



OMNIBUS II

Church Fathers through the Reformation

Edited by DOUGLAS WILSON and G. TYLER FISCHER

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For my grandchildren, in the hope that they will read many of these books to their grandchildren.

—DOUGLAS WILSON

For Emily, whose love, support and longsuffering made this work possible. May your children rise up and call you blessed, adding their voices of praise to mine. *Amore fidelis.*

—G. TYLER FISCHER

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FOREWORD

One of the most obvious questions that Christians might ask about a curriculum like this one is, “Why study this stuff?” The question can be asked for different reasons. Perhaps a concerned parent is attracted to the rigor of a “classical and Christian approach,” and yet has thumbed through a couple of the texts and is taken aback by some of the material. “It was this kind of gunk,” he thinks, “that chased us out of the government school.” Or perhaps the question is asked by the student himself when he “hits the wall.” The rigor that is built into this course of study is significant, and about a third of the way through the year, a student might be asking all sorts of pointed questions. “Why are you making me do this?” is likely to be one of them. The student may be asking because of his workload, but if he points to the nature of the material, the question still needs a good answer. It is a good question, and everyone who is involved in teaching this course needs to have the answer mastered.

G.K. Chesterton said somewhere that if a book does not have a wicked character in it, then it is a wicked book. One of the most pernicious errors that has gotten abroad in the Christian community is the error of *sentimentalism*—the view that evil is to be evaded, rather than the more robust Christian view that evil is to be conquered. The Christian believes that evil is there to be fought, the dragon is there to be slain. The sentimentalist believes that evil is to be resented.

My wife and I did not enroll our children in a classical Christian school so that they would never come into contact with sin. Rather, we wanted them there because we wanted to unite with like-minded Christian parents who had covenanted together to deal with the (inevitable) sin in a consistent, biblical manner. We fully expected our children to encounter sin in the classroom, on the playground and in the curriculum.

We also expected that when they encountered it, they would see it dealt with in the way the Bible says sin should be dealt with.

A classical Christian school or a home school following the classical Christian curriculum must never be thought of as an asylum. Rather, this is a time of basic training; it is boot camp. Students are being taught to handle their weapons, and they are being taught this under godly, patient supervision. But in order to learn this sort of response, it is important

that students learn it well. That is, setting up a “straw man” paganism that is easily demolished equips no one. All that would do is impart a false sense of security to the students—until they get to a secular college campus to encounter the real thing. Or, worse yet, if they continue the path into a soft, asylum-style Christian college and then find themselves addressing the marketplace completely unprepared.

If this basic training is our goal, and it is, then we should make clear what one potential abuse of the Omnibus curriculum might be. This curriculum was written

and edited with the assumption that godly oversight and protection would accompany the student through his course of work. It was written with the conviction that children need teachers, flesh and blood teachers, who will work together with them. It was also written with the assumption that many of these teachers need the help and the resources that a program like this can supply. But we also believe that, if a seventh-grader is simply given this material and told to work through it himself, the chances are good that the student will miss the benefit that is available for those who are taught.

The Scriptures do not allow us to believe that a record of sinful behavior, or of sinful corruption, is inherently corrupting. If it were, then there are many stories and accounts in the Bible itself that would have



to be excluded. But if we ever begin to think our children need to be protected “from the Bible,” this should bring us up short. Perhaps we have picked up false notions of holiness somewhere. In short, there is no subject that this curriculum will raise in the minds of seventh-grade students that would not *also* be raised when that student reads through his Bible, cover to cover. It is true that this curriculum has accounts of various murders, or examples of prostitution, or of tyranny from powerful and cruel kings. But we can find all the same things in the book of Judges.

So the issue is not the *presence* of sin, but of the *response* to that sin. What we have sought to do throughout—in the introductory worldview essays, the questions and exercises, and in the teachers’ materials—is provide a guideline for responding to all the various worldviews that men outside of Christ come up with. This program, we believe, will equip the student to see through pretences and lies that other Christian children, who have perhaps been too sheltered, are not able to deal with.

Of course, there is a limit to this, as we have sought to recognize. There *are* certain forms of worldliness and corruption that would overwhelm a student’s ability to handle it, no matter how carefully a parent or teacher was instructing them. And while children differ in what they can handle, in our experience with many students of this age, we believe that the content of this curriculum is well within the capacity of Christian children of this age group. But again, this assumes godly oversight and instruction. The challenge here is two-fold. The rigor of the curriculum can seem daunting, but we have sought to provide direction and balance with regard to the demands of the material. The second concern is the question of false worldviews, paganism and just plain old-fashioned sin, which we have addressed above.

As our students work their way through this material, and in the years of the Omnibus program that will fol-

low, we want them to walk away with a profound sense of the *antithesis*. What we mean by this is that right after Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, God gave His first messianic promise (Gen. 3:15). But along with this promise, He also said that there would be constant antipathy between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This is what we mean by the antithesis, and we want our students to come to share in that godly antipathy. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Ps. 97:10; Prov. 8:13). In every generation, in all movements (whether of armies or philosophies), in all schools of literature, the men and women involved are either obeying God or disobeying Him. They are either trusting Him or they are not trusting Him. All students are learning to love God, or they are not learning to love God.



But when they love and trust Him, they must do so in the face of conflict. Jesus was the ultimate Seed of the woman, and yet when He came down and lived among us, He faced constant opposition from “broods of vipers.” It is not possible to live in this world faithfully without coming into conflict with those who have no desire to live faithfully. The task of every Christian parent bringing children up to maturity in such a world is to do it in *a way that equips*. False protection, precisely because it does not equip, leaves a child defenseless when the inevitable day comes when that artificial shelter is removed. True protection equips. We do not want to build a fortress for our students to hide in; we want to give them a shield to carry—along with a sword.

Students who have faithfully worked through this course of study will not be suckers for a romanticized view of ancient paganism offered up by Hollywood. They have read Suetonius, and they have worked through a Christian response to true paganism. They are grateful that Christ came into this dark world, and they know *why* they are grateful.

—Douglas Wilson

P R E F A C E

In the grip of unbelief, some cultures are truly blind. The Bible describes what it is like to live without God and without hope in the world. Before the gospel came to them, the Gentiles of the first century were caught in the grip of “vanity of mind” and “blindness of heart.” This was their way of life, their culture of futility. When a people do not know Christ, they are dead in their trespasses and sin, and God gives them over to the logical consequences of their unbelief. The twisted results of this can be seen clearly in St. Paul’s description in Romans 1.

This does not mean that the depravity of unbelievers is absolute, or that they are as wicked as they could possibly be. We know that by God’s common grace, He restrains cultures from getting to the end of the road, and such cultures can still produce poems, stories, engravings and statues that are quite beautiful. Christians can study such things, and profit by them, but they have to be very careful in

this. This was the kind of task we had before us in the first *Omnibus* text—we were dealing with many texts from the ancient classical world, and this meant that we had to take their cultural blindness into account and learn to bring the revelation of Jesus Christ to bear.

This second *Omnibus* text is covering the medieval period, and as a result we must adjust what we are doing. We are *not* adjusting our commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word, but rather recognizing that we are working with quite a different period. It is possible to move from one task to another while retaining the same work ethic. The reason our task in this year of readings is so different is that we must take account of the conversion of Europe to the Christian faith. And in the history of our people during the medieval period, one of the most striking things about us at that time is that we were unashamed of Jesus Christ. This entire and complete confidence in Him



is largely missing today, even in many churches.

However, after the gospel comes to a people, this does not mean that they automatically have the cultural equivalent of perfect 20/20 vision. This side of the resurrection, all believing cultures, even the best of them, will still have their blind spots. This certainly includes our medieval fathers, and it means that we will perhaps see some things more clearly than they did. But it is very tempting for us to simply assume this as a given across the board, and part of the reason for having our students study this period with deep appreciation is so that we might come to learn the dangers in this self-serving approach.

The reason for this is that the reverse is also true; *they* saw certain things far more clearly than we do. We may be permitted to see their blind spots, and, being alive, we can talk about them. But they can see our blind spots also, and if we want to hear their critique, we will have to read some books from another era. In a famous essay on the reading of old books, C.S. Lewis makes the very important point that reading such old books prevents us from falling into what might be described as a chronological provincialism. The people in one village, who don't get out much, can easily believe that the people in that *other* village fifty miles down the road don't pronounce some of their words right. And the more we are limited to just our own village, the more likely it is that we will believe this kind of thing. But someone who has traveled extensively around the world is unlikely to get caught up in such a mistake. Travel broadens the mind, and reading old books is a form of travel.

Most students today are living in the chronological equivalent of a village. They don't read all that much, and, of what they read, over ninety percent of it was written within a small fraction of their lifetime. When

it comes to history, literature, poetry, art and architecture, this robs such students and makes them the temporal equivalent of rubes and cornpones.

The students working through the *Omnibus* program this year will be reading many glorious texts. And these texts will of course have blind spots and errors, like all human productions—but they won't be the errors that are characteristic of *our* age. That being the case, we are likely to be able to identify them. By the same token, we will also be able to see some of their statements of the *truth* that are not characteristic of our age either. And those statements of the truth will bring us up short and make us reflect on the practices of our “small village.” The period in which we live is also a “period,” and five hundred years from now students will be struggling over it, trying to make sense of some of our practices. Nothing is better for clearing our minds of the vanity that afflicts us than to begin seeing ourselves as others will see us. And since we are currently living in the future's “past,” a good way of coming to an understanding of ourselves is by studying and appreciating and *understanding* that which is past to us now.

And so this is why we are inviting the student reader to exult in *The Song of Roland*, to learn the shrewd insights of *The Canterbury Tales*, to see the connections between Anglo/Saxon culture and the world of Middle-earth in *The Lord of the Rings*, to rejoice with Arthur in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, to grasp the similarities between David the future king and Robin Hood, to learn to alliterate with joy in *Beowulf*, and to enjoy history in the same way that Geoffrey of Monmouth did. The writers of this textbook have enjoyed the process thoroughly, and we invite you to now join us.

—Douglas Wilson

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Have you ever stopped to think what the President of the United States in the year 2040 is doing right now? What about the next Martin Luther or John Calvin? I'll tell you what I hope they are doing. I hope they just finished reading this sentence!

There is no doubt in my mind that classical Christian education and the rigorous study of the greatest works of Western Civilization is a tool to create leaders like no other—godly leaders who understand that this is God's world, Christ inherited it, and we are to take dominion of it to His glory.

Many have begun down the path of studying this material and have not persevered—in their minds it was too hard, too salacious for Christian ears, too unrealistic, too much to grasp, the books were too old or some other “too.” Be assured, like the Scriptures say in the Parable of the Sower, the work you do will *bear fruit a hundredfold* if you stick with it. In the lives of our own children we have already seen tremendous benefit and really have just barely scratched the surface.

Our goal with this text is to make the work easier for you. This text should make approaching *Omnibus*, and other material not previously encountered, come alive in a way that instills confidence, and it should convey a sense that young students (and teachers) can handle it.

We have done all we could to make this text a stand-alone guide for reading, studying and understanding these great books. A couple reference books will prove beneficial as resources for this year as well as the following years. *Western Civilization* by Jackson Spielvogel and *History of Art for Young People* by H.W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson are the two main ones. If you have previously used our *Veritas Press History and Bible Curriculum*, you will want to keep the flash-cards from them handy, too.

May you be blessed as you dig in and study the hand of God at work in the past and prepare for His use of you in the future.

—Marlin Detweiler

ADVISORY TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In the course of history there has been much fluctuation on what has been deemed age appropriate for young students. And for those of us alive today, there remains great variation as to what is considered age appropriate. The material we have created and the books we have assigned address numerous subjects and ideas that deal with topics (including sex, violence, religious persuasion and a whole host of other ideas) that have been the subject of much discussion of whether they are age appropriate. The judgment we applied in this text has been the same as we apply to our own children.

In the creation of this program we have assumed that it will be used by students in seventh grade and above. Furthermore, we have assumed that there is no part of the Bible deemed inappropriate to discuss with a seventh-grade student. Therefore, the material assumes that the student knows what sex is, that he understands the existence of violence, that he understands there are theological and doctrinal differences to be addressed and that he has the maturity to discern right and wrong.

The worldview we hold and from which we write is distinctly protestant and best summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Bible is our only ultimate and infallible rule of faith and practice.

We encourage you to become familiar with the material that your students will be covering in this program in order to avoid problems where you might differ with us on these matters.

INTRODUCTION

Knock, knock, knock.

Who could that be?

Knock, knock, knock!

Unfortunately, my wife is away at choir practice, and so I have to go and find out. Hadn't I turned the lights off outside?

