

DEL REY BIBLE INSTITUTE  
CHURCH HISTORY 101

# APPENDICES



# WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES? HOW THEIR DEATHS EVIDENCE EASTER

~ c michael patton ~

I have an interest in the death of the Apostles. We all should. Every Christian should spend some time looking into the historical records. There are many legends concerning their deaths which makes the historical evidence hard to interpret. Many times the accounts conflict with one another. Most early Christians wanted their home to be crowned with the stature of having been the final resting place of one of the twelve. It is probably for this reason that there were embellishments forged.

Sifting through the wheat and the chaff is not easy task. The martyrdom of some of the Apostles is more certain than others. Historians will have different degrees of certainty concerning the circumstances of their deaths. For instance, unbiased historians will not take issue with the historical credibility of the martyrdom of Peter, Paul, and James the Apostle. Many of the other accounts have decent historic validity as well. Some accounts, however, raise the eyebrow and cause us to remain agnostic.

However, when boiled down to their least common denominator, it is very feasible to believe that all but one of the Apostles suffered and died a martyr's death, even if we can't be sure of the exact details.

Amidst some uncertainty, one thing is clear—the reason given for their death was the same in *all* accounts. They were killed because they proclaimed to have seen Christ die and then to have seen Him alive. They all died because of an unwavering, unrelenting claim that Christ rose from the grave. They died for Easter. Personally, in my mind, the gruesome death of the Apostles as recorded below was one of the greatest gifts that God ever gave to the Church. It contributes much to Christian apologetics by answering the “how do you know?” question concerning the resurrection of Christ.

The following is my attempt to take the best of all the sources and share the most likely scenario for each Apostle's death. At the risk of spoiling some of the “legends,” I have given each account a grade of probability from A (highest probability) to D (lowest probability).

Read through the accounts of their deaths. Use it this Easter. Tell your children. This may sound odd, but in a very real sense, I thank God for bringing about the Apostles' deaths, for in their deaths they sealed their testimony in blood making our faith in the risen Christ built upon a solid foundation.

### **(1) The Apostle James**

James, the Apostle of the Lord, was the second recorded martyr after Christ's death (Stephen was the first). His death is recorded in Acts 12:2 where it is told that Herod Agrippa killed him with a sword. Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History II.2) both tell how the executioner witnessed the courage and un-recanting spirit of James and was then convinced of Christ resurrection and was executed along with James.

Date of Martyrdom: 44-45 A.D.

Probability rating: A for the death of James, C- for the death of the executioner

### **(2) The Apostle Peter**

Although, just before the crucifixion, Peter denied three times that he even knew Christ, after the resurrection he did not do so again. Peter, just as Jesus told him in John 21:18-19, was crucified by Roman executioners because he could not deny his master again. According to Eusebius, he thought himself unworthy to be crucified as his Master, and, therefore, he asked to be crucified "head downward."

Date of Martyrdom: ca. 64 A.D.

Probability rating: A

### **(3) The Apostle Andrew**

Andrew, who introduced his brother Peter to Christ, went to join Peter with Christ in eternity six years after Peter's death. After preaching Christ's resurrection to the Scythians and Thracians, he too was crucified for his faith. As Hippolytus tells us, Andrew was hanged on an olive tree at Patrae, a town in Achaia.

Date of Martyrdom: 70 A.D.

Probability rating: B

### **(4) The Apostle Thomas**

Thomas is known as "doubting Thomas" because of his reluctance to believe the other Apostles' witness of the resurrection. After they told him that Christ was alive, he stated "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). After this, Christ did appear to him and Thomas believed unto death. Thomas sealed his testimony as he was thrust through with pine spears, tormented with red-hot plates, and burned alive.

Date of Martyrdom: 70 A.D.

Probability rating: B concerning his martyrdom, D concerning the exact method of execution.

### **(5) The Apostle Philip**

Philip was corrected by Christ when he asked Christ to "show us the Father, then this will be enough for us" (John 14:8). Christ responded, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the

Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father ‘?’” (John 14:9). Philip later saw the glory of Christ after the resurrection and undoubtedly reflected with amazement on Christ’s response to his request. Philip evangelized in Phrygia where hostile Jews had him tortured and then crucified.

Date of Martyrdom: 54 A.D.

Probability rating: C

#### **(6) The Apostle Matthew**

Matthew, the tax collector, so desperately wanted the Jews to accept Christ. He wrote The Gospel According to Matthew about ten years before his death. Because of this, one can see, contained within his Gospel, the faith for which he spilled his blood. Matthew surely remembered his resurrected Savior’s words, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20), when he professed the resurrected Christ unto his death by beheading at Nad-Davar.

Date of Martyrdom: 60-70 A.D.

Probability rating: B

#### **(7) The Apostle Nathanael (Bartholomew)**

Nathanael, whose name means “gift of God” was truly given as a gift to the Church through his martyrdom. Nathanael was the first to profess, early in Christ’s ministry, that Christ was the Son of God (John 1:49). He later paid for this profession through a hideous death. Unwilling to recant of his proclamation of a risen Christ, he was flayed and then crucified.

Date of Martyrdom: 70 A.D.

Probability rating: C

#### **(8) The Apostle James the Lesser**

James was appointed to be the head of the Jerusalem church for many years after Christ’s death. In this, he undoubtedly came in contact with many hostile Jews (the same ones who killed Christ and stated “His [Christ’s] blood be on us and our children” (Matt. 27:25)). In order to make James deny Christ’s resurrection, these men positioned him at the top of the Temple for all to see and hear. James, unwilling to deny what he knew to be true, was cast down from the Temple and finally beaten to death with a fuller’s club to the head.

Date of Martyrdom: 63 A.D.

Probability rating: B that he was cast down from the temple, D that he was being beaten to death with fuller’s club after the fall

#### **(9) The Apostle Simon the Zealot**

Simon was a Jewish zealot who strived to set his people free from Roman oppression. After he saw with his own eyes that Christ had been resurrected, he became a zealot of the Gospel. Historians tell of the many different places that Simon proclaimed the good news of Christ’s resurrection: Egypt, Cyrene, Africa, Mauritania, Britain, Lybia,

and Persia. His rest finally came when he verified his testimony and went to be with Christ, being crucified by a governor in Syria.

Date of Martyrdom: 74 A.D.

Probability rating: B

#### **(10) The Apostle Judas Thaddeus**

Judas questioned the Lord: “Judas said to him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that you will show yourself to us, and not unto the world?” (John 14:22). After he witnessed Christ’s resurrection, Judas then knew the answer to his question. Preaching the risen Christ to those in Mesopotamia in the midst of pagan priests, Judas was beaten to death with sticks, showing to the world that Christ was indeed Lord and God.

Date of Martyrdom: 72 A.D.

Probability rating: C

#### **(11) The Apostle Matthias**

Matthias replaced Judas Iscariot (the betrayer of Christ who hanged himself) as the twelfth Apostle of Christ (Acts 1:26). It is believed by most that Matthias was one of the seventy that Christ sent out during his earthly ministry (Luke 10:1). This qualifies him to be an apostle. Matthias, of which the least is known, is said by Eusebius to have preached in Ethiopia. He was later stoned while hanging upon a cross.

Date of Martyrdom: 70 A.D.

Probability rating: D

#### **(12) The Apostle John**

John is the only one of the twelve Apostles to have died a natural death. Although he did not die a martyr’s death, he did live a martyr’s life. He was exiled to the Island of Patmos under the Emperor Domitian for his proclamation of the risen Christ. It was there that he wrote the last book in the Bible, Revelation. Some traditions tell us that he was thrown into boiling oil before the Latin Gate, where he was not killed but undoubtedly scarred for the rest of his life.

Date of Martyrdom: 95 A.D.

Probability rating: A that he was not martyred, C that he was thrown into boiling oil

#### **(13) The Apostle Paul**

Paul, himself a persecutor of the Christian faith (Galatians 1:13), was brought to repentance on his way to Damascus by an appearance of the risen Christ. Ironically, Paul was heading for Damascus to arrest those who held to Christ’s resurrection. Paul was the greatest skeptic there was until he saw the truth of the resurrection. He then devoted his life to the proclamation of the living Christ. Writing to the Corinthians, defending his ministry, Paul tells of his sufferings for the name of Christ: “In labors more abundant, in beatings above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often.

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once was I stoned, three times I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeys often, in storms on the water, in danger of robbers, in danger by mine own countrymen, in danger by the heathen, in danger in the city, in danger in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness “(2 Cor. 11:23-27). Finally, Paul met his death at the hands of the Roman Emperor Nero when he was beheaded in Rome.

Date of Martyrdom: ca. 67 A.D.

Probability rating: A

### **An Afterthought:**

I believe that the deaths of the Apostles increase the certainty level of the historicity of the resurrection to a level that is beyond excuse for disbelief. People do not die for their own lies, half-truths, or fabrications. If the Apostles truly died proclaiming to have seen Christ dead then alive and ascend into heaven, Christ is who He said He was, God incarnate who came to take away the sins of the world.

### **An Objection:**

However, some might object to my reasoning. *You* may object to my reasoning. The question that gives rise to the objection is this: Don't many people die for something they believe? Does this mean that if you die for something, it is true? To be sure, many people have died for something that they believed and this does not make it true. The 9-11 bombers believed something and died for that belief, but their deaths do not give credence to the validity of their beliefs in any way. There is a big difference in dying for something that you believe having received the basis for that belief from someone else and dying for something that you believe because *you* witnessed the events that establish the belief.

From a historical stand point, the difference is as great as day and night. The suicide bombers and others who die for their faith are dying for something that they believe because they have heard it from someone else. This adds no valid verification to what they believe from an standpoint of evidence or reason. It would be like me dying for *my* faith in Christ's resurrection. All that this would prove is that *I* truly did believe that Christ rose from the grave, but it would not verify in any way that He *actually did* rise from the grave. Why? Because I did not see it. I was not a first hand witness. Now if I died a martyr's death saying that *I* saw Christ die and rise from the grave with *my own* eyes that would be a different story. Why? Because it would not verify a belief handed down from someone else, but a belief in something that I witnessed firsthand. At this point, you have only three options for explaining the Apostles' belief: 1) Say that they died for a lie knowing that it was a lie, 2) that they were delusional or crazy, or 3) that was the truth, Christ did rise from the grave.

