *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-1781), the last major work of neoclassical criticism, appeared against a background of emerging romanticism.

Romantic Era

The central difference between neoclassicism and romanticism lies in their differing interpretations of what it means to follow "nature." The romantic period, in England, usually is considered to have begun with the publication of essays by two major poets: the preface by William Wordsworth to the second edition of his *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and *Biographia Literaria* (1817) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Both were directly influenced by the work of contemporary German philosophers. The German dramatist and critic, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, made a significant contribution to criticism, in the romantic era, with his essay, *Laokoon* (1766). The work, discussed distinctions between visual art and literary art. In France, the critics, Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve and Hippolyte Taine, wrote criticism, with an emphasis, on literary history. Taine's conviction, was that "we might recover, from the monuments of literature, a knowledge of the manner, in which, men thought and felt, centuries ago." In the United States, the literary theory of the romantic movement, found expression in the essay, "The Poet" (1844), by the writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and in the lectures of the writer, Edgar Allan Poe, on "The Poetic Principle" (posthumously published, 1850).

19th-Century Realism and Naturalism

During the second half of the 19th century, realism dominated criticism and literature, especially in the United States. As a leading novelist, critic, and editor, William Dean Howells, was undoubtedly, the strongest American spokesperson for the realist approach. In such works as, *Criticism and Fiction* (1891), he promoted the writing of his contemporaries, Mark Twain and Henry James, while rejecting the romanticism of popular British novelists, such as Sir Walter Scott and William Makepeace Thackeray. By the end of the 19th century, realism was evolving into naturalism, as exemplified by the works of Emile Zola, in France, and Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser, in the United States. In his attempts at naturalism, Dreiser followed the direction, suggested by Zola's critical essay, "The Experimental Novel" (1880; translated, 1893). The essay described a view of the individual as a creature without free will, a part of nature bound by scientific laws. Nearly every major writer, between 1900 and 1930, was influenced by naturalism.

20th-Century Critical Movements

The chief opposition to naturalism, came from a group of American university professors. The central figures of the neohumanist movement, as it was called, were Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt, and Stuart Pratt Sherman. Sherman's essay, "The Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser," published in the magazine, *The Nation*, in December, 1915, is characteristic of the neohumanistic attack on Dreiser's naturalism. The neohumanists, called for a reaffirmation of human institutions and a recognition of

human beings, as moral, responsible, individuals.

The theories of the German philosopher, Karl Marx, and the Austrian psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, have had enormous impact on 20th-century criticism and writing. In the 1930's, Marxist criticism flourished, chiefly, in the work of Granville Hicks, an American.

No movement, however, has had so resounding an impact on 20th-century criticism, as the so-called New Criticism, which was greatly influenced by T.S. Eliot. It began as a distinct school, in the late 1930's, with the publication of The World's Body (1938) by the American critic and poet, John Crowe Ransom. The movement, sometimes, is called ontological criticism, because of Ransom's insistence, derived from the book, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), by the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, that a poem represents a kind of reality, different from that of logical prose. The New Critics, were not concerned with the historical context, in which, a work was written, or with biographical details about the author, or with the author's purposes. Rather, their technique was to use close analysis of structure and imagery, to identity precisely, those technical devices, capable of expressing the particular concrete meaning, that a literary work possesses.

The landmark texts, of this school, include *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), by the leading New Critic in England, William Empson. In the United States, the movement was defined and developed, in such works as, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939), by Cleanth Brooks, *Reason in Madness* (1941), by Allen Tate, "Pure and Impure Poetry" (1943), by Robert Penn Warren, and *Language as Gesture* (1952), by Richard P. Blackmur.

The American writer, Edmund Wilson, was one of several influential 20th-century literary critics, who worked independently, of any particular critical movement. Wilson's book, *Axel's Castle*: *A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (1931), is generally considered, to be one of the century's major critical pronouncements. Seminal critical works, have been written by three American university professors, also working outside any formal tradition: *On Native Grounds* (1942), by Alfred Kazin, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), by Lionel Trilling, and *Collected Essays* (2 volumes, 1971), by Leslie Fiedler. The English critic, F.R. Leavis, noted for his *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), also belongs to this group.

Later 20th-Century Trends

Archetypal criticism received its main impetus from the theories of the Canadian scholar-critic, Northrop Frye, whose monumental work, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) established the principles of the movement. Frye's criticism has its source in the work of the Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Gustav Jung. Archetypal critics focus on the mythic imagery and patterns in a literary work, that reflect primordial images, present in the "collective unconscious" of the human race.

By mid-century, a new philosophical movement, existentialism, occasioned a critical re-examination of earlier writers. Studies such as, *Hemingway and the Dead Gods*: *A Study in Existentialism* (1960), by John Killinger, The *Absurd Hero in American Fiction* (1970), by David Galloway, and *A Dangerous Crossing*: *French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel* (1973), by Richard Lehan, argue that American literature, after its naturalistic beginnings, early in the century, actually received much of its direction from an existential vision of life.

More recent approaches to the critical evaluation of literature, include those from the standpoints of semiotics (the study of the function of signs and symbols), hermeneutics (the science of interpretation), Marxism, psychoanalytic theory, feminism, and structuralism, which emerged, in France, in the 1960's and 1970's. Based on theories developed by American and French linguistics scholars, that languages and cultures are determined by immutable basic structures, structural criticism concentrates on small stylistic details and negates the importance of the author. One of the foremost theorists of structuralist criticism, was the French critic, Roland Barthes, for whom, criticism was a "secondary language," functioning as a "comment applied to a primary language" -- that is, the universal language of art.

Another French critic, Jacques Derrida, devised the countertheory known as deconstruction. This approach asserts that, because written texts seem to refer more to other texts than to some central, fixed reality, close analysis of their language reveals essential ambiguities of meaning. Derrida's theory had particular influence at Yale University, where he conducted annual seminars. Another important critic was the American, Harold Bloom, whose book, *The Anxiety of Influence*: *A Theory of Poetry* (1973) demonstrates his contention, that writers try to overcome the influence exerted by their predecessors by a process, he describes, as a creative misreading of texts.

Didache (Greek**,** “teaching”), ancient Christian manual of instruction, also called Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. It was probably written, in Syria, during the 1st century, although some critics have estimated a later date of composition. The document was unknown until its discovery, in 1873, and its publication, in 1883, by Philotheos Bryennios, Greek metropolitan of Nicomedia.

The Didache is a compendium of moral precepts, of instructions on the organization of Christian communities and of regulations pertaining to liturgical worship. It contains the oldest recorded eucharistic prayers and directives on baptism, fasting, prayer, and the treatment of bishops, deacons, and prophets. Revered by many early Christians, as equal in importance to the books of the New Testament, the Didache was used to instruct converts. Today, it serves as a valuable source of information about early Christian life and belief.

Filioque, combination of Latin words, meaning “and from the Son,” added to the Nicene Creed, by the Third Council of Toledo, in 589: *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum qui ex patre filioque procedit* (“I believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and Son”). It refers to the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Although it was accepted by the Western Church as a belief by the end of the 4th century, the formula was not authorized for general liturgical use before the early part of the 11th century. It was assailed vehemently, by Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, in 867 and 879. The Eastern Church did not accept the addition on two distinct grounds: (1) The addition was made unilaterally, altering a creed approved by early ecumenical councils; and (2) the formula reflected a particular Western conception of the Trinity, to which, most Byzantine theologians objected. The *filioque* clause, was probably devised, in response to Arianism, which denied the full divinity of the Son. To the Byzantines, however, the clause also appeared to compromise the primacy (“monarchy”) of the Father, which according to the Eastern Church, is the source of deity. An unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the two points of view, was made at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, in 1439. The Eastern and Western Churches have remained separate, and the doctrine represented by the term, *filioque* stands as one of the primary points of difference between them.

Logos (Greek, “word,” “reason,” “ratio”), in ancient, and especially in medieval philosophy and theology, the divine reason, that acts as the ordering principle of the universe.

The 6th-century B.C., Greek philosopher, Heraclitus was the first to use the term Logos in a metaphysical sense. He asserted that the world is governed by a firelike Logos, a divine force, that produces the order and pattern, discernible, in the flux of nature. He believed that this force, is similar to human reason, and that his own thought partook of the divine Logos.

In Stoicism, as it developed after the 4th century B.C., the Logos is conceived, as a rational divine power that orders and directs the universe; it is identified with God, nature, and fate. The Logos is "present everywhere," and seems to be understood, as both a divine mind, and at least, a semi-physical force, acting through space and time. Within the cosmic order, determined by the Logos, are individual centers of potentiality, vitality, and growth. These are "seeds" of the Logos (*logoi spermatikoi*). Through the faculty of reason, all human beings (but not any other animals), share in the divine reason.. Stoic ethics stress the rule, "Follow where Reason [Logos] leads;" one must, therefore, resist the influence of the passions -- love, hate, fear, pain, and pleasure.

The 1st-century A.D., Jewish-Hellenistic philosopher, Philo Judaeus, employed the term, Logos in his effort to synthesize Jewish tradition and Platonism. According to Philo, the Logos is a mediating principle, between God and the world, and can be understood as God's Word or the Divine Wisdom, which is immanent in the world.

At the beginning of the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ, is identified with the Logos, made incarnate, the Greek word, *logos*, being translated as "word" in the English Bible: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God**. . . .** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us **. . .**" (John 1:1-3, 14). John's conception of Christ, was probably influenced, by Old Testament passages, as well as, by Greek philosophy, but early Christian theologians developed the conception of Christ, as the Logos in explicitly Platonic and Neoplatonic terms. The Logos, for instance, was identified with the will of God, or with the Ideas (or Platonic Forms), that are in the mind of God. Christ's incarnation, was accordingly understood, as the incarnation of these divine attributes.

Nicene Creed, in Christian theology, confession of faith.

The first creed, so named, was adopted at the first Council of Nicaea, in A.D. 325, to settle a controversy, concerning the persons of the Trinity. It was intended to cover debated questions as to the divinity of Christ, and it introduced the word, *homoousios* (Greek, "of the same substance") to correct the error of the homoiousian ("of like substance") party. To it, were added several clauses, against Arianism.

A later creed, that is popularly known, as the Nicene Creed, is more properly called, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan or Constantinopolitan Creed. It is based on a 4th-century creed, that was made, under the influence of the bishop of Jerusalem, St. Cyril, and edited in a Nicene sense. It is contained in the *Ancoratus* of St. Epiphanius of Salamis and is traditionally, but erroneously attributed to the first Council of Constantinople, which met in 381. Of the 178 words, in the original of this second "Nicene Creed," only 33, are positively taken from the creed of A.D. 325. The second creed is received, as ecumenical by the Eastern and Roman communions and by the majority of the Reformed Churches. It employs the singular form of the words used for expressing assent, "I believe," "I hope," "I confess." At the Council of Toledo (589), the Western Church added the filioque clause and inserted the preposition, "in" before the words "one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." In the *Book of Common Prayer*, the preposition, "in" is omitted, and by an accident, the word, "holy" does not appear; the phrase reads there, "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Papacy, office of the Pope, the Supreme Head of the Roman Catholic Church. The word is derived from the medieval Latin *papa* ("Pope," or "Father"), a term, originally applied, to bishops, in general. Roman Catholics believe, that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, to whom Christ entrusted the leadership of the Church, as recorded in Matthew 16:18-19: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church**. . . .**"

The Pope has many official titles: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, Successor to the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City, Servant of the servants of God. The title, Bishop of Rome, is the basis for the others: an individual is Pope, because he is Bishop of Rome (and thus, the Successor of Peter), not vice versa.

Powers and Structure

As wielders of the highest power in the Church, Popes issue authoritative doctrinal statements, convoke coun-cils, adjudicate legal questions, establish dioceses, appoint

bishops, and perform a host of other functions. Never in history, have these powers been exercised more fully or broadly, than at present.

The Curia

The Pope is assisted by an elaborate bureaucracy, known as the Curia. After many reorganizations, the Curia still retains the same tripartite structure it was given in the 16th century: (1) congregations (administrative committees), each charged with a specific area of government; (2) tribunals, to handle legal matters; (3) offices, councils, and secretariats, of which, the most important, now, is the secretariat of state, which functions as the chief organ of government, to which, the others generally report.