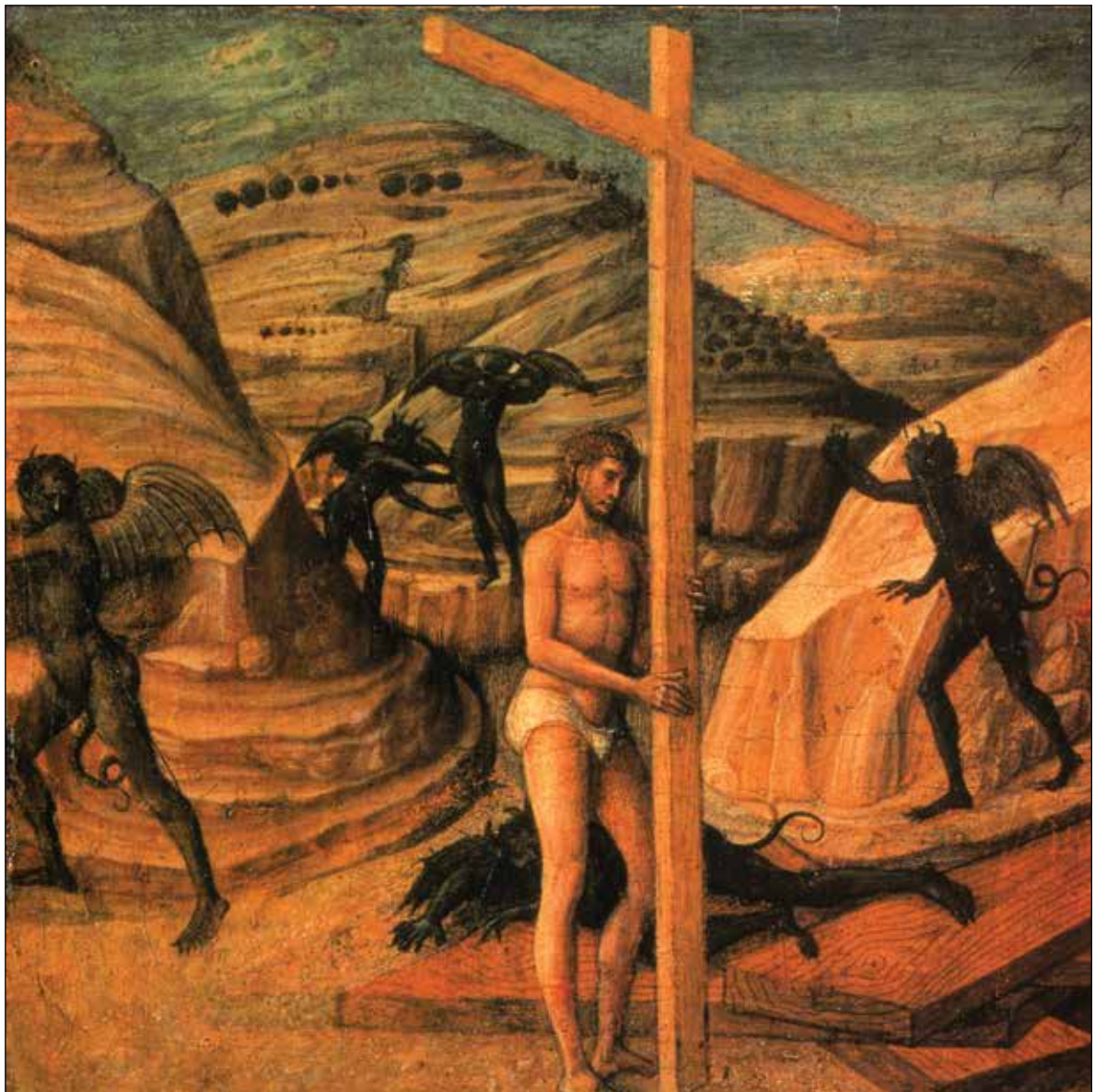
KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

I swing the door open to find Frankenstein, Spiderman, some sort of zombie-looking creature and someone with a knife sticking out of his head. He is carrying a chain saw. (*I hope that it is not real.*) Out from among them steps the prince of darkness himself—not looking too fearsome.

“Trick or Treat!” they scream (which might be translated in some neighborhoods as “bribe us with candy or we will show you what this chain saw is for,” but in the quiet, rolling fields of Lancaster County it still means something like “please”). I reach for the candy.

They thank me and scurry down the driveway. I switch off the lights. I have got to get some work done—no more distractions.

As I settle into my chair, I think back to the devil (or facsimile of a devil) that I just bribed with candy and wonder how our culture got so messed up—so comfortable with the Devil.



Today, we seem to have two competing cultural attitudes toward Satan: fear or adoration. Part of our culture seems to almost admire the Devil as the leader of all rebels. We see the fringe of this in the hard core Rock and Rollers, but as the first generation of Dark Lord-worshiping metal heads mumbles incoherently into a permanent stupor, who can argue that this is a good life? Still, our modern culture will not be persuaded by the evidence and still follows in the spirit of rebellion, even when it seems increasingly clear that we are running out of things to rebel against.

Often the Christian attitude is one of fear. In some circles of Christians where divine worship has become increasingly light and airy, I have even seen the odd paradox of Christians who seem to fear and respect the Devil more than they do God. *Jesus is my pal, but the Devil, yikes!*

Thankfully, as in most things, the medieval world both explodes and informs our sad, modern outlook. They did neither fear Satan nor admire him. They mocked him. In fact, it is quite possible that the original celebrations on the Eve of All Saints Day—or All Hallow's Eve, a.k.a., Halloween—were done for this purpose.¹ Some have pointed to celebrations that centered on Christian children chasing a few men dressed as demons and devils out of town—usually with sticks. The children were learning to chase the Devil out because he is a vanquished foe. Whether these stories are true or apocryphal, this sort of celebration certainly fits with the medieval mentality concerning the Devil. They treated him like a vanquished foe because that is what they knew him to be.

I will supply two examples of this attitude. The first comes from no less eminent a source than Martin Luther himself—who claimed to have often seen the Devil. When Luther thought that he saw Satan, he did not cower in fear, but instead threw ink bottles and other things at him. He is also said to have claimed that the Devil could be chased away by, among other things, prayer and laughter.² St. Boniface, the great missionary to the Germans, supplies the other example. He faced down the pagans who were in spiritual slavery to the demonic forces. They lived dark lives eating each other and worshiping a grove of gigantic, sacred oaks. These pagans feared the devil. St. Boniface did not. One night, with the fearful pagans still clinging to their tree-gods, a sound echoed through the forest. CHOP,

CHOP, CHOP! The pagans rushed out, and, as the story goes, they warned Boniface that the pagan gods would surely destroy him if he continued this folly. Boniface's answers can be paraphrased: "Bring it on." CHOP, CHOP, CHOP! They say that the pulpit of Boniface's first church among the Christian Germans was made of oak. The power of the pagan gods had been shattered. There was a new *Man* in town, *the Man Christ Jesus*. Before the gospel came Satan and his forces looked invincible. The light of the gospel revealed them for what they really were: petty, defeated tyrants whose time was over. He was a foe whose head had been crushed, and for the medieval world this meant that it was time to celebrate.

Perhaps this will be the most shocking aspect of the Middle Ages for those who are studying it anew this year. The medieval world was one of great beauty, joy and celebration. They rejoiced because they knew the horror of what they had been freed from and the joy of serving a new, glorious master. In light of the great wisdom and joy that we will explore in the Middle Ages, I thought it was appropriate to address in this Introduction how to use the Omnibus wisely and joyfully.

One of the chief ideas to remember is that Omnibus is a path of renewal and remembrance. In it, we are attempting to rediscover the wisdom of our forefathers that we have, as a culture, cast aside in derision—to our own destruction. What we are seeking to recover is a pearl of great value and complexity. We should not hope to recover everything overnight—in fact, if we could "get up to speed" overnight, we should recognize that what is being recovered is cheap.

At Veritas Academy, we do a better and more comprehensive job of teaching Omnibus every year. When we started doing this, we did not read as much or as deeply as we do now. We could not for a number of reasons, the main one being that our teachers were learning material with which they were unfamiliar. We are getting to know our fathers through the books they have left to us. We know them better now, so we can teach our students to know them better. In those days we read less and not as deeply.

As you work through *Omnibus II*, there are three variables to consider: the teacher, the student and the material. Go as close to the recommended rate as these three allow, keeping in mind the ultimate purpose of

this material and of all Christian education: that our training should end with our students taking joyful dominion of our culture for the glory of Christ.

Just as our teachers went more slowly at the beginning, so will you. Do not be afraid to omit a book or books or to take more time on a session (maybe spending an extra day or two on something that is recommended to be one day), particularly if you are just starting out.

Failing to “ramp up” to doing all or most of the books, or doing the program for the first time in a home school situation, can lead to a couple of catastrophic problems. The first problem is burn-out—which feels something like living death. I have made acquaintances with some who have done this with *Omnibus* and with other material. A few have even claimed—usually tearfully—that I, or others at Veritas Press, are trying to destroy their lives! Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is, however, that this material—like any other curriculum—can become a cruel taskmaster if mishandled or followed woodenly instead of wisely.

As a general rule of thumb, the teacher can only take the student as far as he, the teacher, can inspire him. This means that teachers might need to limit the amount of material that can be effectively pursued in a year. Perhaps this fact will make you downcast, but recognize that this is the way it has always been. Unwise teachers push ahead when no learning is occurring. This is usually an issue of pride, but there can be other motives that lead a teacher to burn out or to exasperate their students. Perhaps the temptation to burn out is even greater with this approach than with others because of the glory of the content. I have met few who claimed that the reading proposed in this book is not worth doing. For most classical Christian school teachers and home educators, I do not even have to argue the point. We all know that we should do it. We must, however, learn to pace ourselves wisely. The end goal of reading the Great Books and entering into the Great Conversation is that we would get to know our fathers, learn from their wisdom and mistakes and thereby be enabled to take dominion presently for Christ and to do this joyfully. If you are not headed toward this end, stop and realign. If you are not headed there joyfully, you are really not headed there at all. The love of learning is,

in fact, a love. Instructors should seek to wisely gauge their own ability to lead students through the books, recognizing that their ability should grow each year.

The ability of the student or students will limit what you can accomplish. If you are in a school setting, you might recognize that from year to year the classes might not move forward at the same rate. I have met those who are befuddled by this—the medieval educator would not be, however. He would recognize that we are training children and that children—like most humans—are unique individuals. When you join them together in a class of ten or twelve, this tendency seems to me to be multiplied rather than diluted. (Of course, if you increase your class size greatly—as many schools in our culture do—you can round the edges and create a system that works mechanically. The only drawback to this is that anything that works like this should hardly be called an education.) So the ability of the students must also be accounted for when a teacher is considering what he can accomplish with them in a year, and this is certainly the case in a home school setting as well.

This advice must be balanced with a goad. Learning is hard work, however joyful it may be. You should get to the end of the year of *Omnibus* and feel like you need to take a week or two off. In fact, teachers *and* students should probably take a week or two off after your school year is complete. The more we pour into the education of our children the more we should expect to see them and their descendents gaining ground in our culture. If you are a teacher, you should usually expect to move more quickly and effectively through the material as you become more familiar with it. But do not expect Dante to deliver up all his glories immediately. At first, he might seem extraordinarily complicated—almost opaque—to both you and the student. By no means give up! Have patience, simmer on the material, ponder it as you drive to the store where you encounter a child or adult racing from one popular brand name to another. Does this remind you of the Vestibule of Hell? It should.

So, this is how you can use *Omnibus II* wisely—or should we say *medievally*? Using it in this manner will prepare your sons and daughters to take dominion joyfully—as many did in the Middle Ages. For unlike what we read about the Middle Ages in stale and unreadable volumes of “enlightened” history, the Middle Ages were not dark ones. Medieval people

were staggeringly wise at some points, and to them we owe much of the good that exists in the world—and some of the bad as well. Something in them calls us back. We yearn like Dante to see Beatrice. We long for leaders like Aragorn or Beowulf. We desire to be noble like Arthur or Gawain and courageous like Boniface. We long to worship in cathedrals and dance as we celebrate Epiphany. To see women dressed as if they meant to be feminine and to meet men who do not remind us of our modern rootless, chestless species. We can not go back and would not want to in many ways—only the most desperate fools want to experience the word *medieval* as it is attached to words like *medicine* or *transportation*. We must, however, be driven forward to a future that learns from much that is presently ignored or forgotten. We must create a culture that remembers and builds on the beauty and glory of this most Christian age.

Knock, knock, knock.

Maybe we just want the ghouls to stop knocking at

the front door. *I know the lights are off now.*

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

Wait! Was that a *KNOCK* or a *Chop*?

Perhaps if I just close my eyes I can imagine that the rapping at my chamber door is the swing of St. Boniface's ax.

CHOP, CHOP, CHOP!

There, that's better.

—G. Tyler Fischer

All Hallow's Eve, A.D. 2005

NOTES

- 1 I do not intend to settle all of the debates that go on among Christians concerning the roots of and propriety of celebrating Halloween. I would only note that both sides of the debate, the *This-Is-the-Devil's-Holiday* crowd and the *Halloween-is-Essentially-Christian* group, tend to base their opinions on conjecture about the origin of traditions, and neither side is immune from the charge of pseudo-scholarship.
- 2 He mentioned one other method, but I can not and will not mention it here. If you go and do the historical research, however, you will be either fascinated or scandalized.

USING OMNIBUS

Students throughout the ages have read the books that you are about to read. These books have been their teachers and have done a lot to make them the great men and women that they became. Now, you are being welcomed to come along and join with them and to learn from them. It is important to realize that some of these books are not to be learned from uncritically—some of them we learn from by the problems they caused. Before you get started, however, there are a few terms you need to understand. First among them is the word *omnibus*. This Latin word means “all encompassing” or “everything.” So, in a very loose sense, the Omnibus curriculum is where we talk about everything. All of the important ideas are set on the table to explore and understand. In a more technical sense, however, this Omnibus focuses our attention on the ideas, arguments and expressions of the Western Canon, which have also become known as the Great Books of Western Civilization.

