

S T U D Y G U I D E

# Handout

# Church History

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*Renew your Mind.*

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# Introduction

1. “Church History” is here defined as the period from the end of the apostolic period to the return of Jesus
2. In these thirty-nine steps, I will try to bring the story of the church’s ascent and descent to the end of our own time in which each of us is writing his own page.
3. Your teacher subscribes to the childhood dictum that all history is *His story*.
4. All that comes to pass is eternally ordained by God (Lamentations 3:37), for His own glory, and the good of mankind.
5. This may seem strange because all history ends with heaven and hell (Matthew 25:31ff.). All can see that heaven is for the good of those who are there, but hell?
6. That is good, too, because all history is the “forbearance of God that leads to repentance” (Romans 2:4) and eternal life.
7. It is man himself who chooses not to repent and live, and it is good that he receive what he himself chooses to receive.
8. God is surely not to “blame” for what happens only when man, rejecting Him, leaves Him “out of the picture.”
9. Every historian has his own speciality in this vast field. Your professor’s is the development of doctrine, and that will be emphasized in this brief sketch. I took my Ph.D. at Harvard in history and religion and am professor emeritus of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, where I taught this subject for thirty years.
10. This course is called *Handout Church History* because each student receives a handout containing ten points from which I lecture extemporaneously. For those who want to go deeper we suggest among thousands of titles:
  - a. Heaviest: W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*
  - b. Less heavy: E. E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*
  - c. Lighter: *Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity*
  - d. Lightest: Kuiper, *Story of the Church*
  - e. Reference: Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* and Philip Schaff, *Creeks of Christendom*, 3 volumes

## 2

# The Bible and Church History (Part 1)

1. The Bible is the only inspired church history ever written (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. Or, that ever will be written.
3. Since it is God's Word, it is, of course, without any error in fact or judgment. Yes, the Bible was written by men; but if it is God's Word, He would not allow the human writers to err.
4. Someone will persist and say, "Then the human writers could not be really human if they could not err." If that were so, I reply, then Jesus Christ, who never erred, was not human. Enough said?
5. Since the Bible is the Word of God, all may read its inspired church history with absolute confidence in its contents.
6. But the Bible also has great relevance to the church history we are studying here.
7. First, the Bible tells us many things that will happen in our age. This helps us understand what is actually occurring. Events themselves are often like a train conductor calling out a station, almost indecipherably, until we see the posted sign outside our window.
8. Second, the Bible tells us this is all "His" story, so the Christian can rejoice in every episode, however sad it may be by itself alone. We can roll with every punch.
9. Third, the Bible tells us all that this world's history will end with the return of Jesus Christ. The Christian then knows that every day brings history closer to the blessed hope!
10. Fourth, depending on one's interpretation of the last book of the Bible, much of church history has been progressively unfolding so that the Christian knows that the time of the end is approaching without ever knowing the precise date.

## The Bible and Church History (Part 2)

1. Fifth, most important of all, the Bible is “normative” history, while merely human church histories are “descriptive.”
2. That means that the Bible tells us what church history ought to be, while “church history” only tells us what it is.
3. The non-biblically oriented church historian can only relate events but cannot judge their goodness or badness as can the biblical church historian.
4. I fancy I hear an expostulation from some members of the class: “How can there be any ‘badness’ or ‘ought not’ in history, if, as you say, all history is His story?”
5. Answer: His story means decreed or predetermined by God but not necessarily authored by Him. He eternally decreed (as we saw above) to allow men to choose to abuse divine forbearance and bring judgment on themselves, which they ought not to have done.
6. Back to the sequel to point #3 above. The biblical church historian should follow Emerson’s advice: “Hug the facts; then cut loose.” Let him, with the help of secular, non-biblical historians, gather the mere and sheer data and only then “cut loose” with biblical evaluations.
7. The difference between biblical and non-biblical church historians even surfaces in the names of courses taught. For example when you see a course in “New Testament and Early Church,” probably the professor does not believe that there is a qualitative difference between New Testament history and early church history, which there certainly is.
8. That is not to say that there is no quantitative continuity.
9. So, you should understand this course far better for knowing your Bible.
10. And, you should understand your Bible better for knowing this course.

## Second Century: The Church of the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists

1. As the church grew it encountered persecution. Indeed, it was persecution by which it grew.
2. Already by the end of the first and throughout the early centuries, it was the “blood of the martyrs that was the seed of the church.”
3. It may be that the Reformed church is not notably growing today because there is not enough “martyrdom.”
4. The nature of the church in the early second century is known mainly from the apostolic fathers such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and the Shepherd of Hermas.
5. Theirs was a relatively simple, trusting, biblical Christianity.
6. The second century was gradually recognizing that in the apostles, and especially Paul, God had given a final supplement of inspired Scripture to complete the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament.
7. It was the later “apologists” (such as Aristides, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus) who were to defend the divine truth of the Christian religion as its impact was being felt throughout the Roman Empire, including its educated classes.
8. That defense was what we today usually call “classical” or “evidential.”
9. It rested chiefly on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the miracles (especially of Christ), and the changed lives Christ produced.
10. Generally, the apologists (as the most famous, Justin Martyr) out-died as well as out-thought their heathen contemporaries.

## Third and Fourth Centuries: Nicaea and the Deity of Christ

1. The Bible teaches the deity of Christ.
2. The Christian church was founded on Christ. Those who believed in Him met together to worship Christ.
3. So where Christ was, there was the church.
4. But just as there was a Judas among the apostles there were antichrists in the church from its beginnings (1 John 4:1ff).
5. Those who later openly denied the deity of Christ were called Arians, after Arius (the presbyter of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria); but it was Origen (c. 185-254) who, though he apparently loved and worshiped Christ, nevertheless may have led Israel to sin by seeming to deny His full deity.
6. Whatever question there may be about Origen's teaching and intention, there can be no question about Arius' teaching and intention.
7. Emperor Constantius showed that the son of a godly father (Emperor Constantine) could become an Arian and an antichrist, though it must be admitted that his father had been more tolerant of Arians than Athanasius approved.
8. Not being for Christ, Constantius and others turned against Christ and his great advocate, Athanasius, successor of Alexander as bishop of Alexandria.
9. The first ecumenical council, Nicaea in 325, mixed multitude of ecclesiastical leaders that it was, became nevertheless the greatest ever because it affirmed that Christ was of the same substance as the divine Father, God.
10. After a half century of further struggle, the First Council of Constantinople (381) reaffirmed the deity of Jesus Christ and affirmed the deity of the Holy Spirit as well.

