

8. Christianity attracts all classes of people
9. Christianity wins its freedom
10. The organization of the Church

#### STUDY EXERCISES

1. Why is the birth of Christ the central point in history?
2. How did Christ prepare for the Church while He was on earth?
3. How did Christ make it clear that St. Peter was to be the visible head of the Church?
4. Describe the missionary work of St. Paul.
5. How did the Roman emperors persecute the Christians?
6. Why did the Church attract so many people?
7. Show how the teachings of Christ and His Church affected the lives of the Christians.
8. What was the importance of the Edict of Milan?
9. Describe the manner in which the Catholic Church was organized.
10. What was the importance of the Council of Nicaea?

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Read again in your Bible history the life of Christ and His founding of the Church.
2. Draw a map showing the journeys of St. Peter and St. Paul. Consult your Bible history.
3. Give a report on the life of St. Stephen, the first martyr, or St. Helena, who found the True Cross of Christ.
4. Place in your scrapbook pictures of the life of Christ, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the apostles.

## BARBARIAN TRIBES INVADE THE ROMAN EMPIRE

### *The Weakened Empire*

**Division of the Roman Empire.** For about three hundred years after the time of Augustus, the Roman Empire remained strong and powerful. But it was hard for the emperor living at Rome to keep in close touch with the eastern part of the Mediterranean world. Large armies had to be kept in this area to hold back the enemies who tried to invade the empire.

When Constantine became emperor, he wanted to strengthen his hold over this eastern territory. He decided to build a new capital and to locate it in the East. The new capital was named Constantinople, that is, the city of Constantine. In 1929 the Turks changed its name to Istanbul.<sup>1</sup>

If you turn to the map on page 161, you will see why Constantinople became an important city. It is located on the narrow strip of water which forms the only passage for ships going from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. And, also, it is on one of the leading land routes between Asia and Europe.

1. Istanbul (ě'stān bōöl')

Naturally, the city became very important as a trading center.

During his lifetime Constantine ruled the entire Roman Empire from his new capital. But after his death, the empire was divided into two parts. The part which had its capital at Constantinople became known as the Eastern Roman Empire. The other part was known as the Western Roman Empire; it was ruled from Rome.

**Weakness within the Empire.** Many other weaknesses had developed within the empire, although it appeared to be strong and powerful. Some of the emperors were weak leaders.

Many of the Romans had lost the virtues which made their country great. They had become greedy and lazy. They were too lazy either to work or to fight. Those who were wealthy preferred to live in extreme luxury. They looked upon work as some-



thing which only slaves should do. The poor were also unwilling to work.

The fields of Italy became idle. Italy did not produce enough grain for the people of the cities. The emperors had to bring grain from distant parts of the empire. This was given to the people free. It was an expensive method of feeding the idle mob at Rome. It meant that taxes increased and became a great burden.

The old Roman race declined in numbers. The emperors had difficulty finding enough soldiers for their armies. Gradually, they had to depend on the barbarian peoples who lived outside the empire. They brought thousands of these barbarians to Rome as slaves to do the work in the city and on the farms. Later they permitted several of the tribes to come into the empire and settle down. Very soon the Roman legions were made up almost entirely of the barbarians. Some of the barbarian leaders became Roman generals, and some became the chief advisers of the emperors. Without realizing what they were doing, the Romans had permitted the outsiders to take over the empire.

### *The Teutonic Tribes*

**The Races of Europe.** All along the northern boundary of the Roman Empire there lived tribes whom the more civilized Greeks and Romans called

barbarians. The tribes living in Gaul and Britain at the time Julius Caesar conquered those regions belonged to the Celtic<sup>2</sup> race.

Near the river Rhine, Caesar found tribes of the Teutonic<sup>3</sup> race. The Rhine and the Danube rivers formed a natural boundary between the Teutons, or Germans, and the Roman Empire. A great wall and a series of forts were erected between the two rivers by the Romans to keep the tribes from entering the empire.

Yet the warm climate, the fertile lands, and the wealthy cities of the Roman Empire continued to attract these tribes from the colder areas of Europe. The Teutonic tribes lived among rough mountains, dense forests, and swamplands in what are now Germany and Austria. The peoples who lived farther to the east—the Slavs and the Huns—were pushing the Teutons westward and southward.

**The Teutonic People.** The Romans have left us some vivid descriptions of the Teutons. They were very tall and seemed like giants to the shorter Romans. They had fair skin, blond hair, and fierce blue eyes. Living outdoors most of the time in a cold climate made them very hardy and strong.