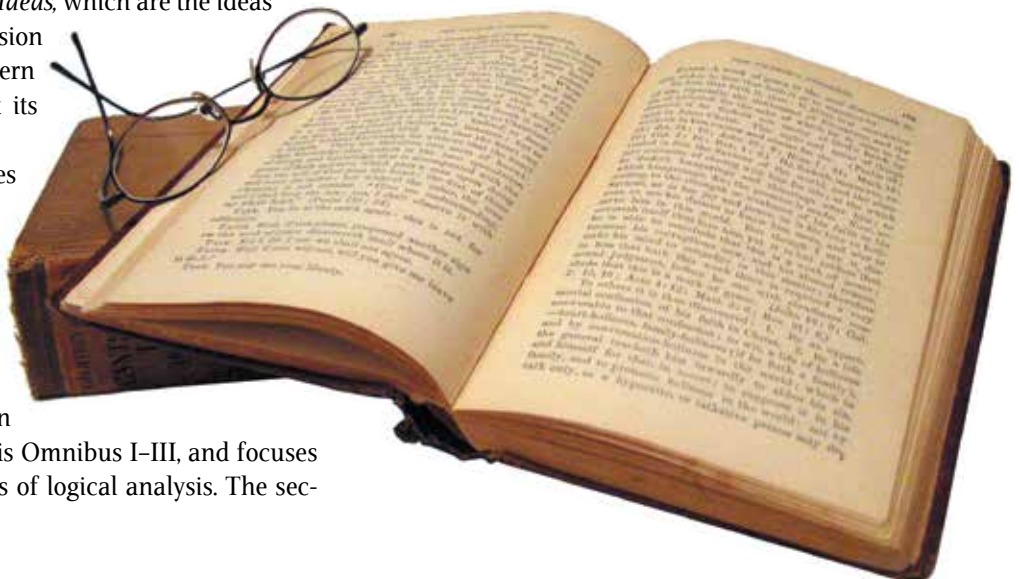
The Great Books are those books that have guided and informed thinking people in Western Civilization. They are the books that have stood the test of time. They come from many sources, starting with the Hebrews and Greeks and extending to their Roman, European and Colonial heirs. These books represent the highest theological and philosophical contemplations, the most accurate historical record and the most brilliant literary tradition that have come down to us from our forefathers. The Great Books lead us into a discussion of the *Great Ideas*, which are the ideas that have driven discussion and argument in Western Civilization throughout its illustrious history.

The Omnibus takes students on a path through the Great Books and the Great Ideas in two cycles. It follows the chronological pattern of Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods. The first cycle is Omnibus I-III, and focuses on sharpening the skills of logical analysis. The sec-

ond is *Omnibus IV-VI*, focusing on increasing the rhetorical skills of the student.

TITLE	PERIOD	YEARS	EMPHASIS
Omnibus I	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 70	Logic
Omnibus II	Medieval	70–1563	Logic
Omnibus III	Modern	1563–Present	Logic
Omnibus IV	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 70	Rhetoric
Omnibus V	Medieval	70–1563	Rhetoric
Omnibus VI	Modern	1563–Present	Rhetoric

Two kinds of books are read concurrently in the Omnibus, *Primary* and *Secondary*. The list of Primary Books for each year is what might be termed the traditional “Great Books.” On this list are authors like Homer, Dante and Calvin. The Secondary Books are ones that give balance to our reading (balance in the general areas of Theology, History and Literature). The secondary list contains works such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These books are usually easier, and less class time is devoted to them. Each year is similarly organized. There are thirty-seven weeks’ worth of material. Each week is divided into eight sessions of roughly seventy minutes each, optimally. The time estimate is approximate. Home schooling situations might vary greatly from student to student. Five of these sessions are committed to the study of the Primary Books. The other three are dedicated to the Secondary Books.



KINDS OF SESSIONS

Prelude

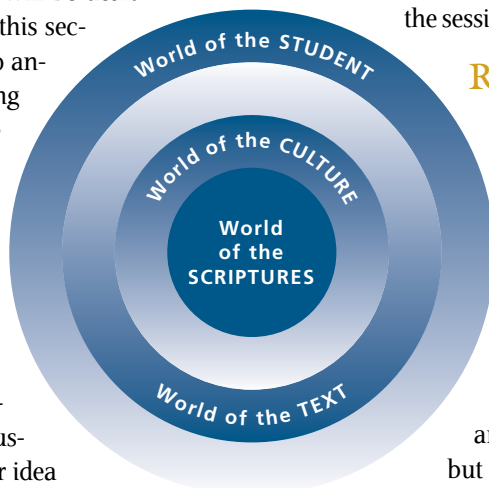
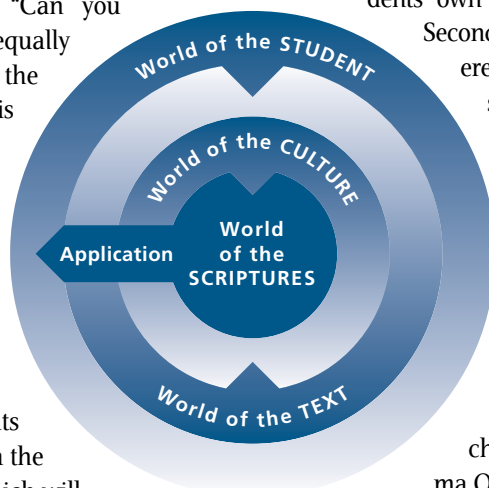
Each chapter is introduced with a session called a Prelude. In each Prelude we seek to stir up the interest of the students by examining a provoking question that is or could be raised from the book. This is done in the section called A Question to Consider. When the teacher introduces this question he should seek to get the students' initial reaction to the question. These questions might range from "Can you teach virtue?" to "Are all sins equally wicked?" Usually, a student in the Logic years will love to argue his answers. Generally, it will prove helpful for a student to read the introductory essay in the student text *before* tackling A Question to Consider. Sometimes a teacher may want to introduce the question first to stir up interest. This "introductory material" will give the students both the general information on the work and a worldview essay which will unpack some of the issues that will be dealt with in the book. After reading this section, the student will be asked to answer a few questions concerning the chapter. These questions are based only on the introductory material they have just read, not on the reading of the book itself.

Discussion

The Discussion is the most frequently used class in the Omnibus. It has five parts. The Discussion seeks to explore a particular idea within a book from the perspective of the text itself, our culture and the Bible. It begins, like the Prelude, with A Question to Consider, which is the first of "four worlds" that will be explored, the *world of the student*. The *world of the text* is discovered through the Text Analysis questions. These questions unlock the answer that the book itself supplies for this question (e.g.,

when reading the *Aeneid*, we are trying to find out how the author, Virgil, would answer this question). After this, in the Cultural Analysis section, the student examines the world of the culture, how our culture would answer the same question. Many times this will be vastly different from the answer of the student or the author. The Biblical Analysis questions seek to unearth what God's Word teaches concerning this question. We can call this discovering the world of the Scriptures. So the progression of the questions is important. First, the students' own opinions and ideas are set forth.

Second, the opinion of the text is considered. Next, the view of our culture is studied. Finally, the teaching of the Scriptures is brought to bear. All other opinions, beliefs and convictions must be informed and corrected by the standard of God's Word. Often, after hearing the Word of God, the material seeks to apply the discovered truth to the life of the students. Finally, the students are challenged to think through a Summa Question which synthesizes all they have learned about this "highest" idea from the session.



Recitation

The Recitation is a set of grammatical questions that helps to reveal the student's comprehension of the facts or ideas of the book. This can be done in a group setting or individually with or by students. The Recitation questions can also be answered in written form and checked against the answers, but we encourage doing the Recitation orally whenever possible. It provides great opportunity for wandering down rabbit trails of particular interest or launching into any number of discussions. Of course, we cannot predict what current events are occurring when your students study this material. Recitations can prove a great time to direct conversation that relates to the questions and material being covered in this type of class.

Analysis

This session of worldview analysis is focused on comparing a character, culture or author you are studying to some other character, culture or author. This might be done by comparing two or three characters' or authors' answers to the same questions. This type of session effectively helps students to understand the differences between cultures and characters, especially in the arena of worldview.

Writing

There are a variety of writing assignments all focusing on expanding a student's ability to write effectively and winsomely. In the earlier years the focus is on the basics. This includes exercises of the *progymnasmata*, beginning writing exercises used by Greek and Roman students in antiquity and by their medieval and colonial counterparts. Also, essay writing and argument is at the forefront. The assignments in these sessions will progress each year from teaching the basics to including composition in fiction and poetry.

Activity

These classes are focused on bringing creative ideas into the mix. Activities might include debates, trials, sword fights, board games and dramatic productions. Music and art appreciation are also included in this category. These classes are harder to prepare for, but are quite important. Often, the student will remember and understand (and love) the material only if our discussions and recitations are mixed with these unforgettable activities. There are also a number of field trips that are recommended. Often, these are recommended in two categories: ones that most people can do and ones that are "outside the box" experiences that only some will be able to do. The first category might send you to the local museum or planetarium. The latter will recommend ideas like chartering a boat at Nantucket to experience what Ishmael felt on the *Pequod*. Careful pre-planning is important to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

Review and Evaluation

Weekly testing is not recommended. Students will weary of it and will spend all of their time preparing for tests instead of learning. Choose your tests careful-

ly. Even if a chapter has an evaluation at the end, know that you can use it as a review. The test and the review both work toward the same goal of demonstrating the knowledge of the students and cementing the material into their minds.

Evaluations are divided into three sections. The first section tests the student's *grammatical* knowledge of the book. Answers to these questions should be short, consisting of a sentence or two. The second section is the *logic* section. In this section students are asked to answer questions concerning the ideas of the book and to show that they understand how ideas connect with each other within the book. The final section is called *lateral thinking*. This section asks students to relate ideas in one book with the ideas that they have studied in other books. For instance, the student might be asked to compare Homer's ideal heroes (Achilleus and Odysseus) with Virgil's character Aeneas to discover how the Roman conception of the hero was different from the Greek idea. Finally, students often will be asked to compare and contrast these pagan ideas with a biblical view. So, students might be asked to contrast Homer and Virgil's teaching on what is heroic with the ultimate heroic work of Christ. In this way students demonstrate that they can set ideas in their proper biblical context, showing the relationship between the writing of one author and another. Students should be allowed to have their books and Bibles available during testing. If they are having to do extensive reading during the tests, they are not going to be able to finish or do well anyway. Students should not be permitted to have notes of any kind during the test.

Optional Sessions and Activities

For each chapter there are also some optional classes included. These allow the teacher to be flexible and to add to, or omit classes as they think wise. Usually the number of optional classes is approximately one optional class for every week that the book is taught. There are also a number of optional activities included. These activities allow you to spend addition time on ideas that your students might find fascinating.

Midterms and finals have been provided on the *Omnibus* Teacher's Edition CD. These tests are optional, but can be a helpful gauge of how much the student is retaining. Usually midterms are given around the ninth

week of the semester, and finals are given during the last week of the semester. Midterm exams are designed to be completed in a class period. (You might want to give the students slightly more time if possible.) The finals, however, are made to be completed over two class periods (or roughly two and a half hours). Most students will finish more quickly, but some might need all of the time. If possible, give the finals when the student has no time limit. These tests, as well, are given with open books and Bibles, but no notes, and they feature the same sections as the review and evaluation (i.e., grammar, logic and lateral thinking).

WHAT'S ON THIS CD?

Teacher's Edition of the Text

The teacher text includes 300 additional pages of material, with an expanded Introduction and suggested answers for all the questions, writing assignments and activities in the daily sessions.

Lesson Plans

Session-by-session lesson plans for each chapter.

Midterms and Exams

Tests with answer keys for both semesters. Three versions are provided for each test (labeled A, B and C).

Grading Tools

An explanation of our suggested grading routine, including sample and blank grading charts, as well as a grading calculator in a popular spreadsheet format.

For those getting ready to teach this curriculum, preparation should be carefully considered. The material has been designed so that it can be taught with little preparation, but this is not recommended. If you want your students to get the most out of this program, you should prepare carefully. First, make sure you are familiar with the book being studied. Also, consult the Teaching Tips on the Teacher's Edition CD before teaching. Knowing where you are going in the end will help you to effectively move through the material and interact with your students effectively.

Requirements and Use

The CD is Windows and Macintosh compatible. Requires free Acrobat Reader. Installer for the latest version is right on the CD or may be downloaded for free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader>.

WINDOWS OS

If the main application does not appear automatically, double-click the file named "VP.exe".

MACINTOSH OS

Double-click the file named "Omnibus II (Double-click)" to launch the main application. *Macintosh OS 9 and earlier—double-click the individual files you wish to view.*

THE CHURCH HISTORY

Have you ever wondered what it must have been like for the first generation of pioneers who migrated to the Oregon Territory in the Northwest United States? As a resident of the state of Washington, I have sporadic opportunities to meditate on this question. I wander into the wilderness and wonder, “How in the world did they do it?”

Recently I learned that the earliest settlers in the Northwest arrived under the leadership of David Thompson, a Canadian explorer and fur trapper. He established a trading post near my hometown of Spokane, Washington, and appointed two men, Finan McDonald and Jaco Finlay, to oversee its operation. As I read about their adventures, I marvel at their fortitude, strength, courage, and tenacity. Finan and Jaco picked up their shipment of trading goods at the mouth of the Columbia River, rowed them 600 miles up the river—past portages, hostile Indians, and swift currents—to the mouth of the Spokane River where they transferred the goods to pack animals and hiked the remaining distance to the fort.