## Fifth Century in the East: Two Natures of Christ in One Divine Person

1. The theological battle did not end at Nicaea or even at Constantinople, though the standard of a divine Christ was raised for all of subsequent church history.
2. Granted that Jesus Christ was God, what was the church to make of His humanity?
3. As one modern heretic put it in answer to the question, Is Jesus Christ God? “Of course not. God is God.”
4. There were also those in the fourth century who could not see that if Christ was God He could be man (the Monophysites) or if He were man He could not be God (the Nestorians).
5. The great Council of Chalcedon in 451 did not tell the Monophysites and Nestorians *how* Christ could be both God and man, but it did tell them in almost inspired language, that it was so.
6. Jesus Christ, Chalcedon said, is God and man.
7. Jesus Christ is one God who has two natures: divine and human.
8. These two natures were not so combined that the human was absorbed into the divine (against the Monophysites).
9. Nor so separated that they became two persons and Christ a split personality (against the Nestorians).
10. From 451 to this day, the church has not essentially improved on what Chalcedon did for the glory of the incarnate Son of God.



## Fifth Century in the West: Augustine and the “Whole Counsel of God”

1. By the middle of the second century, the church had developed her Apostles' Creed and by the middle of the fifth century, her classical affirmation of the person of her Lord Jesus Christ.
2. She was propagating this elemental Gospel to the “world” from Jerusalem to India in the East, Britain in the West, and Africa in the South.
3. It remained for Christ's atoning work to be declared as clearly as His divine person in human form had been.
4. I note in passing that the church was following the doctrinal path of the apostles in the New Testament. First, the apostles had leaned that Christ was “the Son of the living God,” only to be told that He must go to Jerusalem and die (Matthew 16:13ff).
5. Nothing but his actual death could persuade them that their God could die (in the human nature).
6. But then Christ and “Him crucified” became the heart of their Gospel.
7. Before the Atonement was to receive its classical statement by the church, however, the “whole counsel of God” from which Paul had not shrunk lest he be guilty of the blood of men (Acts 20:20) had to be spelled out.
8. For this, Augustine (354-430), especially, was the architect.
9. He showed, as never before in church history, the depths of human depravity and the heights of a “double predestination.”
10. Augustine did not shrink from the whole counsel, but most of the church ever since has done so.

## Fifth Century in the West: Tertullian to Cyprian to Augustine and the True Church

1. One notices that the Apostle's Creed has no mention of predestination in the Christian life, though the apostles stressed such principles.
2. And Nicaea and Chalcedon, preoccupied with the person of Christ, had no time left for stressing the need of Christians to take up their cross and follow Him.
3. But Tertullian, who provided much of the very language of Christology, did stress the living Christ.
4. In fact, he thought so much of the duty of following Christ, living and dying for Him, that his ethical rigorism made him disgusted with the developing easy-believism.
5. Finally, he could stand it no longer and became a separatist from the church catholic (universal), joining a group that was, as most separatists are, worse than the faulty mother church from whom they separated.
6. Cyprian, another North African, affected by Tertullian, insisted on the purity of the church to the point of not accepting baptism by an impure priest.
7. Cyprian matched his practice to his strict preaching by dying a martyr. Thus he made his error seem as good as Cyprian was himself.
8. That made it all the more difficult for Augustine to show the church that though Cyprian's heart was right, his head was not always screwed on tightly.
9. But, thanks to Augustine again, we have a doctrine of the church that strives for a perfection she never reaches.
10. The church's unworthy ministers do not destroy the sacraments they administer even when they destroy themselves by hypocritically administering them.

## Fifth Century in the West: Fall of Imperial Rome and Rise of Ecclesiastical Rome

1. While the missionary church was using Roman roads, language, and civilization to Christianize the world, Rome and her culture were collapsing before the barbarians pouring over her borders.
2. Alaric the Visigoth, pushed by the Huns and later followed by the Huns themselves under Attila, poured into Rome, and only its bishop could persuade them to leave.
3. Thus began the fall of one Rome which tyrannized over the bodies of men to be succeeded by another Rome, which ultimately tyrannized over the bodies and souls of men.
4. Imperial Rome advanced by the sword and ruled by the sword. Ecclesiastical Rome was to conquer and rule by two swords: ecclesiastical and political.
5. There can be no question that political Rome gave birth to ecclesiastico-political Rome. Many scholars once held that Peter died a martyr in Rome after a twenty-five year bishopric. Hardly anyone believes that today, though Peter apparently reached Rome and died there as a martyr.
6. There is no question that Rome was Paul's city, twice visited and the place of his martyrdom, and Paul, not Peter, was the New Testament Moses.
7. But Rome, having settled on a misinterpretation of Matthew 16:18, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church..." and seeing Peter and not "Peter-in-faith-in-the-Lordship-of-Jesus-Christ-confessing," had to find a successor for him not even mentioned in the New Testament.
8. And Peter's successors were to become the ones to whom submission was necessary for salvation.
9. Once begun, this virtual deification of the papacy could not be stopped.
10. How this development came about will be traced in the next handout.

## Early Middle Ages: Ecclesiastico-Political Romanism

1. The establishment of the ecclesiastico-political Rome was the work especially of three popes: Hildebrand (1075-1089); Innocent III (1198-1216); and Boniface VIII (1294-1303)
2. The “Investiture Struggle”—who should ordain or crown whom? The king, the pope; or the pope, the king? This was a battle royal of political and ecclesiastical royalty.
3. In the East the battle had been won by the czars. In Islam the offices were combined in the sultanate.
4. In the West the battle was pitched between King Henry IV and Hildebrand, especially at Canossa (1077). There the emperor, who had been excommunicated and his subjects freed from submission by the pope, stood barefoot in the snow outside the papal palace begging for forgiveness.
5. The pope had to forgive a penitent, but he could not because he knew too well what would happen if he did.
6. The emperor won his pardon and the pope lost his throne—at least the occupation of it, for he was soon driven into exile where he died.
7. The ultimate papal triumph came with Innocent III, who, more than any pope before or since, controlled church and state. At the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), he commanded crusades, defined the seven sacraments (including transubstantiation), made confession necessary, and the penitential system the only way of salvation.
8. Boniface VIII in 1302 issued his *Unam Sanctum*, which made submission to the pope necessary for salvation.
9. He himself could not escape the power of Philip the Fair, king of France, in this world.
10. It has been said that he ruled like a lion, but died like a dog.

## The Thirteenth Century: Salvation by the Church

1. Once upon a time salvation was by Jesus Christ.
2. By the thirteenth century, salvation was by the church.
3. It was alleged that salvation was by the grace of God alone but that grace was available from the church alone.
4. The saving Gospel medicine came from above, from God; but it was given to the church to be administered by her.
5. A neat theological package. The recipient of grace could thank God for it and thank the church for letting him have it.
6. If God had not given it, the world would not have it; but, if they church did not release it, the world would perish. In summary:
  - a. The church administered baptism to the infants, which brought their regeneration.
  - b. The church administered confirmation, which brought the strengthening Holy Spirit.
  - c. The church administered the Eucharist, which fed the people with the body of Christ for the Christian journey.
  - d. The church in the confession administered forgiveness and required penitence for sins committed.
  - e. The church by extreme unction prepared the soul for transition to heaven, usually indirectly through purgatory.
  - f. For the clergy the church administered indelible orders and for the laity marriage.
7. Absolute certitude of salvation in the ecclesiastical way from womb to tomb was guaranteed by the church.
8. Only one problem: The system will not work.
9. It will not work because: (1) Baptism does not regenerate; (2) love is not produced apart from regeneration; (3) the works would not be meritorious even

if they were “good” works, which they are not; (4) all sins of an unregenerate person are mortal; (5) the penitential system is purely human performance, and as such, purely useless.