They lived in small villages. Their houses were like thatched huts. Their food was simple. They ate fish, meat, fruit, vegetables, grains, milk, and

2. Celtic (sě'l'tík)      3. Teutonic (tú tǝn'ík)

cheese. The clothing of these barbaric tribesmen was coarse and simple. Usually it was made from the skins of animals or from rough woolen or linen cloth.

These people were very warlike. They enjoyed fighting much more than working. In fact, the warriors left most of the work to the old men or the women.

They had many good qualities. They were brave and courageous. They were always true to their word. They treated women with great respect, and their family life was superior to that of the Romans at the time of the empire.

Before the Christian missionaries taught the German tribes about the true God, their religion was pagan. They worshipped many gods and goddesses. The chief of the gods was Woden. His wife was Frigg. Thor, the son of Woden, was the god of thunder, and another son was Tiu, the god of war.

The days of our week have come from the names of these four gods. Wednesday is Woden's day; Friday, Frigg's day; Thursday, Thor's day; and Tuesday, Tiu's day.

**Government among the Tribes.** There was really little government among the Teutonic tribesmen. They had no written laws. But they had a great respect for the customs and rules of their tribes. At the head of each tribe was a chief, who was

chosen by the warriors. When the tribe was at peace, the chief acted as judge and settled the less important disputes that arose. In matters of more importance, he discussed affairs with the people in their assemblies. Then a vote of the warriors was taken. If the warriors agreed to his suggestions, they clashed their spears or swords against their shields. This was their method of voting. Our legislatures developed from these tribal assemblies.

### *The Struggle against the Barbarians*

**The Huns.** The Celtic tribes to the west and the Slavic tribes to the east were similar to the Teutons. All of these peoples might have made a peaceful settlement with the Romans. The tribes who lived along the border of the empire had already become partly civilized. But now a new and different race entered Europe from the east.

These were the fierce Huns, who came from somewhere in central Asia. It may be that they were the same people who tried to take China six hundred years before. Coming on horseback, the Huns appeared suddenly in great numbers. Wherever they went, they threw fear into all who saw them, for according to writers of the time they were terrible looking creatures. Their faces were made ugly by the deep gashes which had been cut into them during babyhood. Their yellow skin made

them seem strange and fearful to the fair-haired Teutons. The Huns were short; their noses were flat; their eyes were small, black, and deep-set. Their dark hair was long and straggly.

**A Roman Defeat.** The Huns struck terror into the Teutonic tribes. Directly in the path of the Huns were the Gothic tribes. The East Goths, or Ostrogoths,<sup>4</sup> surrendered to the Huns, but the West Goths, or Visigoths,<sup>5</sup> fled before them. The Visigoth chieftains begged the emperor Valens at Constantinople to permit them to cross the Danube River into the empire.

Valens made an agreement with the Visigoths. They were to furnish him with warriors, and the Romans were to supply food to the Visigoths. When the Romans failed to keep their promises, the Visigoths rose in rebellion. At Adrianople,<sup>6</sup> in the year 378 A. D., they defeated Valens and his army.

Later the entire Visigoth nation, under their leader Alaric, began to move again. They crossed through Greece and marched up around the Adriatic Sea into Italy. In 410 A. D. they captured and sacked the city of Rome. Many of the treasures of the city were destroyed or stolen. The Visigoths finally went into Spain, where they settled in a fertile, pleasant area.

4. Ostrogoths (ös'trô göths)      5. Visigoths (vîz'î göths)

6. Adrianople (ă'drĭ ăn ō'p'l)

Attila, the Hun. The Huns had moved into the territory vacated by the Visigoths, north of the Danube. But they were restless and wanted to push into the Roman Empire. Under a terrible leader, Attila,<sup>7</sup> they marched first into Gaul.



Pope St. Leo Meeting with Attila, Leader of the Huns

For three years Attila and his Huns burned and ravaged the towns in Gaul and Italy. Attila was called the "Scourge of God." As he advanced toward Rome, Pope St. Leo went out to meet him.

7. Attila (ăt'ī lă)

Attila was impressed by the dignity of the Pope and agreed not to attack Rome.

Shortly thereafter Attila died, and his followers were forced back to the east. They were no longer a threat to Europe and, in fact, disappeared from history.

### *The Power of Rome Is Broken*

Fall of the Western Roman Empire. Other Teutonic tribes were seizing great sections of the Roman Empire. The power of Rome over her western empire was broken. The emperor at Rome had to rely almost entirely on Teutonic soldiers to defend Rome. Finally, in the year 476 A. D., the legions at Rome deposed the last of the Roman emperors, Augustulus. They then proclaimed one of their generals, a Teuton named Odoacer,<sup>8</sup> as king. A barbarian now ruled from the throne of the Caesars.