To say that they died knowing it was a lie places a great burden of proof upon the proponent of this view and completely lacks in any historical credibility (no matter how many attempts have been made to substantiate such). It would take a much greater leap of faith to believe this than to believe that they were telling the truth and Christ actually rose. Remember, the *possibility* of an alternative does not amount to *probability*.

To opt for number two and say that they were crazy suffers from the same fate as the first. There is no way to substantiate this. There is absolutely no historical evidence in favor of this supposed insanity for even a single Apostle, much less all of them. From a historical standpoint, this would most certainly be a greater leap of faith than to believe that they were telling the truth.

The only option is the last—that Christ did raise from the grave and He is who he said he was. All others are blind leaps into the dark.

The motives for these blind leaps are many I am sure, but let me mention a couple of the most likely.

People who deny this evidence are sometimes motivated by an anti-supernatural bias. This bias starts with the assumption that Christ did not rise from the grave because it is impossible for people to rise from the grave. But this argument is completely unsustainable since it begs the question. It may be true that people don't *normally* rise from the grave, but simply because you do not have personal empirical evidence of its possibility does not make it impossible objectively. I do however understand this bias. I think that it is foolish to uncritically and characteristically accept stories of happenings that fall outside of our God-given means of empirically acquiring information. But belief in the resurrection of Christ, as I have been arguing, is not in any way an uncritical belief (at least it does not have to be). The evidence *compels* us to adjust our bias at this point.

Another motive that people have for rejecting the evidence is less intellectual and more emotional. Many people have an emotional bias against the very idea of God. This emotional bias, practically speaking, comes to us from a variety of avenues. For some, it is their upbringing. They have a commitment to that which they were taught. We all want mom and dad to be right and we will do everything in our power to cheer for their beliefs. Why? Because they become *our* beliefs and we have a lot invested in them. For many, if Christ rose from the grave, then they, their family, their religion, and all their friends are wrong. This is sometimes too much to handle emotionally.

For others, the emotional objection comes from a jilted experience. They have called upon God to save them from sickness. They have looked for His mercy in their family. They have prayed for their basic needs and He, in their estimation, has not answered. Therefore, they are apathetic to the evidence of the resurrection, being guided by their emotional experiences and longings. Both of these emotional objections to the resurrection are understandable.

I know that emotion unbridled is a much more powerful source for belief than the cold facts of the intellectual realm. But, at the same time, while the objections are understandable, they should not be not admissible or sustainable. We cannot let emotions rule our belief system. We must be ready to look past our experience and our traditions so that we can see the truth. Once we do, then the truth can take the hand of our emotions and train them properly.

In sum concerning the initial objection, the 9-11 suicide bombers may have sincerely believed their religion, but their conviction carries no inherent verification. All we know is that they were sincere in their belief. The disciples, on the other hand, died for something that they claimed to have witnessed firsthand. This carries no “hearsay” but firsthand testimony. It is a completely different story.

Therefore, the objection, while understandable at first glance, really must be dismissed as an irrelevant and false comparison. Here are your three options concerning the Apostles:

1. They died for a lie and knew it (unsustainable do to lack of any reasonable motive).
2. They were all delusional and crazy (but this would take more faith than *any* option since you would have to explain how they all had the same delusion and craziness—many being at different places and different times).
3. What they said was true. Christ did rise from the grave and is who He said He was.

To conclude, I want you to listen to the words of Ignatius, a second century church Father who’s beliefs were sustained by the reasoning of my current argument concerning the Apostles’ deaths.

“Mindful of him, do ye by all means know that Jesus the Lord was truly born of Mary, being made of a woman; and was as truly crucified. For, says he, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus.”<sup>11</sup> And He really suffered, and died, and rose again. For says [Paul], “If Christ should become passible, and should be the first to rise again from the dead.<sup>12</sup> And again, In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, what advantage would there be in [becoming subject to] bonds, if Christ has not died? what advantage in patience? what advantage in [enduring] stripes? And why such facts as the following: Peter was crucified; Paul and James were slain with the sword; John was banished to Patmos; Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews who killed the Lord? But, [in truth,] none of these sufferings were in vain; for the Lord was really crucified by the ungodly.”

(Ignatius: *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Tarsians*, III)

Happy Easter—celebrate the resurrection and proclaim the kingdom!

The evidence is there. Do you believe? . . .

## Discussion Questions:

1. It was said in the article that we can thank God for the death of the Apostles. Why would we be compelled to do such a thing?
2. If the Apostles had recanted their faith in order to save their lives, how would things possibly be different?
3. It was said that one cannot compare the deaths of the 9-11 hijackers and their religious convictions to that of the Apostles. Summarize the difference.
4. If one were to die for something that they said they saw, this adds credibility to their testimony, no matter how extraordinary. Give a modern-day example of some extraordinary claim that would parallel the death of the Apostles. It does not have to be real; be creative.
5. All of the Apostles were God honoring men. While they were sinners in need of God mercy, they followed Christ as much as anyone. Why do you think God allowed such suffering in their lives?
6. Do you think that the Apostles had any idea that Christians would be referring back to the gruesome circumstances of their deaths 2000 years later? Explain.
7. Read Roman 8:28. Considering the suffering of the Apostles, what does this tell you

## APPENDIX 2

# ANCIENT CREEDS OF CHRISTIANITY

## THE APOSTLES CREED

### Background:

Legend has it that the Apostles wrote this creed on the tenth day after Christ's ascension into heaven. Whether that is true or not, each of the doctrines found in the creed can be traced to statements current in the apostolic period. The earliest written version of the creed is perhaps the *Interrogatory Creed of Hippolytus* (ca. A.D. 215). The current form is first found in the writings of *Caesarius of Arles* (d 542). The creed was apparently used as a summary of Christian doctrine for baptismal candidates. In Hippolytus' version it was given in question and answer format with the baptismal candidates answering in the affirmative that they believed each statement.

### The Creed:

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; On the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.”

---

## THE CREED OF NICAEA (325 AD)

### Background:

The First Ecumenical council of Nicaea was called by emperor Constantine. The council met to deal with the schism created by Arianism. The Arians wished to avoid the heresy of Sabellius who believed in a divine monad which, by expansion, projected itself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit--a form of Modalism. The Arians separated the Son from God entirely so that they believed he was a creature having a beginning. "There was when he was not." The Son was but God's first creation, yet out of nothing and hence has preeminence over the rest of creation.

The symbol answers the question, "Who is Jesus Christ." Its answer: God

The Creed:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, 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 [both in heaven and on earth]; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost.

[But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]

---

## THE NICENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED OF 381

Background:

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is the version of the Nicene Creed as approved by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) by 150 church fathers. Usually associated with the Council of Constantinople this symbol is an expansion of the earlier Creed of Nicaea with which it is often confused. This is the creed recited in churches. The council met to refute Apollinarianism.

Apollinarius taught that Jesus was a combination of the divine Logos spirit, a sensitive human soul and a human body. He taught that Jesus did not have a human spirit. His views were based on the platonic tripartite view of human nature. The council condemned this view in order to show that Christ, as truly human, could redeem the whole person.

The symbol emphasizes the Trinitarian faith. The symbol is very suitable for liturgical use and was used as an early baptismal creed. It goes beyond the Creed of Nicaea in its affirmation of the full deity of the Spirit though it uses biblical rather than philosophical terms to do so. The *filioque* clause found in the Western version of this creed is one of the major disagreements between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. This clause was not accepted even by the Western Church until the turn of the first millennium.

The Creed:

“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 the Father before all worlds (æons)*, 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; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and 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; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”*

---

## THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED OF 451

### Background:

The Council of Chalcedon was a church council held in 451 from 8 October to 1 November 451 at Chalcedon (a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor). The Council is considered by the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, and numerous Christian movements to be an authoritative and biblically accurate expression of orthodox Christian faith. To deny the creed is to deny the very God it proclaims and defends, the God of the Bible revealed to us through Christ. The council of Chalcedon met to resolve the Monophysite controversy in which Eutyches had refused to confess the existence of two natures in Christ both after the union as well as before. The definition summarizes the Church's teaching on the natures of Christ largely in terms of what is not believed.

### The Creed:

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως - in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter) the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person (prosopon) and one Subsistence (hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning

Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.”

---

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century)

### Background:

The Athanasian Creed (*Quicumque vult*) is a Christian statement of belief, focusing on Trinitarian doctrine and Christology. The Latin name of the creed, *Quicumque vult*, is taken from the opening words "Whosoever wishes." The Athanasian Creed is attributed to Athanasius (c.293-373) a famous church leader and theologian, however, it is unclear if he wrote it. Nonetheless, it has been used by Christian churches since the sixth century AD. This creed makes it very clear that Christians believed in the doctrine of the Trinity and it goes beyond the earlier creeds (Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds) to include anathemas, or condemnations of those who disagree with the Creed (specifically Appollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Monophysitism). The Creed is widely, if not universally, accepted by Christians today, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, and Protestant denominations. The Athanasian Creed is usually divided into two sections: lines 1-28 addressing the doctrine of the Trinity, and lines 29-44 addressing the doctrine of Christology.

### The Creed:

Whoever wants to be saved should above all cling to the church's faith. Whoever does not guard it whole and inviolable will doubtless perish eternally.

Now this is the church's faith: We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being.

For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Spirit is still another. But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty. What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit. Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit. The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite. Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit: And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal; as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated and unlimited.

Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit: And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty. Thus the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God: And yet there are not three gods, but one God. Thus the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.

As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so the church forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords. The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor created, but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor created, but is proceeding from the Father and the Son.