10. To see the deficiency another way, I cite the view of the historian of dogma, Seeberg, who remarks that *sola gratia* survived the Middle Ages but not predestination or irresistible grace. But without predestination and irresistible grace, *sola gratia* cannot survive or even begin to be.

## The Thirteenth Century: True Church “in the Wilderness”

1. Where was the church of Christ during all of this anti-Christian development?
2. Some of it, undoubtedly, was in the Roman fold, where the elect heard Christ’s voice above the cry of false shepherds as the blind man of the Gospels (John 9) heard Jesus as the Christ.
3. Outside the Roman fold, individual believers survived and a whole movement grew.
4. The Waldenses of the twelfth and following centuries walked shoeless through the streets of Europe preaching a simple, primitive form of the New Testament message, and many heard them gladly. Others also were crying out their hallelujahs, though this group was most prominent and clearly evangelical.
5. Even the organized church at first tried to embrace them, but the Waldenses marched and later died to a different drummer.
6. The Inquisition was more effective. Those it did not destroy it drove into hiding, especially into Alpine fortresses.
7. There the Waldenses survived to the Reformation and to the greater toleration of modern times.
8. Many interpreters see them as the woman-church of Revelation driven into the wilderness and there protected by her God.
9. Others see them as evidence that God will never let the visible church disappear totally from the world.
10. All see the Waldenses, along with the Lollards of Wyclif as an inspiration, as forerunners of the Reformation.

## The End of the Middle: A Summary

1. The great question concerning the church at the end of the middle is, Was the church still there?
2. We have seen vast corruption creep in during the Middle Ages. Some changes had taken place even during the era of divinely guided apostles. Especially was this so after they left the churches; fortunes to “ordinary officers” without any further supernatural guidance.
3. Christ is the only Head of the Christian church, but the pope had become His vicar and the only (for all practical ecclesiastical purposes) visible and real head.
4. From eminent to preeminent to indispensable, the pope had become head not only over the church but over the Christian empire as well.
5. Membership in the visible church had become necessary to salvation and submission to the pope necessary to membership in that church.
6. He had not yet been “defined” as infallible, but he was acting as if he were and was being accepted as such by many.
7. The councils had tried to control the papacy and failed.
8. On the other hand, justification by faith alone, the divine way of forgiveness and salvation, had not yet been explicitly rejected and condemned.
9. Nor had the church’s interpretation of the inspired Word of God yet been declared infallible and alone legitimate.
10. When Luther came on the scene to declare essential biblical verities, he had some reason to think that his admonitions would be heeded and the church become faithful to Jesus Christ.



## Forerunners of Luther: Wyclif and Hus

1. John Wyclif and John Hus could almost be considered English and Czech Waldenses. Not quite. They had a history of their own outside the Roman Church.
2. Wyclif was an Oxford professor who also professed a more orthodox Christianity, beginning with an attack on transubstantiation, an advocacy of saving personal faith, and a free independent church.
3. If he had not had the support of the nobleman John of Gaunt, he could have met martyrdom in this world rather than the posthumous martyrdom of having his bones dug up by the Roman Church, burned, and ashes cast into the waters.
4. John of Gaunt and other nobles felt they could defend Wyclif no longer when his attacks on the church became more radical.
5. Wyclif, in ill health, retired to Lutterworth, where he died in 1384, an even century before the birth of Luther. But not before, like Luther, in exile he did his most important literary work of beginning the translation of the Bible.
6. Luther was never to call himself a Wyclifite but a Hussite.
7. Though Hus was a foreign disciple of Wyclif, it was he who suffered martyrdom at the Council of Constance for principles Luther was later to adopt.
8. Hus had caught the Gospel contagion from Wyclif, expressing it in various ways, including a demand of the cup for the laity.
9. The “utraquists” (communion in both kinds) could not be tolerated by the church, though Christ had so instituted the Supper.
10. The principle of the Reformation is now alive: Individuals finding for themselves biblical truths denied by the church who will part with their lives rather than those principles.

## Forerunners of Luther: Lyra, Valla, Erasmus, and Ockham

1. One does not always think of these men, who never broke with the church (not to mention paying with their lives for so doing), as forerunners of the Reformers.
2. But they were children of the Renaissance if not of the Reformation, and there is some question whether there could have been a Reformation without a Renaissance.
3. Renaissance meant rebirth, referring to Greek and Latin culture, which had been largely lost by the barbarian invasions of Europe.
4. God uses natural or common grace as well as supernatural or special grace for the well-being of His church.
5. Let me explain. When man fell he lost the moral image of God (holiness) but not the natural image of God (reason and will).
6. So natural man can and often does cultivate the things of the mind and will, however sinfully motivated. Knowledge puffs up but it is useful, as seen in art, music, literature, and culture in general. The Renaissance mind can gain the whole world while losing its soul, but for those whose souls are alive, its culture can be a great blessing.
7. So it was said that Nicolas of Lyra played the lyre to which Luther danced. Being interpreted, this means that Nicolas' great scholarship producing many learned biblical commentaries showed Luther how to use scholarship in his profound evangelical penetration of the Word of God.
8. Lorenzo Valla, closer to Luther's time, by his critical researches on the forged "Donation of Constantine" and on Scripture itself, showed Luther the way of necessary biblical exegesis or exposition from the original languages.

9. Saying Erasmus, whose life overlapped Luther's laid the egg Luther hatched seems especially strange inasmuch as Erasmus' and Luther's theology were polemically opposed. Yet it was Erasmus' biblical scholarship that made Luther possible.
10. Probably the greatest non-reformational forerunner of Luther's Reformation was William of Ockham, an English Franciscan monk whose unsound philosophical and theological principles indirectly led Martin Luther in the true path.

## Forerunners of Luther: Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life

1. What came closest to the Reformation before the Reformation was the movement called the Brothers (and later also Sisters) of the Common Life.
2. It began with G. Groote in the Netherlands and ultimately spread through other parts of the European church.
3. These brothers and sisters were lay people who seemed alive in Christ, spreading the Gospel and doing much good among the common people, especially the poor and needy.
4. The most famous adherent was known as Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380-1471), author of the immortal *Imitation of Christ*.
5. Along with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, it is the world's bestseller next only to the Bible.
6. It was a study in the inner life of the devout Christian, showing him how to mediate and practice especially the teachings of Jesus.
7. The emphasis was on humility, love, service, and preparation for the sacrament.
8. The *Imitation* gives no great development of soteriology but does point to deep piety and practice.
9. Why did this type of movement, useful as it was, not lead to reformation?
10. It was domesticated by the papal church as the Waldensian movement couldn't be. When Boniface IX recognized it and gave it standing in the church, reform was nipped in the bud.

