

**SYNOPSIS OF LECTURES ON CHURCH  
HISTORY. GENERAL INTRODUCTION. HISTORY  
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 100-750 A. D.;  
DIVISION I: THE APPREHENSION OF  
CHRISTIANITY AS TRUTH AS  
SHOWN IN THE CREED OF THE CHURCH AND IN  
ITS MAINTENANCE**

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Synopsis of Lectures on Church History. General Introduction. History of Christian Doctrine 100-750 A. D.; Division I: The apprehension of Christianity as truth as shown in the creed of the church and in its maintenance by Egbert Coffin Smyth

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**EGBERT COFFIN SMYTH**

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# SYNOPSIS

OF

LECTURES ON CHURCH HISTORY.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

100-750 A. D.

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DIVISION I.

THE

APPREHENSION OF CHRISTIANITY AS TRUTH

AS SHOWN IN

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# CHURCH HISTORY.

## SYNOPSIS.

### INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY.

#### I. Subject of Church History.

Inquire, first, What is the Idea of History? secondly, What is the Idea of the Church? as each term is used in the phrase "Church History."

§ 1. *History*.—Uses of the word "History." Analysis of the Idea: Events occur in space and time; in a series; are to be studied in their causes; [Aristotle's classification of causes; application of this division; main use of it; "bare" fact, "exact" fact, often not = the historical fact;] in their development; [development = evolution; more than growth from a germ; general acceptance of the conception; its fruitfulness, its nature, and some of its characteristics—a formal idea, denotes a process, not the subject, moving forces, nor specific end of the process; importance of retaining the principle that events are to be studied in their causes; criticism of Dr. Shedd's definition; specific type of evolution given in history; some of its marks—selection of ends, spiritual ideals, dependence and moral obligation, law and fact of sacrifice]. Definition. Distinguish History from Chronicles; from Archaeology, from Biography. Different methods of writing History—their key. Define Narrative History; Dramatic; Pragmatic; Idealistic; Religious.

§ 2. *Church*.—Three terms to be considered: βασιλεία, ἐκκλησία, church (τὸ κυριακόν). Why begin with the older? Characteristics indicated in Exodus xix. 3-6? General characteristics given in the New Testament. Inferences. Special Characteristics—The Principle, Goal, Visibility, Condition in the world, Law of Growth, of the Church. Definition of the Subject of Church History. Definition of Church History.

§ 3. Relation of Church History to other branches of Theology.

#### II. Sources of Church History.

Definition of "Sources." Classification. Three grounds of distinction. Classes thus obtained. Best method.

#### III. Methods of Division and Arrangement of the Materials of Church History.

§ 1. Three grounds of division. Three methods. Relative value of each. Method of Eusebius. Of the Mediaeval Historians. Of Baronius.

Of Flacius. Of Mosheim. Of Schröckh. Of Neander and Gieseler. Of later Historians. — Schaff, Kurz, Möller, Müller.

§ 2. *Chronological Divisions—Nomenclature.* A. Epochs. What constitutes an Epoch. The Eras of Church History. Corresponding Epochs. Reasons for adopting A.D. 750 as an Epochal year. Special treatment required by Western Christianity. Characterize the three Eras in respect to Geographical Sphere, Nationalities, the State, Polity, Doctrine, Ethics, Results. B. Periods. — Define the Periods into which the History divides.

§ 3. *Rubrical Divisions.* — Method of Neander. Of Dr. Schaff. How do we obtain the true grounds of Rubrical Division? Central Principle in Church History. Three Special Centres. Arrangement of the Materials: Three Parts; Three Rubrics for each Part. Apply these Rubrics to the Preparative Part; to the Constitutive Part; to Church History proper.

**IV. Value of Church History to the Theologian and Preacher.  
Method of Study.**

## A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE;

OR

## THE APPREHENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AS TRUTH.

### INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *Definition.*—Subject—Common meaning of the phrase “Christian Doctrine.” New Testament use of the word *δόγμα* [Luke ii. 1; Eph. ii. 15; Acts xv. 25, 28; xvi. 4]; Patristic; Mediaeval; Semler’s [*δόγμα* = *δόξα*]; Hegelian; Harnack’s. Objective basis. [*εὐαγγέλιον, κήρυγμα ἀποστολικόν*]. Subjective basis. Authority. Form—Relation of *δόγμα* to *κήρυγμα*. Sphere—Where and how wrought out. Relation to the Church. Tests. Illustrate from Acts xv. 22-29.

