

CHAPTER I

CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION

1. WHAT WE FIND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament represents the church under the imagery of a temple “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.” Eph. 2:20. Again it is referred to under the figure of a body with Jesus Christ as the head. Col. 1:18. All will agree that the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ is meant and that, therefore, Christ being the Head, all the body is subject to him. Hence, every individual member is under His authority, and all the members in a given community are subject to Him as Head. In any locality where there may be few or many believers, Christ is their Head. This authority has been delegated to no other, and Christ is, and ever will be the one Head of the “one body.” He is not visibly present on the earth, but invisibly “in the midst” of his disciples wherever even “two or three are gathered together” in his name. Matt. 18:20. When Jesus was about to leave this earth and “ascend to the Father” he charged his apostles to “wait for the promise of the Father”—“tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.” Acts 1:4 and Luke 24:49. And so he “gave some to be apostles” who were eye witnesses of “Christ risen from the dead;” and that “which having at the first been spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.” Eph. 4:11 and Heb. 2:3, 4. These

apostles have no successors as apostles and have “once for all” given the doctrine of Jesus Christ to the world. We have the apostles with us to-day by continuing “steadfastly in their doctrine.” In like manner also have we the testimony of the prophets, “for the testimony of Jesus in the spirit of prophecy.” Rev. 19:10. This doctrine must be preached “to every creature,” from generation to generation, and God has given some to be “evangelists” who are charged “in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus” to “preach the word; be urgent in season, out, of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine;” (II Tim. 4:1, 2) and who are to “set in order the things that are wanting.” Titus 1:5. Through the preaching of the Gospel, believers are made and congregations are formed and God has given some to be “pastors and teachers” that these flocks may be fed and tended. There are six words used in the New Testament Scriptures to designate these who have the oversight of the members in the various communities. These six words may be divided into pairs, each pair expressing a distinct thought. First, we have the words “elders” and “presbyters;” the former of Anglo-Saxon origin, the latter of Greek origin. Next, “shepherds” and “pastors;” the former of Anglo-Saxon, the latter of Latin origin. Then, the words “overseers” and “bishops;” one of Anglo-Saxon parentage, the other of Greek. We have expressed in these words, the three ideas of “experience,” “feeding” and “oversight.” There are not three different characters represented here with three different degrees of office; and certainly no distinction of title or rank is suggested by the New Testament use of these words. “That they (elders) did not differ at all from the bishops or overseers is evident from the fact that the two words are used indiscriminately, Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7.” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 536, Edition of 1889.)

In Phil. 1:1 we find mention of deacons as well as bishops, and in I Tim. 3 their qualifications are given. (See also Acts 6:1-6.) Thus provision is made for the relief of the poor and all other temporal wants and affairs of the congregations. This

simple arrangement and Divine plan was all-sufficient for the “building up of the body.” The members worked harmoniously and were ready to serve in any capacity for which they may have been qualified. (See Romans 16:1; Eph.4:13-16; Phil. 4:3; Acts 9:36, 39, etc.)

2. WHAT WE FIND AT THE PRESENT DAY

In contrast with the simplicity of the New Testament church government, we find at the present time several forms of church polity.

1. The first to which we direct attention is the Papal System. At the head of this organization is the pope at Rome, who claims to be the direct successor of the apostle Peter; there is a sacred college composed of Cardinals; there are twelve patriarchs; over six hundred archbishops and bishops and many priests. Through these “ecclesiastics” the Roman Catholic Church is governed.
2. The Greek Catholic Church. The government of this church is under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. They separated from the Roman Church in the eleventh century. There is a “Holy Synod” at St. Petersburg, composed of Bishops and secular clergy; and one at Constantinople composed of four Patriarchs, a number of Metropolitans and Bishops and twelve Secular Greeks.
3. The Church of England. This organization is governed by three orders of ecclesiastics: Bishops, Priests and Deacons. There are also Archbishops, Deans, Prebendaries, Parsons, Vicars, Curates and Canons, but these are titles of