Election

The Pope is elected by the College of Cardinals, within several weeks after his predecessor's death. The cardinals are sequestered into a conclave, under an oath, to keep the voting a secret. This system, many times modified, has been in use since the 11th century, when it definitively replaced, the rather haphazard systems, that preceded it. Although, in theory, any baptized male, can be elected Pope, the cardinals have not gone outside their own number, since the 16th century. Until then, it was not uncommon, to elect as Pope, individuals who had not yet received priestly ordination.

History

Archaeological and literary evidence supports the belief, that St. Peter was martyred, in Rome, and even that he was buried in the traditional site, under the main altar of St. Peter's Basilica, but the precise role he played in the Christian community, in Rome, before his death, is not known.

Emergence of Papal Primacy

The First Letter of Clement (*Prima Clementis*, c. 100), from the Christians of Rome, to those of Corinth, can be interpreted as an early Roman awareness of responsibility for other Churches. By the end of the 2nd century, with Pope St. Victor I, (reigned 189-99), and especially by the middle of the next century, with Pope St. Stephen I, (reigned 254-57), the bishops of Rome assumed that, the tradition of their Church, was somehow normative for other, quite distant Churches.

During the 4th and early 5th centuries, the Popes made various claims to special authority and rarely had them challenged, perhaps as much, because of poor communications and indifference, as acquiescence. With Pope St. Leo I, the Great, (reigned 440-61), the prerogatives of the papacy, were articulated in word and deed with a new forcefulness. By this time, the canon of Apostolic succession, clearly proposed as a norm for orthodoxy and legitimacy at the end of the 2nd century, was fully developed, and Leo was able to exploit it as successor of Peter -- indeed, as "Vicar of Peter." Backed by the civil authority of the Western Roman Empire, Leo successfully intervened in the affairs of other Western sees, such as Vienne, in France, where he reversed the decision of the local bishop. Leo insisted, in peremptory fashion, that the Council of Chalcedon (451), accept his teaching on the Christological debates then raging, and the council in effect did so. To Leo's dismay and disapproval, however, the council also decreed, that the New Rome (Constantinople) was to have in the East, the same primacy as the Old Rome, in the West.

The Early Medieval Papacy

Italy's turbulent political history, during the next century and a half, submerged the Popes from view. Pope Saint Gelasius I, (reigned 492-96), was an exception, especially noteworthy for his collection of Christian legal and disciplinary texts, which, with their decided tendency to emphasize papal authority, would influence the way canon law developed in the Middle Ages. Like Leo, other Popes during these centuries, considered themselves endowed with powers over the whole Church, even over the East where this viewpoint was sometimes accepted, but more generally, was only tolerated, ignored, or rejected.

Pope St. Gregory I, the Great, (reigned 590-604), administered so well, the vast territories that had accrued through legacies to the papacy and dealt so successfully, with his bellicose neighbors in Italy, the Lombards, that he made the papacy a major political force, thereby decreasing papal dependence on the East. When Gregory dispatched the monk, Augustine, as a missionary to England in 596, he injected into the Christianity of northern Europe, a sense of gratitude and loyalty to the papacy that would stand his successors in good stead, for centuries. In the late 8th and early 9th centuries, the Frankish house of Charlemagne offered protection to the Popes and bestowed upon them, immense territories in central Italy, the basis for the future Papal States. Pope Saint Leo III, (reigned 795-816), in turn, laid the foundation for the medieval German empire, (Holy Roman Empire), when he crowned Charlemagne in St. Peter's Basilica on December 25, 800.

Decline and Gregorian Reform

As political conditions, in Italy, disintegrated in the 10th century, the papacy fell into the hands of the local nobility. The Popes were now, at best, mere liturgical figures in an almost abandoned city; at worst, they were moral degenerates manipulated by their own passions and by unscrupulous barons, often their kinsmen. The pontificate of Pope St. Leo IX, (reigned 1049-54), a reformer from Alsace, put the papacy squarely on the road to recovery and committed it to a reform of the Church. Especially characteristic of this reform, as promoted by the Popes of the late 11th and early 12th centuries, was its practical emphasis on papal authority, as the key to restoring proper Church order. Pope St. Gregory VII, (reigned 1073-85), emerged -- both before and after his election to the papacy -- as the strongest advocate of this movement, known as both the, Investiture Controversy and the Gregorian Reform.

The papacy that resulted from this reform, more insistent than ever on its prerogatives, had managed to convince most bishops and many princes, that these prerogatives were just, had enshrined them in the new canon law, then being formulated, and had translated them into the institutional form of a centralizing bureaucracy. Gregory VII and his successors, were thus, the founders of the modern papacy.

The legacy of the Gregorians, reached it zenith, in Pope Innocent III, (reigned 1198-1216), whose energy and ability made him the most important person, secular or religious, in contemporary European society. He was the first Pope to make consistent use of the title, Vicar of Christ.

Avignon and the Great Schism

Less than a century after the triumph of medieval papal authority under Innocent III, King Philip IV, of France, humiliated Pope Boniface VIII, (reigned 1294-1303), and the psychological warfare he waged against Pope Clement V, (reigned 1305-14), resulted in the long residence, (1309-77), of the Popes at Avignon, France, where they were under strong French influence. At the end of this period, the Great Schism developed, during which, each of two or three Popes, simultaneously contended, to the great scandal of Christendom, that he was the only legitimate pontiff. Although the Great Schism, was finally ended, by the Council of Constance, (1414-18), the papacy had lost prestige, and for the next hundred years, it lived in apprehension of attacks on its authority from radical conciliar theory, such as that which erupted, at the Council of Basel, (1431-49).

The Counter Reformation and After

In the early 16th century, the Popes were finally able to consolidate their political authority in the Papal States and became, for the first time, effective territorial princes. At about the same time, however, Martin Luther made a rejection of the papacy, an integral part of the Reformation. With ever-increasing vehemence, he denounced the Pope, as the Antichrist, not so much for the supposed worldliness and corruption of the papacy, as for its failure to proclaim the doctrine of justification, by faith. In 1534, King Henry VIII, of England, had Parliament declare him head of the Church of England, thus dislodging the Pope, from that office. Although the various Protestant reformers differed among themselves on many issues, all agreed, that the papacy was a pernicious, or at least, an inessential, institution.

The Roman Catholic response to the Reformation, began with Pope Paul III, (reigned 1534-49). By taking care, to appoint worthy men to the College of Cardinals, he tried to guarantee, a morally upright papacy, in the future. The Council of Trent, (1545-63); did not deal with the role of the papacy in the Church, although it formulated most of the doctrines and practices of the modern Roman Catholic Church.

When, at its close, the council handed over to the papacy its unfinished business and the implementation of its decrees, it did however, strengthen the Pope's leadership in the Church. The exchange of polemics with the Protestants, moreover, moved the papacy to a more central role in Roman Catholic theology, than it had had before, and made it the mark that distinguished the Roman Catholic from all Protestant Churches. This development, also further aggravated, the schism with the Eastern Church, that had occurred, in 1054. Still, without a clear formulation of the relationship of the papacy to the episcopacy and national rulers, however, the Roman Catholic Church was susceptible to divisive controversies on these issues, such as Gallicanism, Febronianism, and Josephism, in the 17th and 18th centuries. Each of these movements, which stressed some degree of Episcopal or royal independence of the papacy, was condemned by papal decree. Finally, under Pope Pius IX, (reigned 1846-78), the First Vatican Council (1870); defined papal primacy of jurisdiction and papal infallibility in doctrine.

The French Revolution and its long aftermath, throughout Europe, brought new problems to the papacy, especially the drive, in Italy, toward national unity, that led in 1860-70, to the incorporation of the Papal States and the city of Rome, into the Italian state. In protest, particularly against the loss of Rome, Pius IX, withdrew from the city to

become a voluntary “prisoner of the Vatican,” a tiny area of about 40 hectares (about 100 acres), around St. Peter’s Basilica. This “Roman Question,” was settled, in 1929, by an agreement with the Italian government of Benito Mussolini, whereby Vatican City, became a sovereign state with the Pope, as its ruler.

The 20th Century

During the last 100 years, the papacy has grown in prestige and importance, even outside Roman Catholic circles. Beginning with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), written by Pope Leo XIII, (reigned 1878-1903), it has taken some far-sighted stands, concerning the moral implications of social and economic questions. The papacy held steadfast in opposition to Marxism, but after World War II, it tried to arrive at some accommodation with the Communist regimes, in Eastern Europe. It was most successful in Poland and Yugoslavia, where the Church operated with some freedom even before the Marxist governments were turned out of office.

The attractive personality of Pope John XXIII, (reigned 1958-63), won for the papacy an immense, worldwide respect. The Second Vatican Council, (1962-65), that Pope John convoked, re-emphasized the functions of the episcopacy in the government of the Church, without denying the decrees of Vatican I, and at the same time, adopted a more conciliatory attitude toward the Protestant and Orthodox Churches. The council, also tended to favor a more participatory, less authoritarian style of Church government. Partly, in response to such initiatives, the Protestant and Orthodox Churches began to re-examine the role of the papacy in the Church and to show more sympathy, toward that amazingly resilient institution. Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian Pope to be chosen, in more than 400 years, emphasized the worldwide nature of the Church, by traveling extensively, visiting all continents, except Antarctica.

Bull, Papal, special letter or document bearing the Pope’s own seal. The word *bull*, originally meant “seal” in the Middle Ages; it was applied also, to the document, to which, the seal was affixed. Application of the word, exclusively to papal documents, as opposed to documents of state bearing the seal of a sovereign, is a relatively modern development.

The papal seal, affixed to most bulls, is made of lead and is inscribed with the name of the reigning Pope, on one side, and representations of the heads of St. Peter and St.

Paul, on the other side. A golden seal, or *bulla aurea*, is attached to papal documents of special gravity. A decree of Pope Leo XIII, in 1878, made it permissible to use red stamps, in place of seals, for ease in mailing. Another of Leo XIII's innovations, was the substitution of Roman script for the archaic Gothic script, used by previous Popes. Until the 11th century, papal bulls were written on papyrus; thereafter, they were written on parchment.

Papal States, territory of Italy, formerly under direct temporal rule of the Pope. They were also known, as the States of the Church or Pontifical States. The Popes became de facto rulers of the city of Rome and the surrounding area, by the 6th century A.D. This territory, was formally granted to Pope Stephen II, by Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, in 754. Additions were made by gifts, purchases, and conquests, until the Papal States included nearly the whole of central Italy, reaching their greatest extent in the 16th century. The acquisitions of the papacy, were for the most part, retained until 1797, when French forces under Napoleon Bonaparte, seized much of the territory. In 1801, Pope Pius VII, regained some power, and in 1815, the Congress of Vienna restored nearly all the territory of the states, placing them under Austrian protection.

The final dissolution of the Papal States came in 1870, when nearly all the territory, including Rome, was annexed to a united Italy by its King, Victor Emmanuel II. The jurisdiction of the Pope was confined to the

Vatican, in which, as a protest against the Italian occupation, each succeeding Pope remained a voluntary prisoner until 1929, when the Lateran Treaty recognized the full and independent sovereignty of the Holy See, in Vatican City.

Roman Catholic Church, the largest single Christian body, composed of those Christians, who acknowledge the supreme authority of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, in matters of faith. The word, *catholic* (Greek *katholikos*), means "universal" and has been used to designate the Church, since its earliest period, when it was the only Christian Church. The Roman Catholic Church regards itself as the only legitimate inheritor, by an unbroken Episcopal succession descending from St. Peter to the present time, of the commission and powers conferred by Jesus Christ on the 12 apostles. The Church has had a profound influence on the development of European culture and on the introduction of European values into other civilizations. Its total membership, in the

early 1990's, was about 958.4 million (about 17 percent of the world population). The Church has its greatest numerical strength, in Europe and Latin America, but also has a large membership, in other parts of the world.

