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REFORMATION HISTORY

We begin a new series this quarter on the history of the Reformation. There might be a few who are asking, “Why do we / why should we need to study church history?” This is not meant to be an insult, because it has applied to me. There might be some people reading this who do not even understand what the Reformation was about. Again, let me say that I, too, once had the same questions. Simply put, the Reformation was a time when men grew tired of the horrible teaching, the immorality and the materialism of the Roman Catholic church, and decided to break away or “Reform” Christianity. I hope you will enjoy the articles as they come your way.

REASONS FOR THE STUDY OF HISTORY

A few years ago, I had some Christian friends visiting me who had come from another city to Colorado Springs for a conference. As we finished dinner, our friends mentioned that they had nothing to do for the rest of the evening; I promptly invited them to a Bible study I was teaching that evening. I told them that I would be covering the Reformation and its causes on this particular evening, and that I would love for them to attend. One of the friends spoke up and said, “No, I’m not really interested. If you were going to teach something spiritual, I would come.”

You might be thinking the same thing yourself as you read this, but my response to you is, what could be more spiritual than to look and see the providence of God at work as He delivered people from the bond-

age of Rome! It is almost like a second Exodus. Millions of people were under the diabolical hand of the Roman church, and Martin Luther was chosen by God to lead them out of that bondage.

We are Protestants because of this great Exodus. Consider the following:

- A. How many of you reading this are Protestants?
- B. Why are you Protestants? What were you protesting?
- C. Do you know what the Protestant Reformation was about?

I will look at the Reformation and try to determine if it was a good thing. I will determine that, if the Reformation had not taken place when it did, it should happen now.

- D. If you don’t know what it was about, and why the reformers broke off from the Catholic church, how do you know if they were right?
- E. Maybe you should be a Catholic.
- F. Who was Charles Finney? When did he live?
- G. What impact did he have on evangelical Christianity in America? What this a positive impact?
- H. What major change did he bring about in the churches of America? Was it a positive change?

Modern evangelicalism is in real trouble. Most evangelicals don’t even know the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, or even the significance of October 31.

While I was working on
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my dissertation, I called the library and asked if they had a particular book by Martin Luther. The librarian told me that all they carried was his speech on “I Have A Dream.”

Why is the pulpit in the center of the platform in Protestant churches? Where did it use to be? Why was it moved?

When and why did churches start inviting people to come down to the front of the church to accept Jesus? Was this always done? If not, who started it, and what were his beliefs about God, Jesus and salvation?

Who were the Puritans? Apparently they were a group of people who were prudish, overly disciplined, and were a bad testimony to Christianity—right?

One leader of a national para-church organization announced in a meeting that we as Christians should not be so disciplined in the Christian life, because we would be like the Puritans; after all, the Puritans only lasted for forty years and died out because they could not get anyone to follow their example. Is this true?

Puritans were first called Puritans in 1540; the last true Puritan was Jonathan Edwards, who died in 1755. This is a 215 year span of time. One church historian has a cartoon on the door of his office. It is a picture of Charlie Brown; he is saying that, when you study church history, you have to go all the way back to its beginnings. Then Charlie Brown continues by saying, “Our pastor was born in 1930.” Contrary to popular belief, this is not when church history started!

Let me ask some more important questions than any of those I’ve asked thus far in this article:

- How did we get our Bible?
- Why do we have only 66 books in the Bible?
- What is the “canon” of Scripture?
- What year was the list of the 66 books finalized that we know today as our Bible?
- Why are the New Testament books in the order they are in?

The 66 book that we now call our Bible

were officially accepted at the Council of Carthage in 397 AD. In 367, Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was the first to list the 66 books that are today considered the Protestant Bible; this was in a letter on the Paschal Festival.

There were three main criteria for canonizing the books of the Bible:

1. The book had to be written or endorsed by an Apostle.
2. The book had to have been received by the early church from the beginning.
3. Questionable books could not contradict any books about which there was no doubt; conformity was critical.

There were other factors that were also taken into consideration:

1. Was it authoritative? Did it claim to be from God? (“...thus says the Lord.”)
2. Was it dynamic? Did it have the power to change lives?
3. Was it prophetic?
4. Did it come true?

In previous Bibles, there had been no uniform arrangement; translators placed them in whatever order suited them. Luther, however, ranked them by the yardstick “treibet Christus,” or “how was Christ taught?”; the four Gospels, Acts and the Epistles in descending order of the Savior’s prominence in each, and finally the Revelation of John. Tyndale followed Luther’s lead as have virtually all Bible translators since.

What is the Apocrypha? Why is it not in the Protestant Bible? Why was it not accepted by those who were dealing with the canonization of Scripture?

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Our Purpose...