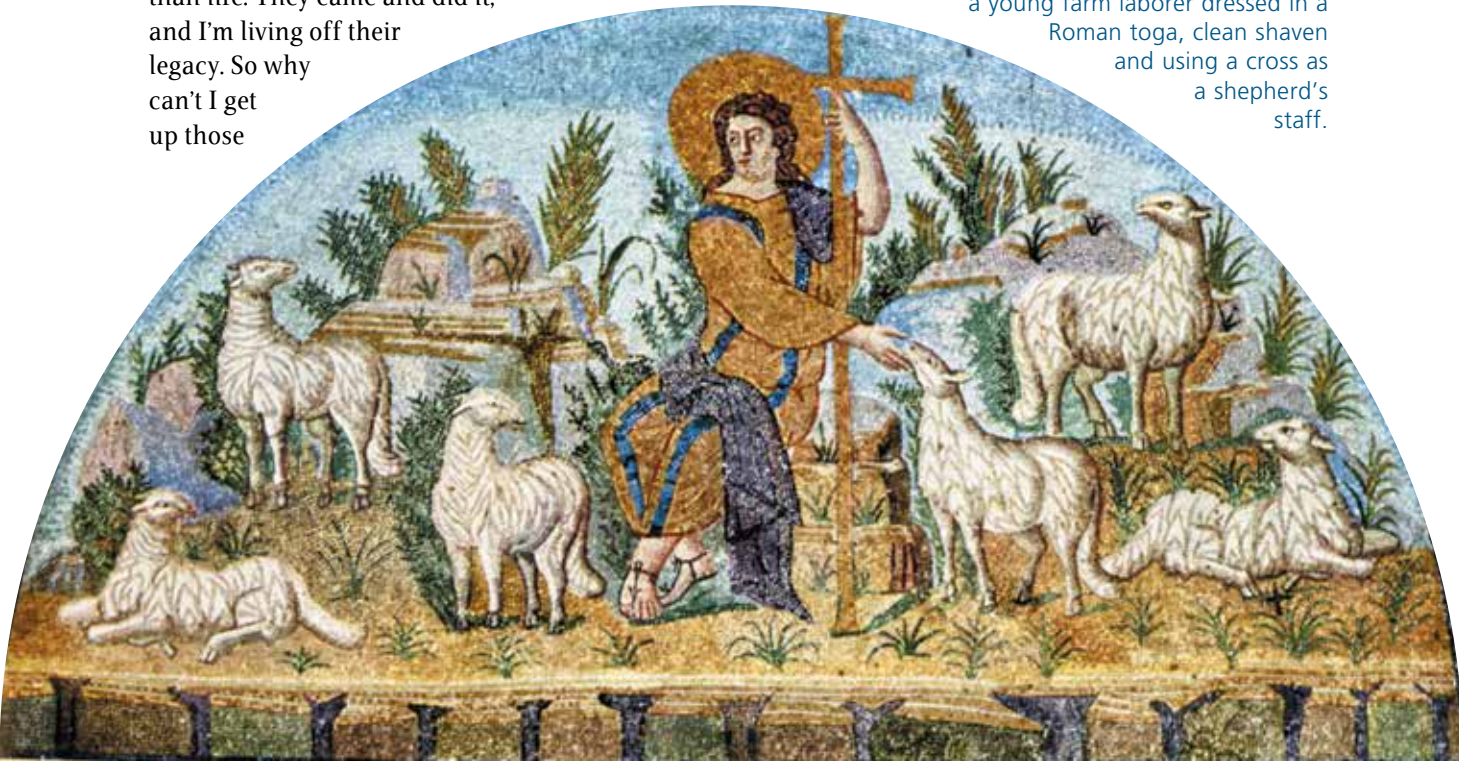
Such endurance stuns me. I’m winded by the time I get to the top of my stairs— after all, ten is a pretty big number! But these men did what seems to me nearly impossible. And yet there they are, larger than life. They came and did it, and I’m living off their legacy. So why can’t I get up those

stairs more easily?

The book that you are preparing to read is a pioneering book. The history recorded tells us about the earliest members, the pioneers, of Christ’s church following the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The men and women who hallow and stain these pages are pioneers of the likes of Finan McDonald, Martin Luther, John Winthrop, and Romulus. Not only does this book record the doings of pioneers, it also explores new territory. For this book is the first record we have of the church’s history since Luke penned the book of Acts in the New Testament more than *two hundred years* earlier.

And so, as you pick up this book and read it through, envision the pioneers throughout history who have given and sacrificed that we might enjoy the fruit of their labors.

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” Artwork of the Good Shepherd became common after the third century, usually with the shepherd bearing a sheep across his shoulders, while other sheep stand by his side. In this fifth-century mosaic from Galla Placidia Mausoleum, Ravenna, Italy, we do not find Jesus depicted with a red sash and beard as most Protestants expect, but as a young farm laborer dressed in a Roman toga, clean shaven and using a cross as a shepherd’s staff.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Author and Context

The author of our book is Eusebius (c. 265–c. 339). While Eusebius is not a very common name today (What would we nickname him? Sebi?), it was a common name in the early church. Indeed, it was so common that our Eusebius is sometimes called *Eusebius of Caesarea* to distinguish him from the others.

Eusebius was born around the year 265 and likely lived and was educated in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire. After witnessing and experiencing the vicious results of the Diocletian persecution, including the death of his good friend Pamphilus¹, he was appointed Bishop of Caesarea in 313. In this role he served for the remainder of his life.

Because of his vast learning and prolific pen, Eusebius was highly esteemed by the emperor

Constantine, the first Christian emperor. After the persecution of Christians was terminated by the Edict of Milan in 313, Eusebius became one of Constantine's chief advisors. He is most famous for his role in the Arian controversy,² serving as one of the leading bishops at the Council of Nicea, which Constantine convened in 325 to bring peace and unity to the church.

It was around the time of the Nicene Council that Eusebius finished *The Church History*³ at the request of Paulinus, the Bishop of Tyre. As Eusebius glanced back over the three hundred years separating him from the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he could not help but marvel at the overriding hand of Providence and see in the conversion of Constantine the realization of Isaiah's prophecy:

“Kings will see and arise,
Princes will also bow down,
Because of the Lord who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel who has chosen You”
(Isaiah 49:7b).

[A sarcophagus from Adelfia bears this carving of The Triumphal Entry.](#)



Significance

Without Eusebius's book our knowledge of the early history of the church would be scant. One problem with reconstructing the history of pioneering days is that the pioneers were often so busy building, planting, and just surviving that they did not have the leisure to sit and write about what they were doing. So it was in the early church. Our fathers were so busy articulating the Gospel, preserving it from false teachers, and maintaining a consistent witness before their pagan rulers, that they did not have the leisure to look at the big picture and consider what God was accomplishing through them.

By God's good providence, this situation changed with the conversion of Constantine. Christians were suddenly freed from the impending sense of doom. Perceiving the significance of this moment, Eusebius wrote the first history of our people—becoming in the process the Father of Church History.

Eusebius's work did not remain in obscurity. It was copied and recopied, read and reread, imitated and re-imitated throughout history. While there are no church historians prior to Eusebius, there are many after him: Socrates (not the famed hemlock drinker), Sozomen, Theodotus, Augustine. One thing characterizes them all—they start with Eusebius.

Main Characters

The main character in *The Church History*, who occasionally pops out from behind the screen to reveal that He is the real mover and shaker in this period, is God Himself. Eusebius clearly understands that God is the author of history, and he interprets the changing fortunes of the church through the lens of God's sovereign control.

But God orchestrates this story through the lives of men and women, and so Eusebius is careful to include their names. He discusses heroes of the faith like the apostles and their successor bishops, the presbyters (elders) who strove to protect biblical doctrine from false teachers and the confessors and martyrs who endured torture and oftentimes death for the sake of their Master. There are, for instance, great teachers and writers like Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria who defended the church from false teaching. There are apologists like Justin Martyr and Quadratus who risked personal harm to defend their brethren in

writing. There are martyrs like Polycarp and Blandina who endured unimaginable cruelties for the sake of the Name.

Eusebius's story includes not only heroes but also villains. There are emperors who set themselves against God, Jews who reject the Messiah, and false teachers who endeavor to lead the church astray. They include vile men like Nero, Galerius, and Maximin Daia; weak men like Pilate; deceptive men like Simon Magus, Valentinus, and Paul of Samosata. Each plays his role in the story which God has orchestrated for the ultimate good of His people.

Summary and Setting

The basic purpose of *The Church History* is to record the history of God's people from the life of our Lord through Eusebius's own day. More particularly, Eusebius states in the opening paragraph of the book that it is his intent to record (1) the names and deeds of the apostles and their successor bishops in the most famous churches, (2) the major historical events which occurred in this period, (3) the writings of those shepherds who strove to teach and defend Christian doctrine, (4) the names of the heretics who endeavored to corrupt apostolic teaching, (5) the fate of the Jews who rejected their Messiah, and (6) the glorious achievements of the confessors and martyrs who suffered for the sake of Christ.

Eusebius accomplishes this purpose by organizing his material in a series of ten books (what we would call chapters). The books are arranged chronologically, beginning with the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, proceeding through the reigns of the Roman emperors, and closing with the victories of Constantine over Maxentius, Maximin Daia and Licinius.

BOOK 1: The historicity of the Christian faith and the life of our Lord

BOOK 2: The labors of the apostles up to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)

BOOK 3: The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the labors of the apostles and first leaders through the reign of Trajan

BOOK 4: Bishops, heretics, martyrs and apologists from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius

BOOK 5: From Marcus Aurelius to Septimius Severus

BOOK 6: Origen's life and deeds; from Septimius Severus to Decius

BOOK 7: Dionysius of Alexandria; from Gallus to Diocletian

BOOK 8: The persecution of Diocletian; from Diocletian to Galerius

BOOK 9: The victories of Constantine

BOOK 10: Reestablishment of the church; final victory of Constantine

Worldview

Pioneers are frequently criticized. Later generations look back and are prone to question every move, every decision made. Why did they do it *that way*? Why didn't they think of that problem? Why didn't they tell us what happened on that occasion? Hindsight is always 20/20.

Eusebius has not escaped this type of criticism. As the first man to compose a history of the early church, he has been the object of numerous criticisms. "He relies too much on other sources." "He doesn't give us sufficient detail about the heretical movements he mentions." "He is too triumphalistic." "He is not sufficiently critical of Constantine." The list goes on.

One of the most persistent criticisms leveled against Eusebius as historian is the first—he relies too much on other sources. As you read you will quickly discover that he quotes freely and liberally from previous writers. His style of writing history (*historiography*) is not attuned to modern standards which do not value such extensive borrowing.

His use of other sources, however, does not detract from Eusebius's accomplishment or mar our knowledge of his own understanding of the events he covers. Eusebius's quotations and excerpts are joined together in a masterful way such that the material reads as a cohesive story. He didn't simply cut and paste; rather, he carefully organized his material and added explanatory notes and chapters to unite it in a single tale. What emerges is a stirring saga of the earliest years of the church.

The Creator of All

This saga begins with the God of heaven and earth as He has revealed Himself in Christ. Apart from

Christ, as Eusebius himself remarks, there would be no Christians. Therefore, if we are to compose a history of the Christians, it follows that we must start with Christ (1.1).

So who is Christ? Where did He come from? Is He merely an ordinary man or is He something more? Is He God? Is He God and man? Is He a creature or is He, in fact, the Creator? Is He different from the Father or absolutely the same? And is His Father also the Creator of the universe, the God of the Old Testament, or is He a completely new deity?

Most Christians today answer these questions rapidly and without a great deal of contemplation. However, in the early history of the church, these basic questions had to be carefully considered in light of the Word of God and the worship of God's people. Who exactly is Christ?

Every pioneer has to stake out the limits of the territory he is claiming. Whether it is Romulus plowing the Palatine Hill or Finan McDonald stacking the logs of Spokane House, one of the pioneer's first tasks is to build fences or place boundary stones which declare, "This is mine." The pioneer needs to know what land is rightfully his so he can improve the land without fear of losing it when the next settler arrives and so he can defend it from invaders and thieves.

Likewise early Christians had to articulate their understanding of God and Christ and stake out, as it were, what teachings were acceptable and unacceptable in referring to Him. Jesus himself had warned that false Christs would appear and attempt to lead his people astray. Sure enough, this happened. Heretics like Simon Magus, Menander, Marcion, Valentinus, Mani and Paul of Samosata arose and endeavored to lead the people of God astray from the truth. The leaders in the church had to counter such men and preserve "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

One of the first stakes that our fathers had to pound in the ground was the relationship between Jesus and the God of the Old Testament. Heretics like Marcion, Valentinus, and other Gnostics denied that the Creator and the Father were one and the same God. They maintained that the Father revealed by Jesus is different from the Creator who fashioned the earth. They even held that, while the Father is good and loving, the Creator is a harsh and judgmental

being unworthy of our worship (cf. 4.11). Is this what our Lord Jesus and the apostles taught?

According to Eusebius and the other early fathers of the church, the answer is most emphatically, “No!” The God of the Old Testament who created heaven and earth is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Nicene Creed would later declare, “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth...” Eusebius fully embraced this understanding of the Father. He repeatedly uses the Psalms as hymns of praise to God, quotes the prophets who anticipated the coming of the Lord, and criticizes those who reject the Old Testament. He urges his hearers, “Let us then sing the new song to the Doer of wonders, the Lord of the universe, Creator of the world, the almighty, the all-merciful, the one and only God” (10.4).

The first thing we learn, then, about our Lord Jesus Christ is that He is the Son of the Living God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Jesus did not come to introduce some new deity, but the same Lord who sent a flood upon the earth, called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and led the Israelites out of Egypt. Contrary to Marcion and his pals, it is this God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus.