Organization and Structure

In keeping with early Christian traditions, the fundamental unit of organization in the Roman Catholic Church is the diocese, headed by a bishop. The Church comprises about 1880 dioceses and about 520 archdioceses, which today, are simply more distinguished sees, without the special jurisdiction over nearby bishops, that they once enjoyed. The major Church in a diocese is the cathedral, where the bishop presides at worship and other ceremonies. The cathedral contains the bishop's "throne" or "chair" (Latin *cathedra*), from which, in the early Church, he preached to his congregation.

The Bishop

The bishop is the chief liturgical figure in the diocese and is distinguished from the priest, principally by the power to confer Holy Orders and to act as the usual minister of confirmation. The bishop, also wields the highest jurisdictional powers, within the diocese: He has the right to admit priests to his diocese and to exclude them from the practice of ministry within it, and he assigns priests of his diocese to parishes and other duties. The bishop, often delegates, administrative details to his vicar-general, his chancellor, or other officials. In larger dioceses, he may be assisted by auxiliary or coadjutor bishops.

The Clergy

Directly under the bishop, are the clergy, both secular and religious. Secular clergy are not members of religious orders or congregations and have permanently been incorporated (incardinated) into the diocese, under the authority of the local bishop. Secular clergy, generally staff the parishes of the diocese and serve as pastors in them.

The religious clergy, on the other hand, are primarily committed to their orders or congregations, which transcend diocesan boundaries. While working within a given diocese, these clergy must adhere to the bishop's decisions in matters of public worship, but otherwise enjoy considerable discretion in their ministry. The same can be said of nuns (or sisters) and brothers, who are members of orders or congregations, but are not clergy. These religious -- clergy and laity -- tend to staff the schools, hospitals, and other institutions of mercy and social service in the diocese. Since the Second

Vatican Council, the laity, who are not members of religious orders, have assumed an increasingly active role in advising pastors, and bishops, especially in practical matters, and in the directly pastoral ministry, such as catechesis (instruction given, in preparation for adult baptism).

The Pope

At the head of the Roman Catholic Church is the Pope, who has final authority, in all matters. The Pope appoints bishops to dioceses and transfers them to others. Although bishops enjoy their jurisdictional powers, by reason of their office, they cannot legitimately exercise them, without the permission of the Pope. On

September 15, 1965, Pope Paul VI, instituted the Synod of Bishops, a representative body of bishops and others, that may be called by the Pope, to consult on major issues. The first such synod, met in Vatican City, in 1967, and several have been held, since then. Synods are not to be confused with ecumenical councils, solemn convocations of all the bishops of the world. The Catholic Church numbers only 21 such councils in its long history -- the most recent being, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). While they are in communion with the Pope, the councils exercise unquestionably, the highest authority in the Church.

The Cardinal

Cardinals are the highest dignitaries, in the Church, after the Pope. Appointed by the Pope, they constitute the Supreme Council of the Church, the Sacred College, and on the death of the Pope, they elect his successor. Most cardinals are bishops of dioceses, located throughout the world; others are the chief members of the Sacred Congregations of the papal administration. The Sacred Congregation of Cardinals, was formerly limited, to 70 members (6 cardinal bishops, 50 cardinal priests, and 14 cardinal deacons). By 1991, the number of cardinals had reached 163, most of whom, had been named by Pope John Paul, II.

The Curia

The Pope is assisted, in his administration of the Church, by a complex bureaucracy, known as, the Curia. Of ancient origin, the Curia is located in Vatican City. It is now directed by the Secretariat of State, to which, the various other offices report. These offices, now consist of, the Sacred Congregation for the Public Affairs of the Church, as well as, ten congregations, three tribunals, three secretariats, and other bureaus.

Eastern Rite Churches

Although most members of the Roman Catholic Church follow a discipline, ritual, and canon law, that developed in the early years of the diocese of Rome, others adhere in these matters, to their own centuries-old traditions. These are the Eastern Rite Churches, or Uniate Churches, such as the Maronite, Chaldean, Ruthenian, and Ukrainian. Some of these Churches, legitimately practice Holy Communion, under both kinds (the use of both, bread and wine) and baptism by immersion, and allow marriage of the clergy.

Distinctive Doctrines

Although the Roman Catholic Church holds certain doctrines, that distinguish it from other Christian Churches, it is most characteristic in the breadth and comprehensiveness of its doctrinal tradition. Locating its beginnings, in the earliest Christian communities and refusing to acknowledge any decisive break in its history, the Roman Catholic Church, considers itself, heir to all the theological speculation of the Apostolic, partistic, medieval, and modern periods. Although this doctrinal comprehensiveness, may sometimes seem, to lack internal coherence, it helps vindicate the Church's claim, to "catholicity" (universality), even in doctrinal matters. The Church does not, in principle, exclude any theological method, and since Pope Pius XII's encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), it has officially sanctioned modern principles of exegesis for interpreting the Bible. Participation, since the Second Vatican Council in the ecumenical movement, has made Catholics appreciate the doctrinal viewpoint, even of the Protestant reformers, who broke with the Church in the 16th century.

The Bible

Like other Christian Church's, the Roman Catholic Church accepts the Bible, as the basis for its teaching. This was an unquestioned assumption until the Reformation, and great theologians, such as the 13th-century Italian, St. Thomas Aquinas, taught that "Scripture alone" was the source for theology. Even while maintaining a "Scripture-alone" position, however, theologians also held, that certain truths or practices (such as infant baptism), although not found in Scripture, were validated by the tradition of the Church. They agreed, moreover, that the solemn decisions of the Church, especially those that were arrived at by the ecumenical councils, were authentic interpretations of Christian doctrine, and therefore, irrevocably binding on the Church.

Tradition

In reaction to the Protestant insistence, during the Reformation, on a seemingly unqualified “Scripture-alone” principle, the Council of Trent affirmed (Fourth Session), that Christian revelation was contained in “written books” and in “unwritten traditions.” Although this decree speaks at length, and almost exclusively about the Bible, the insertion of the phrase about, “unwritten traditions” was interpreted until recently, as indicating a “two-source” theory. Today, the interpretation of the decree is debated, but its significance, has been somewhat diminished by a general agreement among, both Catholic and Protestant scholars, that the books of the New Testament, are themselves, the product of various traditions or schools in the early Church.

Apostolic Succession

Somewhat related to the theological notion of tradition, is the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, that is the continuous transmission of ministry, from the time of Jesus, until today. The doctrine is found, as early as the Epistle to the Corinthians (circa 96), traditionally attributed, to Pope Clement I. It is present in a qualified form in some Protestant Churches, but it is more expressly affirmed, in Roman Catholicism. It is identified with the succession of bishops in office and interpreted as the source of the bishops’ authority and leadership role. The most specific instance of these claims, is that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, who was chosen, by Jesus, as head of His Church (see Matthew 16:16-18). Thus, Catholicism tends to see the same authority and spiritual gifts, operative in the Church today, as were operative in the Apostolic communities.

Almost implicit, in this belief in Apostolic succession, is the belief that the Church has the right and duty to teach Christian doctrine and morals, authoritatively, and that the substantial correctness of this teaching, is guaranteed by the continued presence of the Holy Spirit, in the Church. For all practical purposes, Catholic theology locates this authority in the bishops, the Pope, and the ecumenical councils; under certain circumstances, it acknowledges this teaching, as infallible. The teaching authority of the Church, is referred to collectively, as the *magisterium*, a term that came into common use in the 19th century.

The Church

Because of Catholic emphasis on the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, Catholic theology has given more attention to ecclesiology, than has the theology of other Christian bodies. Trying to correct an excessively juridical concept of the Church,

the Second Vatican Council, consistently spoke of it, as a mystery and favored images, such as the “people of God,” to describe it. Fundamental to Catholic belief, in all ages, has been the assumption that God’s love and grace are mediated to the world, in a uniquely efficacious way, through the ministry of the Church.

Saints

With greater enthusiasm than other Western Churches, Roman Catholicism fosters the veneration of the saints, and especially of Mary. In 1854, Pope Pius IX, proclaimed the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary, and in 1950, Pope Pius XII, proclaimed her assumption. Often criticized for letting veneration of the saints obscure the worship due God, the Church has tried to limit it, for instance, by reducing the number of saints, whose feasts are observed in the liturgy. Catholics, also believe, that they can help by their prayers and good works, those who have died without being fully purified of their sins. This belief, is closely associated, with the doctrines of purgatory and indulgence.

Worship and Practices

Catholic worship, is unequivocally centered, on the Mass, at which, the faithful are expected to be present, every Sunday, and on a few major feasts, during the year. Mass, is also celebrated daily, in most Churches, and is the essential element of the service at marriage, funerals, and other Catholic observances.

The Mass

The Mass consists of several parts, of which, the longest and most important, are the so-called liturgy of the Word and the eucharistic liturgy, during which, Holy Communion is distributed. Within this set structure, considerable variation, is possible, in the use of music, pageantry, and other devices, to render the service appropriate for a given occasion.

This potential for variation, is graphically illustrated, in the history of the Mass and in the differences that exist today, between the Roman rite and the rites of the Eastern Churches. The most sweeping changes, ever made in the Roman rite, were those effected by the Second Vatican Council in its decree, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963). The general tendency of these changes, was to excise accretions to the liturgy, that obscured its purpose and basic outline. Of all the provisions legislated or inspired by the council, none was more dramatic, than the translation of the

liturgy and rites of the Church, from their traditional Latin language into modern vernaculars.

Sacraments

The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments, which are the most important symbolic rites, by which, the Church nourishes its members. Catholics believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, through the change of bread and wine into His body and blood (transubstantiation) and are encouraged to receive the Eucharist, at every Mass, in which they participate. The other sacraments are baptism, confirmation, pe-*nance*, holy orders, matrimony, and the anointing of the sick. Catholic theology teaches, that these signs, instituted by Christ, effect their spiritual benefit, on the recipient, independent of the faith or virtue of the minister (*ex opere operato*).

Liturgical reforms, after the Second Vatican Council, revised the sacrament of penance to shift attention away from confession of a detailed list of sins, to the healing nature of the divine mercy, mediated through the sacrament. To highlight these purposes, the alternative term, *sacrament of reconciliation*, was devised. Besides other revisions in sacramental rites, the council determined, that the anointing of the sick should be administered in every serious illness or old age and not be delayed until the point of death. Hence, it should no longer be called, extreme (last) unction.

The minister for the sacrament of matrimony is not the officiating priest, as is usually thought, but the bride and groom themselves. The bond this sacrament creates between two baptized persons cannot, according to Catholic theology, be dissolved. Numerous prior conditions exist for a valid bond, however, so that it is sometimes possible, for the Church to declare, after examination, that a marriage was null and void, from the beginning. Often viewed as the Catholic equivalent of divorce, annulment is based on different principles. The Church teaches, that the purpose of matrimony, is to foster mutual love and procreate children.

Other Practices

Catholics express piety in many ways in addition to the Mass and sacraments. The rosary of the Virgin Mary, for instance, is still a popular devotion. In recent years, the strict obligation to fast and to abstain from meat on certain days, has been made optional, but is still observed by many. Although the earlier insistence of bishops, especially in the United States, that children be sent to schools operated by the Church

has been abandoned, many Catholics continue to do so, maintaining a strong system of elementary and secondary education.

Throughout the world, the Church sponsors a number of universities and an even larger number of faculties of theology. The Church is directly or indirectly responsible for an immense number of publications, that range from popular journalism to highly sophisticated scholarship.

Current Issues

The Roman Catholic Church has been characterized, in modern times, by strong positions on some controversial issues. Beginning with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the Popes have consistently decried the injustices of the economic and social conditions, created by modern industrial societies, and proposed remedies for them. They have denounced nuclear warfare, repeatedly urged an end to the arms race, and sought to halt the exploitation of poor nations by rich ones. The protection and promotion of basic human rights in the social, economic, and political orders have been central to these pronouncements.

The so-called liberation theology, created by some Catholic intellectuals in Latin America, has recently attempted to fit these concerns into a less traditional framework of speculation, even utilizing concepts, found in Marxist literature.

At the Second Vatican Council, the Church encouraged Catholics to work with members of other religions for common human goals and for the reunion of the various Christian Churches. Although the Roman Catholic Church has never joined the World Council of Churches, it does maintain contact with it. In recognition of the genuine spiritual values in other religions, Catholic missionary practice, since the council, has been modified from proselytizing to a dialogue more respectful of those values.