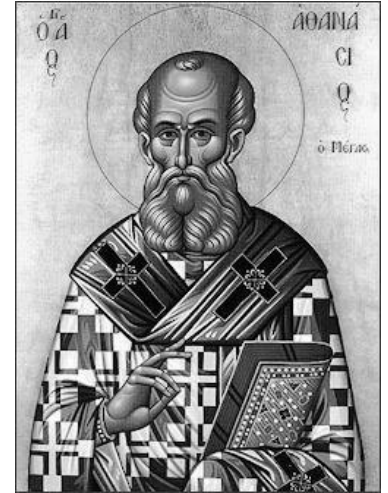
Thus there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three spirits. And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other; but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so we must worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.

Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh. For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man. He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother -- existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity. Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ.

He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity. He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures. For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man. He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

This is the church's faith. One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.

# Athanasius: On the Incarnation



## *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*

This translation was made by **Sister Penelope Lawson**, of the Anglican Community of St. Mary the Virgin in Wantage, England. It was originally published with a byline that reads only "Translated and edited by A Religious of C.S.M.V."

With Introduction by C. S. Lewis

---

Athanasius stood *contra mundum* ("against the world") in defense of the biblical doctrine of Christ. He opposed Arius when it seemed all the world would follow Arius's heresy. Athanasius's work remains even today one of the definitive statements of orthodox Trinitarianism.

---

### Contents

Introduction by C. S. Lewis

1. Creation and the Fall
2. The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation
3. The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation— *continued*
4. The Death of Christ
5. The Resurrection
6. Refutation of the Jews
7. Refutation of the Gentiles
8. Refutation of the Gentiles—*continued*
9. Conclusion

This workbook only contains the first 5 chapters of Athanasius' work.

## Introduction

by C. S. Lewis

There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. Thus I have found as a tutor in English Literature that if the average student wants to find out something about Platonism, the very last thing he thinks of doing is to take a translation of Plato off the library shelf and read the Symposium. He would rather read some dreary modern book ten times as long, all about "isms" and influences and only once in twelve pages telling him what Plato actually said. The error is rather an amiable one, for it springs from humility. The student is half afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator. The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavours as a teacher to persuade the young that firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than secondhand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.

This mistaken preference for the modern books and this shyness of the old ones is nowhere more rampant than in theology. Wherever you find a little study circle of Christian laity you can be almost certain that they are studying not St. Luke or St. Paul or St. Augustine or Thomas Aquinas or Hooker or Butler, but M. Berdyaev or M. Maritain or M. Niebuhr or Miss Sayers or even myself.

Now this seems to me topsy-turvy. Naturally, since I myself am a writer, I do not wish the ordinary reader to read no modern books. But if he must read only the new or only the old, I would advise him to read the old. And I would give him this advice precisely because he is an amateur and therefore much less protected than the expert against the dangers of an exclusive contemporary diet. A new book is still on its trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light. Often it cannot be fully understood without the knowledge of a good many other modern books. If you join at eleven o'clock a conversation which began at eight you will often not see the real bearing of what is said. Remarks which seem to you very ordinary will produce laughter or irritation and you will not see why—the reason, of course, being that the earlier stages of the conversation have given them a special point. In the same way sentences in a modern book which look quite ordinary may be directed *at* some other book; in this way you may be led to accept what you would have indignantly rejected if you knew its real significance. The only safety is to have a standard of plain, central Christianity ("mere Christianity" as Baxter called it) which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can be acquired only from the old books. It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones.

Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially

liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook—even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it. Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. They thought that they were as completely opposed as two sides could be, but in fact they were all the time secretly united—united with each other and against earlier and later ages—by a great mass of common assumptions. We may be sure that the characteristic blindness of the twentieth century—the blindness about which posterity will ask, "But how could they have thought that?"—lies where we have never suspected it, and concerns something about which there is untroubled agreement between Hitler and President Roosevelt or between Mr. H. G. Wells and Karl Barth. None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books. Where they are true they will give us truths which we half knew already. Where they are false they will aggravate the error with which we are already dangerously ill. The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them.

I myself was first led into reading the Christian classics, almost accidentally, as a result of my English studies. Some, such as Hooker, Herbert, Traherne, Taylor and Bunyan, I read because they are themselves great English writers; others, such as Boethius, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Dante, because they were "influences." George Macdonald I had found for myself at the age of sixteen and never wavered in my allegiance, though I tried for a long time to ignore his Christianity. They are, you will note, a mixed bag, representative of many Churches, climates and ages. And that brings me to yet another reason for reading them. The divisions of Christendom are undeniable and are by some of these writers most fiercely expressed. But if any man is tempted to think—as one might be tempted who read only contemporaries—that "Christianity" is a word of so many meanings that it means nothing at all, he can learn beyond all doubt, by stepping out of his own century, that this is not so. Measured against the ages "mere Christianity" turns out to be no insipid interdenominational transparency, but something positive, self-consistent, and inexhaustible. I know it, indeed, to my cost. In the days when I still hated Christianity, I learned to recognise, like some all too familiar smell, that almost unvarying something which met me, now in Puritan Bunyan, now in Anglican Hooker, now in Thomist Dante. It was there (honeyed and floral) in Francois de Sales; it was there (grave and homely) in Spenser and Walton; it was there (grim but manful) in Pascal and Johnson; there again, with a mild, frightening, Paradisial flavour, in Vaughan and Boehme and Traherne. In the urban sobriety of the eighteenth century one was not safe—Law and Butler were two lions in the path. The supposed "Paganism" of the Elizabethans could not keep it out; it lay in wait where a man might have supposed himself safest, in the very centre of *The Faerie Queene* and the *Arcadia*. It was, of course, varied; and yet—after all—so unmistakably the same; recognisable, not to be evaded, the odour which is death to us until we allow it to become life:

an air that kills  
From yon far country blows.

We are all rightly distressed, and ashamed also, at the divisions of Christendom. But those who have always lived within the Christian fold may be too easily dispirited by them. They are bad, but such people do not know what it looks like from without. Seen from there, what is left intact despite all the divisions, still appears (as it truly is) an immensely formidable unity. I know, for I saw it; and well our enemies know it. That unity any of us can find by going out of his own age. It is not enough, but it is more than you had thought till then. Once you are well soaked in it, if you then venture to speak, you will have an amusing experience. You will be thought a Papist when you are actually reproducing Bunyan, a Pantheist when you are quoting Aquinas, and so forth. For you have now got on to the great level viaduct which crosses the ages and which looks so high from the valleys, so low from the mountains, so narrow compared with the swamps, and so broad compared with the sheep-tracks.

The present book is something of an experiment. The translation is intended for the world at large, not only for theological students. If it succeeds, other translations of other great Christian books will presumably follow. In one sense, of course, it is not the first in the field. Translations of the *Theologia Germanica*, the *Imitation*, the *Scale of Perfection*, and the *Revelations of Lady Julian of Norwich*, are already on the market, and are very valuable, though some of them are not very scholarly. But it will be noticed that these are all books of devotion rather than of doctrine. Now the layman or amateur needs to be instructed as well as to be exhorted. In this age his need for knowledge is particularly pressing. Nor would I admit any sharp division between the two kinds of book. For my own part I tend to find the doctrinal books often more helpful in devotion than the devotional books, and I rather suspect that the same experience may await many others. I believe that many who find that "nothing happens" when they sit down, or kneel down, to a book of devotion, would find that the heart sings unbidden while they are working their way through a tough bit of theology with a pipe in their teeth and a pencil in their hand.

This is a good translation of a very great book. St. Athanasius has suffered in popular estimation from a certain sentence in the "Athanasian Creed." I will not labour the point that that work is not exactly a creed and was not by St. Athanasius, for I think it is a very fine piece of writing. The words "Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" are the offence. They are commonly misunderstood. The operative word is keep; not acquire, or even believe, but keep. The author, in fact, is not talking about unbelievers, but about deserters, not about those who have never heard of Christ, nor even those who have misunderstood and refused to accept Him, but of those who having really understood and really believed, then allow themselves, under the sway of sloth or of fashion or any other invited confusion to be drawn away into sub-Christian modes of thought. They are a warning against the curious modern assumption that all changes of belief, however brought about, are necessarily exempt from blame. But this is not my immediate concern. I mention "the creed (commonly called) of St. Athanasius" only to get out of the reader's way what may have been a bogey and to put the true Athanasius in its place. His epitaph is *Athanasius contra mundum*, "Athanasius against the world." We are proud that our own country has more than once stood against the world. Athanasius did the same. He stood for the Trinitarian doctrine, "whole and undefiled," when it looked as if all the civilised world was slipping back from Christianity into

the religion of Arius—into one of those "sensible" synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended today and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen. It is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.

When I first opened his *De Incarnatione* I soon discovered by a very simple test that I was reading a masterpiece. I knew very little Christian Greek except that of the New Testament and I had expected difficulties. To my astonishment I found it almost as easy as Xenophon; and only a master mind could, in the fourth century, have written so deeply on such a subject with such classical simplicity. Every page I read confirmed this impression. His approach to the Miracles is badly needed today, for it is the final answer to those who object to them as "arbitrary and meaningless violations of the laws of Nature." They are here shown to be rather the re-telling in capital letters of the same message which Nature writes in her crabbed cursive hand; the very operations one would expect of Him who was so full of life that when He wished to die He had to "borrow death from others." The whole book, indeed, is a picture of the Tree of Life—a sappy and golden book, full of buoyancy and confidence. We cannot, I admit, appropriate all its confidence today. We cannot point to the high virtue of Christian living and the gay, almost mocking courage of Christian martyrdom, as a proof of our doctrines with quite that assurance which Athanasius takes as a matter of course. But whoever may be to blame for that it is not Athanasius.

The translator knows so much more Christian Greek than I that it would be out of place for me to praise her version. But it seems to me to be in the right tradition of English translation. I do not think the reader will find here any of that sawdusty quality which is so common in modern renderings from the ancient languages. That is as much as the English reader will notice; those who compare the version with the original will be able to estimate how much wit and talent is presupposed in such a choice, for example, as "these wiseacres" on the very first page.