offices and not “ecclesiastical degrees.” The Church of England claims direct succession from the apostles and the list of bishops up to Gregory the Great is substantially the same as that of the Roman Catholic Church. In the year 596 Gregory the Great sent Augustine as a missionary to England. Augustine converted Ethelbert in 597 and in the same year was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church of England remained under the Papal rule until the time of Henry VIII. “The different Episcopal parishes . . . are connected by a Constitution, which provides for a convention of the clergy and lay delegates from each parish in the State or Diocese. This Convention is held annually, and regulates the local concerns of its own Diocese, the Bishop of which is the President of the Convention. The Conventions of the different Dioceses elect deputies to a General Convention which is held once in three years. Each Diocese may elect four Clergymen and four Laymen as delegates, who, when assembled in General Convention form what is called the ‘House of Clerical and Lay Deputies;’ each Order from a Diocese having one vote, and the concurrence of both being necessary to every act of the Convention. The Bishops form a separate House with a right to originate measures for the concurrence of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, each House having a negative upon the other, as in the Congress of the United States. The whole Church is governed by Canons, framed by the General Convention.” (John Hayward in “Book of Religions.” pp. 30, 31.) Episcopalians who have a high

conception of the church jurisdiction are called “High Churchmen;” the others, by way of distinction, are designated “Low Churchmen.”

4. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. This church does not differ from the Church of England in doctrine, but it is not in any way connected with the state and its bishops do not enjoy any civil power, immunity or emolument, by virtue of the office they hold in the church.
5. The Methodist Episcopal Church has a modified form of Episcopalian church government.
6. The Methodist Protestant Church rejects the idea of one-bishop ruling a Diocese and declares that “all elders in the church of God are equal.” They have a General Conference, meeting once in four years. For every thousand members there are two delegates, one minister and one layman.
7. The Presbyterian Church. This church is governed by “Presbyteries” and each congregation elects its own Pastor. The entire Body is governed through “General Assemblies” and “Synods.”
8. The Lutheran Church. Lutherans are governed by a “Ministerium,” “The Synod,” “The Special Conference” and “The Vestry.” The “Vestry” is the judicial authority in each congregation; the “Special Conference,” of each District; the “Synod” is composed of ministers and laymen chosen by the Vestries of the several congregations; the “Ministerium” is composed of ministers who regulate the spiritual affairs of the church.

There are several of the larger denominations who hold, in the main, to the Bible doctrine of church government; but the idea of the “Clergy” as distinguished from the “Laity,” a distinction first made in the second century, destroys the simplicity of the primitive order. There are also many minor sects who have various methods and forms of government of which we shall not now write in detail. Some of these are controlled by individuals styled, “Prophets,” “Leaders,” “Readers,” etc. We find religious societies which have no form of government, and affairs are managed with a freedom and liberty that degenerate into license and lawlessness. Then there are those who profess to be governed by the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit in all matters pertaining to the local and general interests of the organization.

Against all corruptions of church polity there is a worthy protest on the part of many followers of the Christ and in many parts of the world are found congregations, known simply as “churches of Christ,” contending for the New Testament form of church government.

3. HOW CHANGES WERE BROUGHT ABOUT

During the lifetime of the apostles the different congregations were independent of each other, and elders were appointed in every church. There were no Synods, Councils, Conventions, Associations or Conferences composed of delegates from different congregations constituting an Ecclesiastic Legislative Body. (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5. Also, Mosheim’s Church History, page 22, Neander, Vol. 1, p. 183.) We find, however, that the “mystery of iniquity” was working in the days of Paul (II Thess. 2:7) and that Diotrophes desired to have the pre-eminence. III John, 9. Let us remember that the New Testament uses the words—elders, bishops, overseers, presbyters, pastors and shepherds without distinction of rank or office. The first departure from this New Testament principle was the distinction between “bishops” and “presbyters.” “What we find existing in the 2nd Century

enables us to infer that soon after the apostolic age the standing office of President of the Presbytery must have been formed, which president, as having pre-eminent oversight over all, was designated by the special name of *Episcopas* (Bishop) and thus distinguished from the other presbyters. Thus the name came, at length, to be applied exclusively to this presbyter, while the name presbyter continued at first to be common to all." (Neander's Church History.) This distinction in rank naturally led to a distinction in authority and function and here we find the second step away from New Testament church polity. The territory over which a bishop ruled was called a diocese; a diocese often included a large district of country over which it was impossible for one bishop to rule in person and this called for the creation of a new class of "ecclesiastics" called the "*Chorepiscopi*" *i.e.*, "Country Bishops" who held rank midway between the "City Bishops" and "Presbyters." (See Mosheim, p. 22.)