Other Invasions. The invasions continued for another hundred years. The Vandals crossed the Rhine from Germany. They journeyed across Gaul and Spain and established a Vandal kingdom in North Africa.

The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes moved into Britain from the northwest coast of continental Europe. The Franks and Burgundians also crossed the Rhine into Gaul, where they established kingdoms. There

8. Odoacer (ō'dô ä'sēr)

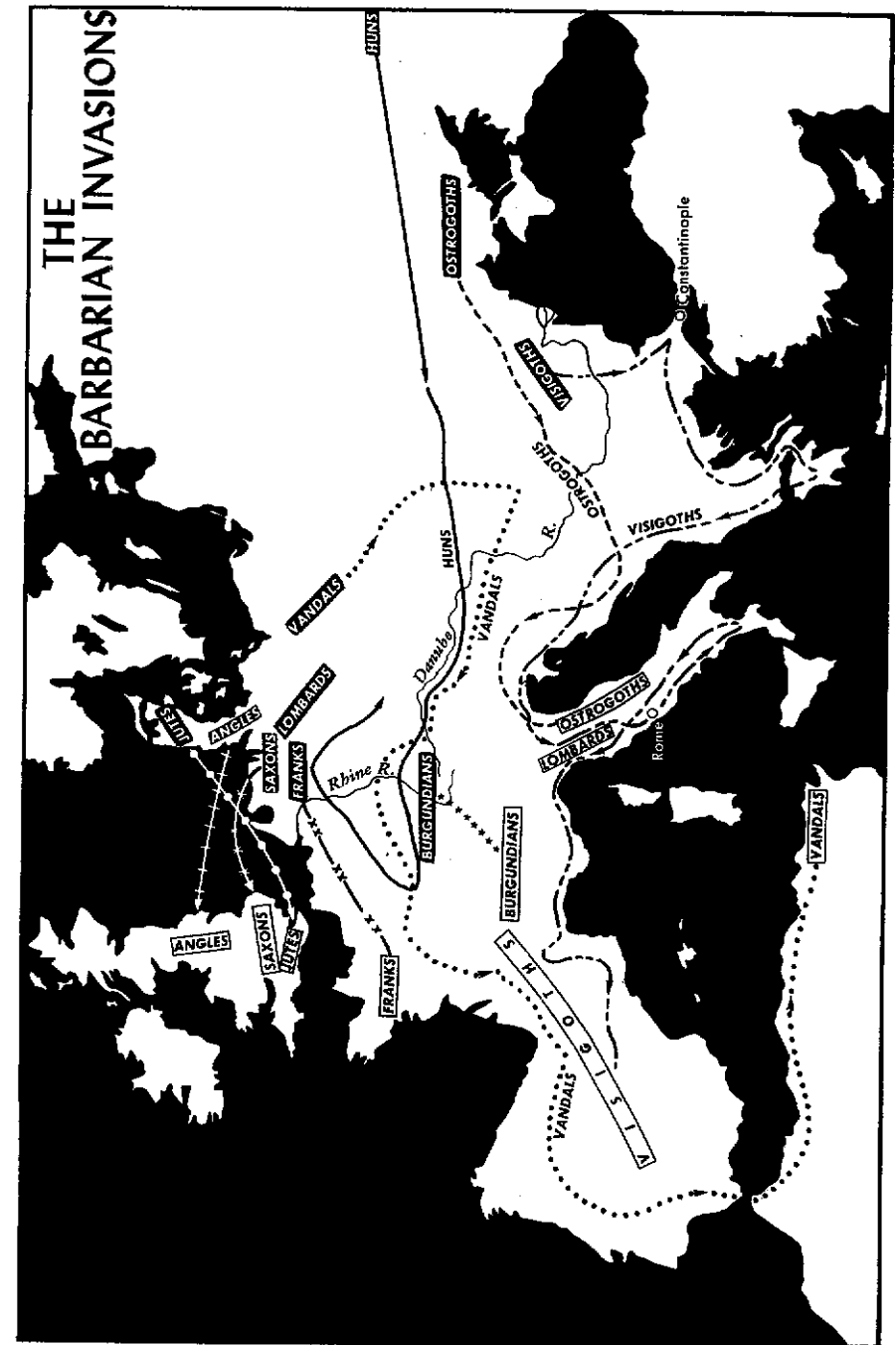
was still another invasion of Italy. This time a tribe with long beards, called Lombards, settled in northern Italy. The region is still called Lombardy.