## Forerunners of Luther: Savonarola

1. Savonarola was a one-man movement starting out like Luther's but with quite a different ending.
2. Like Luther, Savonarola was a monk, though in the Dominican order.
3. Like Luther, his opposition to the hierarchy's indifference to Christian thought and life was surprisingly successful, as the Medicis' Florence overnight became quite zealous and moral, burning their vanities and soberly reforming.
4. But the way that all came about was as fluky as Savonarola himself was genuine.
5. The Reformer of Florence had threatened divine judgment on the city's sins. He became specific, saying it would be by the king of France.
6. Savonarola did not know that the miracle of predictive prophecy had ceased with the apostolic age.
7. God, who is sometimes pleased to allow the deceived to remain deceived, permitted the successful and sobering invasion of Charles.
8. The easily and willingly deceived people saw this as divine confirmation of Savonarola. They repented wholesale.
9. Pope Alexander knew that if the Florentines could be impressed by one false claim, they might be impressed by an even greater false claim. He put the city under interdict, threatened the people, and excommunicated and arrested Savonarola.
10. Savonarola's last words as he was being burned may have been his greatest and truest: "You may cut me off from the church militant here below, but you cannot cut me off from the church triumphant above."

# Martin Luther

## (Part 1)

1. Luther was born in 1483.
2. Though his father was a humble miner, Luther's family gave him a good humanistic education, hoping he would become a lawyer.
3. It took a bolt of lightning striking a friend to drive Martin to the cloister.
4. An Augustinian monk and scholar, it took a trip to corrupt Rome and a jolt of Augustine's orthodoxy plus a bolt from heaven through Romans 1:17 to make a Protestant Reformer out of him.
5. Even then, his father-confessor reassuring him that the Roman was Christ's church and that the agitated monk might still have faith in her, he remained faithful to Rome.
6. It was the church herself which seems to have awakened Luther to the conviction that she was no longer the holy apostolic church of the New Testament.
7. Aroused by the crass selling of indulgences by Tetzl, Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses to the Wittenberg chapel door, challenging various ecclesiastical ideas and practices of the established church.
8. There were no clear affirmations of the great Protestant principle of justification and the priesthood of believers but only a questioning of the sacramental system that had prevailed unchallenged for centuries.
9. That you don't question the unquestionable Luther learned soon enough. First, his Augustinian order summoned him to Heidelberg in 1518; then Cardinal Cajetan summoned him to Augsburg in 1519; and finally John Eck met him in debate at Leipzig.
10. That was where Luther learned that not only popes but councils as well could err.

## Martin Luther (Part 2)

1. When Luther became a “Hussite,” the Reformation was born. Not in 1509, when Augustine was discovered and the Reformation was born in Luther’s mind, or in 1513’s “experience in the tower,” when it was born in his heart, or 1517, when the theses were posted and the Reformation had its external beginnings, but in July 1519, when Luther himself was born as one who would stand for the Reformation, though a council disapprove and martyrdom be the price as it was for John Hus.
2. The Brethren of the Common Life may have seen what Luther saw but they came to terms with the papacy. Lefevre certainly saw what Luther saw, but he was not speaking for the record.
3. But the “Here I stand” Luther was born at Leipzig, though it was not historically clear until he said those words at the Diet of Worms in April 1521, after an earlier excommunication.
4. The pope by excommunication could sentence Luther to hell, but it was the emperor who had the power to send him there by execution.
5. That was the stark probability facing him at the parliament where he was asked if he recanted his writings and replied with the immortal “NO” and “Here I stand.”
6. When Luther said that, he would have become a Hussite martyr were he not rescued and hidden by his elector, Frederick the Wise, who was never wiser.
7. While the Reformer was in hiding, the Reformation went on in Wittenberg with a new twist from the charismatics of that day.
8. While Luther was in hiding he was accomplishing the greatest feat of his literary career: the translation of the Bible into German.
9. Luther returned to Wittenberg to remove these *schwärmer* [“fanatics”] and put the Reformation back on track.
10. Meanwhile, as the Reformer and his learned assistant Melanchthon were enjoying their drinks in a German beer garden, God was bringing down the “gates of hell” all over Europe.

## Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

1. Ulrich Zwingli was one of those ministers who was converted after, rather than before, entering his ministry.
2. Though his humanistic education was thorough and his preaching at Glarus in east Switzerland very affecting, it seems to have been his verse-by-verse preaching in Zurich that made a Reformer out of him.
3. Of course, where signs of spiritual life appeared the establishment became concerned. In this case, it was the bishop of nearby Constance.
4. Warnings were issued, but the people stood with their preacher. Hierarchical hands were tied, especially since Zwingli was considered to have bested the bishop in debate.
5. Zwingli was allowed to flourish and the reform spread from Zurich to Bern and regions around.
6. The Reformer's Sixty-five Articles of Faith showed, as the Swiss proudly claim, that their Zwingli was independently one with the German Reformer—a co-Reformer, not a warmed-over Luther.
7. Zwingli's special problem was with the Anabaptists who opposed infant baptism.
8. The Anabaptists felt, possibly correctly, that Zwingli (once opposed to baptism apart from faith) had compromised to hold his constituency.
9. True or not, Zwingli turned against the Anabaptists as enemies of the church and state. They opposed the state as of this world and tended to undermine its military, essential to defense against Roman Catholic forces.
10. It was indeed Roman Catholic military force that defeated the Protestant army at Kappel in 1531 and killed its chaplain, Ulrich Zwingli.



## Colloquy of Marburg (1529)

1. Prepare for the saddest event in early Reformation history.
2. When Zwingli learned that God was reforming the church in the North (Luther) and Luther learned that God was reforming the church in the South (Zwingli), they realized that they should discuss together their rediscovered evangelical truth.
3. The meeting was set for Marburg, one of the Lutheran centers in Hesse, under Prince Phillip, who convened the meeting in 1529.
4. Because Luther and Zwingli were too fiery to risk their dialoguing together, they coupled Luther with milder Oecolampadius of Basel and Zwingli with Melanchthon.
5. The two Reformed groups realized that they agreed on every doctrine except one—the Lord’s Supper. Such unanimity! But it was not enough.
6. For Luther, the bread of the Eucharist was the body of Christ. That is what Christ said. Luther wrote on the velvet cloth: *Hoc est corpus meum!*
7. The Swiss reminded Luther that Christ also called himself the vine and the door. That made no difference to Luther. *Hoc est corpus meum!*
8. Oecolampadius asked, “Martin, how is Christ any more present in the sacrament if He is corporeally present than He is when spiritually and dynamically?”
9. “I don’t know,” answered Luther, “but if Christ told me to eat dung I’d do it knowing it was good for me.” Not to believe Christ’s words was to be of “another spirit” (*andere geist*). For Martin Luther this one difference was nonnegotiable because it meant to him fidelity to Christ or infidelity.
10. Two ironic historical postscripts: (1) Luther saw a copy of Calvin’s writing on the Lord’s Supper (essentially like Oecolampadius’s views) and seemed to agree with it. (2) Manschreck, a Melanchthon authority, says that it was Melanchthon who stiffened Luther against the Swiss view of the Eucharist, fearing with would make reunion with Rome impossible.