Toward the close of the second century we find the first trace of Synods and Councils. Delegates from different churches were called together to settle disputes and these meetings soon partook of the nature of Legislative Bodies and were called Synods by the Greeks and Councils by the Latins. "*These Councils*, of which we find not the smallest trace before the middle of this (second) century, *changed the whole face of the Church and gave it a new form.* For by them the ancient privileges of the people were considerably diminished and the power and authority of the Bishops greatly augmented." (Mosheim, p. 41.) The presiding officer of one of these Synods was usually the bishop of the capital of the province in which the Synod was held; and, of course, there must be a title given him to "magnify his office" and he was called a "Metropolitan." The office was made permanent and with the assumption or imposition of this dignity came the corresponding increase of dominion and authority. Not many years passed until these Metropolitans claimed to have been "empowered by Christ to dictate to the churches authoritative rules and manners."

The third century witnessed another great departure from New Testament teaching, arising from the contentions between the “Bishops” and “Presbyters.” The Bishops claimed supreme power in the guidance of church affairs and no longer called upon the Presbyters to assist them or counsel with them. *This marks the beginning of the conflict between the two systems of church government; namely, the Episcopal and the Presbyterian.* The Episcopal system triumphed. In the beginning of the 3rd Century the Synods were made no longer “occasional assemblies called for the settlement of disputes” but met at stated seasons and became permanent institutions. The bishops assumed more and more authority and finally secured absolute control of the Synods. Up to the fourth century these Councils or Synods were held in the various provinces over which the Metropolitans ruled and each Metropolitan was independent of all the other Metropolitans in the government of his province. 325 A.D. the emperor Constantine called the first General or Ecumenical Council. This Council was composed of Commissioners from all the churches of the Christian World and represented the Church Universal. Still another ecclesiastical innovation was introduced in this century. The political rulers of the large divisions of the Roman Empire were called “Exarchs” and this title was also given to the ecclesiastical rulers of these districts. The term “Exarch” was later changed to “Patriarch” (Chief Father). At first only three bishops were thus designated; namely, the bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch; but ere long the bishops of Jerusalem and Constantinople were made Patriarchs. We may judge of the influence and extent of the “love of pre-eminence” even as early as the fourth century, by the following extract from the pen of Gregory of Nazianzus. “Would to heaven there was no primacy, no eminence of place and no precedence of rank; that we might be known by eminence of virtue alone. But as the case now stands, the distinction of a seat at the right hand, or the left, or in the middle, at a higher or a lower place, of going before or aside of each other, has given rise to many disorders among us to no salutary purpose whatever, and plunged multitudes into ruin.” In

451 in the Council of Chalcedon it was resolved, that the same rights and honors, which had been conferred upon the Bishop of Rome were due to the Bishop of Constantinople on account of the equal dignity and lustre of the two cities in which these prelates exercised their authority. Leo, the Great, Bishop of Rome, opposed with vehemence the passing of this decree and his opposition was seconded by that of several other prelates; but their efforts were vain, as the emperors threw their weight into the balance and thus supported the decision of the Grecian Bishops. In consequence then, of the decrees of this famous Council, the prelate of Constantinople began to contend obstinately for the supremacy with the Roman Pontiff, and to crush the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, so as to make them feel the oppressive effects of his pretended superiority; and no one distinguished himself more by his ambition and arrogance in this affair, than Acacius. (Mosheim, p. 113.)

In the year 588 A. D., the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, assumed the title of “Universal Bishop of the Church.” Gregory the Great was at that time Patriarch of Rome. He is considered by Roman Catholics one of the greatest and best of popes, and has been canonized a “saint.”

In regard to the assumption of the title “Universal Bishop of the Church,” Gregory the Great wrote to John the Faster as follows:

“You remember, my brother, the peace and concord which the Church enjoyed when you were raised to the sacerdotal dignity. I do not, therefore, understand how you have dared to follow the inspiration of pride, and have attempted to assume a title which may give offense to all the brethren. I am the more astonished at it that I remember your having taken flight to avoid the episcopate; and yet you would exercise it to-day as