§ 2. *Method.*—Sketch of its history [Lange, Münscher, (Murlock), Augusti, Baumgarten Crusius, Kliefoth, Engelhardt, Meier, Hagenbach, Strauss, Baur, Beck, Gieseler, Neander, Niedner, Schmid, Schwane, Shedd, Nitzsch, Thomasius, Sheldon, Harnack, Loofs]. Its Principle. Distribution of Materials. Chronological divisions.



## THE ANCIENT ERA.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH: FROM CLEMENT OF ROME  
TO JOHN OF DAMASCUS. A.D. 100-750.

## DIVISION I.

THE APPREHENSION OF CHRISTIANITY AS TRUTH AS  
SHOWN IN THE CREED OF THE CHURCH AND IN ITS  
MAINTENANCE.

## BOOK I.

THE CREED IN THE SECOND CENTURY. TO c. A.D. 220.

## CHAPTER I.—The Symbols.

§ 1. Meaning of the phrase τὸ σὺμβολον. Similar use of the phrase "The Creed." Origin of the early Baptismal Confessions.—Custom suggested by 1 Tim. vi. 12; Acts viii. 37. What implied in Acts ii. 38-41; x. 48; xviii. 8; xviii. 24-xix. 7; Matt. xxviii. 16-20; Didaché vii. 1-3? Form of the Confessions—On Jewish soil. Earliest Expansion. Later Symbols—as in the *De Sacramentis*, and c. A.D. 748 (Boniface) in Old Low German. What indicated as to very early expansion in the writings of Ignatius and Irenaeus? Contents and probable date of the Old Roman Creed. Relation to the other Western Symbols. The Eastern Symbols—Their variety, archetype, special characteristics (Harnack). Design and use of the Symbols—personal confession, relation to the κήρυγμα; spontaneity. Why expanded? Different methods in the East and West.

## CHAPTER II.—Conflicting Apprehensions of Christianity.

I. *Judaic Christianity.*

§ 2. *Introductory. Jewish Christianity to c. A.D. 136.*—Three Minor Periods. Three Phases in the first of these Periods. Success of Jewish Proselytism. Two Classes of Gentile adherents to Judaism. Series of facts by which the relation of pagan converts to the true Israel was brought before the Jewish Christian Church [Acts ii. viii. xi. 20, xiii. xiv. 23]. Question before the Council at Jerusalem [Acts xv.]. Significance of the cry for circumcision. Variety of motives combining to this demand—ψευδαδελφοί, conditional necessity, prudential and missionary reasons. Position of the majority [Acts xi. 18, xv. 13, 14 (λαός) sqq., xxi. 20 (c. A.D. 58)]. Position of Paul [Acts xxi. 17-26, Gal. ii. 9, Rom. xi. Gal. iii. 28]. In what sense did Paulinism prevail? Epp. of the

Imprisonment. Special questions:—Did the decisions of the Council (Acts xv.) put Gentile Christians on the footing of Proselytes of the Gate? Did it require social union? How far applicable? Probable explanation of the long tenure of Jewish observances in the Church of Jerusalem. Characteristics of the Second Minor Period. Influence of the destruction of Jerusalem. Neander's opinion. In what particular questionable. Outline of the history during the Third Minor Period.

§ 3. *Ebionism*.—Patristic notices. From whose time regarded as heretical? Gieseler's division. Three classes of Ebionites now discriminated. Epiphanius's *Ναζωραῖοι*. Jerome's Nazaraei (Hebionitae, Hebionitarum socii). Can this party be historically traced to the primitive church at Jerusalem (Pella)? Insufficiency of the evidence to prove the continuous existence of a Nazarene sect. Probable way in which this party became separated from the Catholic Church and identified with the Ebionites. *Διαθήκαι τῶν ἑβραίων*. Characteristics of the Ebionites (*Ἐβιωναῖοι*). By whom first mentioned. Origin of the name (*יְהוֹנָתָן*). Relation to Jewish Christianity. When did this party become a sect? Locality, numbers, and influence. Philosophising Ebionism—Other names. Which preferred. Sources of information respecting it. Probable allusion to it in Col. ii. 8–23. Combination of theosophy, Jewish ordinances and asceticism, all with a practical aim. Further traces in the tenets and practices of the Elkesaites. Probable origin of the name (*עֲלֵסַי*). Oriental, Essene, and Christian elements in the book *Elkesai*. Rejection of sacrifices and parts of the Old Testament. Obligation of circumcision and the law. Their Christology. Compared with that of the vulgar Ebionites. The Clementines. Aim and method of this species of Ebionism. Resemblance to those of Neo-Platonism. Result. Estimate of the influence of Ebionism. Its duration.

