

Pre-Reformation Church History I and II: Lecture Notes

1959-1960

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Abstract

This is the first semester of a two-semester course in Pre-Reformation Church History. These lectures were transcribed from a sound-recording and only lightly edited, so they still have much of a spoken flavor.

The lectures begin with introductory matters, followed by a presentation of the world into which Christianity came, including the Roman Empire, Hellenism and Judaism. Thereafter the course is divided into centuries, this first semester covering the first four centuries of the Christian era. Typical topics include Christian interaction with the Roman Empire, Christian leaders and writers, various heresies and theological developments.

The second semester begins in the latter part of the fourth century AD with the rise of monasticism, and it goes on to discuss the careers of Jerome and Augustine. Then the fifth century is sketched, along with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The thousand-year period from then to the Reformation is first given in overview, and later discussed in more detail. Each century (or two-century period) includes a sketch of the secular or political situation, the various doctrinal controversies, monastic movements, the papacy, and principal writers and leaders. The rise of Islam and the Crusades are sketched, along with various movements leading toward the Reformation.

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Contents and Outline

I. Introductory.

A. The Method of the Course

B. The Value of Studying Church History

1. It can be a source of great encouragement to us
2. The purpose of studying Church History Negatively
 - a. Not to learn what is true in theology
 - b. not to learn how God desires us to worship Him
 - c. Is not to learn God's plan for our lives
3. The purpose of studying Church History Positively
 - a. To see how God has worked in the past
 - b. To see how Satan has worked in the past
 - c. To see how much of our social and religious culture is historical rather than logical or Biblical in origin
 - d. To become acquainted with great men of the past and to see the points of strength and weakness
 - e. To get illustrations for Divine truths

C. Divisions of Church History

1. History is a continuum -- breaks are not usually complete at any one point
2. Centuries are convenient means of general division
3. Church history is usually divided into three major sections
 - a. Ancient church history – After Apostolic Age
 - b. Medieval church history – After the fall of Rome
 - c. Modern church history – After the Reformation

D. Remarks about Dates

E. What is History?

F. What is the Church

G. What is Church History?

II. The World into which Christianity Came

A. The Roman Empire

1. Its Importance (in Church History)

2. How It Came into Being

- a. It was a Gradual Growth
- b. In Rome there had developed a constitutional system with a large measure of individual liberty
- c. A gradual extension of the rights of Roman citizenship to conquered peoples
- d. There was a concentration of power in experienced hands
- e. The Tensions which were largely the result of extremely rapid conquest, eventually resulted in concentration of ultimate power in one head

3. The nature of the Roman Empire

a. Strong Central Power

b. A Great Tradition of Law and of Personal Liberty

4. A rapid survey of the history of the Roman Empire

a. The Julian Line (30BC–68AD)

(1) Augustus (30BC–14AD)

(2) Tiberius (14–47AD)

- (3) Caligula (37–41AD)
- (4) Claudius (41–54AD)
- (5) Nero (54–68AD)
- b. The Flavian line (69–96)
 - (1) Vespasian (69–79)
 - (2) Titus (79–81)
 - (3) Domitian (81–96)
- c. The Nerva–Antonines (90–193)
 - (1) Nerva (96–98)
 - (2) Trajan (98–117)
 - (3) Hadrian (117–138)
 - (4) Antoninus Pius (138–161)
 - (5) Marcus Aurelius (161–180)
 - (6) Commodus (180–192)
- 5. Advantages to Christianity of the Existence of the Roman Empire
 - (1) Comparative Peace and Safety
 - (2) Lack of Borders
 - (3) Roads
- 6. Disadvantages to Christianity of the Existence of the Roman Empire.
 - a. The Great Importance of the Personality of the Emperor
 - b. The Development of Official Opposition