if you had run toward it, impelled by ambitious desires. You who used to say so loud that you were unworthy of the episcopate, you are no sooner raised to it than, despising your brother, you aspire to have alone the title of bishop. My predecessor, Pelagius, of saintly memory, wrote very seriously to your Holiness upon this subject. He rejected, in consequence of the proud and magnificent title that you assumed in them, the acts of the synod which you assembled in the cause of Gregory, our brother and fellow-bishop; and to the archdeacon, whom, according to usage, he had sent to the Emperor's court, he forbade communion with you. After the death of Pelagius, having been raised, notwithstanding my unworthiness, to the government of the Church, it has been my care to urge you, my brother, not by writing, but by word of mouth, first by my envoy, and afterward through our common son, Deacon Sabinian, to give up such assumption. I have forbidden him also to communicate with you if you should refuse to yield to my request, in order that your Holiness may be inspired with shame for your ambition, before resorting to canonical proceedings, in case shame should not cure you of pride so profane and reprehensible. As before resorting to amputation, the wound should be tenderly probed, I pray you—I entreat you—I ask with the greatest possible gentleness, that you, my brother, will resist all the flatterers who give you an erroneous title, and that you will not consent to ascribe to yourself a title as senseless as vain-glorious. Verily I have tears for this; and from the bottom of my heart I ascribe it to my own sins that my brother has not been willing to return to lowliness—he who was raised to the episcopal

dignity only to teach other souls to be lowly; that he who teaches others the truth would neither teach it to himself, nor consent, for all my prayers, that I should teach him.

“I pray you, therefore, reflect that by your bold presumption the peace of the whole Church is troubled, and that you are at enmity with *that grace which was given to all in common*. The more you grow in that grace, the more humble you will be in your own eyes; you will be the greater in proportion as you are further removed from usurping this extravagant and vainglorious title. You will be the richer as you seek less to despoil your brethren to your profit. Therefore, dearly beloved brother, love humility with all your heart. It is that which insures peace among the brethren, and *which preserves unity in the Holy Catholic Church*.

“When the Apostle Paul heard certain of the faithful say, ‘*I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,*’ he could not see them without horror, thus rending the body of the Lord, to attach his members to various heads and he exclaimed, ‘Was Paul crucified for you?—or were you baptized in the name of Paul?’ If he could not bear that the members of the body of the Lord should *be attached piecemeal to other heads than that of Christ, though those heads were Apostles*, what will you say to Christ, who is the head of the universal Church—what will you say to him at the last judgment—you who, by your title of *universal*, would bring all his members into subjection to yourself? Whom, I pray you, tell me, whom do you imitate by this perverse title if not him, who, despising the legions of angels, his companions, endeavored to

mount to the highest, that he might be subject to none and be alone above all others; who said, '*I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High?*' What are your brethren, the bishops of the universal Church, but the stars of God? Their lives and teaching shine, in truth, through the sins and errors of men, as do the stars through the darkness of the night. When, by your ambitious title, you would exalt yourself above them, and debase their title in comparison with your own, what do you say, if not these very words, *I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God?* Are not all the bishops the clouds that pour forth the rain of instruction, and who are furrowed by the lightnings of their own good works? In despising them, my brother, and endeavoring to put them under your feet, what else do you say than that word of the ancient enemy, *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds?* For my part, when, through my tears, I see all this, I fear the secret judgments of God; my tears flow more abundantly; my heart overflows with lamentations, to think that my Lord John—a man so holy, of such great abstinence and humility, but now seduced by the flattery of his familiars—should have been raised to such a degree of pride that, through the lust of a wrongful title, he should endeavor to resemble him, who, vain-gloriously wishing to be like God, lost, because he was ambitious of a false glory, the grace of the divine resemblance that had been granted to him, and the true beatitude. Peter, the first of the Apostles, and a *member* of the holy and universal

Church; Paul, Andrew, John— were they not the chiefs of certain nations? And yet all are *members* under *one only head*. In a word, the saints *before the law*, the saints *under the law*, the saints *under grace*—do they not all constitute the body of the Lord? Are they not members of the Church? Yet is there none among them who desired to be called *universal*. Let your Holiness consider, therefore, how much you are puffed up when you claim a title that none of them had the presumption to assume.

“You know it, my brother; hath not the venerable Council of Chalcedon conferred the honorary title of *universal* upon the bishops of this Apostolic See, whereof I am, by God’s will, the servant? And yet none of us hath permitted this title to be given to him; none has assumed this bold title, lest by assuming a special distinction in the dignity of the episcopate, we should seem to refuse it to all the brethren.