## Philip Melancthon and Lutheran Slippage

1. We all know the not-too-funny joke that the man is the head of the family and the wife the neck, but it is the neck that turns the head.
2. It was something like that in Melancthon's relation to Luther. He not only helped Luther but was in awe of him.
3. Nevertheless, as we have seen, it was probably Melancthon and not Luther who turned the German Reformation against the Swiss, causing the first great division in Protestantism.
4. It was also Melancthon and not Luther who wrote the first Lutheran systematic theology. *Loci Cummunes* ("common places") was the first Protestant theology (1521), and it was Melancthon who negotiated with Roman Catholicism at Augsburg in 1530, though Luther was in the background keeping his associate in line.
5. Nevertheless, Melancthon never agreed with Luther's profound Augustinianism, though he never dared differ with him openly while Luther lived.
6. After Luther's death in 1546, immediately and openly Melancthon differed, and Lutheranism gradually slipped back to medieval semi-Augustinianism (called semi-Pelagianism).
7. There were violent criticisms of Melancthon's little steps backward toward the Calvinistic view of the Eucharist but little or none against his synergism (that God and the sinner cooperated in regeneration).
8. After the controversies within Lutheranism settled and the Book of Concord was adopted in 1580, the Lutheran movement became Luther-anism, not Lutherism or Lutheranism—a very subtle form of synergism that few recognized as such.
9. They agreed with the Reformed up to the point that regeneration preceded faith but then made that faith resistible—a thought alien to the mind of Martin Luther.
10. The great Lutheran church of the Reformation has followed Luther in his eucharistic error and Melancthon in his soteriological one.

## The Lutheran Book of Concord and Saxon Visitation Articles

1. Whatever differences between the Lutheran and Reformed reformations were revealed in Luther himself and Melancthon and the later Book of Concord, the depth of the cleavage is seen even more clearly in a document such as the Saxon Visitation Articles of 1595.
2. This was a typical guide for Lutheran officials by which they were to examine Lutheran adherents and ministers in various localities in Saxony.
3. In addition to the usual and to be expected differences concerning the Lord's Supper, one sees a systematic difference that explains why many "old Lutherans" came to regard Calvinism as a form of fatalism worse than heathenism or Islam.
4. The Reformed championed their differences but never seemed to have viewed Lutheran error as so grave. They were a wound (*naevus*) in the body of Christ but not a fatal defect.
5. Though Luther himself was an uncompromising predestinarian not a whit less so than John Calvin, these articles find that doctrine to be profound heresy.
6. Growing out of the difference between Lutheran and Reformed thinking on the Lord's Supper arose differences in Christology also. Because the Reformed deny the corporeal presence of Christ in the Supper, they are denounced as restricting Christ to heaven and denying His presence in the Eucharist.
7. Probably the worst differences as seen by the Visitation Articles are the practical ones dealing with the Christian life itself.
8. According to the Reformed (the Articles teach), a predestined person is saved no matter how he thinks or how badly he behaves.
9. On the other hand, a non-elect person is lost be he never so godly!
10. Marburg is being "revisited" today not by old Lutherans and old Calvinists but by new Lutherans and new Calvinists, and a "New Reformation" may come out of it.

## John Calvin (1509-1564) and the Calvinists

1. The three great Reformers are usually listed as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. It should be remembered, however, that Calvin was second generation, only being converted shortly before Zwingli's death and the greatest events of the Lutheran Reformation era.
2. According to Melanchthon, Calvin was "THE Theologian" of the Reformation, though monergistic and predestinarian.
3. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the classic of the Reformation, was first published in 1536, the year of Erasmus's death, a decade before Luther's, when Calvin himself was a veritable youth in his mid-twenties.
4. Calvin was a Lutheran—or should we say that Luther was a Calvinist? I once gave a lecture, "Martin Luther the Great Calvinist," followed by Roger Nicole, "John Calvin the Great Lutheran."
5. That the two greatest leaders of the Reformation were at one in their message—apart from the sacraments—cannot be denied however divergent those who came after them.
6. Calvin was the son of a Roman Catholic secretary to the local bishop of Noyon, France. After an awakening traceable to Lutheranism in his native France, Calvin became a Protestant refugee under Frances I, the king to whom he dedicated his *Institutes*, insisting Protestantism was not an innovation but classic Christianity.
7. After many vicissitudes Calvin and his Reformation were established in Geneva by 1539 and solidified in 1559. Calvin died triumphantly and at peace in 1564, just as the Roman Council of Trent was closing.
8. Virtually forced to settle in Geneva, he had almost his entire ministry there, constantly writing, teaching, preaching, organizing, corresponding, and spreading the Gospel to the world.

9. Charles Porterfield Krauth, a leading Lutheran theologian of last century, wrote an important work called *The Conservative Reformation*, showing how Lutheranism had preserved more of the medieval heritage than Calvinism.
10. That is true as we have seen in our brief sketch of Calvin's life.

## Calvinistic Creeds and the Westminster Standards

1. The Lutherans are a people of one creed, itself a single composite of several creeds, the Book of Concord. The Calvinists developed creeds for virtually every country they entered.
2. Scotland had its Scots' Confession; England its Thirty-nine Articles; Ireland its Irish Articles; the Netherlands its Articles of Dort; the low countries its Belgic Confession; Germany its Heidelberg Catechism; Switzerland, the First and Second Helvetic Confessions.
3. A century later came the most comprehensive Reformed creed of the Reformation era, The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.
4. In spite of the spontaneity of these and the number of them, they have a unity equal to the Lutheran Book of Concord.
5. Dort is especially interesting because the controversy with Arminianism leading up to its convocation led to a defining of Calvinism in relation to its internal challenger.
6. Arminius, who had been a Reformed pastor, departed from his doctrinal heritage, a departure the remonstrants defended after his death in 1609.
7. The controversy was settled by the ecumenical synod convened at Dort in the Netherlands, 1618-1619.
8. Its reaffirmation of Calvinism and denunciation of remonstrant principles gave birth to the familiar "five points" popularity remembered by the acrostic TULIP.
9. Remonstrants were ultimately tolerated and today anti-Calvinism prevails in Holland, though not without vigorous advocates of the Reformed faith.
10. In the seventeenth century, an effort to harmonize Calvinism and Arminianism in Amyrauldianism failed.