The Sovereign Creator

As Eusebius relates the early history of the church, he not only confesses that God is the Creator of all, he also recognizes God’s providential direction of every event in the saga that he writes. Eusebius repeatedly gives praise to God, acknowledging His goodness,

BONE POLITICS

An ancient limestone burial box (called an *ossuary*) with an inscription “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” was found in Israel in 2002. As one noted scholar explained, “The James ossuary is testimony to the fact that the people of the time had a strong belief in the resurrection of Jesus. In antiquity, crucifixion was the most humiliating and dishonorable way to die, and people believed that how you die was a reflection on your character. If Jesus’s life had simply ended in crucifixion, no one in their right mind would include his name—in a place of honor—on the box.”

Previously, the ossuary of the high priest Caiaphas, who orchestrated Judas’s betrayal of Jesus, was uncovered by archaeologists in 1990.

James’s Bone Box came to public light when the Biblical Archaeology Society (BAS) published the findings of a French scholar and the Geological Survey of Israel that the box and its inscription were authentic. The publication set off a media frenzy and a series of charges and counter-charges about whether the box or inscription are authentic or fraudulent. It seems that the box was not dug up by professional archaeologists but was originally bought by an Israeli engineer from an antiquities dealer. This engineer obtained the services of a French scholar, who became convinced the box was authentic, and the Geological Survey confirmed authenticity. Subsequently the Royal Ontario Museum also confirmed authenticity. Still, some archaeologists questioned the finding because the box was not professionally excavated under controlled conditions.

Then in 2003 the Israeli Antiquities Authority reported their conclusion that, based on their analysis of the patina, the inscription was a recent forgery. It had been made to look old by adding a chalk solution. It is wise to remember that faith is not based on archaeological evidence. Many times Christians grasp at archaeological findings to prove the Bible’s veracity. We must instead insist that the Bible is the standard for all truth and not what we might dig up in the ground.



This limestone box is about 20x10x12 inches and bears the inscription “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.”

crediting Him with miraculous wonders and praising His power. Eusebius is constantly aware of God's sovereignty.

Nearly all of us, no doubt, would be willing to confess that God is sovereign. But how far are we willing to take this? As we look at the church around us and see her divided into factions, do we confess that this is according to God's plan? When we see unbelievers mocking Christ and placing crucifixes in jars of urine,⁴ do we see this as God's chastisement upon the church for our unbelief and lack of love? When nations suffer civil strife and upheaval, do we view this as evidence of God's governance of the nations?

Eusebius would have answered, "Yes," to all these questions. God's sovereignty means that nothing happens apart from His determination. "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Ps. 115:3).

Eusebius's confession of God's sovereignty is robustly biblical. First, Eusebius acknowledges time and time again that God is the one permitting the horrendous persecutions being perpetrated against the church. God brings it about and brings it to an end in His time and for His good purposes. "[T]he rulers of this life," writes Eusebius, "would never find it easy to attack the churches of Christ, unless the hand that champions us allowed this as a divine judgment to punish and reform us at chosen times" (7.30). It is God, not man, who orchestrates the trials through which the church passes (cf. Phil. 1:29–30; 1 Pet. 4:12–14).

Second, Eusebius emphasizes the close connection between piety toward God and blessings and curses in this life, both for the church and for the world. God is the one who governs history, and we can expect that if we rebel against Him, He will chastise us. In self-conscious imitation of the book of Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 28), Eusebius traces the rise of the Diocletian

persecution to the unbelief and wickedness of God's people during the time of peace which preceded it (8.1; 9.8). God is faithful and will always, with His "accustomed mercy", discipline His people when they turn away from Him.

While God disciplines the church out of mercy as a father does his son, His judgment on the wicked—both individuals and communities—is a result of His justice. As an example of individuals who faced God's judgment, consider the emperors who persecuted the Christians. They share a remarkable thing in common: nearly all of them died miserably. Herod was eaten by worms, Pontius Pilate committed suicide, Herod Agrippa was racked by stomach pains, Galerius was transformed into a great blob of flabby fat, Maxentius sank to the bottom of the Tiber and Maximin Daia withered away.

Why? Because God "attacked the perpetrator[s] of these crimes, angry with [them] as the prime instigator[s] of the whole evil persecution" (8.16).

God's judgment confronts communities of people no less than individuals. Communities suffer from plague, famine and war as a result of their warfare against God's people. These sufferings are not simply a matter of natural conse-

quences—God visits these consequences upon them. "In response [to human rebellion], God sent them floods and conflagrations, famines and plagues, wars and thunderbolts—punishments progressively drastic—in order to restrain the noxious illness of their souls" (1.2). This is particularly evident in God's judgment upon those Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah (cf. 3.5–7). However, it is also evident in the history of Rome (8.13). God is not mocked. What a man or community sows, that will he also reap. Eusebius sees this with crystal clarity and interprets the history he records within this framework. God is sovereign and rules over the affairs of both men and nations.

Since God is sovereign, what cause could there possibly be for Christians to despair? Remember



Found in the catacombs, the symbol at upper left represents the four evangelists and the symbol to the lower right is a representation of the Trinity.



the horrendous things Eusebius is recording—cruel deaths, vicious tortures, heartless sentences. Do these things cause Eusebius to write without hope? To mourn the hard fortunes of the church? By no means! God is in control. He knows precisely what He is doing at every moment and the people of God can rest in His sovereign disposal of all events. At the end of the Great Persecution, Eusebius declares:

After all this, God, the great, heavenly Champion of the Christians, having displayed his wrath to all men in return for their brutal assaults against us, restored his providence to us again and caused the light of peace to shine on us out of black darkness, as it were, making it clear to all that God himself had constantly been overseeing our affairs. Sometimes he scourged his people and in due time corrected them through trials, but after enough chastening he showed mercy and kindness to those who had hope in him (9.8).

God's sovereignty, therefore, is not some abstract idea for Eusebius—it is a teaching of immense practical comfort and application. No matter how much Satan may rage against the people of God (cf. 4.7), no matter how many enemies rise up and persecute them, God is in control. He does all things, and He does all things well.

The God-Man

But there was other ground to stake out in addition to Jesus' relation to the God of the Old Testament, the Sovereign Creator of all things. Even if it is agreed that he revealed the same God mentioned in Genesis, we still have not answered our original question—who is Jesus? The answers to this question varied widely in Eusebius's day. . Some heretical groups began to teach that Jesus was just a man.⁵ Others insisted that He was only God and had merely appeared to be man.⁶ Still others maintained that, while He was more than man, He was less than God.⁷ The options seemed limitless.

Eusebius is careful to criticize all these false views of Christ. Christ is no ordinary man. He is the Word of God, "who existed before the world and assisted the God of the universe in the fashioning of all created things" (1.2). In ages past He appeared as the Angel of the Lord but now has finally revealed Himself by taking on human nature and dwelling among us. He

is the divinely anointed Christ of God, serving as our Prophet, Priest and King (1.3).

But neither did Christ only appear or seem to be a man. He really and truly became flesh in order to redeem us from our sin and rescue us from our bondage to Satan. Eusebius spends considerable time harmonizing the genealogies in Matthew and Luke not only to vindicate the trustworthiness of Scripture but also to emphasize Christ's human lineage (1.7). According to Eusebius, Christ appeared "in the form of a man, [with] a nature like ours" (1.2); as "the only Son of the Father, [he] willingly assumed our corrupt nature" (10.4). Christ was a man with a nature like ours.

How then can Christ be no ordinary man and yet simultaneously be a man? The full answer to this question is not given by Eusebius, nor the rest of the church until the Council of Chalcedon. Remember that pioneers don't always answer every question. Nevertheless, Eusebius embraces the mysterious reality that the Christ who was clearly man was just as clearly God. "Thus Jesus Christ our Savior is the only person in history to be acknowledged—even by earth's most exalted—not as an ordinary human king but worshiped as the true Son of the God of the universe and as himself God" (10.4). Jesus shares "in the unbegotten divinity of the Father" (1.3) and "to this day is honored by his worshipers throughout the world as King, held in greater awe than a prophet, and glorified as the true and only High Priest of God and above all as the preexistent Word of God, having his being before all ages and worshiped as God" (1.3).

Despite these clear statements of Christ's deity, there are moments when Eusebius's comments about the Lord Jesus should make us squirm—even more than when we read that the original pioneers ate cow tongue. As a disciple of Origen, Eusebius at times comes perilously close to *subordinationism*, the teaching that Christ was less than the Father. On a couple occasions, for instance, he remarks that Christ should be accorded "second place" in relation to the Father (1.2; 10.4). However, on the whole, Eusebius's comments about Christ in *The Church History* appear remarkably orthodox.

A New Race of Men

Prior to the coming of the God-man, mankind was divided into two basic ethnic groups—Jews and

Gentiles. While both were created in the image of God, God bestowed certain blessings upon the Jews which He did not give to the rest of humanity. That exclusivity changed when Christ came. The saga that Eusebius records bears testimony to this transformation. In Christ, Jew and Gentile cease to be relevant categories (cf. Gal. 3:28). Christ came to create a “new people” with a new name—Christian (1.4).

Eusebius articulates this transformation throughout *The Church History*. At the very beginning of Book One he notes that, though Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, he rebelled against God and plunged humanity into ruination and distress (1.2). This rebellion had horrendous consequences for humanity. We have become dead in our sin, we wander in darkness and we labor as slaves for the Prince of Darkness. Our lives are no longer our own and, apart from Christ, we are without hope in the world. But the good news is that while we were in this state of despair, God sent Christ to redeem and rescue us. “But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Eusebius explains:

Like the best doctor . . . so [Jesus] saved us, who were not merely sick or afflicted with terrible ulcers and festering wounds but lying among the dead, for no one else in heaven could undertake the salvation of so many. He alone endured our sorrows, taking on himself the penalty for our sins when we were not half dead, but decaying in tombs, and he raised us up and saves us now, as in the days of old, out of ardent love for humankind, sharing with us the Father’s blessings—our lifegiver, enlightener, great physician, king, and lord, the Christ of God.

When he saw the whole human race sunk in demon-inspired darkness, his appearance alone tore apart the chains of sin as easily as wax melts in the sun (10.4).

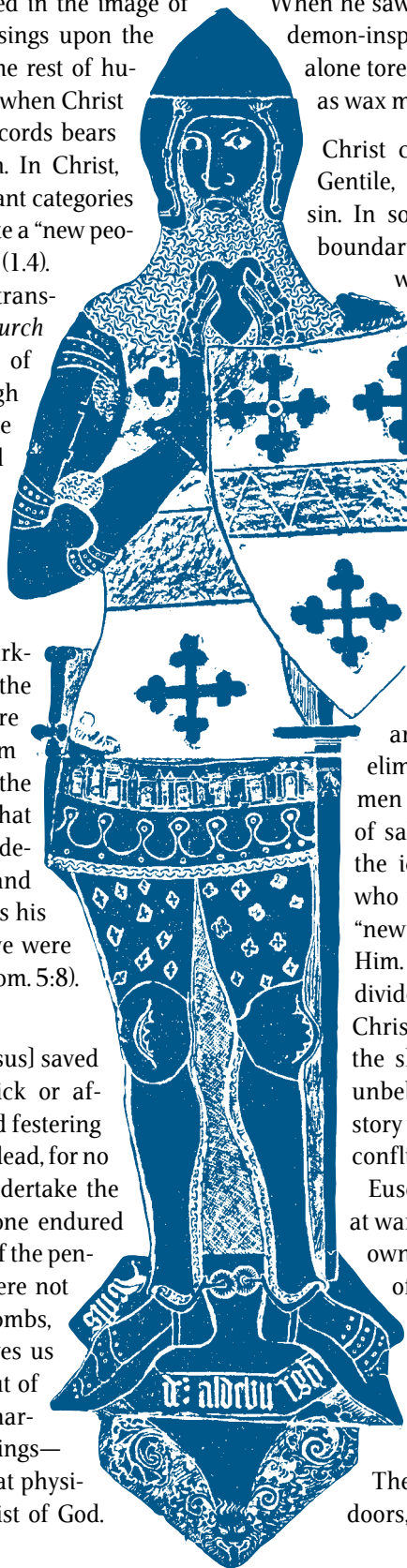
Christ came to deliver all men, Jew and Gentile, from their natural bondage to sin. In so doing he destroyed these ethnic boundaries. “For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace” (Eph. 2:14–15). Christ has made a new race of men called Christians.

Men at War

Though Christ has eliminated the ethnic boundaries which separated Jew and Gentile, He has not eliminated all boundaries. Because all men by nature are lost in sin and in need of salvation, Eusebius clearly embraces the idea of *antithesis*. There are those who reject Christ and refuse to join the “new people” which God has created in Him. There is therefore a fundamental divide in humanity. There are those for Christ and those against Him. There are the sheep and the goats, believers and unbelievers, friends and enemies. The story which God is orchestrating involves conflict.

Eusebius understands that the church is at war. God’s people are fighting for their own salvation and for the deliverance of all humanity from Satan’s clutches. While the biggest danger that the modern church faces is pretending as though she does not have enemies, in Eusebius’s day the threat was more direct.

The enemies were banging down the doors, burning the churches, killing the



bishops and torturing the laymen. In his day the enemies were not trying to lull God's people into complacency—they were endeavoring to obliterate the church from the earth. And so Eusebius makes sharp distinctions between the church and her enemies. He calls rulers who oppress God's people "tyrants." He labels unbelievers "wicked." He even christens a certain heretic a "conceited crackbrain!" But behind all these labels is his firm conviction that the church is at war with her enemies. In order to prevail, she must recognize them as such.