“The Lord, wishing to recall to a proper humility the yet feeble hearts of his disciples, said to them, ‘If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all’; whereby we are clearly taught that he who is truly high is he who is most humble in mind. Let us, therefore, beware of being of the number of those ‘who love the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.’ In fact, the Lord said to his disciples. ‘*Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, . . . and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called Fathers, for ye have but one Father.*’

“What then could you answer, beloved brother, in the terrible judgment to come, who desire not only to be called Father, but universal Father of the world? Beware then of evil suggestions; fly from the counsel of offense. ‘*It is impossible,*’ indeed, ‘*but that offenses will come;* but,’ for all that, ‘Woe unto him through whom they come!’ In consequence of your wicked and vainglorious title, the Church is divided and the hearts of the brethren are offended.

“I have sought again and again, by my messengers and by humble words, to correct the sin which has been committed *against the whole Church*. Now I myself write. I have omitted nothing that humility made it my duty to do. If I reap from my rebuke nothing better than contempt, there will nothing be left for me but to appeal to the ‘*Church.*’”

Gregory also wrote to the Emperor who bestowed this title of Universal Bishop on John. We quote the following extract from his letter:

“Our very pious lord does wisely to endeavor to accomplish the peace of the Church that he may restore peace to his empire, and to condescend to invite the priesthood to concord and unity. I myself desire it ardently; and as much as in me lies, I obey his worshipful commands. But since not my cause alone, but the cause of God is concerned; since it is not I alone who am disturbed, but the whole Church that is agitated; since the canons, the venerable councils, and the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ himself are attacked, by the invention of a certain pompous and vainglorious word; let our most

pious lord cut out this evil; and if the patient would resist him, let him bind him with the bonds of his imperial authority. In binding such things you will give liberty to the commonwealth, and by excisions of this sort you will diminish the malady of your empire.

“All those who have read the Gospel know that the care of the whole Church was confided by our Lord himself to St. Peter, first of all the apostles. Indeed, he said to him, *‘Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep.’* Again it was said to him, *‘Satan has desired to sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’* It was also said to him, *‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’* He thus received the keys of the celestial kingdom; the power to bind and loose was given to him; and yet he did not call himself *universal Apostle*. But that most holy man, John, my brother in the priesthood, would fain assume the title of *universal bishop*. I can but exclaim, *O temporal O mores!* (O times! O customs!)

“Is it my cause, most pious lord, that I now defend? Is it a private injury that I wish to avenge? No; this is the cause of Almighty God, the cause of the universal Church.

“Who is he who, against the precepts of the Gospel and the decrees of the canons, has the

presumption to usurp a new title? Would to heaven there were but one who, without wishing to lessen the others, desired to be himself *universal!*

The Church of Constantinople has produced bishops who have fallen in the abyss of heresy, and who have even become heresiarchs. Thence issued Nestorius, who, thinking there must be two persons in Jesus Christ, mediator between God and man, because he did not believe that God could become man, descended thus to the very perfidy of the Jews. Thence came Macedonius also, who denied that the Holy Spirit was God con-substantial with the Father and the Son. But if any one usurp in the Church a title which embraces all the faithful, the *universal* Church—O blasphemy!—will then fall with him, since he makes himself to be called the *universal*. May all Christians reject this blasphemous title—this title which takes the sacerdotal honor from every priest the moment it is insanely usurped by one!

“It is certain that this title was offered to the Roman Pontiff by the venerable Council of Chalcedon, to honor the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles. But none of us has consented to use this particular title, lest, by conferring a special matter upon one alone, all priests should be deprived of the honor which is their due. How, then, while we are not ambitious of the glory of a title that has been offered to us, does another, to whom no one has offered it, have the presumption to take it?” (John assumed it; the emperor acknowledged it.)