On certain other issues, the Church has been more conservative, but no less forceful. The prohibition of "artificial" means of birth control, was reiterated by Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968). This document, provoked objections in some theological and even Episcopal circles -- a unique phenomenon for the modern papacy. Although its import continues to be debated, it is certainly, the most authoritative statement on the issue. The Roman Catholic Church has been a fierce opponent of liberalized abortion laws and has inspired political resistance, to such legislation, in

several Western countries. Although the Church permits women, under certain circumstances, to administer the Eucharist and perform some other ministries, it has not allowed them to be ordained priests or deacons. For priests of the Roman rite, marriage is strictly forbidden.

History

Until the break with the Eastern Church, in 1054, and the break with the Protestant Churches in the 16th century, it is impossible to separate the history of the Roman Catholic Church from the history of Christianity, in general. The distinct Roman Catholic view of history, however, is its claim to unbroken continuity with the Church of the New Testament and its consequent acceptance as legitimate of the major developments in doctrine and structure, that it has assimilated, since then. The great shifts in culture, theology, and discipline within Christian history are not necessarily viewed, therefore, as deviations from some absolute norm of the Apostolic Church. They tend to be viewed, rather, as expressions in different and more elaborate ways of impulses, that were already present from the beginning.

The Early Church

The first great change in Christian history, was its spread from Palestine to the rest of the Mediterranean world, in the first few decades after Jesus' death. Within a short time, Christianity had adopted the language and philosophical vocabulary of the Greco-Roman world to express its message, and it also adopted some procedural and organizational practices of the Roman Empire. Nonetheless, the characteristically Christian figure of the bishop, had clearly emerged, by the middle of the 2nd century. The recognition of the Church by Emperor Constantine the Great, in 313, consolidated these developments and gave the Church support in the great doctrinal controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries, that determined orthodoxy. By the time of the 5th-century Pope, Leo I, the bishop of Rome, was claiming and to some extent, was exercising a primacy of leadership over the other Churches.

The Medieval Church

The decline of the Roman Empire in the West and the assimilation of the Germanic peoples into the Church had great impact on all aspects of religious life, including a diminution of Episcopal authority from the 7th to the 11th century. Under the leadership of a reformed papacy in the late 11th century, however, Episcopal rights were restored, amid the bitter Investiture Controversy, waged by the papacy with various rulers, in Europe. As a result, the papacy emerged as the acknowledged leader of the Western Church, possessing a centralizing and increasingly efficient Curia. Canon law was

revitalized and implemented, with an emphasis on the role of the papacy in governing the Church. These developments, plus the Crusades, made reconciliation with the Eastern Church, more difficult, after the Great Schism of 1054.

The Modern Period

Partly in reaction to the changes resulting from the investiture Controversy, the Protestant Reformation broke out in the 16th century. The Catholic Church responded, during the era of the Counter Reformation, by reaffirming the traditions that had developed through the ages, and especially, by emphasizing those elements that were most under attack, such as Scholastic theology, the efficacy of the sacraments, and the primacy of the Pope.

The attacks launched against the Church by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, were largely responsible for the defensive postures struck by Catholicism long afterward. The Second Vatican Council tried to reverse this trend. Although the changes introduced, by the council, engendered considerable confusion for some years, the Church has remained fundamentally stable and flourishing in many parts of the world.

The Church in The United States

In 1493, 12 priests accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage of exploration, and the first Episcopal see, was erected at Santo Domingo (now in the Dominican Republic), the first European settlement in the New World, in 1512. The second American see -- that of Santiago de Cuba, Cuba -- was established, in 1522, the third -- that of Mexico -- in 1530. The missionaries, who preached to the natives of the southeastern and southwestern portions, of what is now, the United States, were mainly Spanish Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits. Between the middle of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century, they established many communities, in what are now the states of Florida, Texas, New Mexico, and California. French missionaries, during the same time, were preaching on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River, in areas, that are now, Maine and northern New York, and even around the Great Lakes, and in the Mississippi River Valley. Before 1789, Catholics, living in the colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania, were under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of London, but in that year, a see was established in Baltimore, and on August 15, 1790, the American prelate, John Carroll, was consecrated its first Bishop.

During the 19th century, the tide of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, swelled the ranks of the Roman Catholic communion, and the Catholic population of the United States, which had been 30,000 in 1790, increased to 250,000 in 1820, about 1 million in 1840, and some 5 million in 1870. In the early 1990's, the estimated Roman Catholic population of the United States, had reached a figure of about 59,858,000. During the same period, the U.S. Catholic hierarchy was composed of 9 cardinals, 45 archbishops, 344 bishops, and 50,320 priests. The total number of Roman Catholic parishes was 19,787. The Church maintained 226 seminaries for the training of the clergy. Other educational institutions, under Roman Catholic sponsorship, were 7,292 elementary schools, 1,360 high schools, and 232 colleges and universities, the total number of students enrolled in these institutions was about 3,336,000.

The Church in Canada

In the 17th and early 18th centuries, the missionary zeal of French Jesuits, Ursulines, Sulpicians, and others, aided the colonization of New France, in the Canadian wilderness. The first Canadian martyrs were Jesuits, killed in an Iroquois massacre of the Huron people, in the 1640's. Francois Xavier de Laval-Montmorency, in charge of Church affairs, since 1659, was consecrated the first Bishop of Quebec, in 1674. With Protestants legally banned from the colony, the bishop had a permanent seat on the three-man governing council; the clergy had charge of education, hospitals, and welfare; and the state enforced tithes and gave the Church land and money. After the British conquest of New France, in 1760, opposition to the Church arose, but the Quebec Act (1774), opened public office to Catholics and authorized continuation of tithes.

As a result of 19th-and 20th-century immigration, the Roman Catholic Church in Canada, grew rapidly and was removed from mission status, in 1908. The newcomers, however, changed its character. Irish immigration in the early 1800's, reduced the French-Canadians to a minority among Catholics outside Quebec and led to conflict over language and Episcopal appointments. Such tension continued in the 20th century, with the arrival of southern and eastern Europeans. In the early 1990's, the Roman Catholic Church was the largest religious group in the country, with about 45 percent of all, Canadians. It still had some government recognition, especially in Quebec, and in provinces where Catholic schools received tax aid. Its clergy included 3 cardinals and 118 other prelates.

Schism, Great, in the history of the Christian Church, term used to refer, to both the break between the Eastern and Western Churches, traditionally dated, 1054, and the period (1378-1417), in the Western Church, when two (and then, three) Popes, simultaneously claimed, to be legitimate. The term, *schism* means any formal and willful separation from the unity of the Christian Church; unlike heresy, with which, it is often linked, it does not of itself, denote doctrinal deviations.

Schism of Eastern and Western Churches

The alienation between the Eastern and Western Churches had deep cultural and political roots and evolved over the course of many centuries. As Western culture was gradually transformed, for instance, by the influx of Germanic peoples, the East sustained an unbroken tradition of Hellenistic Christianity. Although respectful of the prerogatives of Rome, as the original capital of the empire, the Church at Constantinople resented some of the jurisdictional claims made by the Popes, claims vigorously renewed and amplified during the pontificate of Leo IX, (reigned 1048-54), and his successors. The West, in turn, opposed the Caesaropapism (subordination of the Church to a secular ruler), that characterized the Church at Constantinople (Church and State).

When the headstrong Michael Cerularius became patriarch in Constantinople, in 1043, he began a bitter campaign against the Latin Churches in his own city, and eventually closed them. His attacks were directed against such matters, as the Latin's use of unleavened bread. Only later, did he discover the discrepancy in belief between the two Churches on the procession of the Holy Spirit, a divisive issue that was destined to assume ever greater importance, in subsequent centuries (Filoque).

Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, sent to Constantinople from Rome, in 1054, to deal with the problem, matched Cerularius in narrow-minded zeal and concluded his visit, by excommunicating the patriarch and his colleagues, an act later interpreted, as an excommunication of the entire Greek Church. After a few days, the patriarch and his synod, responded in kind. Later events, such as the tragic sacking of Constantinople (Cru-sades), during the Fourth Crusade (1204) confirmed the rift, and efforts to heal it have never been successful. On December 7, 1965, however, the mutual excommunications were cancelled by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I, as part of a larger effort to draw the two Churches together.

Schism of Rival Popes

The Great Schism in the Western Church began with the contested election of Pope Urban VI, in 1378. The cardinals, who elected him, dismayed at his erratic behavior, withdrew their obedience, declared Urban's election invalid, because it was made under the duress of rioting in Rome, and selected a new Pope, Clement VII. Urban retaliated, by excommunicating Clement and his followers and by creating a college of cardinals of his own.

Historians today, find it impossible to adjudicate between the claims for validity of these two elections. In any case, when Clement moved to Avignon and won the adherence of the French king, the schism began in earnest. Allegiance, to either Pope, was determined by the political preferences of the rulers concerned.

During the half-century the schism lasted, a number of solutions were proposed, including the Popes' resignations, but only the convocation of a council offered any real hope. Cardinals and bishops, from both sides, met at Pisa, in 1409, but their efforts only resulted in adding a third Pope to the other two. The Council of Constance (1414-18), finally effected the resignation or deposition of the contending Popes and the election of Martin V, (reigned 1417-31), with universal recognition (Constance, Council of). The scandal of the schism gave temporary impetus to a conciliar theory of Church government, and also intensified the call for reform, that eventually erupted, in the Protestant Reformation.

Theology, a discipline, that attempts to express the content of a religious faith, as a coherent body of propositions. Theology is narrower in scope than faith, for whereas faith is a total attitude of the individual, including will and feeling, theology attempts to bring to expression in words, the elements of belief that are explicitly or implicitly, contained in faith.

Not every verbal expression of faith is theology, however. The first verbalizations of faith, were naïve and mythological. Theology arose out of reflection upon these first naïve utterances. For instance, in the New Testament, the disciple, Thomas exclaims to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" but a long process of reflection and speculation came between that simple confession and the theological declaration, made by the Council of Nicaea (325), that Jesus Christ is "one in substance with the Father." This example,

demonstrates the tendency to move from concrete language (“Lord”) to conceptual language (“substance”).

Although theology, ultimately concerns God, many theologians maintain, that concepts of Him, necessarily fall short. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God is often described, in such negative terms, as invisible or incorporeal. If this negative theology is not to become sheer agnosticism, it has to be supplemented by indirect ways of speaking about God (involving analogy, symbolism, and metaphor), so that the language of theology never becomes purely conceptual, instead retaining some of the imagery from the pre-theological stage of belief. A careful analysis of theological language, is a necessary prelude, to the theological enterprise. It reveals a language that employs, both images and concepts, and that, is both critical and confessional.

Theology and Science

Theologians as diverse as the 13th-century Italian, St. Thomas Aquinas and the 20th-century Swiss Karl Barth, have held that theology is a science. Both, however, were careful to point out that sciences are of many sorts.

Theology resembles a science, to the extent, that orderly, critical, intellectual, procedures are employed in the study of its subject matter, but it radically differs, from the natural, and even from, the human sciences, because its ultimate subject matter, God, is not accessible to empirical investigation. The problem of establishing a rigorous way of reasoning about God, is therefore, crucial, in theology. Aquinas began his theological system, by offering five proofs for the existence of God, as a basis for all his other arguments. Barth, on the other hand, began with God’s revelation or communication of Himself (the Word of God), believing that only thus, can one avoid the danger of approaching God, as a mere object of investigation. Those who follow Barth’s method, argue that every science has to begin with some assumptions, and that the assumption of a self-communicating God, is the correct starting point for theology; those who follow Aquinas’s example, hold that intellectual integrity, demands that the theologian begin with the question, of whether God exists. Clearly, in both views, theology must be concerned as much with human beings and their capacities, as with God. Indeed, Barth has said, that theology would be more properly called, “theanthropology,” because its subject matter is not God in isolation, but rather, the divine and the human, as they are related to each other.