The last invasion of the barbarians was three hundred years later. These were the Northmen, or Vikings. They swooped down on England, Scotland, and Ireland. They settled in northern France in the province now called Normandy. They set up a kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily. They had large colonies in Iceland and Greenland. They even came to America. About the year 1000 A. D., they explored a region which they called Vinland.

### *The Results of the Invasions*

The Eastern Roman Empire. Rome, the proud and ancient capital of the Western Empire, had fallen into the power of the barbarians. But Constantinople, the newer capital of the Eastern Empire, escaped. The great emperor of the East, Justinian, even won back for a while Italy and the Vandal kingdom in North Africa.

For a thousand years after the fall of Rome, the eastern capital remained a large, rich, and beautiful city. Here thousands of people came to trade their wares. Silk, rugs, spices, glass, and many other products from Asia were bought and sold in Constantinople. Constantinople continued to be a city of splendid churches, palaces, amphitheaters, aque-



ducts, and paved roads. There men continued to read and study, and Greek learning was preserved.

**The Western Roman Empire.** During the invasions of the barbarians, and for many years afterwards, Europe was in a sad state of disorder. Great numbers of people were turned out of their homes to wander aimlessly here and there. Instead of working for a living, many became robbers and took by force what they wanted. There was very little business and trade. Travel became difficult and dangerous, because roads and bridges were no longer kept in repair.

Whole cities were laid in ruins. Because the barbarians did not understand civilized ways of living, they destroyed paintings, statues, furniture, pottery, and buildings. Libraries were destroyed. In this way a great deal of ancient knowledge about such subjects as history, geography, mathematics, and astronomy was lost forever.

Instead of being ruled by Roman law and judges in Roman courts, both the conquered and the conquerors usually followed the tribal customs of the barbarians. For a long time almost everything the Romans had achieved seemed to be lost.

**The Church Survives.** The mighty empire of the Romans had been destroyed. But the Catholic Church, which also had its capital at Rome, continued to survive. Goths, Huns, and Vandals had

attacked or threatened Rome, but the Church continued to elect successors to St. Peter as Bishops of Rome.

Not only did the Church survive; it set out to convert and to civilize the barbarian tribes. This was a slow task at first, but it makes a thrilling story which we will study in Chapter 10 of this book.

**A Mingling of Peoples.** Throughout the empire the barbarian Teutons and the civilized Romans gradually settled down to peaceful living. They traded with one another. They intermarried. In France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the barbarians adopted the dress, the language, the customs, and the laws of the Romans.

This mixture of the civilized Romans and the barbaric Teutons had many good results. The invaders brought new strength and new life into Europe. They taught the world to love liberty, and they revived the virtue of courage. In fact, these two peoples finally became the founders of many of the present-day nations of Europe. This, of course, means that they are also the ancestors of many of the people in America.

#### AN OUTLINE OF THIS CHAPTER

1. The Roman Empire is divided into two parts
2. Weaknesses within the Empire

3. The various races of Europe
4. The life of the Teutonic tribes
5. The coming of the Huns
6. The end of the Roman Empire of the West
7. The other invading tribes
8. The Eastern Roman Empire
9. Mingling of Roman and Teutonic peoples

#### STUDY EXERCISES

1. Why did Constantinople become an important city?
2. Describe the weaknesses of the Roman Empire.
3. What were the chief races of Europe and where were they located?
4. Describe the customs of the Teutonic people.
5. Describe the Huns and the effect of their movements on the other peoples of Europe.
6. How did the Roman Empire of the West come to an end?
7. Describe the conditions in the West after the barbarian invasions.
8. What was the position of the Catholic Church during the invasions?

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Draw a map of Europe showing where each of the Teutonic nations finally settled.
2. Make a list of the interesting things you would like to see on a visit to Constantinople.
3. *Class Exercise:* Find out how many members of your class may be descended from the Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavic peoples mentioned in this chapter.

## THE MOSLEM THREAT

### *A New Religion*

**Mohammed.** The barbarian tribes were just beginning to settle down and live peacefully when a new danger threatened Europe. It came from the Near East. A new religion, Mohammedanism,<sup>1</sup> appeared in Arabia. Its followers began with fire and sword to force this religion on all the peoples of the East. Their methods were very different from the quiet and beautiful sermons with which St. Peter and St. Paul and their successors spread the gospel of Christ.

Mohammed was born in Mecca, a city of Arabia. He became a camel driver and led caravans across the desert. On his journeys he met many shepherds and traders. Some of these were Christians and Jews. From them he learned many things about the Christian and Jewish religions.

Mohammed came to believe that there was only one God. His name for God was Allah. He claimed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and revealed many new ideas to him. Mohammed became convinced that he was the chosen prophet

1. Mohammedanism (mô hăm'ě dăn iz'm)