C. S. LEWIS.

---

---

## 1 Creation and the Fall

In our former book[1] we dealt fully enough with a few of the chief points about the heathen worship of idols, and how those false fears originally arose. We also, by God's grace, briefly indicated that the Word of the Father is Himself divine, that all things that are owe their being to His will and power, and that it is through Him that the Father gives order to creation, by Him that all things are moved, and through Him that they receive their being. Now, Macarius, true lover of Christ, we must take a step further in the faith of our holy religion, and consider also the Word's becoming Man and His divine Appearing in our midst. That mystery the Jews traduce, the Greeks deride, but we adore; and your own love and devotion to the Word also will be the greater, because in His Manhood He seems so little worth. For it is a fact that the more unbelievers pour scorn on Him, so much the more does He make His Godhead evident. The

things which they, as men, rule out as impossible, He plainly shows to be possible; that which they deride as unfitting, His goodness makes most fit; and things which these wiseacres laugh at as "human" He by His inherent might declares divine. Thus by what seems His utter poverty and weakness on the cross He overturns the pomp and parade of idols, and quietly and hiddenly wins over the mockers and unbelievers to recognize Him as God.

Now in dealing with these matters it is necessary first to recall what has already been said. You must understand why it is that the Word of the Father, so great and so high, has been made manifest in bodily form. He has not assumed a body as proper to His own nature, far from it, for as the Word He is without body. He has been manifested in a human body for this reason only, out of the love and goodness of His Father, for the salvation of us men. We will begin, then, with the creation of the world and with God its Maker, for the first fact that you must grasp is this: *the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning*. There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made it in the beginning.

(2) In regard to the making of the universe and the creation of all things there have been various opinions, and each person has propounded the theory that suited his own taste. For instance, some say that all things are self- originated and, so to speak, haphazard. The Epicureans are among these; they deny that there is any Mind behind the universe at all. This view is contrary to all the facts of experience, their own existence included. For if all things had come into being in this automatic fashion, instead of being the outcome of Mind, though they existed, they would all be uniform and without distinction. In the universe everything would be sun or moon or whatever it was, and in the human body the whole would be hand or eye or foot. But in point of fact the sun and the moon and the earth are all different things, and even within the human body there are different members, such as foot and hand and head. This distinctness of things argues not a spontaneous generation but a prevenient Cause; and from that Cause we can apprehend God, the Designer and Maker of all.

Others take the view expressed by Plato, that giant among the Greeks. He said that God had made all things out of pre-existent and uncreated matter, just as the carpenter makes things only out of wood that already exists. But those who hold this view do not realize that to deny that God is Himself the Cause of matter is to impute limitation to Him, just as it is undoubtedly a limitation on the part of the carpenter that he can make nothing unless he has the wood. How could God be called Maker and Artificer if His ability to make depended on some other cause, namely on matter itself? If He only worked up existing matter and did not Himself bring matter into being, He would be not the Creator but only a craftsman.

Then, again, there is the theory of the Gnostics, who have invented for themselves an Artificer of all things other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. These simply shut their eyes to the obvious meaning of Scripture. For instance, the Lord, having reminded the Jews of the statement in Genesis, "He Who created them in the beginning made them male and female. . . ," and having shown that for that reason a man should leave his parents and cleave to his wife, goes on to say with reference to the Creator, "What therefore *God* has joined together, let no man put asunder."<sup>[2]</sup> How can they get a creation independent of the Father out of that? And, again, St. John, speaking all inclusively, says, "All things became by Him and without Him came nothing

into being.[3] How then could the Artificer be someone different, other than the Father of Christ?

(3) Such are the notions which men put forward. But the impiety of their foolish talk is plainly declared by the divine teaching of the Christian faith. From it we know that, because there is Mind behind the universe, it did not originate itself; because God is infinite, not finite, it was not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing and out of non-existence absolute and utter God brought it into being through the Word. He says as much in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;[4] and again through that most helpful book *The Shepherd*, "Believe thou first and foremost that there is One God Who created and arranged all things and brought them out of non-existence into being." [5] Paul also indicates the same thing when he says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which we see now did not come into being out of things which had previously appeared." [6] For God is good—or rather, of all goodness He is Fountainhead, and it is impossible for one who is good to be mean or grudging about anything. Grudging existence to none therefore, He made all things out of nothing through His own Word, our Lord Jesus Christ and of all these His earthly creatures He reserved especial mercy for the race of men. Upon them, therefore, upon men who, as animals, were essentially impermanent, He bestowed a grace which other creatures lacked—namely the impress of His own Image, a share in the reasonable being of the very Word Himself, so that, reflecting Him and themselves becoming reasonable and expressing the Mind of God even as He does, though in limited degree they might continue for ever in the blessed and only true life of the saints in paradise. But since the will of man could turn either way, God secured this grace that He had given by making it conditional from the first upon two things—namely, a law and a place. He set them in His own paradise, and laid upon them a single prohibition. If they guarded the grace and retained the loveliness of their original innocence, then the life of paradise should be theirs, without sorrow, pain or care, and after it the assurance of immortality in heaven. But if they went astray and became vile, throwing away their birthright of beauty, then they would come under the natural law of death and live no longer in paradise, but, dying outside of it, continue in death and in corruption. This is what Holy Scripture tells us, proclaiming the command of God, "Of every tree that is in the garden thou shalt surely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ye shall not eat, but in the day that ye do eat, ye shall surely die." [7] "*Ye shall surely die*"—not just die only, but remain in the state of death and of corruption.

(4) You may be wondering why we are discussing the origin of men when we set out to talk about the Word's becoming Man. The former subject is relevant to the latter for this reason: it was our sorry case that caused the Word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us, so that He made haste to help us and to appear among us. It is we who were the cause of His taking human form, and for our salvation that in His great love He was both born and manifested in a human body. For God had made man thus (that is, as an embodied spirit), and had willed that he should remain in incorruption. But men, having turned from the contemplation of God to evil of their own devising, had come inevitably under the law of death. Instead of remaining in the state in which God had created them, they were in process of becoming corrupted entirely, and death had them completely under its dominion. For the transgression of the commandment was making them turn back again according to their nature; and as they had at the beginning come into being out of non-existence, so were they now on the way to returning, through corruption, to non-existence again. The presence and love of the Word had called them into being; inevitably, therefore when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it;

for it is God alone Who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good. By nature, of course, man is mortal, since he was made from nothing; but he bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then his nature is deprived of its power and he remains incorrupt. So is it affirmed in Wisdom: "The keeping of His laws is the assurance of incorruption."<sup>[8]</sup> And being incorrupt, he would be henceforth as God, as Holy Scripture says, "I have said, Ye are gods and sons of the Highest all of you: but ye die as men and fall as one of the princes."<sup>[9]</sup>

(5) This, then, was the plight of men. God had not only made them out of nothing, but had also graciously bestowed on them His own life by the grace of the Word. Then, turning from eternal things to things corruptible, by counsel of the devil, they had become the cause of their own corruption in death; for, as I said before, though they were by nature subject to corruption, the grace of their union with the Word made them capable of escaping from the natural law, provided that they retained the beauty of innocence with which they were created. That is to say, the presence of the Word with them shielded them even from natural corruption, as also Wisdom says: God created man for incorruption and as an image of His own eternity; but by envy of the devil death entered into the world."<sup>[10]</sup> When this happened, men began to die, and corruption ran riot among them and held sway over them to an even more than natural degree, because it was the penalty of which God had forewarned them for transgressing the commandment. Indeed, they had in their sinning surpassed all limits; for, having invented wickedness in the beginning and so involved themselves in death and corruption, they had gone on gradually from bad to worse, not stopping at any one kind of evil, but continually, as with insatiable appetite, devising new kinds of sins. Adulteries and thefts were everywhere, murder and rapine filled the earth, law was disregarded in corruption and injustice, all kinds of iniquities were perpetrated by all, both singly and in common. Cities were warring with cities, nations were rising against nations, and the whole earth was rent with factions and battles, while each strove to outdo the other in wickedness. Even crimes contrary to nature were not unknown, but as the martyr-apostle of Christ says: "Their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature; and the men also, leaving the natural use of the woman, flamed out in lust towards each other, perpetrating shameless acts with their own sex, and receiving in their own persons the due recompense of their pervertedness."<sup>[11]</sup>

---

## Chapter 1 Notes

1. i.e. the *Contra Gentes*.
2. Matt. xix. 4-6.
3. John i. 3.
4. Gen. i. 1.
5. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Book 2. par 1.
6. Heb. xi. 3.
7. Gen. ii. 16 f.
8. Wisdom vi. 18.
9. Psalm lxxxii. 6 f.
10. Wisdom ii. 23 f.
11. Rom. i. 26 f.

## 2

### The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation

We saw in the last chapter that, because death and corruption were gaining ever firmer hold on them, the human race was in process of destruction. Man, who was created in God's

image and in his possession of reason reflected the very Word Himself, was disappearing, and the work of God was being undone. The law of death, which followed from the Transgression, prevailed upon us, and from it there was no escape. The thing that was happening was in truth both monstrous and unfitting. It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon His word and that man, having transgressed, should not die; but it was equally monstrous that beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption. It was unworthy of the goodness of God that creatures made by Him should be brought to nothing through the deceit wrought upon man by the devil; and it was supremely unfitting that the work of God in mankind should disappear, either through their own negligence or through the deceit of evil spirits. As, then, the creatures whom He had created reasonable, like the Word, were in fact perishing, and such noble works were on the road to ruin, what then was God, being Good, to do? Was He to let corruption and death have their way with them? In that case, what was the use of having made them in the beginning? Surely it would have been better never to have been created at all than, having been created, to be neglected and perish; and, besides that, such indifference to the ruin of His own work before His very eyes would argue not goodness in God but limitation, and that far more than if He had never created men at all. It was impossible, therefore, that God should leave man to be carried off by corruption, because it would be unfitting and unworthy of Himself.