# Anabaptists

1. Professor Williams of Harvard calls the Anabaptists the “radical Reformation” as Krauth called the Lutherans the “conservative Reformation.”
2. We might call the Anabaptists the “un-conservative Reformation.”
3. They were the thorns in the sides of Lutheranism and Calvinism as well as Catholicism.
4. What made these people radical and yet a part of the Reformation?
5. Their radicalism was their “ana-baptism” (second baptizing of those already baptized in infancy). Infant baptism is one thing that all mainline reformations preserved from the early and medieval church without (except for Lutheranism) the baptismal regeneration.
6. The Anabaptists rejected not only baptismal regeneration but infant baptism itself, thus antagonizing the Reformation as well as Catholicism. Both groups were driven to make martyrs of these radical Reformers.
7. The other distressing-for-the-Reformers feature of Anabaptism was its separatism. Lutheranism and Calvinism did not consider themselves as separating from Rome but Rome as separating from them. They were the continuation of biblical and earlier Christianity. Papalism had left essential Christianity.
8. The classic Reformers saw no justification for the antipaedobaptism or anti-civil government of the Anabaptists.
9. Nor did they see any justness in the Anabaptist claim of a pure church, which Augustine a millennium earlier had proven unbiblical and impossible.
10. The Reformers saw themselves in a mighty, difficult, and dangerous struggle to preserve the Christian church when along came a protesting group full of error itself and yet separating on the ground of having a pure church.

## Romanism's Counter-Reformation: Trent

1. Roman Catholicism, after Pope Leo X, who saw the Reformation in Germany as only monks' squabbles, learned to take it very seriously and fought it all the way and in all areas.
2. Strangely, it seemed reluctant to call an ecumenical council to condemn (what it could not conquer), as Emperor Charles V had been urging all along.
3. Papal foot-dragging was because the pope had condemned the movement and excommunicated Luther. That seemed sufficient. Why a council when the only one who could call one—the pope—didn't need it and decided the matter as only he could do in any case?
4. But finally the papacy felt the council inevitable and called one for Trent in 1545. It may have been a long time coming, but once formed it was a longer time in meeting, 1546-1563.
5. The reluctance in calling showed itself in a reluctance to have Protestants present. If the pope had already condemned them, what justification for their presence but penitence—in which they were totally lacking?
6. So Rome settled the Bible issue, sin issue, and salvation issue before Protestants even arrived to discuss these crucial doctrines.
7. Thus the conclusion of Trent marked the fall of Rome in 1564.
8. I say that Rome fell as a church in 1564 (while she was calling herself the only true church) for at least two reasons:
9. First, at the outset, the council declared the Roman Church the only legitimate and infallible interpreter of the Word of God, thus taking the Bible from the people to whom God gave it.
10. Second, the council renounced the only way of salvation: justification by faith alone.



## The Thirty Years War (1618-1648)

1. The Reformation and Trent having settled the doctrinal issues decisively, nothing was left but to settle existence issues on the field of battle.
2. Christianity was not yet ready to let heresy and truth live side-by-side until the Day of Judgment.
3. The situation in seventeenth-century Germany was like that in South Africa at the end of the twentieth. There was no question that war would break out but only when.
4. What brought it about in Germany was the “defenestration of Prague,” which being interpreted meant that an unwelcome Roman Catholic official was thrown out of a window in Protestant territory (Prague 1618).
5. Rome declared war and Protestantism had to defend itself—which it did very poorly at first. The Roman General Wallenstein virtually romped across Europe.
6. The battle would have been soon over and the Reformation almost erased were it not for Sweden’s Gustavus Adolphus. Almost an even century after the Reformation’s most basic creed the Augsburg Confession, was drawn up in 1530, the Swedes—partly for political and partly for religious reasons—invaded Europe.
7. Gustavus Adolphus lost his life but won the battle for northern Europe.
8. From the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to this day, Protestantism has dominated northern Europe and Romanism, southern Europe. Romanism has never been able to take the north nor Protestantism the south.
9. It should have been called the “Truce” of Westphalia because not until this century has either Rome or the Reformation recognized the religious right of each other to exist.
10. Today the fortunes of Christianity have sunk so low that justification by faith alone has become negotiable with men. God in His Word seems not to have changed his mind.

## Orthodoxy on the Continent and Britain

1. During and after the military battles, orthodoxy in Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism continued to develop.
2. I mention “Anglicanism” separately from Calvinism because, though its creed is Calvinistic, many in that church hold aloof from the Reformation as if it were a *via media* between Protestantism and Romanism.
3. Later, Methodism broke with the Anglican church and with the Calvinistic Reformation as well.
4. Lutheran orthodoxy followed the pattern of the Book of Concord faithfully, solidifying the Arminianized Calvinism of Melanchthon and the Book of Concord.
5. I explained earlier what remained true in the era of Chemnitz, Gerhard, and Holzapf, namely that Lutheranism felt itself true to Luther in affirming regeneration’s priority to faith without recognizing that the notion that the regenerated could reject that faith vitiated Luther’s Calvinistic thinking.
6. The sacramentalism, better called *sacramentalitis*, remained and remains unchanged in Lutheran orthodoxy and today threatens Reformed orthodoxy.
7. As Lutheran orthodoxy tended to vitiate Luther’s reformed orthodoxy, Calvinist orthodoxy tended to strengthen Calvin’s (until recently). If Lutheranism weakened Luther’s strength, Calvinism strengthened Calvin’s weakness or incompleteness.
8. Calvin tended to treat the children of believers as elect, barring them from the Lord’s Supper only because they could not “discern” the Lord’s body.
9. Calvinistic orthodoxy made clearer that what the sacraments symbolized was not necessarily united with the persons who received them.
10. Contemporary Calvinism is tending to return to Calvin’s weakness.

## Puritanism in England and New England

1. There converged in the Presbyterianism of Scotland and England and an independent and baptistic strand the purest form of Reformation theology: Puritanism.
2. Most of the continent, as we noticed, had come to terms with medieval sacramentalism or its Reformed equivalent of tying the offspring to believers with sacramental grace, though not *ex opere operato*.
3. Since all Calvinists favored the biblical teaching that all men are born dead in sin and are not necessarily regenerated when baptized, their only possible conclusion was this: Though children of believers are in the covenant of grace in some sense, that sense does not necessarily include election.
4. Consequently, all baptized children were still little sinners; or, as Edwards once called them, little vipers.
5. But when in a lecture I once referred to Edwards' "little vipers," one Reformed minister present sent me a note reading: "Little vipers in covenantal diapers."
6. The note contained no explanation, but I think the man meant that the covenant relationship somehow removed the infant's viperish condition or responsibility therefore. That could only be if the covenant somehow promised that the child was elect if not regenerate.
7. But the Puritans could find no biblical evidence for such a comforting doctrine. The Puritans "never diluted the vinegar of life."
8. God did say when He established the Abrahamic covenant, "I will be God to you and to your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7).
9. But God did not say "all the descendants of Abraham," and the rest of the Bible points to the "spiritual seed" of Abraham.
10. Furthermore, Ishmael was the natural seed of Abraham and Esau the natural seed of Isaac.