Sources of Theology

The oldest theology of all -- that of the Greek philosophers, who invented the word, *theology* -- was based on rational reflection on God, the world, and human life. These philosophers, explicitly contrasted, the rational theological approach to the problem of God with the mythological stories of the gods, told by the Greek poets. The rational approach has continued to have many adherents, such as Aquinas, but the appeal to revelation, as the source of theological truth, has also been strong in the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and several Eastern traditions. These religions are traced back to founders, who offered some new and striking insights into the questions of God and human destiny. Subsequent generations of theologians reflected on the content of these illuminations, drew their implications, applied their insights in new situations, and tested and criticized the interpretations, that had been previously offered. The distinctive insights of the founders, whether or not the word, *revelation* is used, have been stamped on the theologies of the different religions, and it is a testimony to the depth and richness of these insights, that so much has been drawn from them, and that they still seem inexhaustible.

The Role of Scripture

Most developed religions of the world possess scriptures, or sacred writings. These are usually taken to be the work of the founders themselves or of their earliest disciples. The Torah, long attributed to Moses; the New Testament, much of it attributed to disciples of Jesus; the Koran, attributed to Muhammad; and the voluminous scriptures of Hinduism and Buddhism are all examples of the transmission of original revelations, through written documents. Within the various traditions, the status of scripture varies. Among Christians, Jews, and Muslims, scripture is accorded an authority -- sometimes as the very Word of God -- that it does not have in Hinduism or Buddhism. Even in Christianity, however, differences exist between Fundamentalists, for whom, the Bible is divinely inspired, and liberals, for whom, it is the fallible human attestation of revelation, but not revelation itself. Nonetheless, wherever scriptures exist, they provide an important source for theology, even when modern critical methods are applied.

Tradition and Experience

Tradition is another means, by which, the original revelation is conveyed and mediated. Tradition precedes scripture, in the sense that stories and teachings of the founders, were passed on by word of mouth before they were written down and assumed a fixed form. But, tradition also follows scripture, for where scripture is unclear or inconsistent, the believing community has to interpret it, and a whole body of interpretation may evolve alongside the original scripture and may even be, written down. This has

happened, in both Judaism and Islam, although the body of tradition, in these religions, is not accorded the same status, as scripture.

In Christianity, Roman Catholicism has assigned a high value to tradition, as the living voice of the Church. Protestants have stressed the principle, of relying on the authority of the Bible alone, but because the Bible is read and taught in the context of the Church -- especially in the liturgy -- it is virtually impossible, to hear it without overtones of traditional interpretation. Finally, experience has become an important influence on theology, especially in modern times. Respect for the authority of scripture, tradition, and even revelation has diminished, and consequently, the theologian tends to draw, more and more, on present experience, either personal or that of the community. The theologian searches for the meaning of God, not only in such religious experiences, as mysticism and conversion, but also, in the general cultural, social, and political experience of the time.

Theological Method

There is no single, universally recognized method in theology. Method varies from one theologian to another and largely depends on the degree of importance attached to the various sources. The 11th-century theologian, St. Anselm, is a good example of a theologian, who used the method of rigorous logical argument. In his *Proslogion*, Anselm sought to prove the existence of God from the concept of a perfect being (the ontological argument; and in *Cur Deus Homo*, he argued that, given the existence, both of a benevolent God and of the sinfulness of humanity, the Christian doctrines of incarnation and atonement, may be deduced by logical necessity. Few theologians have been as rigorously logical as Anselm, but most have aimed at logical coherence. A minority, however, including the 2nd-century Church father, Tertullian and the 19th-century Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, have denied, that theology can be conceived as a rational system and have held that the human experience of God reveals discontinuities and paradoxes.

A quite different method can be observed among Reformation and post-Reformation Protestant theologians, who have attempted to base theology on the Bible alone. In its crudest form, this has meant a constant appeal to the Bible to prove theological assertions. With the development of biblical studies, however, this type of theology has become much more sophisticated. The method is, first of all, to establish the biblical text from the manuscripts and variant readings and, next, to subject this text to the closest scrutiny, taking note, for example, of linguistic considerations, literary sources,

and historical background. This constitutes the work of exegesis, which aims at ascertaining, as far as possible, the meaning that the writer intended. The theologian must then go on to ask how the original meaning of the text has been developed in the course of doctrinal history, and what it might be taken to mean in the theologian's own time and cultural situation. This step involves hermeneutics, the science of interpretation. Some hold that interpretation is itself a creative, innovative, act, not just the transposition of meaning from an ancient to a modern context. Even a transposition, intended to reproduce the exact meaning of the original text, may result in substantial changes. The 20th-century German theologian, Rudolf Bultmann, advocated a method of "demythologizing" on the assumption, that the essential meaning of the New Testament is an understanding of human existence that must be disengaged from the mythological language, current at the time, when the New Testament was written. Bultmann's project, involved the translation of this "essential meaning," into the language of modern existentialist philosophy.

Formally similar to the biblically based theologies of Protestant writers, are those of Roman Catholic writers, who have tried to develop theologies, based on the dogmatic pronouncements of the Church. This was done, somewhat naively, in the older handbooks, but it is now recognized, that hermeneutical questions are as relevant to dogma as they are to scripture, and that even the most venerated dogmas, periodically need reinterpretation and may lead to new insights.

Theologians who are reluctant to begin with an appeal to authoritative texts, whether biblical or dogmatic, begin the task from the opposite end, analyzing human experience and its problems, and then asking how traditional wisdom might illuminate or resolve these problems. The 20th-century German theologian, Paul Tillich, has used the expression, "method of correlation" to describe this procedure in theology. He and others have made much use of phenomenology, in their analysis of human experience.

The principle types of theological method, are obviously capable of being combined, in different ways. Every major theologian has a method, that in its detail is unique, but which nonetheless, involves many procedures similar to those of other theologians. It is also important to notice, that many of the methods of theology are the same as those employed by historians, students of language and literature, philosophers, and others.

The Branches of Theology

The word, *theology*, is sometimes used in a broad sense, meaning not only the study of doctrine, but also biblical studies and Church history, as when one speaks of a faculty of theology in a university. More often, however, theology means systematic theology -- the sense, in which, it has been discussed in this article -- that is, the ordered exposition of the beliefs of a religious faith, as a whole. Christian systematic theology is subdivided into the doctrine of God (theology in the strictest sense); Christology, the doctrine of the person of Christ; soteriology, the doctrine of salvation; anthropology, the doctrine of humanity; pneumatology, the doctrine of the spirit; eschatology, the doctrine of the "last things," or the end of time; and ecclesiology, the doctrine of the Church. Further divisions, are sometimes made, but truly systematic theology, always emphasizes, the unity and mutual implication of the various parts.

The distinction between natural theology, which is based on reason and common experience, and revealed theology, which is based directly on revelation, has already been noted. Similarly, a distinction should be made between apologetics -- the attempt to state religious belief, while taking note of, and responding to, objections and criticisms -- and dogmatics, the straight exposition of beliefs. Some theologians, however, reject apologetics, because it seems to allow their opponents to set the agenda, arguing that the best apologetic, is simply a clear statement of belief.

The rise and development of religious doctrines is the subject of historical theology, which has important implications for current theological speculation. Somewhat less central to the theological enterprise, are several disciplines, in which, insights are derived from systematic theology, but applied to various specialized problems. In moral theology, the insights of faith are applied to questions of moral conduct. Because of the variety of these issues, moral theology tends to become an interdisciplinary task. When the problems are connected with social and institutional aspects of human life, one may speak of social theology and even political theology. Pastoral, or practical theology has to do with the exercise of ministry, in such matters, as counseling and the cure of souls.

Early Christian Theology

Although the Bible contains much theological material, it is obviously not a textbook of systematic theology. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, is perhaps the nearest approach to a theological treatise in the New Testament; beginning with the sinful human condition. Paul develops a doctrine of justification, by faith, and sketches a scheme of universal salvation. As has already been mentioned, theology began among the Greeks as a scientific discipline, and it was the convergence of Greek philosophy and biblical faith,

that gave rise to the great age of patristic theology. Although the German theologian, Adolf von Harnack, lamented the "Hellenization" of the Gospel, most theologians, would agree with Tillich, that biblical faith had to respond to the intellectual challenge of Greek philosophy.

In the East, the 3rd-century writer, Origen, of the school of Alexandria, was perhaps the most influential theologian of the early Christian era: *De Principiis* (On First Principles) covers the major topics of theology, and *Contra Celsum* (Against Celsus), in which, Origen answers the criticisms of a pagan philosopher, is a notable example of apologetics. The great patristic theologian of the West, was St. Augustine. His principal work is, *The City of God* (413-26), a vast study, in which, human history is presented as a struggle between the forces of good and evil. Another profoundly, influential, theological work of Augustine, is his lengthy treatise, *On the Trinity* (400-16). Both Origen and Augustine, also wrote commentaries on books of the Bible, and both were much influenced by philosophies, derived from Plato. It was during the patristic period, that the major Christian doctrines, received their definitive formulation.

The Middle Ages

The next upsurge of theological activity occurred during the Middle Ages. Anselm and his principal works have already been mentioned, but the outstanding figure in medieval theology, was Thomas Aquinas. His great, *Summa Theologica* (1265-73), running to 2 million words and still unfinished at the time of his death, is a detailed systematic exposition of the doctrines of God, human nature and right conduct, and incarnation and salvation. It subtly interweaves, philosophical and theological themes and has exercised an unparalleled influence, especially in Roman Catholic theology. Aquinas, also wrote a major work of apologetics, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1261-64; trans. 1956). He made considerable use of the philosophy of Aristotle, which was being rediscovered, about this time.

The Reformation

The Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, marked a return to the Bible and a more practical, ethical, and less speculative tone in theology, and therefore, an attempt to reduce the role of philosophy, in theological work. Martin Luther was not a systematic theologian, but the new teaching, was ably presented, by his collegue, Melanchthon, in his *Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum* (1521). By far the greatest Reformation theologian, was John Calvin, whose, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) remains the classic of Reformed systematic theology. Calvin stressed, the sovereignty of God to

the point of constructing a doctrine of strict predestination, but he tried to base all his teachings, on the Bible.

Modern Theology

After the Reformation, a period of theological stagnation set in, as the Roman Catholic and Protestant orthodoxies faced one another, in rigidly entrenched, positions. In the 17th and 18th centuries, both camps were threatened by the rise of rationalist philosophy and empirical science. The long reign of theology as "queen of the sciences," was ending. In the face of these threats, the 19th-century German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, brought new life to theology. The authority of orthodoxy was gone, and the old natural theology had been discredited by two 18th-century philosophers, the English skeptic, David Hume and the German idealist, Immanuel Kant. Thus, Schleiermacher boldly made his appeal to regarding the present experience of the believing community, as the new basis for theology. In his major work, *The Christian Faith* (1821-22; trans. 1948), doctrine is treated as the transcript of experience. With Schleiermacher, the focus of theology seems to shift from God to humanity, and this was generally true, of the liberal theology that dominated the 19th century. Its development was interrupted by the work of Karl Barth, whose monumental, *Church Dogmatics* (1932-62; trans. 1936-62), represents a return to biblical theology. In the last half of the 20th century, a variety of theological schools has coexisted. Notable among them, is the revitalized Roman Catholic theology, springing from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Other schools employ the principles of the 20th-century English philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, the 20th-century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, and even, Karl Marx, for theological construction.

Theology and Other Disciplines

Theology's oldest partner, in dialogue, has been philosophy. Successive schools of philosophy have inspired innovative theological thinking, offered categories for elucidating theological ideas, and interpreted the changing interests of society.

Judeo-Christian theology, in particular, has been intimately involved with history, because in the biblical tradition, history is the medium of revelation, and the historical assertations of faith, have to be scrutinized and tested like other historical assertions. Psychology, sociology, and anthropology all involve the study of religion, and although their methods and aims are different from those of theology, they often throw light on the course of theological development. Theology must also draw on the natural sciences -- for instance, in investigating how the doctrines of creation and providence are related to

the world, described by science. Finally, during the late 20th century, theologians of the great world religions have entered into dialogue with one another, establishing a common ground and exploring differences.