(7) Yet, true though this is, it is not the whole matter. As we have already noted, it was unthinkable that God, the Father of Truth, should go back upon His word regarding death in order to ensure our continued existence. He could not falsify Himself; what, then, was God to do? Was He to demand repentance from men for their transgression? You might say that that was worthy of God, and argue further that, as through the Transgression they became subject to corruption, so through repentance they might return to incorruption again. But repentance would not guard the Divine consistency, for, if death did not hold dominion over men, God would still remain untrue. Nor does repentance recall men from what is according to their nature; all that it does is to make them cease from sinning. Had it been a case of a trespass only, and not of a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well enough; but when once transgression had begun men came under the power of the corruption proper to their nature and were bereft of the grace which belonged to them as creatures in the Image of God. No, repentance could not meet the case. What—or rather *Who* was it that was needed for such grace and such recall as we required? Who, save the Word of God Himself, Who also in the beginning had made all things out of nothing? His part it was, and His alone, both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption and to maintain for the Father His consistency of character with all. For He alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to recreate all, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be an ambassador for all with the Father.

(8) For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us. He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed the Father's Mind, wasting out of existence, and death reigning over all in corruption. He saw that corruption held us all the closer, because it was the penalty for the Transgression; He saw, too, how unthinkable it would be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very things of which He Himself was the Artificer should be

disappearing. He saw how the surpassing wickedness of men was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death. All this He saw and, pitying our race, moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure that death should have the mastery, rather than that His creatures should perish and the work of His Father for us men come to nought, He took to Himself a body, a human body even as our own. Nor did He will merely to become embodied or merely to appear; had that been so, He could have revealed His divine majesty in some other and better way. No, He took *our* body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without the agency of human father—a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own, as the instrument through which He was known and in which He dwelt. Thus, taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death instead of all, and offered it to the Father. This He did out of sheer love for us, so that in His death all might die, and the law of death thereby be abolished because, having fulfilled in His body that for which it was appointed, it was thereafter voided of its power for men. This He did that He might turn again to incorruption men who had turned back to corruption, and make them alive through death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of His resurrection. Thus He would make death to disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire.

(9) The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father's Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining incorruptible through His indwelling, might thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as well, by the grace of the resurrection. It was by surrendering to death the body which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, that He forthwith abolished death for His human brethren by the offering of the equivalent. For naturally, since the Word of God was above all, when He offered His own temple and bodily instrument as a substitute for the life of all, He fulfilled in death all that was required. Naturally also, through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of the Word's indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all. You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; He has come into our country and dwelt in one body amidst the many, and in consequence the designs of the enemy against mankind have been foiled and the corruption of death, which formerly held them in its power, has simply ceased to be. For the human race would have perished utterly had not the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death.

(10) This great work was, indeed, supremely worthy of the goodness of God. A king who has founded a city, so far from neglecting it when through the carelessness of the inhabitants it is attacked by robbers, avenges it and saves it from destruction, having regard rather to his own honor than to the people's neglect. Much more, then, the Word of the All-good Father was not unmindful of the human race that He had called to be; but rather, by the offering of His own body He abolished the death which they had incurred, and corrected their neglect by His own teaching. Thus by His own power He restored the whole nature of man. The Savior's own

inspired disciples assure us of this. We read in one place: " For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that, if One died on behalf of all, then all died, and He died for all that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died and rose again from the dead, even our Lord Jesus Christ." [1] And again another says: "But we behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He should taste of death on behalf of every man." The same writer goes on to point out why it was necessary for God the Word and none other to become Man: "For it became Him, for Whom are all things and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. [2] He means that the rescue of mankind from corruption was the proper part only of Him Who made them in the beginning. He points out also that the Word assumed a human body, expressly in order that He might offer it in sacrifice for other like bodies: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself assumed the same, in order that through death He might bring to nought Him that hath the power of death, that is to say, the Devil, and might rescue those who all their lives were enslaved by the fear of death." [3] For by the sacrifice of His own body He did two things: He put an end to the law of death which barred our way; and He made a new beginning of life for us, by giving us the hope of resurrection. By man death has gained its power over men; by the Word made Man death has been destroyed and life raised up anew. That is what Paul says, that true servant of Christ: For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. Just as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," [4] and so forth. Now, therefore, when we die we no longer do so as men condemned to death, but as those who are even now in process of rising we await the general resurrection of all, "which in its own times He shall show," [5] even God Who wrought it and bestowed it on us.

This, then, is the first cause of the Savior's becoming Man. There are, however, other things which show how wholly fitting is His blessed presence in our midst; and these we must now go on to consider.

---

## Chapter 2 Notes

1. 2 Cor. v. 14 f.
2. Heb. ii. 9 ff.
3. Heb. ii. 14 f.

4. 1 Cor. xv. 21 f.
5. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

---

### 3

#### The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation—*continued*

When God the Almighty was making mankind through His own Word, He perceived that they, owing to the limitation of their nature, could not of themselves have any knowledge of their Artificer, the Incorporeal and Uncreated. He took pity on them, therefore, and did not leave them destitute of the knowledge of Himself, lest their very existence should prove purposeless. For of what use is existence to the creature if it cannot know its Maker? How could men be reasonable beings if they had no knowledge of the Word and Reason of the Father, through Whom they had

received their being? They would be no better than the beasts, had they no knowledge save of earthly things; and why should God have made them at all, if He had not intended them to know Him? But, in fact, the good God has given them a share in His own Image, that is, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and has made even themselves after the same Image and Likeness. Why? Simply in order that through this gift of Godlikeness in themselves they may be able to perceive the Image Absolute, that is the Word Himself, and through Him to apprehend the Father; which knowledge of their Maker is for men the only really happy and blessed life.

But, as we have already seen, men, foolish as they are, thought little of the grace they had received, and turned away from God. They defiled their own soul so completely that they not only lost their apprehension of God, but invented for themselves other gods of various kinds. They fashioned idols for themselves in place of the truth and revered things that are not, rather than God Who is, as St. Paul says, "worshipping the creature rather than the Creator."<sup>[1]</sup> Moreover, and much worse, they transferred the honor which is due to God to material objects such as wood and stone, and also to man; and further even than that they went, as we said in our former book. Indeed, so impious were they that they worshipped evil spirits as gods in satisfaction of their lusts. They sacrificed brute beasts and immolated men, as the just due of these deities, thereby bringing themselves more and more under their insane control. Magic arts also were taught among them, oracles in sundry places led men astray, and the cause of everything in human life was traced to the stars as though nothing existed but that which could be seen. In a word, impiety and lawlessness were everywhere, and neither God nor His Word was known. Yet He had not hidden Himself from the sight of men nor given the knowledge of Himself in one way only; but rather He had unfolded it in many forms and by many ways.

(12) God knew the limitation of mankind, you see; and though the grace of being made in His Image was sufficient to give them knowledge of the Word and through Him of the Father, as a safeguard against their neglect of this grace, He provided the works of creation also as means by which the Maker might be known. Nor was this all. Man's neglect of the indwelling grace tends ever to increase; and against this further frailty also God made provision by giving them a law, and by sending prophets, men whom they knew. Thus, if they were tardy in looking up to heaven, they might still gain knowledge of their Maker from those close at hand; for men can learn directly about higher things from other men. Three ways thus lay open to them, by which they might obtain the knowledge of God. They could look up into the immensity of heaven, and by pondering the harmony of creation come to know its Ruler, the Word of the Father, Whose all-ruling providence makes known the Father to all. Or, if this was beyond them, they could converse with holy men, and through them learn to know God, the Artificer of all things, the Father of Christ, and to recognize the worship of idols as the negation of the truth and full of all impiety. Or else, in the third place, they could cease from lukewarmness and lead a good life merely by knowing the law. For the law was not given only for the Jews, nor was it solely for their sake that God sent the prophets, though it was to the Jews that they were sent and by the Jews that they were persecuted. The law and the prophets were a sacred school of the knowledge of God and the conduct of the spiritual life for the whole world.

So great, indeed, were the goodness and the love of God. Yet men, bowed down by the pleasures of the moment and by the frauds and illusions of the evil spirits, did not lift up their heads towards the truth. So burdened were they with their wickednesses that they seemed rather to be brute beasts than reasonable men, reflecting the very Likeness of the Word.

(13) What was God to do in face of this dehumanising of mankind, this universal hiding of the knowledge of Himself by the wiles of evil spirits? Was He to keep silence before so great a wrong and let men go on being thus deceived and kept in ignorance of Himself? If so, what was the use of having made them in His own Image originally? It would surely have been better for them always to have been brutes, rather than to revert to that condition when once they had shared the nature of the Word. Again, things being as they were, what was the use of their ever having had the knowledge of God? Surely it would have been better for God never to have bestowed it, than that men should subsequently be found unworthy to receive it. Similarly, what possible profit could it be to God Himself, Who made men, if when made they did not worship Him, but regarded others as their makers? This would be tantamount to His having made them for others and not for Himself. Even an earthly king, though he is only a man, does not allow lands that he has colonized to pass into other hands or to desert to other rulers, but sends letters and friends and even visits them himself to recall them to their allegiance, rather than allow His work to be undone. How much more, then, will God be patient and painstaking with His creatures, that they be not led astray from Him to the service of those that are not, and that all the more because such error means for them sheer ruin, and because it is not right that those who had once shared His Image should be destroyed.

What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it men might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? Men could not have done it, for they are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father Who could recreate man made after the Image.

In order to effect this re-creation, however, He had first to do away with death and corruption. Therefore He assumed a human body, in order that in it death might once for all be destroyed, and that men might be renewed according to the Image. The Image of the Father only was sufficient for this need. Here is an illustration to prove it.