Just a few years later (606), this title was taken from the Patriarch of Constantinople, and bestowed upon the bishop of Rome, and in the following manner: "In the year 601 the centurion Phocas rebelled against Maurice, slew him and his family atrociously and usurped the throne (as Emperor of Rome). 'Never,' says Maimbourg, 'was there a more infamous tyrant than this wicked man.'" (McClintock and Strong, p. 1000.) From Mosheim and other authoritative church historians we learn that Boniface III., in the year 606, engaged this Phocas to transfer the title of "universal bishop" from John the Faster to the "Roman See" and "thus was papal supremacy introduced." We can but exclaim, "O temporal O mores!" Now, according to the testimony of Gregory the Great, *Who is the anti-Christ?* Let us note carefully that an unscriptural distinction between two scriptural terms was the seed sown in the second century; a fully developed ecclesiastical hierarchy, with one man at its head, was the fruit borne in the seventh century. This date (606) really marks the beginning of what is now known as the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope of Rome as its head. The word "pope" is derived from the Latin and means "father." It is said that Bishop Siricius, who lived in the fourth century, was the first to use the word as a title. It was applied in a general way for several centuries and "expressly made the exclusive prerogative of the Roman bishops by Gregory VII.," in the eleventh century. The papal power reached its height in Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), who became pope in 1073. The rule of the popes of Rome continued in the height of its assumption and arrogance until the beginning of the fourteenth century, when Philip the Fair of France dared to address the pope (Boniface VIII.) as follows: "Let thy most consummate folly know that in things temporal we are subject to no man; those who think otherwise we hold to be madmen or fools." It was after this controversy that the famous Bull or Decretal of "Unam Sanctam" was published. We give a few extracts: "Each of the two (swords) is in the power of the church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But the latter is to be used for the Church and the former by the Church: the one by the

hand of the priest, the other by that of kings and soldiers but at the bidding and sufferance of the priest. Sword must be subject to sword, the temporal authority to the spiritual. . . . Moreover, we declare, we say, we define and we pronounce, that it is *absolutely necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.*” Successive quarrels with princes and kings reduced the dominions and authority of the Roman Pontiff to such an extent that “though an Ecumenical Council in our own day (1870) has declared the pope infallible, he possesses not a vestige of temporal power and only a shadow of the terrific spiritual dominion which his predecessors enjoyed in the Medieval Ages.” (I. B. Grubbs, in his Notes on Church History.)

The conflicts between the East and the West, the Grecian Bishops and Roman Bishops, eventually led to a separation which resulted in the establishment of the Greek Church, July 16, 1054.

The quarrels of Henry VIII with the pope of Rome resulted in the separation of the Church of England from the Papal Dominion. In 1531 a Convocation proclaimed the king of England “only and supreme lord, and, as far as the law of Christ permits, even the supreme head of the Church of England.” In the year 1534, Henry VIII caused Parliament “to abolish all papal authority in England, and to stop all payments to the Roman exchequer.”

The “Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America” had its rise and origin in the Church of England. At a general convention, held in 1785, “an address was framed to the English bishops and archbishops,” asking that an episcopacy be established in the United States of America. John Adams, who was then minister to the English Government, presented the request to the archbishop of Canterbury. Through an act of Parliament the English bishops were authorized to consecrate bishops for the United States, and thus was “Episcopalianism” established in this country.

The efforts of the Wesleys, and others, to reform the Church of England, resulted in the formation of several societies of "Methodists." John Wesley, himself, gives 1739 as the date of the origin of the "United Societies of the People called Methodists." "At the close of the year 1784, the Methodist societies in these United States were organized by a conference of preachers exclusively, into what is called the Methodist Episcopal Church, and made independent of Mr. Wesley." Dissatisfaction in regard to the government of this church was expressed by a minority of the preachers, and in 1824, those who desired to effect an improvement, met in Baltimore and formed themselves into a Union Society. It was recommended that such societies be organized in all parts of the United States "in order to ascertain the number of persons in the Methodist Episcopal Church friendly to a change in her government." Persecutions followed; several preachers and laymen were expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1830 the Methodist Protestant Church was organized at a convention held in the city of Baltimore.

The reformation of the sixteenth century resulted in the formation of several societies which developed into distinct denominations, viz.: Lutherans, Zwinglians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others.

Further efforts at reform in church government resulted in the organization, in the seventeenth century, of the Independents and Congregationalists. In the middle of this century we also find the appearance and establishment of the Society of Friends (sometimes called Quakers).

In the beginning of the nineteenth century "the Bible alone, without any human addition in the forms of creeds and confessions of faith, began to be plead and preached by many distinguished ministers of different denominations, both in Europe and America." In spite of the simplicity of the plea thus made, and contrary to its very meaning and spirit, there developed two more

denominations, namely, the “Christian Connexion,” and the “Christian Denomination,” or “Disciple Church”; but a large number of the thousands who accepted this plea, consistently reject all names and designations that would “distinguish them from other Christians,” and contend for the use of Bible names and words with Bible meanings and applications. In so doing they do not deny to others this privilege and honor.