Trinity (theology), in Christian theology, doctrine that God exists as three persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- who are united in one substance or being. The doctrine, is not taught explicitly, in the New Testament, where the word, *God*, almost invariably refers to the Father; but already Jesus Christ, the Son, is seen as standing in a unique relation to the Father, while the Holy Spirit, is also emerging as a distinct divine person.

The term, *trinities* was first used in the 2nd century, by the Latin theologian, Tertullian, but the concept was developed in the course of the debates on the nature of Christ. In the 4th century, the doctrine was finally formulated; using terminology still employed by Christian theologians, the doctrine taught the coequality of the persons of the Godhead. In the West, the 4th-century theologian, St. Augustine's influential work, *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity, 400-16) compared the three-in-oneness of God, with analogous structures in the human mind and suggested, that the Holy Spirit may be understood, as the mutual love between Father and Son (although this second point seems difficult to reconcile with the belief, that the Spirit is a distinct, coequal member of the Trinity). The stress on equality, however, was never understood as detracting from a certain primacy of the Father -- from whom, the other two persons derive, even if they do so eternally. For an adequate understanding of the Trinitarian conception of God, the distinctions among the persons of the Trinity, must not become so sharp, that there seems

The doctrine of the Trinity may be understood on different levels. On one level, it is a means of construing the word, God, in Christian discourse. God is not a uniquely Christian word, and it needs specific definition, in Christian theology. This need for a specifically Christian definition, is already apparent in the New Testament, where Paul says, "there are many `gods` and many `lords` -- yet, for us, there is one God, the Father**. . . .** , and one Lord, Jesus Christ"(1 Corinthians 8:5-6). These words constitute the beginning of a process of clarification and definition, of which, the end product is the doctrine of the Trinity. At another level, the doctrine may be seen as a transcript of Christian experience: The God of the Hebrew tradition had become known in a new way, first in the person of Christ, and then, in the Spirit that moved in the Church. On a third, speculative level of understanding, the doctrine reveals the dynamism of the Christian conception of God -- involving notions of a source, a coming forth, and a return (primordial, expressive, and unitive Being). In this sense, the Christian doctrine

has parallels, both in philosophy (the 19th-century German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel's Absolute) and in other religions (the Trimurti of Hinduism).

Synod of Ancyra

An important ecclesiastical **synod** was held at **Ancyra**, the seat of the Roman administration for the province of Galatia, in 314. The season was soon after Easter; the year may be safely deduced from the fact that the first nine canons are intended to repair havoc wreaked in the Church by persecution, which ceased after the overflow of Maximinus, in 313. The tenth canon tolerates the marriages of deacons, who previous to ordination, had reserved the right to take a wife; the thirteenth forbids chorepiscopi to ordain presbyters or deacons; the eightieth safeguards the right of the people in objecting to the appointment of a bishop whom they do not wish.

Synods of Antioch

Beginning with three **synods** convened between 264 and 269 in the matter of Paul of Samosata, more than thirty councils were held, in **Antioch**, in ancient times. Most of these dealt with phases of the Arian and of the Christological controversies. For example, the Catholic Encyclopedia article on Paul of Samosata .

It must be regarded as certain, that the council which condemned Paul, rejected the term, homoousios; but naturally only in a false sense used by Paul; not, it seems because, he meant by it, an unity of Hypostasis in the Trinity (so St. Hilary), but because, he intended by it, a common substance, out of which, both Father and Son proceeded, or which, it divided between them, -- so St. Basil and St. Athanasius; but the question is not clear. The objectors to the Nicene doctrine, in the fourth century, made copious use of this disapproval of the Nicene word, by a famous council.

The most celebrated took place in the summer of 341, at the dedication of the Golden Basilica, and is therefore called, *in encaenia*, *in dedicatione*. Nearly a hundred bishops were present, all from the Orient, but the bishop of Rome, was not represented. The emperor Constantius attended, in person.

The council approved three creeds. Whether or not the so-called “fourth formula” is to be ascribed to a continuation of this synod or to a subsequent, but distinct assembly of the same year, its aim is like that of the first three; while repudiating certain Arian formulas, it avoids the orthodox term, “homoousios,” fiercely advocated by Athanasius and accepted by the Council of Nicaea. The somewhat colourless compromise, doubtless proceeded from the party of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and proved not inacceptable to the more nearly orthodox members of the synod.

The twenty-five canons adopted, regulate the so-called metropolitan constitution of the Church. Ecclesiastical power, is vested, chiefly, in the metropolitan (later called, archbishop), and the semi-annual provincial synod, which he summons and over which, he presides. Consequently, the powers of country bishops (*chorepiscopi*) are curtailed, and direct recourse to the emperor, is forbidden. The sentence of one judicatory is to be respected by other judicatories of equal rank; re-trial may take place, only before that authority, to whom appeal regularly lies. Without due invitation, a bishop may not ordain, or in any other way, interfere with affairs lying outside his proper territory; nor may he appoint his own successor. Penalties are set on the refusal to celebrate Easter, in accordance with the Nicene decree, as well as, on leaving a Church before the service of the Eucharist is completed.

The numerous objections made by eminent scholars, in past centuries, to the ascription of these twenty-five canons to the synod, *in encaeniis*, have been elaborately stated, and probably refuted, by Hefele. The canons formed part of the *Codex canonum*, used at Chalcedon, in 451, and passed over into the later collections of East and West.

Basel, Council of (1431-49), the most troubled of the ecumenical councils of the Middle Ages, still not recognized as legitimate (at least in its entirety) by many historians and theologians. Held in Basel, Switzerland, it was properly convoked by Pope Martin V (reigned 1417-31) in conformity with the decree, *Frequens* of the Council of Constance (1414-18), which required periodic councils; after Martin’s death, it was confirmed by Pope Eugene IV (reigned 1431-47). In 1437, Eugene transferred it to Ferrara, Italy, and in 1438 to Florence, where in effect, an altogether new council was assembled, that won practically, universal recognition. The council, at Basel, defiantly continued as an anti-council, however; in 1439, it declared Eugene deposed, and elected an anti-Pope, Felix V. Perceived at the moment, as threatening to reopen the Great Schism, the council lost most of the support it still had. In 1449, by then, a mere

remnant, the council recognized the new Pope, Nicholas V, and decreed its own dissolution.

The Council of Basel, can best be understood, as the outcome of problems, left unresolved, by the Council of Constance. That council, had called for a general reform of the Church, and in its decree, *Sacrosancta* (the precise meaning, of which, historians continue to debate), seemed to place a council's authority above that of a Pope. For many churchmen, this conjunction meant, that a thoroughgoing reform of the Church could be accomplished, only if councils exercised supreme authority, with power, especially to regulate and reform the Pope and his Curia. Certainly, self-serving motives contributed, as well, to the adoption by prelates and princes of the radical conciliar theory, that animated the council, from the beginning.

Eugene, not always diplomatically adroit in dealing with the council, resented and feared its conciliarism, its anti-papalism, its independent efforts to deal with the Hussite heretics, and its attempts to strengthen its hand, by seeking a reconciliation with the Eastern Church. Eugene himself, carried this last project to a successful, if temporary, conclusion at the Council of Florence (1438-45).

The Council of Basel, at its height, had some 500 members, but bishops and abbots were never well represented. The most celebrated participants, were the German theologian, Nicholas of Cusa and the Italian humanist, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), both of whom, later abandoned conciliarist positions. Basel signified the peak and the effective defeat of radical conciliar theory, which, amid the circumstances of this council, degenerated into mere anti-papalism.

Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).

The **Third Council of Carthage** was not a general council, but a regional council of African bishops, much under the influence of Augustine. The English text below is from Metzger.

Canon 24. Besides the canonical Scriptures, nothing shall be read in Church under the name of divine Scriptures. Moreover, the canonical Scriptures are these: Genesis,

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua the son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, the four books of the Kings, (a) the two books of Chronicles, Job, the Psalms of David, five books of Solomon, (b) the book of the Twelve [minor] Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Tobias, Judith, Esther, the two books of Ezra, (c) and the two books of the Maccabees. The books of the New Testament: the Gospels, four books; the Acts of the Apostles, one book; the epistles of the apostle Paul, thirteen; of the same to the Hebrews, one epistle; of Peter, two; of John the apostle, three; of James, one; of Jude, one; the Revelation of John. Concerning the confirmation of this canon, the Church across the sea, shall be consulted. On the anniversaries of martyrs, their acts shall also be read. (d)

(a) That is, First and Second Samuel and First and Second Kings

(b) The five books ascribed to Solomon in the Septuagint are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon, and the Psalms of Solomon.

(c) That is, Ezra and Nehemiah.

(d) Text according to Metzger. According to Zahn (Geschichte, ii, pp. 252-3), in 419, another council held at Carthage gave the concluding words in the following form: "the Revelation of John, one book. Let this be sent to our brother and fellow-bishop, Boniface [of Rome], and to the other bishops of those parts, that they may confirm this canon, for these are the things that we have received from our fathers to be read in Church." And so in Westcott.

Chalcedon, Council of, fourth ecumenical council, summoned, in 451, by the Eastern emperor, Marcian, at the behest of Pope Leo I, to overturn the decisions of the so-called Robber Synod of Ephesus and to consider the Eutychian controversy. About 600 bishops attended the 17 sessions, that were held between October 8 and November 1.

The council condemned Eutychianism (upheld by the Robber Synod), also called Monophysitism, the doctrine, that Jesus Christ possesses a single divine nature and no human nature at all. The Chalcedonian Definition, based on Pope Leo's formulation, in his *Tome* to Flavian, the bishop of Constantinople, and the synodical letters of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, to Nestorius established, that Christ has both, a divine and a human nature, which exist inseparably, within Him. The chalcedonian Definition represented a compromise between Mono-physitism and Nestorianism (the latter emphasized the distinction between Christ's divine and human natures). This compromise provoked a schism in Egypt, where Monophysite sympathies were strong (the Coptic Church remains a Monophysite body, to this day).

The council, also promulgated 27 canons governing ecclesiastical discipline and hierarchy and clerical conduct; all were accepted by the Western Church. A 28th canon, however, which would have granted the bishop of Constantinople, the title of patriarch and status in the East equal to that of the Pope in Rome, was rejected.

Jesus Christ: The settlement at Chalcedon

The settlement at Chalcedon

The basis of the settlement was the Western understanding of the two natures in Christ, as formulated in the *Tome* of Pope Leo I, of Rome. Chalcedon declared: "We all unanimously teach **. . .** one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in deity and perfect in humanity **. . .** in two natures, without being mixed, transmuted, divided, or separated. The distinction between the natures, is by no means, done away with, through the union, but rather, the identity of each nature is preserved and concurs into one person and being." In this formula, the valid emphases of, both Alexandria and Antioch, came to expression; both the unity of the person and the distinctness of the natures were affirmed. Therefore, the decision of the council of Chalcedon has been the basic statement of the doctrine of the person of Christ, for most of the Church, ever since. The western part of the Church, went on to give further attention to the doctrine of the work of Christ. In the eastern part of the Church, the Alexandrians and the Antiochians continued the controversies, that had preceded Chalcedon, but they clashed now, over the question of how to interpret Chalcedon. The controversy over the Monophysite and the Monothelite heresies, was an effort to clarify the interpretation of

Chalcedon, with the result, that the extremes of the Alexandrian position were condemned, just as the Nestorian extreme of the Antiochian had been.

Emerging from all this theological discussion, was an interpretation of the person of Christ that affirmed, both His oneness with God and His oneness with humanity, while still maintaining the oneness of His person. Interestingly, the liturgies of the Church had maintained this interpretation, at a time, when the theologians of the Church were still struggling for clarity; and the final solution was a scientifically, precise, restatement of what had been present, germinally, in the liturgical piety of the Church. In the formula of Chalcedon, that solution finally found the framework of concepts and of vocabulary, that it needed to become intellectually consistent. In one sense, therefore, what Chalcedon formulated, was what Christians had been believing from the beginning; but in another sense, it represented a development from the earlier stages of Christian thought.