B. Hellenism

- 1. The Achievements of Greece
 - a. Culture, Science, Art, Literature, etc
 - b. Failure in Government
- 2. The Spread of Greek Civilization and Language. The Hellenistic Age
- 3. Advantages to Christianity
 - a. The Existence of a Common Language widely understood
 - b. This Language was Uniquely Fitted for the Expression of Complex and Sublime Ideas
 - c. Partly as a Result of Greek Philosophy, There was a Widespread Attitude of Skepticism Regarding Paganism and of Longing for Something Better
- 4. Disadvantages to Christianity
 - a. Many, particularly of the Lower Classes, were greatly attached to the Greek gods
 - b. The Widespread Skepticism of Everything Supernatural Among a Small but Influential Class

C. Judaism

- 1. Judaism was represented in all parts of the Empire
- 2. Factions among the Jews
 - a. The Sadducees
 - b. The Pharisees
 - c. The Essenes
- 3. High Spots in the History of Judaism During the First Two Centuries
 - a. The Destruction of Jerusalem 70 AD

b. Simon Bar Kokhba, 132 AD

III. The Church in the First Century

A. The Beginning of the Church

1. Evidence in Acts and the Epistles
2. The Importance of the Resurrection

B. The Period of Little Evidence

1. How does there come to be so little evidence?
 - a. The Type of Writing Material
 - b. The lack of Stimulus to Write History
 - c. The Expectation of the Soon-return of Christ
2. Why had God allowed such a gap in our knowledge?
3. Traditions about the Apostles

4. I Clement

5. Information from Non-Christian Sources

- a. Josephus
 - b. Suetonius on Claudius
 - c. Tacitus and Suetonius on Nero
6. Information on Domitian's Persecution

C. The Concluding Summary

IV. The Church in the Second Century

A. The Roman Empire

1. Nerva (96–98)
2. Trajan (98–117)
3. Hadrian (117–138)
4. Antoninus Pius (138–161)
5. Marcus Aurelius (161–180)
6. Commodus (180–192)
7. Septimius Severus (193–211)

B. Pliny's Correspondence with Trajan

1. Evidence of the spread of Christianity
2. Evidence of the Official Roman Attitude toward Christianity

C. Ignatius

1. His letters
2. His idea of martyrdom
3. His idea of the place of a Bishop
4. His Idea of the Catholic Church

D. The Apostolic Fathers

1. General Remarks
2. Early Christian Literature
 - a. Clement
 - b. Ignatius
 - c. Barnabas
 - d. Hermas
 - e. Epistle of Diognetus
 - f. Aside on the N.T. Apocrypha

3. Papias
4. Polycarp
- E. The Apologists
 1. First Apologists
(to Hadrian, all lost)
 - a. Quadratus
 - b. Aristides
 - c. Aristo
 2. Justin Martyr (ca.100–ca.166)
 3. Tatian of Assyria
 4. Melito of Sardis
- F. Gnosticism
 1. The Meaning of the word Gnosis
 - a. Previous de-Mythologizing of Pagan Religions
 - b. The Claim to Superior Knowledge
 - c. Apocryphal Books
 2. The Roots of Gnosticism in the First Century
 - a. New Testament Evidence
 - b. Simon Magus
 - c. Cerinthus
 3. Points Common to Most Gnostic Groups
 - a. The Claim to Possession of Higher Knowledge
 - b. Belief that Matter is Essentially Evil.
 - c. Belief in Angelic Intermediaries and in opposition between the good God and the creator of this world
 - d. Denial of the Incarnation
 - e. Their Attitude toward the body
 4. The Great Variety of Gnostic Groups
 5. Gnostic Leader--Marcion
 - a. His life
 - b. His relation to Polycarp
 - c. Marcion's Attitude toward the Scriptures
 6. The great spread and ultimate decline of Gnosticism
 7. Some Effects of Gnosticism on the Church
 - a. Determine exactly the True Books
 - b. Enlarge the Idea of a Catholic Church
- G. Persecution by Marcus Aurelius
 1. The Character of the Emperor
 2. The Persecution Particularly in Gaul
 3. The Cessation of Persecution under Commodus
- H. Irenaeus
 1. His Life
 2. His Opposition to Gnosticism
 3. A Source of Knowledge of Church History
 4. His Attitude Toward Other Christian Groups