**The Purpose of
Reformed Discipleship Ministries
is to bring the truth
of the Reformation
to a discipling ministry...**

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

Where in the world has the summer gone? This is a statement I have heard from many people in the last few days. My answer has been, "I don't know." It has gone by very fast for me, too.

My main task this summer has been to prepare for a new seminary course that I will be teaching beginning in early September. I confess that, when I was in seminary, I didn't give much thought to all of the work that went on behind the scenes, enabling my professors to stand in front of the class and teach for hours on end. After finishing this present course, I feel as if I should call my former professors and thank them for all of their hard work.

This course will be an overview of the Gospels and Acts. I have to teach this in 24 total hours. In the midst of the preparation, I realized how difficult it is going to be to decide what I should cover and what to leave out. If God should call my name to your mind, please pray for me as I begin this new course.

When I send out this letter each month, I always feel that it is a type of "accountability" letter so that you may know what I am doing in the ministry. This year as usual, I will be leading seven Bible studies every week and meeting with 8-10 men per week man-to-man. As I have said before, Kay and I having the greatest time of our lives as we attempt to minister to a varied group of people.

Please be diligent to pray for our country. When God was finished with Israel for their continued sinning and rejection of His authority, He said some chilling words to Ezekiel. Ezekiel 14:12-14: "The then word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it, and cut it off from both man and beast, even (though) these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were its midst, by their (own) righteousness they could (only) deliver themselves,'" declares the Lord GOD."

God repeats Himself a few verses later and it gets more ominous. Ezek. 14:19-20 "Or (if) I should send a plague against that county and pour out My wrath in blood on it, to cut off man and beast from it, even (though) Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, as I live, " declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either (their) son or (their) daughter. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness."

I am not a prophet of doom; it is just that, as I read the Scriptures, the warnings of God jump out to me. We see in Ezekiel that a country can go so far that the prayers of its most righteous men will not save it. Pray for our nation.

Recently, I read a book that I would like to recommend. The title is Lessons From a Father to His Son , written by the present U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. It was very challenging and moving as I read of the relationship that John Ashcroft had with his father. Mr. Ashcroft is a very dynamic believer, and he attributes much of his character and beliefs in God to the training he received from his father. I recommend it highly to men who have sons they are trying to raise and into which they are trying to instill biblical and godly principles.

Please stay in God's Word and continue to pray.

Talk to you later,
Louis

***If you will contact me with your questions at:
louishill@rdm.org
I will attempt to respond to them in future newsletters.***

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Both the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches hold to the canonicity of the fourteen books of the Apocrypha. This is not to say that they have always held to the Apocrypha. Indeed, no ecumenical council of church history has ever recognized the canonicity of the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent in 1545; this was an obvious reaction to the Protestant Reformation.

The word Apocrypha literally describes that which has been "hidden from sight." These hidden books were written around the time of the Maccabean Revolt in 165 B.C.

THE MAKEUP OF THE APOCRYPHA

The books of the Apocrypha were written during the 200 years before the birth of Christ. They were written entirely in Greek. The Apocrypha is made up of the following books: Esdras 1 & 2, Tobit, Judith, Additions to the book of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Sirach), Baruch, The Story of Susanna, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Bel and

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Historical Facts



Roman Catholic Popes

In our last article, we looked briefly at what could be called an “evil Pope,” so now we look at another one.

Pope John XI disgraced the tiara for eight years (955-963). He was one of the most immoral and wicked popes ever to sit in the chair of St. Peter. He was charged by a Roman Synod of every crime imaginable, and was deposed as a monster of iniquity. Just a few examples:

1. He appointed a 10-year old as a bishop.
2. He committed homicide.
3. He committed adultery.
4. He lived with his father’s mistress.
5. He drank to the health of the devil.
6. He was killed in the act of adultery by an angry husband. (History of the Christian Church, Schaff, Vol. 4, p. 287)

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the Dragon, The Prayer of Manassah, and Maccabees 1 & 2.

REASONS FOR REJECTING THE APOCRYPHA

1. They were never quoted by Jesus, and it is doubtful if they were even alluded to by the apostles.
2. Most of the early fathers regarded these books as uninspired.
3. They did not appear in the ancient Hebrew Canon.
4. The inferior quality of most of the writing, as compared with the canonical books, stamps them as unworthy of a place in the sacred Scriptures.

Why do the Catholics have the Apocrypha in their Bible? A quick hint: the Roman Catholic church teaches the doctrine of purgatory. The doctrine of purgatory is not taught in the Bible. During the Reformation, Rome was challenged numerous times that they were teaching an unbiblical concept. In the Apocrypha, there is at least one teaching that could be contrived to be teaching about a place similar to purgatory. Surprise, surprise.