## Arminianism and the External Attack on Reformation Orthodoxy

1. The Counter-Reformation may have erred by an overly sanguine view of baptismal regeneration with its effect of making baptized children confident of possessing salvation rather than seeking for it.
2. That was and remains a serious mistake, but not so serious as the Arminian attack from without, because that, while encouraging all to seek salvation, taught a way of doing so that could never result in finding.
3. This deep and fatal error came from a defective view of the Fall; or rather, from a defective deduction from a correct view of the Fall.
4. Let me explain with John Wesley as principal and influential example. John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards both wrote defenses of original sin attacking John Taylor's criticism of the orthodox doctrine.
5. After defending original sin, essentially as Edwards did, Wesley's book departed radically from Edwards'. Wesley contended that though man was guilty of the Fall and deserving divine wrath, God had to give him a chance to be saved. Why a man who deserves to die must be given a chance to be saved Wesley never explained, nor did he see that that would change the Gospel from grace to justice.
6. To make matters even worse, Wesley assumed that the sinner, given this "chance," was able—though totally fallen—to avail himself of it and choose Christ and salvation.
7. Such ideas are not found in the Bible nor did they cross Edwards' mind.
8. If the unregenerate sinner sought salvation, it would be a work of the flesh and not of faith. "A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit," said Wesley's Lord.
9. Thus Arminianism, while affirming the Bible's doctrine of original sin, denied its doctrine of the divine initiative.
10. To him that has it shall be given. To him that has not shall be taken what he has.

## Covenant Theology and the Internal Attack on Reformation Orthodoxy

1. The covenant of grace became the cornerstone of Reformed theology.
2. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy never did much with this biblical concept.
3. Lutheranism always opposed it seeing it as a *quid pro quo*, man's faith and obedience equal to or earning Christ's salvation.
4. The Reformed, always realized that there is no legalism in the covenant of grace because God Himself provides the non-meritorious faith and obedience Himself, revealed in the doctrine.
5. Then came the error to which we have already alluded: Since the covenant includes the infants of believers, all their children are elect. We saw in the preceding handout that that was not the case.
6. But what is the case? If the children of believers are in the covenant but not necessarily elect, in what sense are they all in the covenant of grace?
7. All infants of believers are in the covenant of grace as being in its sphere, not necessarily in its salvific effects. Thus the circumcised Jews of the Old Testament, who were non-elect members of the covenant (Esau, as it were), were in the spheres of redemption but not in its salvific effects.
8. The covenant for believers' children also implied that their parents would covenant earnestly to seek their salvation—especially when they were unable to seek it for themselves, and that is very hopeful for the children.
9. If one reads more into the covenant of grace than that, covenantal corruption inevitably follows.
10. That is what is happening today, amounting to an internal attack on Reformation orthodoxy.

## Enlightenment: Root and Branch Attack on Reformation Orthodoxy

1. “We wrestle against flesh and blood...” The devil’s struggle against the Christian is so subtle and formidable that it would deceive, if that were possible, the very elect.
2. Sometimes the prince of darkness becomes very bold, attacking the church of God not only subtly but by brazen, open, arrogant, direct attacks on the very Word of God.
3. This describes the so-called Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.
4. It should be called the *Endarklement*, because in spite of its many valuable contributions to culture, science, and industry it was crass naturalism denying God and especially His saving revelation.
5. The Endarklement was a way for man to gain the whole world and lose his soul.
6. We have already seen that the natural (unlike the moral) image of God survived the Fall. This made it possible for sinners to receive the “common grace” of God while rejecting and despising saving grace.
7. Some Reformed theologians tend to throw out the Enlightenment baby with the Enlightenment wash. That is, they deny even the common grace in which the Enlightenment abounded.
8. These theologians insist that the Enlightenment destroys the should when it gives the world. But the “world” is a gift of God in itself. The fact that sinners sell their souls for it does not make it evil even when it come via evil men.
9. The Christian should thankfully receive all the cultural benefits God gives even when God delivers them by the devil and his agents, who intend to destroy our souls by them.
10. It is God who makes the rain to fall on the righteous and unrighteous. The righteous are blessed by all His gifts and the unrighteous are not cursed by them but make them into curses. Romans 2:4 along with Matthew 5:45 are the golden tests of God’s common grace. Let Christians be enlightened about the Enlightenment.

## The Modern Missionary Movement

1. Missionary work was a part of the Gospel from the beginning. The Gospel was synonymous with, “Go into all the world...”
2. As the fine Baptist theologian A. H. Strong once said: “Don’t ask what will become of the heathen if you don’t take the Gospel to them. Ask what will become of you if you don’t...” It was another Baptist Calvinist, William Carey, who first attempted great foreign missions for God, who strengthened him to accomplish it.
3. Why then was there less expansion of Christianity in the eighteen centuries preceding the last than in that one century?
4. It must be admitted that there were always some Calvinists who felt the Gospel was preached under the whole heaven in the first century and subsequent efforts were unnecessary. Such a theorist told William Carey, when he appealed for funds to send him abroad, that if God wanted the Far East converted He would have done it Himself.
5. The main reason for non-missionary activity, however, was Islamic opposition and the lack of very adequate transportation.
6. It is interesting too that though Calvinism is the message the Bible has for the nations, many of the missionaries were—and are—Arminians.
7. So, many who are evangelizing the world were never commanded to do so with a perversion of the Gospel (though, thank God, including the core).
8. I have often been asked whether an Arminian can be saved, much less be the instrument of others’ salvation. The answer is important for an understanding of the great modern missionary movement that has penetrated every corner of the earth.
9. My answer is yes and no. Yes, because evangelical Arminians profess faith in the divine Christ, His atoning blood, His inspired Word, and many, many other

elements of Christian truth. People hearing those essential truths—unlike people hearing the liberal denial of them—may be saved.

10. The answer is also no. Arminian evangelism rests on the profound error that fallen man is not dead spiritually but only dying. He is therefore supposed to be able to bring about his own new birth by his self-generated faith. This can never happen. No one can ever be saved by himself even with the help of the Holy Spirit. I hope and believe that multitudes of Arminians really believe the truths they do not hold in spite of the otherwise fatal errors they proclaim to the world.



## The Twentieth Century: Theological Liberalism

1. We have but one more decade of the twentieth century, completing two millennia since the Son of God became incarnate and was delivered up for our offenses.
2. How goes the Gospel in the world at the end of the twentieth century? There is no way of getting full or accurate statistics (though there are many useful attempts).
3. One can only make educated guesses. Mine is that the vast majority—maybe 90 percent—of professing Christendom does not profess Christianity. Or rather, it does not understand the Christianity it professes.
4. Pelagianism was the early church's form of professed Christians professing non-Christianity.
5. Today, obviously, most of those who profess Christianity are professing a religion which Machen called "liberalism" (in his definitive volume admired even by liberals, *Christianity and Liberalism*).
6. The economy of the world could not function with 90 percent of the money counterfeit. Neither can what goes by the name Christianity.
7. Solution: True Christians must raise an ensign against false Christianity. If the world chooses to go on calling that Christianity which we label counterfeit, the world will go on perishing, but their blood will be on their own head, not on ours.
8. Liberalism denies the deity of Jesus Christ, the divine Trinity, an inerrant Scripture, the fall of man, the wrath of God and the only salvation through the atoning blood of the Cross. Most of our "mainline" seminaries are training our youth to go into all the world to undermine the Gospel.
9. Satan appears as an angel of light when he who is the messenger of eternal death pretends to be the way to eternal life. True Christians must never weary of warning the world of him and trying to turn the world to its only Savior.