J. Tertullian

1. The First Latin Theological Writer
2. His Life
3. His Writings
4. Tertullian's Influence

K. Montanism

L. the Papacy in the Second Century

I. The word Pope

2. The insignificance of most of the Roman bishops in the 2nd century
3. Anicetus (155–166)
4. Eleutherius (177–190)
5. Victor (190–202)

M. Conclusion of our discussion about this century

1. The Growth During This Century
2. Principal Centers of Christianity

a. Asia Minor

b. Antioch

c. Jerusalem

d. Alexandria

e. North Africa (Carthage)

f. Gaul

V. The Third Century

A. The Roman Empire

1. Septimius Severus (193–211)
2. Caracalla (211–217)
3. Elagabalus (218–222)
4. Alexander Severus (222–235)
5. Maximinus (235–238)
6. Phillip the Arabian (244–249)

B. Monarchianism

I. Dynamic Monarchianism

2. Patrapassianism

3. Sabellianism or Modalism

4. Beryllus of Bostra

C. Hippolytus

D. Clement and Origen

1. Clement of Alexandria

a. The Catechetical School

b. His writings

c. The Allegorical Method

d. Clement's reference to the Didache

2. Origen

3. Origen's Writings

4. Origen's Views

E. Roman Emperors from 249 to 300

1. Decius (249–251)
2. Valerian (253–260)
3. Gallienus (260–268)
4. Aurelian (270–275)
5. Beginning of Diocletian's Reign (284–305)

F. Cyprian

1. His life in general
2. Cyprian's Idea of the Church
3. The Controversy over his Flight
4. The Problem of the Lapsed
5. The Novatian Schism
6. The Problem of Heretical Baptism
7. Cyprian's Relation to Rome
8. Cyprian's Martyrdom

G. Mythraism and Manichaeism

1. Mythraism
2. Manichaeism

H. Neo-Platonism

1. Its Background
2. Ammoniacus Saccas
3. Plotinus
4. Porphyry

J. Forty Years of Freedom from Persecution

1. Growth of the Church
2. Worldliness
3. Paul of Samosata
4. Lucian

K. The Church of Rome in the 3rd Century

VI. The Church the Fourth Century

A. The Persecution of Diocletian

1. The Situation at 303
2. The Outbreak of Persecution
3. The Attitude of Constantius Chlorus
4. Persecution in the East
5. The Greatest Persecution in the History of the Christian Church
6. Persecution in Italy and North Africa
7. The Death of Galerius

B. Constantine the Great

1. The Rise of Constantine
2. Constantine's Victory
3. Edict of Toleration, 313 AD
4. The Advance in Christian Scholarship under Constantine
 - a. Eusebius' Church History
 - b. Copies of the Bible

c. Study of Palestine

- (1). Increased interest in Palestine
- (2). Constantine's Mother
- (3). Eusebius' Onomasticon
5. The Donatist Schism
6. Constantine's Social Legislation
7. The Council of Nicea
8. The Founding of Constantinople
9. The Alleged Donation of Constantine
10. Constantine's character and Achievements

- a. His Character
- b. His Effect on the Christian Church
- c. His Baptism
- d. His Place in Secular History and in Church History
- C. The Rise of Arianism and the Council of Nicea

1. The Rise of Arianism
- a. Its Leader
- b. Its Background
- c. Its Views. The views of Arianism
- d. Its Dissemination
- e. The Opposition to Arianism
- f. Constantine's Attitude

2. The Council of Nicea
- a. The Calling of the Council
- b. The Deliberations
- c. The Homoousian Creed
- d. Other Acts of the Council