(14) You know what happens when a portrait that has been painted on a panel becomes obliterated through external stains. The artist does not throw away the panel, but the subject of the portrait has to come and sit for it again, and then the likeness is re-drawn on the same material. Even so was it with the All-holy Son of God. He, the Image of the Father, came and dwelt in our midst, in order that He might renew mankind made after Himself, and seek out His lost sheep, even as He says in the Gospel: "I came to seek and to save that which was lost.[2] This also explains His saying to the Jews: "Except a man be born anew . . ."[3] a He was not referring to a man's natural birth from his mother, as they thought, but to the re-birth and re-creation of the soul in the Image of God.

Nor was this the only thing which only the Word could do. When the madness of idolatry and irreligion filled the world and the knowledge of God was hidden, whose part was it to teach the world about the Father? Man's, would you say? But men cannot run everywhere over the world, nor would their words carry sufficient weight if they did, nor would they be, unaided, a match for the evil spirits. Moreover, since even the best of men were confused and blinded by evil, how could they convert the souls and minds of others? You cannot put straight in others

what is warped in yourself. Perhaps you will say, then, that creation was enough to teach men about the Father. But if that had been so, such great evils would never have occurred. Creation was there all the time, but it did not prevent men from wallowing in error. Once more, then, it was the Word of God, Who sees all that is in man and moves all things in creation, Who alone could meet the needs of the situation. It was His part and His alone, Whose ordering of the universe reveals the Father, to renew the same teaching. But how was He to do it? By the same means as before, perhaps you will say, that is, through the works of creation. But this was proven insufficient. Men had neglected to consider the heavens before, and now they were looking in the opposite direction. Wherefore, in all naturalness and fitness, desiring to do good to men, as Man He dwells, taking to Himself a body like the rest; and through His actions done in that body, as it were on their own level, He teaches those who would not learn by other means to know Himself, the Word of God, and through Him the Father.

(15) He deals with them as a good teacher with his pupils, coming down to their level and using simple means. St. Paul says as much: "Because in the wisdom of God the world in its wisdom knew not God, God thought fit through the simplicity of the News proclaimed to save those who believe." [4] Men had turned from the contemplation of God above, and were looking for Him in the opposite direction, down among created things and things of sense. The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in His great love took to Himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became Himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He, the Word of God, did in the body. Human and human minded as men were, therefore, to whichever side they looked in the sensible world they found themselves taught the truth. Were they awe-stricken by creation? They beheld it confessing Christ as Lord. Did their minds tend to regard men as Gods? The uniqueness of the Savior's works marked Him, alone of men, as Son of God. Were they drawn to evil spirits? They saw them driven out by the Lord and learned that the Word of God alone was God and that the evil spirits were not gods at all. Were they inclined to hero-worship and the cult of the dead? Then the fact that the Savior had risen from the dead showed them how false these other deities were, and that the Word of the Father is the one true Lord, the Lord even of death. For this reason was He both born and manifested as Man, for this He died and rose, in order that, eclipsing by His works all other human deeds, He might recall men from all the paths of error to know the Father. As He says Himself, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost." [5]

(16) When, then, the minds of men had fallen finally to the level of sensible things, the Word submitted to appear in a body, in order that He, as Man, might center their senses on Himself, and convince them through His human acts that He Himself is not man only but also God, the Word and Wisdom of the true God. This is what Paul wants to tell us when he says: "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the length and breadth and height and depth, and to know the love of God that surpasses knowledge, so that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God." [6] The Self-revealing of the Word is in every dimension—above, in creation; below, in the Incarnation; in the depth, in Hades; in the breadth, throughout the world. All things have been filled with the knowledge of God.

For this reason He did not offer the sacrifice on behalf of all immediately He came, for if He had surrendered His body to death and then raised it again at once He would have ceased to be

an object of our senses. Instead of that, He stayed in His body and let Himself be seen in it, doing acts and giving signs which showed Him to be not only man, but also God the Word. There were thus two things which the Savior did for us by becoming Man. He banished death from us and made us anew; and, invisible and imperceptible as in Himself He is, He became visible through His works and revealed Himself as the Word of the Father, the Ruler and King of the whole creation.

(17) There is a paradox in this last statement which we must now examine. The Word was not hedged in by His body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe by His Mind and might. No. The marvelous truth is, that being the Word, so far from being Himself contained by anything, He actually contained all things Himself. In creation He is present everywhere, yet is distinct in being from it; ordering, directing, giving life to all, containing all, yet is He Himself the Uncontained, existing solely in His Father. As with the whole, so also is it with the part. Existing in a human body, to which He Himself gives life, He is still Source of life to all the universe, present in every part of it, yet outside the whole; and He is revealed both through the works of His body and through His activity in the world. It is, indeed, the function of soul to *behold* things that are outside the body, but it cannot energize or move them. A man cannot transport things from one place to another, for instance, merely by thinking about them; nor can you or I move the sun and the stars just by sitting at home and looking at them. With the Word of God in His human nature, however, it was otherwise. His body was for Him not a limitation, but an instrument, so that He was both in it and in all things, and outside all things, resting in the Father alone. At one and the same time—this is the wonder— as Man He was living a human life, and as Word He was sustaining the life of the universe, and as Son He was in constant union with the Father. Not even His birth from a virgin, therefore, changed Him in any way, nor was He defiled by being in the body. Rather, He sanctified the body by being in it. For His being in everything does not mean that He shares the nature of everything, only that He gives all things their being and sustains them in it. Just as the sun is not defiled by the contact of its rays with earthly objects, but rather enlightens and purifies them, so He Who made the sun is not defiled by being made known in a body, but rather the body is cleansed and quickened by His indwelling, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." [7]

(18) You must understand, therefore, that when writers on this sacred theme speak of Him as eating and drinking and being born, they mean that the body, as a body, was born and sustained with the food proper to its nature; while God the Word, Who was united with it, was at the same time ordering the universe and revealing Himself through His bodily acts as not man only but God. Those acts are rightly said to be His acts, because the body which did them did indeed belong to Him and none other; moreover, it was right that they should be thus attributed to Him as Man, in order to show that His body was a real one and not merely an appearance. From such ordinary acts as being born and taking food, He was recognized as being actually present in the body; but by the extraordinary acts which He did through the body He proved Himself to be the Son of God. That is the meaning of His words to the unbelieving Jews: "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, even if ye believe not Me, believe My works, that ye may know that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."

Invisible in Himself, He is known from the works of creation; so also, when His Godhead is veiled in human nature, His bodily acts still declare Him to be not man only, but the Power and

Word of God. To speak authoritatively to evil spirits, for instance, and to drive them out, is not human but divine; and who could see-Him curing all the diseases to which mankind is prone, and still deem Him mere man and not also God? He cleansed lepers, He made the lame to walk, He opened the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind, there was no sickness or weakness that-He did not drive away. Even the most casual observer can see that these were acts of God. The healing of the man born blind, for instance, who but the Father and Artificer of man, the Controller of his whole being, could thus have restored the faculty denied at birth? He Who did thus must surely be Himself the Lord of birth. This is proved also at the outset of His becoming Man. He formed His own body from the virgin; and that is no small proof of His Godhead, since He Who made that was the Maker of all else. And would not anyone infer from the fact of that body being begotten of a virgin only, without human father, that He Who appeared in it was also the Maker and Lord of all beside?

Again, consider the miracle at Cana. Would not anyone who saw the substance of water transmuted into wine understand that He Who did it was the Lord and Maker of the water that He changed? It was for the same reason that He walked on the sea as on dry land—to prove to the onlookers that He had mastery over all. And the feeding of the multitude, when He made little into much, so that from five loaves five thousand mouths were filled—did not that prove Him none other than the very Lord Whose Mind is over all?

---

### Chapter 3 Notes

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Rom. i. 25.   | 5. Luke xix. 10.    |
| 2. Luke xix. 10. | 6. Eph. iii. 17 ff. |
| 3. John iii. 3.  | 7. 1 Peter ii. 22   |
| 4. 1 Cor. i. 21. |                     |

---

## 4

### The Death of Christ

All these things the Savior thought fit to do, so that, recognizing His bodily acts as works of God, men who were blind to His presence in creation might regain knowledge of the Father. For, as I said before, who that saw His authority over evil spirits and their response to it could doubt that He was, indeed, the Son, the Wisdom and the Power of God? Even the very creation broke silence at His behest and, marvelous to relate, confessed with one voice before the cross, that monument of victory, that He Who suffered thereon in the body was not man only, but Son of God and Savior of all. The sun veiled his face, the earth quaked, the mountains were rent asunder, all men were stricken with awe. These things showed that Christ on the cross was God, and that all creation was His slave and was bearing witness by its fear to the presence of its Master.

Thus, then, God the Word revealed Himself to men through His works. We must next

consider the end of His earthly life and the nature of His bodily death. This is, indeed, the very center of our faith, and everywhere you hear men speak of it; by it, too, no less than by His other acts, Christ is revealed as God and Son of God.

(20) We have dealt as far as circumstances and our own understanding permit with the reason for His bodily manifestation. We have seen that to change the corruptible to incorruption was proper to none other than the Savior Himself, Who in the beginning made all things out of nothing; that only the Image of the Father could re-create the likeness of the Image in men, that none save our Lord Jesus Christ could give to mortals immortality, and that only the Word Who orders all things and is alone the Father's true and sole-begotten Son could teach men about Him and abolish the worship of idols. But beyond all this, there was a debt owing which must needs be paid; for, as I said before, all men were due to die. Here, then, is the second reason why the Word dwelt among us, namely that having proved His Godhead by His works, He might offer the sacrifice on behalf of all, surrendering His own temple to death in place of all, to settle man's account with death and free him from the primal transgression. In the same act also He showed Himself mightier than death, displaying His own body incorruptible as the first-fruits of the resurrection.