Triumphant Men

While calling a spade a spade, Eusebius perceives that all the machinations of these tyrants, oppressors and heretics are inspired by that foe of humanity, the devil. These men are merely his instruments. It is he who holds mankind in his clutches and who recognizes in the death and resurrection of Christ his own impending doom. He would like nothing more than to see the light of the gospel put out and God's people crushed (10.4). And so he strives in every way possible to undermine the truth.

But try as he might, he is ultimately doomed to failure because Christ is at the head of His church and shall lead her in triumph over all her foes. For Eusebius the idea that the church will ultimately fail in her mission to disciple the nations is nonsense. Christ has entrusted the truth to the church—how could she possibly fail? In contrasting the outcome of heretical movements in his day with the course of the true church, Eusebius remarks:

. . . the earlier [heresies] continually fragmented and disappeared. But the universal and only true church, remaining ever the same, continued to grow in greatness, shedding on Greeks and non-Greeks alike the free, sober, and pure light of the divine teaching for conduct and thought. The passage of time, then, squelched the defamations against our teaching so that it stands alone, victorious and supreme, and no one today dares to resume the vile slanders of past enemies against our faith (4.7).

Despite opposition from outside and corruption from inside, the church is destined to prevail—not

because of any inherent goodness in her but because her Savior is sovereign and "leads his armies after death, puts up trophies over his foes, and fills every place, district, and city, both Greek and foreign, with votive [free will] offerings" (10.4). As the book of Esdras, an apocryphal tale about the biblical Ezra, declares, *Magna est veritas et praevalabit*, "The truth is great and will prevail."

Transformed Men

This sense of optimism and triumph permeates Eusebius's vision for the church and the people of God. The same Christ who will eventually cause the church to triumph over her foes is the One who currently causes his people to triumph by transforming them with his Word. God's people possess the truth in the Scriptures—and as God's story unfolds this truth must change them. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

How should the truth transform the people of God? First, it should make them bold and courageous. "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1). Eusebius tells story after story of men, women, and children who endured unspeakable torments because they knew whom they served. They were so confident of the grace, mercy, and truth found in Christ, that no danger could dissuade them from clinging to him. The result of their uncommon boldness was that many were converted to the faith. "At first," Dionysius of Alexandria reports, "we were persecuted and stoned, but then some of the heathen abandoned their idols and turned to God. Through us the Word was sown among them for the first time, and it seems that for this God exiled us to them and returned us when we had finished our mission" (7.11). As Tertullian, another early church father, declares, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." The truth of God should make us bold.

The truth should also inspire us to fight for the purity and unity of the church. When the pioneers came out west, they frequently had to defend their homes from Indian attack. Supposedly the famous frontiersman Kit Carson developed his keen eye from helping his father defend their home when a mere lad of ten

years old. Just as the pioneers were passionate to defend their homes, Christians must be passionate to defend the church.

First, we should preserve the unity of the church. “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal. 5:26). We see in our own day how difficult it is for the church to maintain a godly witness when divided into many camps. The same was no less true in Eusebius’s day. “[T]he very people who ought to be unified in fraternal concord are separated from each other in a disgraceful, no, abominable manner, providing those who are strangers to this most holy religion a pretext for scoffing” (10.5 cf. 6.45). To provide such a pretext is shameful, and God’s people should long for the unification of the church around the truth.

Second, we should safeguard the purity of the church both morally and doctrinally. One of Eusebius’s greatest heroes is Origen whose leadership in the church was as remarkable as some of his ideas were odd and even misguided. He was greatly affected by Plato’s philosophy and even made himself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom. At the remarkably young age of 18 he was appointed a teacher in Alexandria and was so brilliant that men paid to have others transcribe his lectures. Origen had an immense impact on his generation—instructing Christians in the way of truth, converting unbelievers from their paganism, and even recovering heretics from their error. What was the secret of his success? “His deeds matched his words and his words his deeds, as the saying goes, which explains why, under God, he led so many to share his enthusiasm” (6.3). Origen hungered to defend the church, and Eusebius reckoned him a model for generations to come.

Not only should the truth of God make his people bold and courageous; not only should it inspire us to uphold the unity and purity of the church; it should also infuse us with compassion for others—whether believer or unbeliever. One of the pressing problems that confronted the church following periods of persecution was what to do with those who had denied their faith under torture (called the *lapsi*). Novatus and his disciples insisted that the *lapsi* should be permanently excluded from the church—the church should consist only of the pure who had withstood torture without

abandoning Christ in any way. Eusebius contrasts the harshness of the Novatians with the mercy and forgiveness expressed by many confessors who had themselves endured the persecutions. “They did not boast over the fallen but shed tears in their behalf to the Father, praying for life, and he gave it to them” (5.2).

The compassion of Christians should be directed not only internally but externally. One of the most remarkable testimonies in Eusebius is the behavior of Christians during the periods of hunger and famine which God sent upon the Romans for their sin. While the pagans frequently abandoned their own relatives who were struck with the plague, Christians ministered to their former persecutors—tending their wounds, slaking their thirst, and often contracting their disease themselves (cf. 9.8). It was through this ministry of mercy that the Word of God spread among the unbelieving communities and a taste of the gospel’s eventual triumph was experienced.

The saga that Eusebius records—beginning with the Creator of all, centering in the life, death and resurrection of the God-man, ending in the triumph of the God-man over his enemies through his transformed people—should stir our souls and fire our imaginations. Eusebius wrote his history to awaken us from our lethargy and give us a sense of what God can accomplish through us today. The remarkable deeds that Eusebius relates need not be confined to the early days of the church. The same God who led our pioneering fathers is the God who leads the church today.

And so, in the same way that we marvel at the deeds of the pioneers who traversed deserts, streams and mountains to settle the Northwest, and are moved by them to greater feats of self-discipline and achievement, we ought to marvel at the conviction and fortitude of our fathers and mothers in the faith and be inspired to see the church grow and prosper in our own day. As Eusebius himself looked back at the faith of Old Testament saints and was encouraged to righteousness, we can look at the lives of the men and women in the early church and be inspired to serve Christ with unflagging zeal. Let us excel “in self-control and righteousness, in discipline and virtue, and in the confession of the one and only God over all, and in all this [let us show] no less zeal than [them]” (1.4).

—Stuart W. Bryan



A carving in an ivory casket depicting the death of Judas and the Crucifixion, c. 420 A.D.

For Further Reading

Bruce, F.F. *The Spreading Flame*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980.

Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language*. Chicago: Nelson, 1996. 1–123.

Spielvogel, Jackson J. *Western Civilization*. Seventh Edition. Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2009. 168–177.⁸

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SESSION I: PRELUDE

A Question to Consider

Would you hand the Scriptures over to the authorities to be burned?

From the General Information above answer the following questions:

1. Who was Eusebius, and when did he live?
2. Why is *The Church History* considered a pioneering book?
3. Why did Eusebius write *The Church History*?
4. What does Eusebius say about God's sovereignty?
5. Why does Eusebius call folks tyrants, oppressors, heretics and crackbrains?
6. What is Eusebius's vision for the future of the church?



READING ASSIGNMENT:
Book 1.1–1.13

SESSION II: DISCUSSION

Book 1.1–1.13

A Question to Consider

Who is Christ?

Discuss or list short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. How does Eusebius describe the nature of Christ (1.2)?
2. Eusebius offers some proofs that Christ existed *prior* to His earthly advent. List these proofs (1.2).
3. Briefly explain Eusebius's argument reconciling the two different genealogies of Christ (1.7).
4. Should holy men of old be called Christians according to Eusebius? Why or why not (1.4)?
5. According to Eusebius, what does it mean to be a Christian? What strikes you about his summary (1.4)?

Cultural Analysis

1. What do most people think about Christ?
2. Do all Christians today agree with Eusebius's statement that Abraham and his forebears should be called Christians?
3. How does our culture define *Christian*?

Biblical Analysis

1. What do the following passages reveal about the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ: John 1:1; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3–13?
2. What do the following passages reveal about the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ: Luke 2:1–40; Phil. 2:5–11; Heb. 2:14–18?
3. Compare Eusebius's summary of what it means to be a *Christian* with the following biblical summaries: Deut. 10:12–13; Mic. 6:6–8; Mark 12:28–34. How do they compare?
4. What do the following Scriptures reveal about the relationship between Old Testament saints who served the Lord and Christ: Acts 7:51–53; 1 Cor. 10:1–13; Heb. 11:1–40 (esp. v. 26)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

Who is Christ?



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 2.1–2.26

SESSION III: DISCUSSION

Book 2.1–2.26

A Question to Consider

Are there apostles today?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. To whom did Christ give the name *apostles* (1.10)?
2. Does Eusebius use the word *apostle* in a broader sense than just the Twelve (1.12)?
3. What role did the apostles serve in determining correct doctrine (2.14)?
4. Does Eusebius distinguish between the time when the apostles were alive and the time after (3.32)?

Cultural Analysis

1. What authority do the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution have in American society?
2. How does our society tend to look upon past authorities in our culture?

Biblical Analysis

1. What metaphor does Paul use to describe the function of Christ and the apostles in Ephesians 2:19–22?
2. How might this metaphor assist us in answering the question about whether there are apostles today? (When you are building a house how many times do you lay the foundation [cf. Rev. 21:14]?)
3. What offices were established by the apostles to guide and direct the church following their deaths? (See Acts 20:17–35; 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9.)

4. What were the requirements placed upon the man chosen to succeed Judas as one of the Twelve Apostles (cf. Acts 1:15–26)? Can any man now meet these requirements?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.
Are there apostles today?



READING ASSIGNMENT:
Book 3.1–3.25

SESSION IV: DISCUSSION

Book 3.1–3.25

A Question to Consider

What is the Canon?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. Summarize Eusebius's opinions on the *accepted*, *disputed*, *rejected* and *heretical* books of the New Testament canon (3.25).
2. Make a list from this section of the connection between the various books of the New Testament and the apostles (2.15, 2.23, 3.3, 3.4, 3.24).
3. What did Josephus say about the respect which was shown by the Jews toward the Old Testament Scriptures? Does he think that the Old Testament apocryphal books have equal weight with the other Old Testament books (3.10)? On this last question, you may also consult the Old Testament canon listed in 4.26.
4. To be a part of the canon, a book had to have been written by an apostle or one closely associated with an apostle. What other clues does Eusebius cite to determine which were canonical (2.23; 3.24–25)?

Cultural Analysis

1. What is the attitude toward the Bible in our culture at large?
2. In our culture, who or what determines what is true or good?

Biblical Analysis

1. Where do we discover the will of God for us today (John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:14–17; 2 Pet. 1:19–21)?
2. Did the apostles expect their teachings to be obeyed by the church (cf. 1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:14–18)?
3. What is the relationship between the church and the truth (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.
What is the Canon?



READING ASSIGNMENT:
Book 3.26–3.39

SESSION V: RECITATION

Books 1.1–3.39

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions for factual recall:

1. Was Eusebius aware that he was the first man to write a history of the church (1.1)?
2. How did Herod die? What did “wise onlookers” declare about the manner of his death (1.8)?
3. According to tradition, how did the city-state of Edessa come to profess the Christian faith (1.13)?
4. According to tradition, who was the original author of all heresies (2.13–2.14)?
5. Who was James the Just? How did he die (2.23)?
6. Which three emperors who persecuted the church are recorded in this section (2.25, 3.13, 3.17–20; 3.33)?
7. Why and when was Jerusalem destroyed? Which historian gives us the most detailed account of its destruction (3.5–3.8)?
8. Who were the Ebionites, and what did they teach about the Lord Jesus (3.27)?
9. How did Eusebius decide whether to write about someone who succeeded the apostles? In other words, what was his principle of selecting whom to include (3.37)?



SESSION VI: RECITATION

Polycarp

Some events recorded by Eusebius have massive importance historically and inspirationally. One of the most inspiring stories is that of the martyrdom of Polycarp.

Today, you are going to do a recitation on this passage. Answer the questions as you read the passage. Reading it aloud is encouraged. Read The Church History 4.14–15 about Polycarp of Smyrna and answer the following questions:

1. Who was Polycarp?
2. What vision preceded Polycarp's martyrdom?
3. How does Polycarp demonstrate his trust in Christ's word in Matt. 5:10–12?
4. What miracles occurred when Polycarp was martyred? Do you accept these as legitimate or legendary? Why?
5. How should we assess the miracle stories we find in non-biblical literature?



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 4.1–4.30

Hippolytus, a third-century scholar, likened the ark to the church—keeping the people of God in safety, carrying them above the chaotic waters of a sinful world apart from God. And to the early believers, Noah's ark quickly became a sign of baptism, through which a believer enters the church.

SESSION VII: DISCUSSION

Book 4.1–4.30

A Question to Consider

Was the created world considered good by the early church?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. What did Cerdo and his student Marcion teach about God (4.11)?
2. How did the Encratites apply this teaching to the material world (4.29)?
3. How did Clement of Alexandria refute those who rejected marriage (3.30)?
4. How did Attalus convince Alcibiades that he should give up his practice of consuming only bread and water (5.3)?

Cultural Analysis

1. Does the American obsession with dieting grow out of a hatred for the material world?
2. Was the temperance movement in America a reflection of biblical values?

Biblical Analysis

1. What is God's evaluation of the created world and of marriage (cf. Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 2:18-25)?
2. What does Paul say about those who forbid marriage and treat the material world as though it is evil (cf. Col. 2:16-19; 1 Tim. 4:1-5)?
3. What will happen to creation at the end of time (cf. John 5:28-29; Rom. 8:18-25; 1 Cor. 15:50-57)?
4. What does John mean when he tells us not to "love the world nor the things in the world" (1 John 2:15-17)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

Is the created world good?