- (1). The Melitian Schism
- (2). The Matter of Easter
- (3). Centers of Church Leadership
3. The Arian Controversy to the Death of Constantine
- a. The Work of Athanasius
- b. The Political Maneuvers of the Arians
- c. The Exile of Athanasius
- d. the Return and Death of Arius

D. The Reign of Constantius

1. The Sons of Constantine
2. The Progress of Arianism
- E. The reign of Julian (361–363)

1. Julian's Background
2. Julian's Religion
3. Julian's Attitude to Christianity
- F. The Downfall of Arianism (363–381)
1. The Attitude of Valens (364–377)
- a. The Reign of Jovian

- b. The Accession of Valens
- c. The Efforts of Valens to carry out the policies of Constantius
- d. The Death of Valens
- 2. The Last Years of Athanasius
- 3. Hillary of Poitiers
- 4. The Cappadocian Fathers
 - a. Basil the Great
 - b. Gregory of Nazianzus
 - c. Gregory of Nyssa
- 5. The Elevation of Ambrose in Milan
- 6. The Accession of Theodosius
- G. The First Council of Constantinople
 - 1. The Calling of the Council
 - 2. The End of Arianism
 - 3. Macedonianism
 - 4. Apollinarianism
 - 5. Gregory and Nectarius

SECOND SEMESTER, Spring 1960.

Abstract

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- H. The Beginning of Monasticism
 - 1. Causes of this Development
 - a. The Example of Paul.
 - b. The desire to escape the worldliness of the Roman Empire
 - c. The Condition of the Egyptian and Syrian Deserts
 - 2. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony
 - a. Paul of Thebes
 - b. St. Anthony
 - 3. The Influence of Athanasius

4. Basil the Great
5. Pachomius

J. The Church at Rome during the Fourth Century

1. Sylvester I (314–335)
2. Julius I (337–352)
3. Liberius (352–366)
4. Damasus I (366–384)

K. The Roman Empire in the Last Third of the Fourth Century

1. Valens (364–378)
2. Gratian (375–383) (West)
3. Theodosius I (378–395) (East)

L. St. Jerome

1. His birth and early life
2. Jerome's life in the Syrian Desert
3. Jerome at Rome
4. Jerome at Bethlehem
5. The Vulgate
6. Jerome's Commentaries
7. Jerome's Other Works.
8. The Origenistic Controversy
9. The Monastic Controversies
 - a. Jovinian
 - b. Helvidius
10. Jerome vs. Augustine: Views of Inspiration
[See VII–H. Augustine's Relations with Jerome]
11. Jerome c. Augustine: The Pelagian Controversy
[See VII–J. The Pelagian Controversy]
12. Conclusion regarding Jerome

M. The Downfall of Paganism

N. St. John Chrysostom

VII. St. Augustine

A. Augustine's Early Life.

B. Augustine's Conversion.

C. Augustine as Bishop

D. Augustine's Confessions

E. The Manichean Controversy

F. The Donatists

G. The City of God

1. The Political Situation
 - a. The Barbarian Invasion
 - b. The Sack of Rome
2. The Pagan Reaction
3. Augustine's Answer
4. Effect of the Book

H. Augustine's Relations with Jerome

J. The Pelagian Controversy (411–431)

1. The Outbreak of the Controversy
 - a. Pelagius' Background.
 - b. Pelagius' Views
 - c. Coelestius
 - d. Pelagius and Coelestius visit Africa
 - e. Augustine's First Treatises Against Pelagius
2. Pelagius in Palestine
 - a. The Spread of Pelagianism
 - b. The Attitude of Jerome
 - c. The Synod at Jerusalem in 415
 - d. The Synod of Lydda
 - e. The Attack on Jerome's Monastery
3. The Controversy in the West
 - a. The North African Synod of 416
 - b. The Letter of Bishop Innocent
 - c. Augustine's Famous Sermon
 - d. The Action of Bishop Zosimus
 - e. The African Council of 418
 - f. The Edict from Honorius
 - g. Zosimus' Changed Attitude
4. Julian of Eclanum
5. Augustine's Doctrine of Predestination
6. The Council of Ephesus
7. Later History of the Controversy: Semi-Pelagianism
8. Semi-Augustianism