You must not be surprised if we repeat ourselves in dealing with this subject. We are speaking of the good pleasure of God and of the things which He in His loving wisdom thought fit to do, and it is better to put the same thing in several ways than to run the risk of leaving something out. The body of the Word, then, being a real human body, in spite of its having been uniquely formed from a virgin, was of itself mortal and, like other bodies, liable to death. But the indwelling of the Word loosed it from this natural liability, so that corruption could not touch it. Thus it happened that two opposite marvels took place at once: the death of all was consummated in the Lord's body; yet, because the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished. Death there had to be, and death for all, so that the due of all might be paid. Wherefore, the Word, as I said, being Himself incapable of death, assumed a mortal body, that He might offer it as His own in place of all, and suffering for the sake of all through His union with it, "might bring to nought Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver them who all their lifetime were enslaved by the fear of death."<sup>[1]</sup>

(21) Have no fears then. Now that the common Savior of all has died on our behalf, we who believe in Christ no longer die, as men died aforetime, in fulfillment of the threat of the law. That condemnation has come to an end; and now that, by the grace of the resurrection, corruption has been banished and done away, we are loosed from our mortal bodies in God's good time for each, so that we may obtain thereby a better resurrection. Like seeds cast into the earth, we do not perish in our dissolution, but like them shall rise again, death having been brought to nought by the grace of the Savior. That is why blessed Paul, through whom we all have surety of the resurrection, says: "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality; but when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?'"<sup>[2]</sup>

"Well then," some people may say, "if the essential thing was that He should surrender His body to death in place of all, why did He not do so as Man privately, without going to the length of public crucifixion? Surely it would have been more suitable for Him to have laid aside His

body with honor than to endure so shameful a death." But look at this argument closely, and see how merely human it is, whereas what the Savior did was truly divine and worthy of His Godhead for several reasons. The first is this. The death of men under ordinary circumstances is the result of their natural weakness. They are essentially impermanent, so after a time they fall ill and when worn out they die. But the Lord is not like that. He is not weak, He is the Power of God and Word of God and Very Life Itself. If He had died quietly in His bed like other men it would have looked as if He did so in accordance with His nature, and as though He was indeed no more than other men. But because He was Himself Word and Life and Power His body was made strong, and because the death had to be accomplished, He took the occasion of perfecting His sacrifice not from Himself, but from others. How could He fall sick, Who had healed others? Or how could that body weaken and fail by means of which others are made strong? Here, again, you may say, "Why did He not prevent death, as He did sickness?" Because it was precisely in order to be able to die that He had taken a body, and to prevent the death would have been to impede the resurrection. And as to the unsuitability of sickness for His body, as arguing weakness, you may say, "Did He then not hunger?" Yes, He hungered, because that was the property of His body, but He did not die of hunger because He Whose body hungered was the Lord. Similarly, though He died to ransom all, He did not see corruption. His body rose in perfect soundness, for it was the body of none other than the Life Himself.

(22) Someone else might say, perhaps, that it would have been better for the Lord to have avoided the designs of the Jews against Him, and so to have guarded His body from death altogether. But see how unfitting this also would have been for Him. Just as it would not have been fitting for Him to give His body to death by His own hand, being Word and being Life, so also it was not consonant with Himself that He should avoid the death inflicted by others. Rather, He pursued it to the uttermost, and in pursuance of His nature neither laid aside His body of His own accord nor escaped the plotting Jews. And this action showed no limitation or weakness in the Word; for He both waited for death in order to make an end of it, and hastened to accomplish it as an offering on behalf of all. Moreover, as it was the death of all mankind that the Savior came to accomplish, not His own, He did not lay aside His body by an individual act of dying, for to Him, as Life, this simply did not belong; but He accepted death at the hands of men, thereby completely to destroy it in His own body.

There are some further considerations which enable one to understand why the Lord's body had such an end. The supreme object of His coming was to bring about the resurrection of the body. This was to be the monument to His victory over death, the assurance to all that He had Himself conquered corruption and that their own bodies also would eventually be incorrupt; and it was in token of that and as a pledge of the future resurrection that He kept His body incorrupt. But there again, if His body had fallen sick and the Word had left it in that condition, how unfitting it would have been! Should He Who healed the bodies of others neglect to keep His own in health? How would His miracles of healing be believed, if this were so? Surely people would either laugh at Him as unable to dispel disease or else consider Him lacking in proper human feeling because He could do so, but did not.

(23) Then, again, suppose without any illness He had just concealed His body somewhere, and then suddenly reappeared and said that He had risen from the dead. He would have been regarded merely as a teller of tales, and because there was no witness of His death, nobody would believe His resurrection. Death had to precede resurrection, for there could be no

resurrection without it. A secret and unwitnessed death would have left the resurrection without any proof or evidence to support it. Again, why should He die a secret death, when He proclaimed the fact of His rising openly? Why should He drive out evil spirits and heal the man blind from birth and change water into wine, all publicly, in order to convince men that He was the Word, and not also declare publicly that incorruptibility of His mortal body, so that He might Himself be believed to be the Life? And how could His disciples have had boldness in speaking of the resurrection unless they could state it as a fact that He had first died? Or how could their hearers be expected to believe their assertion, unless they themselves also had witnessed His death? For if the Pharisees at the time refused to believe and forced others to deny also, though the things had happened before their very eyes, how many excuses for unbelief would they have contrived, if it had taken place secretly? Or how could the end of death and the victory over it have been declared, had not the Lord thus challenged it before the sight of all, and by the incorruption of His body proved that henceforward it was annulled and void?

(24) There are some other possible objections that must be answered. Some might urge that, even granting the necessity of a public death for subsequent belief in the resurrection, it would surely have been better for Him to have arranged an honorable death for Himself, and so to have avoided the ignominy of the cross. But even this would have given ground for suspicion that His power over death was limited to the particular kind of death which He chose for Himself; and that again would furnish excuse for disbelieving the resurrection. Death came to His body, therefore, not from Himself but from enemy action, in order that the Savior might utterly abolish death in whatever form they offered it to Him. A generous wrestler, virile and strong, does not himself choose his antagonists, lest it should be thought that of some of them he is afraid. Rather, he lets the spectators choose them, and that all the more if these are hostile, so that he may overthrow whomsoever they match against him and thus vindicate his superior strength. Even so was it with Christ. He, the Life of all, our Lord and Savior, did not arrange the manner of his own death lest He should seem to be afraid of some other kind. No. He accepted and bore upon the cross a death inflicted by others, and those others His special enemies, a death which to them was supremely terrible and by no means to be faced; and He did this in order that, by destroying even this death, He might Himself be believed to be the Life, and the power of death be recognized as finally annulled. A marvelous and mighty paradox has thus occurred, for the death which they thought to inflict on Him as dishonor and disgrace has become the glorious monument to death's defeat. Therefore it is also, that He neither endured the death of John, who was beheaded, nor was He sawn asunder, like Isaiah: even in death He preserved His body whole and undivided, so that there should be no excuse hereafter for those who would divide the Church.

(25) So much for the objections of those outside the Church. But if any honest Christian wants to know why He suffered death on the cross and not in some other way, we answer thus: in no other way was it expedient for us, indeed the Lord offered for our sakes the one death that was supremely good. He had come to bear the curse that lay on us; and how could He "become a curse"<sup>[3]</sup> otherwise than by accepting the accursed death? And that death is the cross, for it is written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on tree."<sup>[4]</sup> Again, the death of the Lord is the ransom of all, and by it "the middle wall of partition"<sup>[5]</sup> is broken down and the call of the Gentiles comes about. How could He have called us if He had not been crucified, for it is only on the cross that a man dies with arms outstretched? Here, again, we see the fitness of His death and of those outstretched arms: it was that He might draw His ancient people with the one and the

Gentiles with the other, and join both together in Himself. Even so, He foretold the manner of His redeeming death, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself."<sup>[6]</sup> Again, the air is the sphere of the devil, the enemy of our race who, having fallen from heaven, endeavors with the other evil spirits who shared in his disobedience both to keep souls from the truth and to hinder the progress of those who are trying to follow it. The apostle refers to this when he says, "According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience."<sup>[7]</sup> But the Lord came to overthrow the devil and to purify the air and to make "a way" for us up to heaven, as the apostle says, "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."<sup>[8]</sup> This had to be done through death, and by what other kind of death could it be done, save by a death in the air, that is, on the cross? Here, again, you see how right and natural it was that the Lord should suffer thus; for being thus "lifted up," He cleansed the air from all the evil influences of the enemy. "I beheld Satan as lightning falling,"<sup>[9]</sup> He says; and thus He re-opened the road to heaven, saying again, "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors."<sup>[10]</sup> For it was not the Word Himself Who needed an opening of the gates, He being Lord of all, nor was any of His works closed to their Maker. No, it was we who needed it, we whom He Himself upbore in His own body—that body which He first offered to death on behalf of all, and then made through it a path to heaven.

---

#### Chapter 4 Notes

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Heb. ii. 14 f     | 6. John xii. 32.  |
| 2. 1 Cor. xv. 53 ff. | 7. Eph. ii. 2.    |
| 3. Gal. iii. 13.     | 8. Heb. x. 20.    |
| 4. Gal. iii. 13.     | 9. Luke x. 18.    |
| 5. Eph. ii. 14.      | 10. Psalm xxiv. 7 |

---

## 5

### The Resurrection

Fitting indeed, then, and wholly consonant was the death on the cross for us; and we can see how reasonable it was, and why it is that the salvation of the world could be accomplished in no other way. Even on the cross He did not hide Himself from sight; rather, He made all creation witness to the presence of its Maker. Then, having once let it be seen that it was truly dead, He did not allow that temple of His body to linger long, but forthwith on the third day raised it up, impassable and incorruptible, the pledge and token of His victory.

It was, of course, within His power thus to have raised His body and displayed it as alive directly after death. But the all-wise Savior did not do this, lest some should deny that it had really or completely died. Besides this, had the interval between His death and resurrection been but two days, the glory of His incorruption might not have appeared. He waited one whole day to

show that His body was really dead, and then on the third day showed it incorruptible to all. The interval was no longer, lest people should have forgotten about it and grown doubtful whether it were in truth the same body. No, while the affair was still ringing in their ears and their eyes were still straining and their minds in turmoil, and while those who had put Him to death were still on the spot and themselves witnessing to the fact of it, the Son of God after three days showed His once dead body immortal and incorruptible; and it was evident to all that it was from no natural weakness that the body which the Word indwelt had died, but in order that in it by the Savior's power death might be done away.