Constance, Council of, ecclesiastical council, that met in the imperial city of Constance (Konstanz), from 1414 to 1418. It was convoked by Antipope John XXIII, at the request of Sigismund, Holy Roman emperor. The specific purpose of the council, was to settle the question of the papal succession, claimed by John and by Pope Gregory XII and Antipope Benedict XIII. It was also intended, to end the schism in the Western Church, formulate ecclesiastical reforms, and oppose heresies.

The most important results of the council were the decisions that its rulings were binding, even on the Pope, and that regular meetings of such councils, must be held. The members of the council regularized the voting procedure for papal elections and chose Cardinal Ottone Colonna, who became Pope Martin V. The selection of the new Pope, ended the schism between the Popes of Rome and Avignon. The council, also condemned as heretical, the doctrines of the English religious reformer, John Wycliffe and those of the Bohemian religious reformers, John Huss (Jan Hus) and Jerome of Prague. The two Bohemians, were later condemned to death at the stake by the secular authorities.

The Council of Constance has been, and is still, the object of much controversy, especially concerning the supremacy of a general council over the Pope. The central issue is the questionable legitimacy of the first part of the council, which dealt with supremacy, because it had been convened by John XXIII, an anti-pope. The issue is

further confused, by the enigmatic approval by Martin V, of the decisions of the council: the text of his approval contains a clause, that seems to rule out the questionable first part of the council.

Constantinople, Councils of, eight councils of the Christian Church, held at Constantinople. In the Western Church, only four of these councils are recognized as ecumenical: the first three and the sixth, which is called the Fourth Council of Constantinople.

First Council of Constantinople (381). This council was the second ecumenical council of the Church. It was convened by Theodosius, I, the emperor of the East. The 150 bishops meeting at the council, condemned various religious sects, as heretical, reaffirmed the resolutions of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea (325), defined the Holy Spirit as consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father and the Son in the divine Trinity, and proclaimed the bishop of Constantinople, second in precedence, to the bishop of Rome.

Second Council of Constantinople (553). This meeting at Constantinople was the fifth ecumenical council of the Church. It was convoked by Justinian I, Byzantine emperor, to consider the writings of the Greek theologians, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ebas of Edessa. These writings, known as the Three Chapters, had been approved by the fourth ecumenical council, held at Chalcedon, in 451. The council of 553, however, condemned the Three Chapters and anathematized their authors.

Third Council of Constantinople (680). The third council held at Constantinople was the sixth ecumenical council. It met at the request of Constantine IV, Byzantine emperor (reigned 668-85), to condemn Monothelitism, a doctrine, declaring that Jesus Christ had only one will, even though he had two natures (human and divine).

Fourth Council of Constantinople (691). The fourth meeting held at Constantinople was called by Justinian II, Byzantine emperor (reigned 685-95; 705-11), to enact a legislative code for the Church. This code later became part of the canon law of the Orthodox Church, but was largely rejected by the Church in the West. The council of

691, was regarded in the East, as supplementary to the previous ecumenical councils (the fifth and sixth), and is therefore known, as the Quinisext Synod (Latin, “fifth-sixth”). This council, was also sometimes called, the Trullan Synod, from its meeting place in the *trullum* (“dome”) of the emperor’s palace.

Fifth Council of Constantinople (754). The fifth council at Constantinople was called by Constantine V, Byzantine emperor (reigned 741-75), to deal with the problem of image worship. The council condemned the worship of images; this position, however, was rejected by the seventh ecumenical council, held at Nicaea, in 787, and the council of 754, was not recognized as ecumenical in the West.

Sixth Council of Constantinople (869-70). The sixth meeting at Constantinople is considered the Fourth Council of Constantinople by the Western Church and is recognized as the eighth ecumenical council. It was convened by Basil I, Byzantine emperor, to confirm his deposition of Photius, patriarch of Constantinople. Photius, who was the principal instigator of the 9th-century schism between The Eastern and Western Churches, was formally deposed. The council of 869-70, was not recognized by the Eastern Church.

Seventh Council of Constantinople (879). The seventh assembly at Constantinople was recognized, in the East, as the eight ecumenical council of the Church. It was called by Photius, who had been reinstated as the patriarch of Constantinople, in the previous year. This council, which repudiated the council of 869-70, was not recognized by the Church in the West.

Eighth Council of Constantinople (1341). The last council, held at Constantinople, was recognized, in the East, as the ninth ecumenical council of the Church. It was held to deal with the problem of the Hesychasts, a mystical sect of monks, living on Mount Athos. The council condemned the Greek monk, Barlaam, as a heretic for his opposition to the sect.

Ephesus, Council of (431), third general or ecumenical council of the Christian Church, held in Ephesus, an ancient city, in what is now, Turkey. The assembly was summoned by Theodosius II, emperor of the East, and Valentinian III, emperor of the West, to resolve the controversy caused by the heresy, known as Nestorianism.

The controversy began when Nestorius (died about 451), the patriarch of Constantinople, refused to accord the title “mother of God” to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Proponents of his view, emphasized the separateness of the human and divine in Christ, claiming in effect, that He was actually two separate persons, the one divine and the other human, who acted in agreement with each other. Accordingly, Mary was considered the mother of the Man, Jesus, not of the divine, Jesus. This was opposed to the accepted doctrine, that Christ was a single person, at once God and Man.

Under the leadership of St. Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, the council deposed Nestorius and condemned his doctrine. It declared, that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, that He has two natures (human and divine) joined in one person. As a logical extension of that view, the council approved the title “mother of God” (Greek *theotokos*, “God-bearer”) for Mary.

Council of Gangra; Meshovius, Arnoldus Synodus Gangrensis, euangelicae promulgationis anno circiter trecentesimo congragata**…**Explicata commentariolis Ioannis Quintini; Historiae Anabaptisticae libri septem. *Paris*; *Cologne Andream Wechelum; Gerhardum Greuenbruch 1617* 4 to.2 works in one vol. 120 + 114ff. First work with woodcut device on title- and last pages, second work with woodcut device on title-page and with the final errata leaf, same work somewhat browned, in late seventeenth century English sprinkled calf BY N. ELLISON WITH HIS SIGNATURE ON AN ENDPAPER and price ‘Rel. 1s-6d, 1691,’ rebacked with most of original spine preserved.

First edition of the Greek and Latin canons of the Council of Gangra, a town in Paphlagonia, which took place between 325 and 381, although one can probably date it more precisely to between 362 and 370. Its main purpose was to assess and condemn the teachings of Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste and to reaffirm the following four main points: marriage may not be condemned, marriage may not be renounced out of contempt for it, women should not wear men’s clothes and they should not cut off their hair. A German edition appeared, in 1537, with preface by Luther. The second work seems to be the only edition of Meshovius’ history of the Anabaptists, from their beginnings, in 1521 to the tumultuous events in Munster, between 1532 and 1535, after which, the sect died out or went underground. Ellic Howe, A list of London Book-binders, 1950 informs us that Ellison was a stationer and bookbinder in Pall Mall. At the turn of the century, he was supplying James

Brydges, later Duke of Chandos, with stationery and bindings. i. Adams G2II; not in BMC; RLIN locates only the copy at Boalt Hall.

Council of Laodicea

The **Council of Laodicea** was a regional synod of approximately 30 clerics from Anatolia, (now modern Turkey). It took place around 363-364 A.D., during the close of a 26-year Roman war with Persia.

Contents

* 1 Historical context
* 2 Major concerns
* 3 Biblical Canon

Historical context

Rome's war with Persia had continued under the Emperor Julian, who died of battle wounds on the last campaign on June 26, 363. Officers of the army elected his successor, Jovian, on the battlefield. Julian, the last non-Christian ruler of Rome, was the last direct line descendant of Constantine, the first Christian ruler of Rome. During Julian's rule, the Christian desecration of pagan temples and persecution of pagans, in general, was replaced by a return to the persecution of Christians and an attempted revival of paganism.

Left in a precarious position far from supplies, Jovian ended the war with Persia, unfavorably for Rome. Both he, and Valentinian, who soon succeeded him, after his brief 8-month rule, that ended on February 17, 364, professed the Nicene creed. Valentinian named his brother, Valens, also a Christian, Co-Augustus. As the ruler of the eastern part of the empire, Valens worked to solve the theological problems that arose during Julian's non-Christian reign. During this turbulent time, west of the major battle sites of that war, clerics assembled in Laodicea, Phrygia Pacatiana (now Denizli, Turkey).

Major Concerns

The major concerns of the Council involved constricting the conduct of Church members. The Council expressed its decrees in the form of written rules or **canons**. Among the 59 or 60 canons decreed, several aimed at:

1. Limiting the privileges of neophytes,
2. Limiting duties of lesser clergy,
3. Limiting any dealings with anything heretical,
4. Limiting Judaizing among Christians.

This last one, canon 29, included no more resting on the Sabbath (Saturday), but restricted Christians to honoring the Lord on Sunday, even though canon 16, says the Gospels are to be read on the Sabbath. The Council of Chalcedon, in 451, approved the canon of this council, making these canon ecumenical.

Biblical Canon

There was some confusion about the number of canons decreed by the Council. The 59th canon restricted the readings in Church to only the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments. The 60th, listed the Biblical canon, only omitting the Apocalypse of John. This 60th canon, is missing from some manuscripts containing decrees of the council, giving rise to the impression, that the 60th canon, was added later. Such a list would be required, in order to obey the 59th canon, so adding such a list, if absent, would be helpful. Cyril of Jerusalem, circa 350, produced a list, matching that from the Council of Laodicea.

Lateran Councils, five ecumenical councils of the Roman Catholic Church, held in the Lateran Palace, Rome.

First Lateran Council
The first of these councils was held in 1123, during the pontificate of Callistus II; it was the first general council held in the West. Its most important decision, was the confirmation of the Concordat of Worms (1122), which ended the controversy between ecclesiastical and secular authorities over investiture. The council, also adopted canons, forbidding simony and the marriage of clergymen, and it annulled the ordinances of the anti-pope, Gregory VIII, (reigned 1118-21).

Second Lateran Council
The second council was held in 1139, under Pope Innocent II, (reigned 1130-43). It was called, to heal the schism caused by the anti-pope, Anacletus II, (reigned 1130-38) and decreed excommunication for his followers. The council renewed the canons against clerical marriage and forbade dangerous tournaments.

Third Lateran Council
The third council was held in 1179, under Pope Alexander III. It established the procedure for the election of a new Pope by a conclave of cardinals, decreeing that a two-thirds vote of the conclave was necessary for election.

Fourth Lateran Council
The fourth council was held in 1215, under Pope Innocent III. The most important of the Lateran councils, it was attended by two Eastern patriarchs, representatives of many secular princes, and more than 1,200 bishops and abbots. Among its 70 decrees, were a condemnation of two religious sects, the Cathari and the Waldenses; a confession of faith, containing, for the first time, a definition of transubstantiation; and order forbidding the foundation of new monastic orders; a requirement, that all members of the Western Church, confess and communicate, at least once a year; and arrangements for the calling of a new Crusade.

Fifth Lateran Council
The fifth council was called by Pope Julius II, in 1512, and continued by Pope Leo X, terminating in 1517. It forbade the printing of books without ecclesiastical authority and approved the concordat between Leo X and Francis I, king of France, which abrogated the liberties of the French Church.

Lyons, Councils of, two ecumenical councils of the Christian Church in the West, held at Lyons, France.

First Council of Lyons
The first of these councils was held in 1245, under Pope Innocent IV. The Pope called the council to overthrow Frederick II, Holy Roman emperor, who had driven him from Rome. The council excommunicated and deposed Frederick and absolved his subjects of their oaths of fealty; the actions of the council, however, had no political effect.

Second Council of Lyons
The second of these councils was held in 1274, under Pope Gregory X. Attended by some 500 bishops, it was called principally to effect a reunion of the Western and Eastern Churches, but although a reunion, was indeed, reached at the council, it proved transitory. Regulations, also were established, whereby Popes would be elected by a conclave of cardinals. The council was attended by St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas, died en route to it.

Nicaea, Councils of, two ecumenical councils of the Christian Church, held at Nicaea (now, Iznik, Turkey), a city of ancient Bithynia, in Asia Minor.