K. Augustine and the Church of Rome

1. The Immediate Effect of Augustine's Work on the Development of the Roman System

- a. The Donatist Controversy
- b. The City of God
- 2. The Ultimate Effect of Augustine's Work in this Regard
- 3. Augustine's Personal Relation
 - a. The Famous Sermon
 - b. Reaction to Zosimus' Attitude
 - c. Other Matters

L. Other Writings of St. Augustine

- M. The Last Days of Augustine
 - 1. The Political Developments
 - a. The Vandal Entrance into Spain
 - b. The Western Empire
 - c. Count Boniface
 - 2. Augustine's Death

VIII. The Fifth Century

A. The Political Developments

- 1. The Sack of Rome
- 2. The Vandals
- 3. The Huns
- 4. The End of the Western Roman Empire
- 5. Events in Britain
- 6. The Franks

B. The Church of Rome in the Fifth Century

- 1. Factors Contributing to its Importance
 - a. The Importance of the City
 - b. No Other City could compete for Leadership in the West
 - c. It was founded by Apostles
 - d. Removal of the Emperor from Rome left the Bishop as its most powerful citizen
 - e. Other Western Churches naturally looked to the Church of Rome for advice and for help
- 2. The Relation of the Roman Bishops to the Church of North Africa
- 3. The Comparative Insignificance of most of the Roman Bishops up to 440 AD
- 4. The Mission to Ireland, and the Work of St. Patrick.
- 5. Leo the Great (440–461)
 - a. His Character
 - b. His Activities for the Roman People
 - c. His Theological Leadership
 - d. His Papal Claims
- 6. Gelasius (492–496)

C. The Christological Controversy

1. General Remarks, Nature and Importance
2. Background of Trinitarian Controversy
3. The First Step, Apollinarianism
4. The Nestorian Council
 - a. Nestorius
 - b. His Views
 - c. The Opposition to Nestorianism
 - d. The Council of Ephesus
 - e. The Later Nestorians
5. Eutychianism or Monophysitism
 - a. Outbreak of the Controversy
 - b. The So-Called "Council of Robbers"
 - c. The 4th Ecumenical Council
 - d. Monophysite Schisms
 - e. Later Monophysite Controversies

D. Some Other Aspects of Church History in the Fifth Century

1. Monasticism
 - a. A Special Development of Monasticism
2. The 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon

IX. The Thousand-Year Interval

A. General Remarks as to its Relation to Church History

B. The General Political and Cultural Development.

1. The Cultural decline produced by the Migration
2. Lack of a Strong Center to Produce Peace and Order
3. The Dark Ages
4. Development of the Feudal System
5. The Theoretical Continuance of the Idea of the Roman Empire
6. The Ultimate Rise of Nationalism
7. The Preservation of Culture in the Monasteries
8. The Renaissance
9. Conditions in the Eastern Empire during this Period

C. A General Sketch of Movements in Church History during This Period

1. Monasticism
 - a. Formation of Orders
 - b. Celibacy
 - c. New Types of Monks
 - d. The Increase in Wealth of the Orders
 - e. Good and Bad Features of Monasticism
2. The Increase of Superstition

- a. Mariolatry
- b. The worship of the saints
- c. Transubstantiation
- d. Purgatory
- 3. Spiritual Movements
- 4. Scholasticism
- 5. The Growth of the Papacy
 - a. The Growth of the Local Ecclesiastical Power
 - b. The Bishop of Rome

X. The Sixth Century

- A. Survey of Secular History
- B. The Foundation of the Benedictine Order
- C. The Fifth Ecumenical Council
- D. Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 AD)
 - 1. The Mission to England
 - 2. Relations with the Bishop of Constantinople
 - 3. Purgatory
 - 4. Gregory's Writings