We have given, briefly, an account of changes that have been made, and have come back to our starting point, viz.: New Testament church government and organization. We append an outline convenient for reference.

JERUSALEM, A.D. 34. Pentecost after Christ's ascension. First Gospel sermon under the Great Commission, and conversion of the three thousand; hence, the *first congregation of the Church of Christ* under the New Covenant. In the year 64 Paul wrote to the Colossians that the Gospel was "preached to every creature under heaven" (1:23), and congregations of Christ were found in all parts of the known world. (See Acts and Epistles and Revelations.)

ROME, A.D. 606. Five hundred and seventy-two years later—the establishment of the *Roman Catholic Church*, with Boniface III. as its first pope, in the sense in which the word “pope” is now used and understood. This was accomplished through gradual development and a succession of departures from New Testament teaching, viz.:

1. Distinction between the words “Bishop” and “Presbyter.”
2. Standing office of “President of the Presbytery.”

3. Creation of a new class of officers called “Country Bishops.”
4. Occasional conventions, composed of delegates from different congregations, for the purpose of settling disputes, which conventions assumed legislative authority.
5. General Synods and Councils with permanent presiding officers.
6. Use of the title “Metropolitan” designating this officer.
7. “Bishops” claiming supreme power and no longer counseling with the “Presbyters.”
8. Use of the term “Exarch,” later changed to “Patriarch,” to designate the Metropolitans of the large divisions of the Roman Empire.
9. General or Ecumenical Councils, the first called by Constantine in A.D. 325, representing the Church Universal.
10. Special rights and honors conferred on the “Patriarchs” of Rome and Constantinople.
11. Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, assuming the title of “Universal Bishop of the Church,” A.D. 588. (Gregory the Great, Patriarch of Rome, denounced this assumption as anti-Christ and diabolical.)
12. Boniface III., Patriarch of Rome, had this title transferred from John the Faster to himself (A.D. 606).

Note how many departures from the teaching of Christ, the “head of the body,” “which is the church,” were necessary to establish the “Pope of Rome” as the “head of the Roman Catholic Church.”

NINTH CENTURY. Origin of the Society afterwards called United Brethren, July 16, 1054. Final separation of the Eastern and Western churches, and establishment of the Greek Church.

OCTOBER 31, 1517. "The Birthday of the Reformation," leading to the establishment of the "Lutheran Church."

1519. Reformation introduced into Switzerland by Zwingli, resulting in the founding of the "Reformed Church."

1522. The words "Anabaptists" and "Baptists" first used to distinguish certain believers who contended for the scriptural teaching on the "Action of Baptism," from those who accepted the practice of "sprinkling" or "pouring."

1534. Henry VIII of England separates from the Roman See and becomes supreme head of the "Church of England."

1536. "Calvinism" established at Geneva under the Presbyterian form of church government. (Since 1618 the term "Calvinism" has been used to designate Calvin's theological principles as set forth by the synod of Dort, "independent of his system of church polity.")

1560. Reformation introduced into Scotland by John Knox, resulting in the formation of the "Kirk of Scotland."

1602. A dissenting church formed in the north of England; driven to Holland and resulting in the organization of the “Congregational Church.”
1616. Separation of “Independents” from the Church of England.
1639. Organization of the first “Baptist Church” in the United States, by Roger Williams, at Providence, R. I.
- ABOUT 1650. Origin of “Society of Friends” (Quakers).
1739. Origin of the “United Societies of the People called Methodists.”
1784. Organization of the “Methodist Episcopal Church.”
1785. Organization of the “Protestant Episcopal Church.”
1800. Beginning of the “Nineteenth Century Reformation,” resulting in the development of the “Christian Connexion,” and “The Christian Denomination”; also in the establishment of numerous congregations —“churches of Christ”—contending for the New Testament order.
1810. Organization of the “Cumberland Presbyterian Church.”
1830. Organization of the “Protestant Methodist Church.”
1845. Formation of the “Methodist Episcopal Church, South.”
1858. Organization of the “United Presbyterian Church.”

This is a sample of the material contained in
Church History for Busy People
by George A. Klingman

To order single copies, visit:
store.gospelarmory.com/product/church-history-for-busy-people/

To place a bulk order (10 or more copies)
and receive a discount, visit:
www.gospelarmory.com/bulk/

Thank you!