REASONS FOR STUDYING CHURCH HISTORY

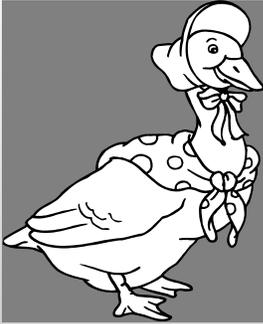
Exodus 13:8 “And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’” Ex. 13:16 “So it shall serve as a sign on your hand, and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.” *Throughout the Old Testament, the Jews are told to do things that would cause them to remember what God had done for them.* Ex. 16:33 “And Moses said to Aaron, ‘Take a jar and put an omer full of manna in it, and place it before the Lord, to be kept throughout your generations.’”

They were told to celebrate the Passover so that they would remember what God did for them, delivering them from Egypt. When they crossed the Jordan River, they were told to pile a stack of rocks together; so that when their children asked them why the rocks were there, they could tell them the story of the crossing of the Jordan.

All of these things and more were given so that the Jews would remember what God had done. Most of the memories were to fall into two categories:

- The good that God had done for them
- The bad that God had done to them, so that they would not again fall into sin. *(cont. on page 7)*

MOTHER•GOOSE



Jack & Jill

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.



Jack and Jill: Louis XVI was considered weak, ignorant and distracted in comparison to his predecessors in the French Royalty. In 1770 he married Marie Antoinette, who heavily influenced his decisions thereafter.

Went up the hill: Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette became King and Queen of France in 1774.

To fetch a pail of water: In 1770, France was amidst a financial crisis, and heavy taxation caused a nationwide withdrawal from royal patriotism. In order to quell the flames of rebellion arising amongst the people, Louis enacted some of the most oppressive taxes, and began financial and judicial reforms (like water from a pail).

Jack fell down: The French Bourgeoisie would not allow for large enough reforms to be implemented. In July 1789, the Parisian populace stormed the Bastille, and imprisoned the king and royal family in the palace of Tuileries.

And broke his crown: In 1792, when the national convention declared France a republic, the king was tried for treason, convicted, and sentenced to death. Louis XVI was beheaded in Paris on January 21, 1793.

And Jill came tumbling after: After being separated from her son, Marie Antoinette was sent before the revolutionary tribunal and sentenced to death for treason; she was beheaded in Paris on October 16, 1793 (a tumbling head).

SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the First Commandment?

A. The First Commandment forbideth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, [and our God,] and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to Him alone.

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words, “before Me” in the First Commandment?

A. These words “before Me” in the First Commandment, teach us that God who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

Q. 49. Which is the Second Commandment?

A. The Second Commandment is, “thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them,; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.”

**WHAT IS THE VALUE OF STUDYING CHURCH HISTORY?
WE GET A PICTURE OF OUR HERITAGE**

This allows us to see how our theology develops. The church had been dealing with persecution and surviving in the world. In 312, Constantine became emperor and supposedly became a Christian. This stopped the persecution, but opened the Christian world up to all types of heresies. It had become fashionable to be a Christian, and many different pagan groups brought their beliefs into Christianity. I will discuss three of the great problems that arose during the early centuries of the church.

The first heresy dealt with the Trinity. Arius declared that Jesus was not really God, but that He was a created being that God chose to use on earth. Athanasius, on the other hand, had declared that Jesus was truly God and was not a created being. In 325 AD, Constantine called a church council in Nicaea and asked all the church fathers to be present to deal with this issue. Finally after much debate, it was declared that Jesus was on a par with God, and that He was not a created being. The result of this conference was the **Nicene Creed**. The Creed declares that the Trinity is equal in all aspects. It says that they are three persons, but one in essence. Although they are three separate people, they are truly one.

Arius was the forerunner of the Jehovah Witnesses, who also declare that Jesus is a created being and not on equal footing with God. Here is an illustration of how knowing history will help us deal with the Jehovah Witnesses. We can tell them that they were declared heretics 1500 years ago.

The second heresy dealt with the divinity and humanity of Christ. Over the next 125 years, a heresy arose regarding both the humanity and the deity of Jesus. There were those who said that if the Nicene Creed was true and that Jesus was truly God, than He certainly could not have been man also. He had to be one or the other. A council was called in 451 in Constantinople, and the issue was resolved. It was declared that Jesus was both 100% man and 100% God. As Christians, we must believe these two conclusions because there are at the very heart of Christianity.

The third issue of the first 400 years of Christianity was the issue of the Scriptures. For 367 years, there was no scripture that was agreed upon by all Christians. It took these 367 years before there was a consensus regarding what should constitute the Bible.

In 367 AD, Athanasius, in his Easter address, mentioned the 66 books of the Bible that we currently recognize. As Christians, we believe in the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, and the infallibility of Scripture—but many do not even know how any of these beliefs came about.

We will continue in the next issue. I hope that you will have a great fall. Remember, if you have any questions, my email address is louishill@rdm.org.

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TRUTH*matters*



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