10. One of the greatest of American liberals, H. E. Fosdick, preached of “The Peril of Worshipping Jesus.” When I was once trying to win a Muslim in Khartoum, he told me that he had heard Dr. Fosdick say that Christ was only a man. The Christian message for the nations is “The Peril of Not Worshipping Jesus.”

## The Twentieth Century: Theological Ambiguity (Neo-Orthodoxy)

1. It was said of Karl Barth that his message was: There is no God and Jesus Christ is His Son.
2. He never, to my knowledge, ever put it quite that way. That is what his message amounted to because he offered no evidence for the existence of God and merely declared the Sonship of Jesus.
3. Barth claimed to get such notions from the Bible, thus blaming the Holy Spirit for this nonsense.
4. One liberal accused of neo-orthodoxy of making a meaningless combination of words into the wisdom of God. Van Til called neo-orthodoxy the “new modernism,” contending that the meaningless combination of words merely covered underlying liberalism.
5. Why did Barth, probably the greatest theological genius of the twentieth century, engage in palpable absurdity? There was “method in his madness.” He was originally a hard-core liberal when he realized that he was eating swine’s food in the far country while he saw the fundamentalists banqueting. How, he wondered, could he enjoy the banquet without becoming a fundamentalist?
6. Barth’s answer: I’ll agree with the smart liberals that Christianity cannot be proved and then enjoy the gospel feast which the ignorant fundamentalists think can be proved.
7. So, Barth’s massive theological work spun out fully but ambiguously what the church believes without any reason for believing it. Brunner, Bultmann, and a host of others were doing the same thing in slightly different ways.
8. The neo-orthodoxy message: Give the world a choice—use your head and reject the Gospel or crucify your intellect and accept.

9. Choose the worship of fools or the unbelief of the knowing.
10. Neo-orthodoxy gave birth to the “Death of God” movement—which was born dead.

## The Twentieth Century: Neo-Evangelism

1. Remember the situation in the early church: Some thought man was well: Pelagians. Some thought man was sick: semi-Pelagians. Some thought man was dead: Augustinians.
2. Among Protestants we still have the “well”—liberals—perhaps 90 percent.
3. We still have the “sick”—evangelicals—perhaps eight percent.
4. We still have the “dead”—Reformed—perhaps two percent.
5. It is the evangelicals we will note especially in this handout. How do the evangelicals make man out to be sick when the Bible, which they know to be inspired, calls man “dead” (Ephesians 2:1)? They think that they think man is dead! They simply cannot see that if a man is still able of himself to accept Christ, he cannot be dead.
6. Why is it so important to the modern evangelical that man be considered sick to death but not spiritually dead? Because if man is sick, he and the evangelist with the help of the Holy Spirit can save him. If he were dead, only the Holy Spirit could resurrect him.
7. The evangelicals are not going to give God all the glory. They admit that the Father sends the Son and claim that the Son died to save everybody, and the Holy Spirit is willing to help anyone; but, the sinner himself, with the evangelical’s help, must do what alone can save him—believe. Even God unaided cannot restore him to health. The evangelical cannot do it alone; neither can the Creator God do it alone. Only sick man can decide the matter.
8. The evangelical even admits that the Holy Spirit does the regenerating of the sinner. That is a work of the Holy Spirit. It looks for a moment—long enough to deceive many evangelicals—that they are giving full glory to the third member of the Trinity, as well as the other two members.
9. Not so. Even though the evangelical Arminian admits that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, it is the sinner alone who allows Him to do it; indeed, by his self-initiated faith obliges the Spirit to regenerate.

10. In the last analysis, though this concluding part of the twentieth century is the period of evangelicalism's greatest seeming power and influence, Arminianism implicitly denies the glory not only of the Spirit but of the Father, who is not allowed unconditionally to elect sinners, nor the Son to die specifically for those the Father gave Him.

## The Twentieth Century: Neo-Calvinism

1. Many will question our estimate that as little as two percent of the professed Christendom are Calvinists. I certainly cannot prove this and I hope I am wrong; but, I have been in the ministry fifty years and taught church history much of that time and perhaps am entitled to a humble and tentative guess.
2. If I am allowed that much I may totally exhaust the patience of my readers when I find some doctrinal tendencies among the relatively few Calvinists eating away at the foundations.
3. But I am afraid that I do, though for the most part this two percent of Christendom is essentially healthy.
4. What is eating at the foundations of Calvinism is very similar to what has tended to destroy Christianity in the Middle Ages and in the contemporary sacerdotal denominations?
5. It was sacramentalism or sacramentalitis with them, and it is what I may call covenantitis, closely connected with the sacrament of infant baptism, with the Calvinists.
6. We saw earlier that the covenant of grace has been central in modern Calvinism.
7. This covenant in some sense includes the children of professed and communicant believers.
8. Strictly speaking, that sense in which children are included does not necessarily include their election, but there can be no question that many Calvinists today think so. One writer in a study of this matter in the Christian Reformed Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the former Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, and his own Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America found it widespread in the other Reformed denominations and wished it would become more so in his own.

9. The great tragedy of this view is that the greatest field for evangelism—the children of believers—is ruled out as a field for evangelism.
10. At the same time let it be said in conclusion that the Reformed churches are essentially faithful to the great commission and “whole counsel.”



## Conclusion

1. In this concluding postscript, let me remind the reader and hearer of *Handout Church History* that it is the merest outline, highly interpretative. He will have to read one of the books recommended or other detailed accounts of the myriad aspects of ecclesiastical history if he would fill in the picture.
2. Nevertheless, the bird's-eye view has its value. You see the forest and don't get lost in the trees.
3. At the same time, those who see the whole forest differently are going to raise a massive protest.
4. Once in a volume in *The Evangelicals*, edited by Woodbridge and Wells, I wrote the opening chapter, giving an overview that saw true evangelicalism as Reformed. The Reformation evangelicalism I saw was declining to Arminianism, which prevails in the twentieth century. Arminians wrote stinging reviews of my chapter. In the revised edition the editors left my chapter intact but added a chapter on the same theme by an Arminian historian. Interestingly, he essentially agreed on the history but instead of seeing Arminianism as decline and degeneration, he saw it as progress and improvement.
5. That illustrates what we said in the opening chapters of this work. History is history; ecclesiastical history is ecclesiastical history. But whether it is good history or bad history, history can never determine.
6. Only the Word of God is "normative."
7. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn [no tomorrow]" (Isaiah 8:20).
8. My conviction as a student of Scripture and of church history is that most of the latter has departed from the former. I find most of church history a departure from the Reformed message of the Scripture.
9. The whole world lies in the evil one (1 John 5:19) and most of the church is in the world. The true church is a remnant of the remnant, wheat among tares in the world church (Matthew 13:24-30). When the Son of Man returns, He will not find any faith in the earth and little in the world church (Luke 18:8).

10. But He will find His bride there waiting and watching for Him ready for their celestial marriage!