## II. *Gnosticism*.

§ 4. *Origin and General Characteristics*.—Conquests of Alexander [B.C. 336–323]. Fusion of opinions. Inquiry awakened. Participation. Aim of pre-Christian Gnosticism. Two-fold influence of Christianity upon it. Aim of Christian Gnosticism. Its Theosophic character. Its conception and treatment of the gospel. Questions with which it dealt. In what respect justifiable? Its three-fold mistake—as to the essence of Christianity and the relation of knowledge to faith; its treatment of the historical facts of Christianity; the control of its Christian materials by foreign conceptions. Its eclecticism. Its Dualism. Its Method.

§ 5. *Particular Tenets of Gnosticism*.—(Statement by Nitzsch). Its doctrine of the Divine Nature; its dualism (*δῆλυ*); origin of the sensible world; separation of a Former from the true God; personified Powers or Aeons—their office; man and his sin—three principles, three classes,

basis of each, attainment of each; Redemption—its nature; the Redeemer; the historic Christ—doctetic treatment of his humanity; treatment of Scripture. [Note on its historical course. Principle of classification adopted by Neander; by Baur. Criticism. Hilgenfeld's attempt to trace a development through three *stadia*—Semitic, Hellenic, Catholicising]. Period of conflict with Gnosticism. Character of the contest.

### III. Reactionary or Reformatory Movements.

§ 6. *Montanism*.—A. Its external history.—Montanus; date and locality of his appearance; his claim; reception; followers [Priscilla, Maximilla]; immediate and secondary results. Judgment passed upon Montanism by the Churches of Asia Minor. In the extant Christian literature of the Second Century. By Neander. Separation from the Church. Duration. Tertullian's connection with Montanism. Personal characteristics favorable to its acceptance. His principal Montanistic writings [*De Corona Militis, De Virginibus Velandis, De Fuga in Persecutione, De Monogamia, De Jejunis, De Pudicitia*]. Chief tenets and characteristic of Montanism as exhibited in Tertullian's writings.—Its doctrine of Prophecy. How were its revelations received and delivered? [Montanus's figure of a lyre; Tertullian's phraseology, *amentia, excidat sensu*] Relation to the pagan divination (*μαντική*) and to Philo's theory of Hebrew prophecy [ὅτε μὲν γὰρ φῶς ἐπιλάμψει τὸ θεῖον, διέραι τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ὅτε δ' ἐκείνο δύει, τὸν ἀνίσχει καὶ ἀνατέλλει. . . Διὰ τοῦτο ἡ δέσις τοῦ λογισμοῦ καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν σκότος, ἔκτασιν καὶ θεσφόρητον μαγίαν ἐγέννησε]. Position of early opponents of Montanism [παρὰ τὸ κατὰ παράδοσιν καὶ κατὰ διαδοχὴν ἄνωθεν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἴθος ἐγένθη προφητεῖοντα.—'Ἄλλ' ὄγε ψευδοπροφήτης ἐν παρεκστάσει . . . καταστρέφειν δὲ εἰς ἀκούσιον μαγίαν ψυχῆς. . . Τοῦτον δὲ τὸν τρόπον, οὔτε τινὰ τῶν κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν οὔτε τῶν κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν πνευματοφορηθέντα προφήτην δεῖξαι δύνησονται, οὔτε Ἄγαθον, οὔτε Ἰοῦδαν, οὔτε Σίλαν, οὔτε τὸν Φιλίππου θυγατέρας . . . οὔτε δὲ τινος ἄλλου μὴδὲν αὐτοῖς προσήκοντα κενκῆσονται.—δεῖν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφητικὸν χρίσμα ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τελείας παρουσίας, ἡ ἀπόστολος ἀξιοῖ· ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν ἔχοιεν δεῖξαι, τισσαρεσκαιδέκατον ᾗδῃ ποῦ τοῦτο ἔπος ἀπὸ τῆς Μαξιμίλλης τελείτης]. Later writers [Clem. Alex., Origen]. Continuance of the new Prophecy as a characteristic of the (spiritual) church [Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit; sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum]. Design of the new revelations. Doctrines of the church. Of the millennial kingdom. Of the requirements of Christian life. C. General conceptions which underlie Montanism.—Relation of the supernatural or spiritual in Christianity to the natural; Conditions of religious progress; Nature of Christian