

The Roman world was open for investigative thinking. Education held an honored place. Literature and scientific thinking were both encouraged. History and the theoretical arts as well as the aesthetic life modes were in good stead. Medicine was better understood than it would be a thousand years later (the great medical teacher was the Roman doctor, Galen). The learned person of this time was conversant with the past and thinking forward to the future. The coming of the fall of Rome (still centuries off) would cause a gigantic reversal in all of this but there was a solid intellectual thrust in the world where Christianity began to show its life.

## II.2 Church Beginnings

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH

In historical perspective, the church as a body politic, found its beginning at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit. In structure and form it was very new: in duty and commission it had a new challenge; in heart and soul it continued the unfolding of the plan of redemption. The church, in many ways, is the new alignment of a continuing witness.

### II.2.a Early Church Conc

#### Early Church Concepts

##### Development

Complete evidence of the development of the church following Pentecost and continuing until 100 AD is lacking. With the close of the book of Acts, we come to a period in which there are no reliable accounts and little that is even fragmentary. Throughout the book of Acts, however, there is relatively little information on works other than those of Paul and we are left to suppose a great deal about the early church development. Much of the tradition related to this period is younger than 325 AD and hence has little proved value. Most of the art work, archaeological evidence, etc., is well after 200 AD and while it shows existing settings, may or may not have a good representation of what was earlier. Therefore materials assigned to this period are, to a very large extent, based on the observation of later developments and then read back into the passage of time as if they had occurred in that fashion. Most of what is taught for this age is by inference or deduction..on the matter of development, that is. Christianity was