XI. The 7th and 8th Centuries

- A. Survey of Secular History
 - 1. Italy
 - 2. France
 - 3. Great Britain
 - a. Ireland
 - b. England
 - 4. The Eastern Empire
- B. Monothelism and the 6th Ecumenical council
 - 1. The Nature of the Controversy
 - 2. The Force of the Controversy
 - 3. The 6th Ecumenical Council (680 AD)
 - 4. The Question of the Orthodoxy of Honorius
- C. The Rise of Mohammedanism
 - 1. Its Teachings
 - 2. The Early Life of Mohammed
 - 3. The Hegira (622 AD)
 - 4. Mohammed at Medina

5. The Conquest of Arabia
6. The Wider Extension of Islam

D. The Irish and English Missions in the 7th and 8th Centuries

E. The Growth of the Empire of the Franks

1. Charles Martel
2. Pepin the Short
 - a. In 752 he took the title of king
 - b. Pepin Defeats the Lombards (754)
 - c. Pepin's Donation
3. Charles the Great, Charlemagne (716–814)
 - a. His Greatness
 - b. His Interest in Education
 - c. His Conquest of the Saxons
 - d. His Relations With the Bishop of Rome
 - e. The Establishment of the Holy Roman Empire (800)
 - f. The Character of Charlemagne

F. The Iconoclastic Controversy

1. The Origin of the Controversy
2. The Constantinople Council of 754
3. The 7th Ecumenical Council of 787
4. The Caroline Books

G. The Adoptianist Controversy

XII. The 9th and 10th Centuries

A. Political Developments

B. The Iconoclastic Controversy

C. Photius

D. The Papacy

1. Nicholas I (858–867)
2. Formosus (891–6)

E. Agobardus and Claudius

F. Radbertus and Ratramnus

G. The Papacy in the 10th Century

H. The Cluny Reform and St Dunstan

XIII. The 11th Century

A. Political Events

1. England
2. The Western Empire
3. The Eastern Empire.

B. The Papacy in the 11th century

1. Benedict IX
2. Renewed German Intervention
3. Hildebrand -- Gregory VII (1073-1085)
4. Sylvester II (999-1003).

C. Separation from the Eastern Church 1054

D. Berengar

XIV. The 12th Century

A. The Papacy

B. St Bernard of Clairvaux

C. The Crusades

D. Henry II of England

1. The Conquest of Ireland
2. Thomas à Becket (1118-1170)

E. Scholasticism

1. Anselm (1032-1109)
2. Abelard (1079-1142)
3. Peter Lombard (c.1096-1164)

XV. The 13th Century

A. Innocent III (1198-1216)

B. The Mendicant Orders

1. St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)
2. St Dominic (1170-1221)

C. Divergent Groups

1. Waldensians
2. The Albigenses or Cathari

D. The Inquisition

E. Scholars of the 13th Century

1. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274)
2. Roger Bacon (1225-1294)
3. Bonaventure (1221-1274).
4. Duns Scotus (c.1266-1308)
5. Raymond Lull (1232-1315)

F. The Papacy

1. Pietro da Morrone, Celestine V. (1294)
2. Boniface VIII (1294-1303)

XVI. The 14th Century.

A. The Babylonian Captivity of the Church

1. John XXII

B. Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342) and William of Ockham (1287-1347)

C. Urban VI (1378-1389)

D. John Wyclif (1320-1384)

XVII. The 15th Century

A. The Great Schism

B. John Huss (1369-1415)

C. The Council of Constance

1. Its Objectives
 - a. End the Schism
 - b. Reform the Church
 - c. The Hussite Movement
2. Its Beginning
3. Huss and Jerome of Prague
4. John XXIII (1410-1415)
5. Efforts at Reform
6. The New Pope Martin V

D. The Popes of the 15th Century

E. Europe on the Eve of the Reformation