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 5.1-5.28

SESSION VIII: DISCUSSION

Book 5.1-5.28

A Question to Consider

What would you do if the government mandated the way you were to worship?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. What were three accusations commonly brought against Christians (4.7; 4.15; 5.1)?
2. What were some of the things Christians were ordered to do by their persecutors (4.15)?
3. Did Eusebius take martyrdom as an automatic sign of piety (5.16)?
4. What did the heretic Basilides teach about denying the faith in times of persecution (4.7)? Read ahead and compare this with the Helkasites in

6.38.

5. Is it appropriate to defend oneself when accused (4.3; 4.12; 4.26)?
6. How did the church deal with those who lapsed during times of persecution (5.2)?

Cultural Analysis

1. For what does our culture say it is worth dying?
2. Why do most newspapers choose not to report the many instances of persecution of Christians that happen daily throughout the world—particularly in Islamic countries?

Biblical Analysis

1. Did Christ and the apostles think that Christians would suffer persecution (Matt. 10:16-39; John 15:18-25; Acts 14:21-22)?
2. Should we be surprised by or fear persecution (Matt. 10:26-31; 1 Pet. 4:12-16)?
3. How should we respond to persecution (Matt. 5:10-12, 43-48; Heb. 10:32-39)?
4. Is it permissible for Christians to flee persecution (Matt. 10:23)? To protest against unjust treatment (Acts 16:35-40; 22:25-29)? To deny Christ with their mouths but confess him inwardly (Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9; 2 Tim. 2:11-13)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

What would you do if the government mandated the way you were to worship?

SESSION IX: WRITING

Progymnasmata

Classical training in rhetoric included preparatory writing exercises called the *progymnasmata*. These exercises in composition introduced the beginning student to basic forms and techniques that would then be used and combined when practicing more advanced exercises and speeches. One of these progymnasmata was called an *impersonation*. The impersonation seeks to imitate the style and characteristics of the person making the speech. To

compose an impersonation:

- Discuss or think through the characteristics of the person whose speech you are emulating.
- Read carefully through the speech or event that you are impersonating (in many cases you will be asked to write an impersonation of a speech that a person has not given, but could have made at a certain time).
- Put the book away and write the speech yourself.
- Read it to someone else.
- After reading it, explain how different personal characteristics of this person come through in your impersonation.

Be careful to remember what has happened in the personal history of the character on which you are writing, and also remember what will happen in the future. You must remember to keep everything in the proper setting (e.g., you can not make the young George Washington say, “I will be the first president under the new Constitution of the United States,” because when he was a boy, of course, neither the Constitution nor the office existed, let alone the country itself).

Write an impersonation of a Christian defending himself against the false charges of cannibalism, incest and atheism.

- I. Exordium
 - Give appropriate honor
 - Claim innocence
- II. Narratio
 - Answer each charge in turn
 - Describe absurdity of the charge in light of Christian teaching and practice
- III. Exhortation or Prayer
 - Appeal to the justness of your case
 - Restate innocence

SESSION X: RECITATION

Books 4.1–5.28

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions for factual recall:

1. Who utilized the various heretical teachers to try to destroy the church (4.7)?
2. Who was Justin Martyr (4.11; 4.16–18)?
3. What did many of the heretical groups endeavor

to do with the Scriptures (4.23; 4.29; 5.18; 5.28)?

4. Identify two of the most notable martyrs of the churches of Lyons and Vienne (5.1).
5. Who were the Montanists and what did they teach (5.16–19)?
6. Briefly explain the controversy over the date of Easter. How did Irenaeus respond to the Bishop of Rome’s attempt to excommunicate the Asian churches (5.24)?
7. What was the heresy of Artemon (5.28)?
8. Which emperor was responsible for the persecutions in this section (4.14–15; 5.1)?

SESSION XI: DISCUSSION

A Question to Consider

What is heresy?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. Who is the instigator of all heresies (4.7)?
2. Make a list of as many heretics/heresies as you can find mentioned in *The Church History*, books 1–5.
3. What makes a teaching heretical (5.28)?
4. How did churches deal with false teachers that arose in their midst (4.11, 24; 5.16)?
5. How seriously did the early church leaders take their obligation to protect the church from false teaching (5.20)?
6. How did the various heretics tend to handle Scripture (4.29; 5.28)?
7. What does Eusebius claim about the ultimate destiny of heresy (4.7)?

Cultural Analysis

1. What beliefs are considered “unacceptable” (heretical) in our culture?
2. How does our culture “excommunicate” these heretics?

Biblical Analysis

1. How did Paul try to prepare the elders in Ephesus to combat heresy? (Acts 20:28–32)
2. Why do divisions (heresies) arise in the church (1 Cor. 11:19)?

3. What did Paul urge Titus to do with divisive men (heretics) who refused to repent (Titus 3:10)?
4. What requirements did Paul place upon those who aspired to leadership in the church (Titus 1:9)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

What is heresy?



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 6.1–6.46

SESSION XII: ACTIVITY

Book 6.1–6.46

Identifying Modern Heresies

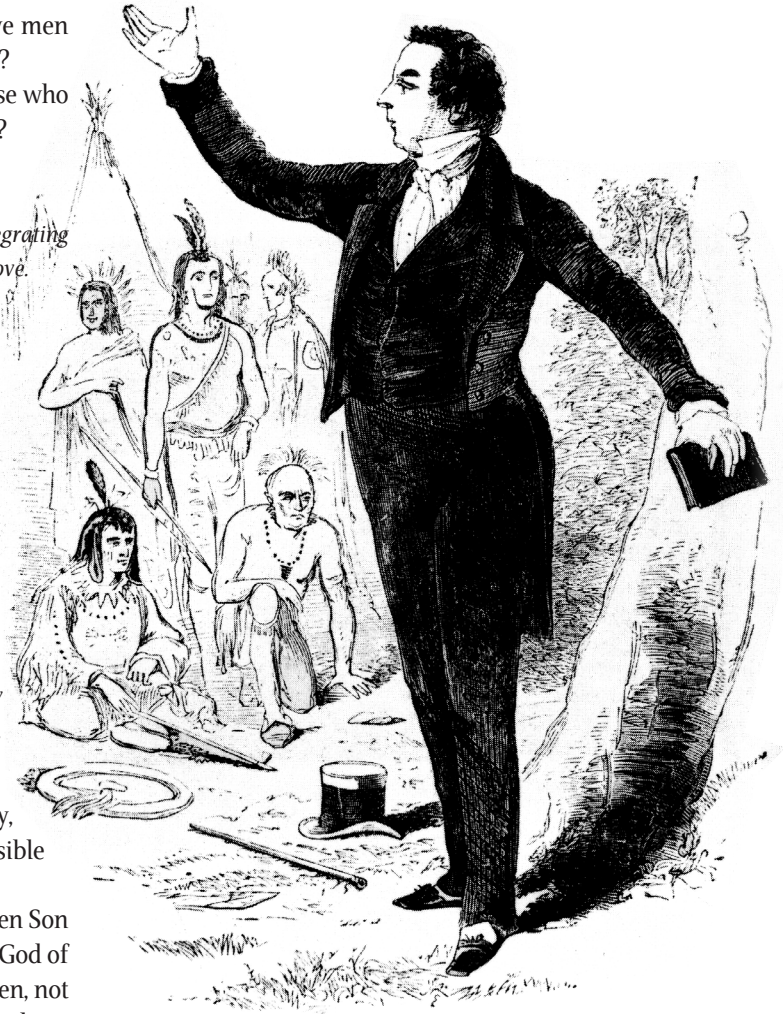
Using the Nicene Creed, included below as a summary of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith, spend some time identifying modern day heresies.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



The heretic Joseph Smith claimed he had received inscribed gold plates from the angel Moroni and used them for the English translation of *The Book of Mormon*. In this work Smith wrote that the Native American Indians were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel in the Americas.

Optional Further Reading

House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Cults, Sects, and Religious Movements*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000.

Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1992.

Wilson, Douglas, ed. *Bound Only Once*. Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001.



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 7.1–7.32

SESSION XIII: DISCUSSION

Book 7.1–7.32

A Question to Consider

What would be the result if Jesus were a mere man and not God and man?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. Which heretics maintained that Jesus was just a man (3.27, 5.28, 7.27)?
2. How did the churches of Antioch counteract the teaching of Paul (7.28–29)?
3. Briefly describe the behavior of Paul of Samosata (7.30).
4. What action of Paul was a direct consequence of his belief that Christ was a mere man (7.30)?
5. Briefly describe the character of the worship services led by Paul. How does Eusebius say one ought to worship in “God’s house” (7.30)?

Cultural Analysis

1. Do most Christian worship services display the type of orderly reverence which Eusebius encourages?
2. Does the nature of our worship reveal anything about the God we serve?

Biblical Analysis

1. Is it lawful to worship anyone or anything other than God (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 6:13–15; Rom. 1:21–23)?
2. During His earthly ministry, did Jesus receive worship (Matt. 8:1–4; John 9:35–38; Rev. 5:11–14)?
3. What did the apostles do when people tried to worship them (Acts 10:24–26; 14:11–18)?
4. What happened to Herod when he accepted worship that was not due him (Acts 12:21–23)?

SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

What would be the result if Jesus were a mere man and not God and man?

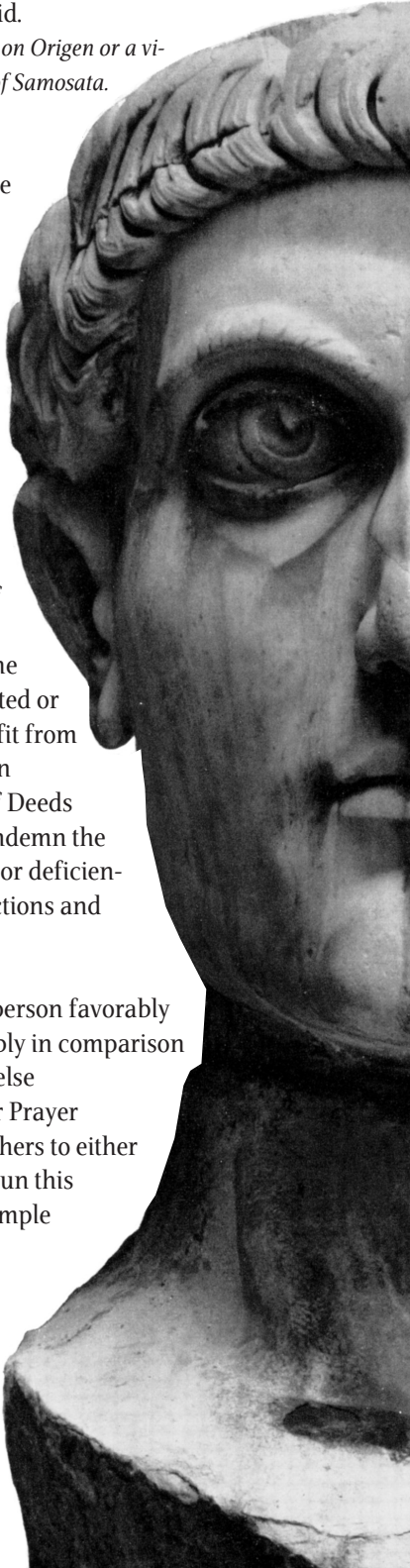
SESSION XIV: WRITING

Progymnasmata

This session introduces another of the writing exercises called the *progymnasmata*. Recall that these exercises in composition introduced the beginning student to basic forms and techniques that would then be used and combined when practicing more advanced exercises and speeches. One of these progymnasmata was called the *encomium*, a composition written to praise an individual. Its opposite exercise (which condemns an individual) is called a *vituperation* (or an *invective*). This writing exercise expounds the virtues or condemns the vices of a specific person (e.g., Joe is a strong warrior), but does not talk about virtue in a general sense (e.g., strength in war is admirable). The encomium and the vituperation each have six parts. The *Prologue* comes first. It introduces the topic and, at the end of the paragraph, states or implies the opinion of the writer. The second part of this exercise is a paragraph called *Description of Heritage*. In this paragraph the writer looks for ways to praise or condemn the person on account of his family history. For instance, if a person comes from righteous parents, then highlight the fact that he learned his righteous habits at home and added to the glory of the family name. A vituperation would emphasize that he comes from a family or nation that taught him wrong beliefs or bad habits. Next comes a paragraph called *Description of Upbringing*. The point is to show how the person profited from a good education or overcame a bad one (this is for the encomium). For the vituperation you should attempt to show how he failed to profit from a good education or learned well the lessons of a bad education. The most powerful part of the encomium comes next: the *Description of Deeds*. In this section the writer praises the excellencies of the mind, body and fortune of the subject. For example, the writer praises the practice of philosophical virtue, the way the person looked and his wealth, influence or social stature. Since Christianity has transformed our society it seems out of place to dwell on physical appearance or possessions (e.g., he was evil because he was quite homely, or it is obvious that he was a good man because he was fabulously rich), so instead the paragraph should concentrate on the actions and motives of the subject. This can be especially powerful if his

life demonstrates a pattern. Next is a *Comparison* of the subject to someone else to portray him in a favorable light (if it is an encomium). An unfavorable comparison is best for vituperation. The final paragraph is an *Exhortation* or *Prayer* in which others are called on to imitate this person's example or a proclamation to everyone telling them not to go down the wicked path that this person did.

Write an encomium on Origen or a vituperation on Paul of Samosata.