First Council of Nicaea
Held in 325, this first ecumenical council was convened by Constantine the Great, emperor of Rome, to settle the Arian dispute concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. Of the 1,800 bishops in the Roman Empire, 318 attend-ed the council. The Nicene Creed, which defined, the Son, as consubstantial with the Father, was adopted as the official position of the Church, regarding the divinity of Christ. The council, also fixed the celebration of Easter on the Sunday after the Jewish Pesach, or Passover, and granted to the bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, authority in the East in the fashion of Rome's quasi-patriarchal authority, which was not, as sometimes erroneously stated, the same as that

of the Pope. In this granting of authority, lay the origin of the patriarchates throughout the Church.

Second Council of Nicaea

Held in 787, the second of the councils, at Nicaea, was the seventh ecumenical council. It was convened by Irene, empress of the East, and attended by 350 bishops, most of whom were Byzantine. In spite of strong objections by the iconoclasts, the council validated the veneration of images and ordered their restoration in Churches throughout the Roman Empire.

Second Council of Nicaea

The **Second Council of Nicaea** was the seventh ecumenical council of Christianity; it met in 787 A.D., in Nicaea (site of the First Council of Nicaea) to restore the honoring of icons (or, holy images), which had been suppressed by imperial edict, inside the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Leo III (717-741). His son,

Constantine V, (741- 775), had held a synod to make the suppression official.

Second Council of Nicaea

Date	787
Accepted by	Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy
Previous Council (Catholic)	Third Council of Constantinople
Previous Council (Orthodox)	Council in Trullo
Next Council	Fourth Council of Constantinople
Convoked by	Empress Irene
Presided by	Irene
Attendance	350 (two papal legates)

Topics of discussion	Iconoclasm
Documents and statements	Veneration of icons approved

Chronological list of Ecumenical councils

Although the veneration of icons had been finally abolished by the energetic measures of Constantine V, whose iconoclastic tendencies were shared by his son, Leo IV, after the latter's early death, his widow Irene, as regent for her son, began its restoration, moved thereto by personal inclination and political considerations.

When in 784, the imperial secretary Patriarch, Tarasius, was appointed successor to the Patriarch, Paul IV, he accepted, on the condition, that intercommunion with the other Churches should be re-established; that is, that the images should be restored. However, a council, claiming to be ecumenical, had abolished the veneration of icons, so another ecumenical council, was necessary, for its restoration. Pope Adrian I, was invited to participate, and gladly accepted. However, the invitation intended for the oriental patriarchs, could not even, be delivered to them. The Roman legates, were an archbishop and an abbot, each named Peter.

In 786, the council met in the Church of the Apostles, in Constantinople. However, soldiers in collusion with the opposition, entered the Church, and broke up the assembly. As a result, the government resorted to a stratagem. Under the pretext of a campaign, the iconoclastic bodyguard was sent away from the capital -- disarmed and disbanded.

The council was again summoned to meet, this time in Nicaea, since Constantinople was still distrusted. The council assembled, on September 24, 787. It numbered about 350 members; 308 bishops or their representatives, signed. Tarasius presided, and seven sittings were held, in Nicaea. Proof of the lawfulness of the veneration of icons, was drawn from Ex. xxv. 17 sqq.; Num. vii. 89; Heb. ix. 1 sqq.; Ezek. xli., and Gen. xxxi. 34, but especially from a series of passages of the Church Fathers; the authority of the latter was decisive.

It was determined that “As the sacred and life-giving cross is everywhere, set up as a symbol, so also, should the images of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the holy angels, as well as those of the saints and other pious and holy men, be embodied in the manufacture of sacred vessels, tapestries, vestments, etc., and exhibited on the walls of Churches, in the homes, and in all conspicuous places, by the roadside and everywhere, to be revered by all, who might see them. For the more, they are contemplated, the more they move, to fervent memory of their prototypes. Therefore, it is proper to accord to them, a fervent and reverent adoration, not, however, the veritable worship which, according to our faith, belongs to the Divine Being, alone -- for the honor accorded to the image, passes over to its prototype, and whoever adores the image, adores in it, the reality of what is there, represented.”

The clear distinction between the adoration, offered to God, and that accorded to the images, may well be looked upon, as a result of the iconoclastic reform. The twenty-two canons drawn up, in Constantinople, also served ecclesiastical reform. Careful maintenance of the ordinances of the earlier councils, knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of the clergy, and care for Christian conduct are required, and the desire for a renewal of ecclesiastical life, is awakened.

The papal legates voiced their approval of the restoration of the veneration of icons in no uncertain terms, and the patriarch sent a full account of the proceedings of the council to Pope Adrian I, who had it translated (the translation, Anastasius, later replaced with a better one).

This council is celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church, as “The Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy,” each year, on the first Sunday of Great Lent, the fast that leads up to Easter.

Jesus Christ: The councils of Nicaea and Constantinople

The councils of Nicaea and Constantinople

Early heresies

From the outset, Christianity has had to contend with those who misinterpreted the person and mission of Jesus. Both the New Testament and the early confessions of the Church referred and replied to such misinterpretations. As the Christian movement gained adherents from the non-Jewish world, it had to explain Christ, in the face of new challenges.

These misinterpretations touched, both the question of His humanity and the matter of His deity. A concern to safeguard the true humanity of Jesus led some early Christians to teach that Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary Man, was adopted as the Son of God, in the moment of His baptism or after His Resurrection; this heresy was called, adoptionism. Gnostics and others wanted to protect Him against involvement in the world of matter, which they regarded as essentially, evil, and therefore, taught that He had only an apparent, not a real body; they were called, docetists. Most of the struggle over the person of Christ, however, dealt with the question of His relation to the Father. Some early views were so intent upon asserting His identity with the Father, that the distinction of His person, was lost, and He became merely, a manifestation of the one God. Because of this idea of Christ as a "mode" of divine self-manifestation, proponents of this view were dubbed "modalists;" from an early supporter of the view, it was called, "Sabellianism." Other interpretations of the person of Christ, in relation to God, went to the opposite extreme. They insisted so strenuously upon the distinctness of His person from that of the Father, that they subordinated Him to the Father. Many early exponents of the doctrine of the Logos, were also, subordinationists, so that the Logos idea itself, became suspect in some quarters. What was needed was a framework of concepts with which to articulate the doctrine of Christ's oneness with the Father, and yet, distinctness from the Father, and thus to answer the question (Adolf von Harnack): "Is the Divinity which has appeared on earth and reunited men with god, identical with that supreme Divinity, which governs heaven and earth, or is it a demigod?"

Jesus Christ: Nicaea

Nicaea

That question forced itself upon the Church through the teachings of Arius. He maintained that the Logos was the first of the creatures, called into being, by God, as the agent or instrument through which He was to make all things. Christ, was thus, less than God, but more than man; He was divine, but He was not God. To meet the challenge of Arianism, which threatened to split the Church, the newly converted emperor, Constantine, convoked in 325, the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church at Nicaea. The private opinions of the attending bishops, were anything but unanimous, but the opinion that carried the day, was that espoused by the young presbyter, Athanasius, who later became bishop of Alexandria. The Council of Nicaea determined, that Christ was "begotten, not made," that He was therefore, not creature, but creator. It also asserted, that He was "of the same essence as the Father" (*homoousios to patri*). In this way, it made clear its basic opposition to subordinationism, even though there could be, and were, quarrels about details. It was not equally clear, how the position of Nicaea and of Athanasius differed from modalism. Athanasius asserted, that it was not the Father nor the Holy Spirit, but only the Son, that became incarnate, as Jesus Christ. But, in order to assert this, he needed a more adequate terminology concerning the persons in the Holy Trinity. So the settlement, at Nicaea, regarding the person of Christ, made necessary, a fuller clarification of the doctrine of the Trinity, and that clarification, in turn, made possible, a fuller statement of the doctrine of the person of Christ.

Council of Sardica

The **Council of Sardica** was called as an Ecumenical Council in 342, 343, or 347, in response to the Arian Heresy. Co-Augusii Constans and Constantius, the 2 remaining sons of Constantine, worked together at the urging of Pope Julius, in response to this heresy, that not only divided the Church, but the State, as well. Constans, Augustus in Rome, favored the Nicene bishops, while Constantius, Augustus in Constantinople, often supported Arian ones. To help insure equal representation to solve this divisive issue, Sardica (now Sofia in Bulgaria) was chosen, as a location near the division between eastern and western portions of the Roman State. However, fearing domination of the council by Western bishops, many Eastern bishops left the council to hold another council in Philippopolis. As a result, the Council of Sardica failed to universally represent the Church and is not one of the official Ecumenical Councils.

Sardica produced 21 cannon. In addition to the attempt to resolve the Arian issue, other major points were:

1. Bishops should not attempt to recruit from diocese, other than their own.
2. Bishops should be permanent residents of their own diocese.
3. Bishops should spend most of their time in their own diocese (not at the court in Rome).
4. Bishops should not be transferred to another diocese.

Trent, Council of (1545-63), 19th ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, which, in response to the Protestant Reformation, initiated a general reform of the Church, and precisely defined, its essential dogmas. The decrees of the council, were confirmed by Pope Pius IV, on January 26, 1564, and they set the standard of faith and practice for the Church, until the mid-20th century.

The need for a council to reform the Church, was widely recognized during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17) failed, in this regard and concluded its deliberations before the new issues, raised by Martin Luther, had been articulated. As early as 1520, Luther called for a council to reform the Church and to settle the controversies that he had provoked. Although many leaders, on both sides, echoed this appeal, Pope Clement VII, feared that such a gathering might encourage the view, that councils, rather than the Pope, have supreme authority in the Church. Moreover, the political difficulties that Lutheranism created for Emperor Charles V, made other rulers, especially King Francis I of France, reluctant to support any action that might strengthen the emperor's hand, by relieving him of these difficulties.

Pope Paul III, was elected Pope, in 1534, partly on the strength of his promise, to convoke a council. After aborted attempts to meet, at Mantua in 1537 and at Vicenza in 1538, the council finally opened at Trent, in northern Italy, on December 13, 1545. Sparsely attended at first and never free from political obstacles, the council grew in numbers and prestige, over the course of the three periods, during which, it met.

First Period (1545-47). In many ways, the first period of the council, was the most successful. Once the many procedural questions were settled, the council addressed the central doctrinal issues, posed by the Protestants. One of the first decrees, affirmed that Scripture had to be understood within the tradition of the Church -- an implicit rejection of the Protestant principle of "Scripture alone." The long and sophisticated decree on justification, condemned the Pelagianism, that Luther detested, but at the same time, tried to define a role for human freedom, in the process of salvation. This session also addressed, less successfully, certain disciplinary questions such as, the obligation of bishops to reside in their dioceses.

Second Period (1551-52). After an interruption, caused by a deep political misunderstanding between Paul III and Charles V, the council, in its second period, turned its attention, particularly to, the sacraments. This session was boycotted by the French, but attended by a few Lutheran representatives.

Third Period (1561-63). Forced to adjourn, because of the outbreak of war, the council eventually reassembled, for its final period. Disciplinary questions dominated the deliberations, especially the unresolved problem of Episcopal residency, seen by many, as the key to implementing reform. The skillful papal legate, Giovanni Morone, reconciled opposing views and brought the council to conclusion. In 1564, Pius IV, published the Profession of the Tridentine Faith (from Tridentum, the ancient Roman name for Trent), summarizing the doctrinal decrees of the council. Despite its length, however, the council never dealt directly with the role of the papacy in the Church, an issue raised repeatedly, by the Protestants. Among the many theologians participating in the council, the most noteworthy, were Girolamo Seripando, Reginald Pole, Diego Lainez, Melchior Cano, and Domingo de Soto.

Significance

Besides resolving for Roman Catholics some crucial doctrinal and disciplinary questions, the council also imparted to their leaders, a sense of cohesion and direction that became an essential element of the revitalization of the Church, during the Counter Reformation. Today, historians judge that the council was interpreted and implemented in a narrower sense, than the participants intended, and some think, that it was of lesser importance in the Roman Catholic revival, than other factors of a more spontaneous nature. Nevertheless, the designation, Tridentine Era for the centuries in Roman Catholicism between Trent and the Second Vatican Council, reflects the decisive influence that the council had on the modern Catholic Church.

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