- 
- I. Prologue
 - Introduce the topic
 - State your opinion
 - II. Description of Heritage
 - Praise or condemn the person on account of his family history
 - III. Description of Upbringing
 - Show how the person profited or failed to profit from his education
 - IV. Description of Deeds
 - Praise or condemn the excellencies or deficiencies of his actions and motives
 - V. Comparison
 - Portray the person favorably or unfavorably in comparison to someone else
 - VI. Exhortation or Prayer
 - Call upon others to either imitate or shun this person's example

LIBERATOR OR OPPORTUNIST?

Constantine was the first Roman emperor to become a Christian. From his famous victory in the Battle of Milvian Bridge in October 312, when he defeated his major challenger for control of the Roman Empire, till his death in 337, he regularly supported the church and took actions against those who persecuted Christians. Because not all of Constantine's actions were consistent with the Faith, some historians contend that he was never really converted to Christianity and that he cynically used the church to serve his own political ambitions. Eusebius was a close advisor to Constantine in his later years and wrote a panegyric (biography extolling his greatness) that fails to mention some of Constantine's faults.

In evaluating historical figures like Constantine, we must understand his times and circumstances. From the perspective that Constantine was the very first major ruler to become a Christian, living in the transition time between pagan and Christian-based cultures, his failure to always conform to Biblical standards in his life and actions is not surprising. Nevertheless, his actions on behalf of the church were constant and faithful, and he always saw himself as the converter of the Roman Empire to Christianity. Most importantly, he effectively stamped out the horrendous persecution of the church. This feat alone was enough to make Constantine a hero to Eusebius and to Christians throughout the Empire.

While Constantine was not the ideal Biblical ruler, we should nevertheless acknowledge and be grateful for how God used him in his time to end the major persecution of Christians and bring about the downfall of paganism.

Optional Activity

Ask at least one other person to listen as you deliver orally the speech you have written. Don't tell them beforehand whether your speech is in praise of the individual or in judgment of him. At the conclusion, ask your audience to evaluate your speech and identify it as either an *encomium* or a *vituperation*. The best of these should praise the person effectively without making the person seem angelic or condemn the person without making the writer (that's you) look like a browbeating ogre. Listen carefully to the feedback that you get, and see if you can strike the right balance. Evaluate your own success based on their answer.

SESSION XV: RECITATION

Books 6.1–7.32

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions for factual recall:

1. During which emperor's reign was Leonides, the father of Origen, martyred (6.1)?
2. What did Leonides insist form the foundation for Origen's education (6.2)?
3. Why did Origen encourage the study of secular philosophy (6.18)?
4. What method of interpretation did Origen learn from Chaeremon the Stoic (6.19)?
5. Compare the opinions of Clement of Alexandria and Origen on the authorship of Hebrews. With whom do you agree (6.14, 25)?
6. What did the Novatian heresy maintain (6.43)?
7. How did Christians respond to their neighbors during the time of plague and hardship in Alexandria (7.22)?
8. How did Dionysius endeavor to convince those who had embraced the opinion of Nepos of their error (7.24)?
9. Summarize Dionysius's argument against John the Apostle as author of Revelation (7.25).
10. List the persecuting emperors mentioned in these two books (6.1, 28, 39; 7.10, 30).

SESSION XVI: DISCUSSION AND WRITING

A Question to Consider

The state should be religiously neutral.

Discuss or briefly answer the questions that follow. Begin to write a one-page synopsis of your position either in favor of or against the Question to Consider in preparation for a debate in Session XVIII.

Text Analysis

1. According to tradition, who was the first ruler to convert to the Christian faith (1.13)?
2. How does Lucius defend his Christian brother who had been sentenced to die (4.17)? What does this reveal about Lucius's attitude toward the duties of the state?
3. What was Dionysius ordered to do by his persecutor, Aemilianus (7.11)? What does this reveal about the religious basis of the Roman state?
4. When Paul of Samosata refused to depart from his church after he was convicted of heresy, how did Christians respond (7.30)?

Cultural Analysis

1. How does the United States Constitution answer the question of the relation between religion and state? (See Amendment 1 of the Bill of Rights)⁹

Biblical Analysis

1. Were church and state united in Old Testament Israel (Num. 3:10; 16:1–40; 2 Chron. 26:16–21)? Religion and state (Deut. 6:24–25; 1 Chron. 28:5–10; Prov. 16:12)?
2. Does Scripture call upon rulers to submit to Christ (Ps. 2:10–12; Prov. 8:12–17; Rev. 19:11–16)?



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Books 8.1–9.11

SESSION XVII: DISCUSSION AND WRITING

Books 8.1–9.11

A Question to Consider

The state should be religiously neutral.

Discuss or briefly answer the questions that follow. Finish writing the one-page synopsis of your position either in favor of or against the Question to Consider.

Text Analysis

1. What happened to the town in Phrygia that confessed Christ (8.11)?
2. What religious beliefs and practices formed the basis of Maxentius's and Maximin Daia's policies and decisions (8.14)?
3. Maximin accuses of outright stupidity those who refuse to recognize what simple truth (9.7)?
4. Why did the Armenians go to war against the Romans (9.8)?
5. What happened to the Roman state as a result of the persecution of Christians (8.13; 9.8)?

Cultural Analysis

1. What does our culture believe about the relationship between one's religious beliefs and the adoption of public policies?

Biblical Analysis

1. Are rulers required to rule justly (Deut. 16:18–20; Is. 32:1–8; Mic. 6:8)?
2. Where do we discover what is just (Deut. 4:5–8; 1 Tim. 1:8–11; Heb. 2:2)?
3. What happens to nations who do or do not practice justice? Does private morality have an affect on the corporate life of a people (Deut. 28:1–68; Rom. 13:1–7; Rev. 14:6–8)?

SESSION XVIII: ACTIVITY

Books 8.1–9.11

Debate

The state should be religiously neutral.

Students should use the synopses that they have written to argue either in favor of or against the proposition. In a group setting, listen to the arguments from both sides, alternating between the two, and then have other students or parents and family members decide on the winner.



READING ASSIGNMENT:

Book 10.1–10.9

SESSION XIX: REVIEW

Books 8.1–10.9

Comprehension Questions

Discuss or list short answers to the following questions:

1. Many emperors are mentioned in this section. Provide a brief description of each of the following emperors:
 CONSTANTINE
 CONSTANTIUS [CHLORUS]
 DIOCLETIAN
 GALERIUS
 LICINIUS
 MAXENTIUS
 MAXIMIAN
 MAXIMIN DAIA

Christ and the Twelve Apostles, from the catacomb of St. Domitilla in Rome. The catacomb is named after one of the two martyrs named Domitilla, most likely Flavia Domitilla.



2. What happened in the church during the many years of peace she enjoyed prior to the Diocletian Persecution (8.1)?
3. What were the so-called *Acts* or *Memoirs of Pilate* (9.5, 9.7)?
4. Which two books of the Bible does Eusebius primarily use in his speech of praise (10.4)?
5. What did the Edict of Milan say about religious worship (10.5)?

SESSION XX: EVALUATION

The Church History

All tests and quizzes are to be given with an open book and a Bible available.

Grammar

Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences. Some answers may be longer than others. (2 points per answer)

1. Who was Eusebius, and when did he write *The Church History*?
2. Who was Constantine?
3. Who was Origen?
4. What is the story of Polycarp's martyrdom?
5. What was the Edict of Milan?
6. Who were the *lapsi*?
7. What did Marcion teach about the deity?

Logic

Demonstrate your understanding of Eusebius's worldview as set forth in *The Church History*. Answer the following questions in complete sentences; your answer should be a paragraph or so. Answer two of the four questions. (10 points per answer)

1. According to Eusebius, who rules human history?
2. What is heresy?
3. What happens to those who oppress the people of God?
4. Is the created world good?

Lateral Thinking

Answer one of the following questions. These questions will require more substantial answers. (16 points per answer)

1. Utilizing your knowledge of the persecutions endured by God's people as recorded in *The Church History*, in what ways was the blood of the martyrs

the seed of the church?

2. Using your knowledge of the story which Eusebius records, is the future of the church bright or dull?
3. According to Eusebius, who is Christ, and why is His identity important?

OPTIONAL SESSION A: ACTIVITY

Historical Tales: Roman

Read Aloud from *Historical Tales: Roman* by Charles Morris.¹⁰

Read the chapters that discuss two of the most notorious emperors in this section, Caligula and Nero. These chapters include "An Imperial Monster," "The Murder of an Empress," "Rome Swept by Flames," and "The Doom of Nero." Answer the following questions:

1. Which of these emperors do you consider the worst?
2. How did these emperors die?
3. Utilizing what you know about the overthrow of the Tarquin dynasty and the establishment of the Roman Republic (from Livy's *Early History of Rome* or other sources), how do the lives of these emperors justify the early Roman distrust of monarchy?

OPTIONAL SESSION B: ACTIVITY

Debate

Invite a Mormon to class for a debate on, "Is Mormonism Christian?" Examine the Mormon view of: God, Christ, Man, Scripture.

OPTIONAL SESSION C: DISCUSSION

A Question to Consider

Should Christians rejoice in the deaths of their persecutors?

Discuss or write short answers to the following questions:

Text Analysis

1. Does Eusebius rejoice in the deaths of the persecutors (2.10; 8.16; 9.9; 10.1)?
2. To what does Eusebius ascribe the deaths of the persecutors (8.16; 9.10)?
3. Does Eusebius make use of the imprecatory psalms—those psalms that ask God to judge His enemies—in his analysis of history (10.4)?

Cultural Analysis

1. Do most Christians today think it is appropriate to rejoice in the deaths of persecutors?
2. Does your church sing the imprecatory psalms—those psalms that ask God to judge His enemies—of the Old Testament? Why or why not?

Biblical Analysis

1. Is it appropriate to pray that God would judge His and our enemies (Ps. 137:7–9; 139:19–22; 2 Tim. 4:14–15; Rev. 6:9–11)?
2. Is it appropriate to rejoice when God executes judgment on those who have set themselves against the church of God (Is. 14:3–11; Prov. 16:4; Rev. 18:20)?
3. How does God go about conquering (judging) his enemies (Ps. 83:16–18; Acts 9:1–9; 12:21–23)?
4. How should we treat our enemies while waiting for God to act (Matt. 5:43–48; Rom. 12:14–21)?

A fourth-century mosaic depicting Christ with a chi-rho “halo.”



SUMMA



Write an essay or discuss this question, integrating what you have learned from the material above.

Should Christians rejoice in the deaths of their persecutors?

ENDNOTES

- 1 Eusebius is sometimes also called *Eusebius Pamphili*, “Eusebius [the friend of] Pamphilius,” because of their close friendship.
- 2 Arius (c. 250–c. 336) was a presbyter in Alexandria who taught that Jesus was not God but the first creation of God. In 318 he was accused of heresy by his bishop, Alexander, was examined, and was eventually excommunicated. However, the controversy continued and Constantine convened the Council of Nicea to bring resolution to the matter. Eusebius feared that orthodox churchmen like Athanasius were denying the distinction between the Father and the Son (a position known as *Sabellianism*) and so frequently appeared on the side of Arius and his defenders. Nevertheless, he did adopt the Nicene Creed and rejected the Arian doctrine that there was a time when the Son did not exist. Opinions on his orthodoxy vary.
- 3 More frequently called the *Ecclesiastical History*, from the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning “church.”
- 4 This refers to the infamous “art work” by Andres Serrano in which a cross submerged in urine was presented as a piece of art. Sadly, American tax dollars were used to support this work.
- 5 The Ebionites, Paul of Samosata, Beryllus.
- 6 The Docetists.
- 7 This would include the Arians about whom Eusebius says nothing in *The Church History*—likely because he had some sympathy with their teaching and because the issue had not yet been completely resolved.
- 8 Note, however, that Spielvogel misunderstands some critical aspects of Christianity, so do not trust him as a reliable guide in doctrinal matters.
- 9 A copy of the Bill of Rights may be found by clicking Link 1 for this chapter at www.VeritasPress.com/OmniLinks.
- 10 You may view this work by clicking Link 2 for this chapter at www.VeritasPress.com/OmniLinks.

Nothing is better for clearing our minds of the vanity that afflicts us than to begin seeing ourselves as others will see us. And since we are currently living in the future's "past," a good way of coming to an understanding of ourselves is by studying and appreciating and *understanding* that which is past to us now.

DOUGLAS WILSON
General Editor

This is how you can use *Omnibus II* wisely—or should we say *medievally*? Using it in this manner will prepare your sons and daughters to take dominion joyfully—as many did in the Middle Ages. For unlike what we read about the Middle Ages in stale and unreadable volumes of “enlightened” history, the Middle Ages were not dark ones. Medieval people were staggeringly wise at some points, and to them we owe much of the good that exists in the world—and some of the bad as well.

G. TYLER FISCHER
Managing Editor



“[When] the book arrived, I eagerly read many of the opening essays for the many books on the list; the more I read the more I became excited. This was exactly what I wanted. The book is beautiful. Thank you so much. You have done what I was not able to do. And now you are sharing the wealth of knowledge of several writers, and not only the knowledge, but also the passion. I then showed the book to the other families in the [homeschool study] group, and they too had the same response. We had a visitor over one afternoon, and she saw the book, read it for a while and signed up her son for the class.” —Lois

“[We] received our copies of the Omnibus today, and they are beautiful. The students immersed themselves as soon as they received them—which was good, since all the teachers were doing the same. We’ve been receiving the benefit of your hard work and godly insights into these books all year long . . .” —Sarah

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