(27) A very strong proof of this destruction of death and its conquest by the cross is supplied by a present fact, namely this. All the disciples of Christ despise death; they take the offensive against it and, instead of fearing it, by the sign of the cross and by faith in Christ trample on it as on something dead. Before the divine sojourn of the Savior, even the holiest of men were afraid of death, and mourned the dead as those who perish. But now that the Savior has raised His body, death is no longer terrible, but all those who believe in Christ tread it underfoot as nothing, and prefer to die rather than to deny their faith in Christ, knowing full well that when they die they do not perish, but live indeed, and become incorruptible through the resurrection. But that devil who of old wickedly exulted in death, now that the pains of death are loosed, he alone it is who remains truly dead. There is proof of this too; for men who, before they believe in Christ, think death horrible and are afraid of it, once they are converted despise it so completely that they go eagerly to meet it, and themselves become witnesses of the Savior's resurrection from it. Even children hasten thus to die, and not men only, but women train themselves by bodily discipline to meet it. So weak has death become that even women, who used to be taken in by it, mock at it now as a dead thing robbed of all its strength. Death has become like a tyrant who has been completely conquered by the legitimate monarch; bound hand and foot the passers-by sneer at him, hitting him and abusing him, no longer afraid of his cruelty and rage, because of the king who has conquered him. So has death been conquered and branded for what it is by the Savior on the cross. It is bound hand and foot, all who are in Christ trample it as they pass and as witnesses to Him deride it, scoffing and saying, "O Death, where is thy victory? O Grave, where is thy sting?"[1]

(28) Is this a slender proof of the impotence of death, do you think? Or is it a slight indication of the Savior's victory over it, when boys and young girls who are in Christ look beyond this present life and train themselves to die? Every one is by nature afraid of death and of bodily dissolution; the marvel of marvels is that he who is enfolded in the faith of the cross despises this natural fear and for the sake of the cross is no longer cowardly in face of it. The natural property of fire is to burn. Suppose, then, that there was a substance such as the Indian asbestos is said to be, which had no fear of being burnt, but rather displayed the impotence of the fire by proving itself unburnable. If anyone doubted the truth of this, all he need do would be to wrap himself up in the substance in question and then touch the fire. Or, again, to revert to our former figure, if anyone wanted to see the tyrant bound and helpless, who used to be such a terror to others, he could do so simply by going into the country of the tyrant's conqueror. Even so, if anyone still doubts the conquest of death, after so many proofs and so many martyrdoms in Christ and such daily scorn of death by His truest servants, he certainly does well to marvel at so great a thing, but he must not be obstinate in unbelief and disregard of plain facts. No, he must be like the man who wants to prove the property of the asbestos, and like him who enters the conqueror's dominions to see the tyrant bound. He must embrace the faith of Christ, this

disbeliever in the conquest of death, and come to His teaching. Then he will see how impotent death is and how completely conquered. Indeed, there have been many former unbelievers and deriders who, after they became believers, so scorned death as even themselves to become martyrs for Christ's sake.

(29) If, then, it is by the sign of the cross and by faith in Christ that death is trampled underfoot, it is clear that it is Christ Himself and none other Who is the Archvictor over death and has robbed it of its power. Death used to be strong and terrible, but now, since the sojourn of the Savior and the death and resurrection of His body, it is despised; and obviously it is by the very Christ Who mounted on the cross that it has been destroyed and vanquished finally. When the sun rises after the night and the whole world is lit up by it, nobody doubts that it is the sun which has thus shed its light everywhere and driven away the dark. Equally clear is it, since this utter scorning and trampling down of death has ensued upon the Savior's manifestation in the body and His death on the cross, that it is He Himself Who brought death to nought and daily raises monuments to His victory in His own disciples. How can you think otherwise, when you see men naturally weak hastening to death, unafraid at the prospect of corruption, fearless of the descent into Hades, even indeed with eager soul provoking it, not shrinking from tortures, but preferring thus to rush on death for Christ's sake, rather than to remain in this present life? If you see with your own eyes men and women and children, even, thus welcoming death for the sake of Christ's religion, how can you be so utterly silly and incredulous and maimed in your mind as not to realize that Christ, to Whom these all bear witness, Himself gives the victory to each, making death completely powerless for those who hold His faith and bear the sign of the cross? No one in his senses doubts that a snake is dead when he sees it trampled underfoot, especially when he knows how savage it used to be; nor, if he sees boys making fun of a lion, does he doubt that the brute is either dead or completely bereft of strength. These things can be seen with our own eyes, and it is the same with the conquest of death. Doubt no longer, then, when you see death mocked and scorned by those who believe in Christ, that by Christ death was destroyed, and the corruption that goes with it resolved and brought to end.

(30) What we have said is, indeed, no small proof of the destruction of death and of the fact that the cross of the Lord is the monument to His victory. But the resurrection of the body to immortality, which results henceforward from the work of Christ, the common Savior and true Life of all, is more effectively proved by facts than by words to those whose mental vision is sound. For, if, as we have shown, death was destroyed and everybody tramples on it because of Christ, how much more did He Himself first trample and destroy it in His own body! Death having been slain by Him, then, what other issue could there be than the resurrection of His body and its open demonstration as the monument of His victory? How could the destruction of death have been manifested at all, had not the Lord's body been raised? But if anyone finds even this insufficient, let him find proof of what has been said in present facts. Dead men cannot take effective action; their power of influence on others lasts only till the grave. Deeds and actions that energize others belong only to the living. Well, then, look at the facts in this case. The Savior is working mightily among men, every day He is invisibly persuading numbers of people all over the world, both within and beyond the Greek-speaking world, to accept His faith and be obedient to His teaching. Can anyone, in face of this, still doubt that He has risen and lives, or rather that He is Himself the Life? Does a dead man prick the consciences of men, so that they throw all the traditions of their fathers to the winds and bow down before the teaching of Christ? If He is no longer active in the world, as He must needs be if He is dead, how is it that He makes

the living to cease from their activities, the adulterer from his adultery, the murderer from murdering, the unjust from avarice, while the profane and godless man becomes religious? If He did not rise, but is still dead, how is it that He routs and persecutes and overthrows the false gods, whom unbelievers think to be alive, and the evil spirits whom they worship? For where Christ is named, idolatry is destroyed and the fraud of evil spirits is exposed; indeed, no such spirit can endure that Name, but takes to flight on sound of it. This is the work of One Who lives, not of one dead; and, more than that, it is the work of God. It would be absurd to say that the evil spirits whom He drives out and the idols which He destroys are alive, but that He Who drives out and destroys, and Whom they themselves acknowledge to be Son of God, is dead.

(31) In a word, then, those who disbelieve in the resurrection have no support in facts, if their gods and evil spirits do not drive away the supposedly dead Christ. Rather, it is He Who convicts them of being dead. We are agreed that a dead person can do nothing: yet the Savior works mightily every day, drawing men to religion, persuading them to virtue, teaching them about immortality, quickening their thirst for heavenly things, revealing the knowledge of the Father, inspiring strength in face of death, manifesting Himself to each, and displacing the irreligion of idols; while the gods and evil spirits of the unbelievers can do none of these things, but rather become dead at Christ's presence, all their ostentation barren and void. By the sign of the cross, on the contrary, all magic is stayed, all sorcery confounded, all the idols are abandoned and deserted, and all senseless pleasure ceases, as the eye of faith looks up from earth to heaven. Whom, then, are we to call dead? Shall we call Christ dead, Who effects all this? But the dead have not the faculty to effect anything. Or shall we call death dead, which effects nothing whatever, but lies as lifeless and ineffective as are the evil spirits and the idols? The Son of God, "living and effective,[2] is active every day and effects the salvation of all; but death is daily proved to be stripped of all its strength, and it is the idols and the evil spirits who are dead, not He. No room for doubt remains, therefore, concerning the resurrection of His body.

Indeed, it would seem that he who disbelieves this bodily rising of the Lord is ignorant of the power of the Word and Wisdom of God. If He took a body to Himself at all, and made it His own in pursuance of His purpose, as we have shown that He did, what was the Lord to do with it, and what was ultimately to become of that body upon which the Word had descended? Mortal and offered to death on behalf of all as it was, it could not but die; indeed, it was for that very purpose that the Savior had prepared it for Himself. But on the other hand it could not remain dead, because it had become the very temple of Life. It therefore died, as mortal, but lived again because of the Life within it; and its resurrection is made known through its works.

(32) It is, indeed, in accordance with the nature of the invisible God that He should be thus known through His works; and those who doubt the Lord's resurrection because they do not now behold Him with their eyes, might as well deny the very laws of nature. They have ground for disbelief when works are lacking; but when the works cry out and prove the fact so clearly, why do they deliberately deny the risen life so manifestly shown? Even if their mental faculties are defective, surely their eyes can give them irrefragable proof of the power and Godhead of Christ. A blind man cannot see the sun, but he knows that it is above the earth from the warmth which it affords; similarly, let those who are still in the blindness of unbelief recognize the Godhead of Christ and the resurrection which He has brought about through His manifested power in others. Obviously He would not be expelling evil spirits and despoiling idols, if He were dead, for the evil spirits would not obey one who was dead. If, on the other hand, the very naming of Him

drives them forth, He clearly is not dead; and the more so that the spirits, who perceive things unseen by men, would know if He were so and would refuse to obey Him. But, as a matter of fact, what profane persons doubt, the evil spirits know—namely that He is God; and for that reason they flee from Him and fall at His feet, crying out even as they cried when He was in the body, "We know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God," and, "Ah, what have I in common with Thee, Thou Son of God? I implore Thee, torment me not." [3]

Both from the confession of the evil spirits and from the daily witness of His works, it is manifest, then, and let none presume to doubt it, that the Savior has raised His own body, and that He is very Son of God, having His being from God as from a Father, Whose Word and Wisdom and Whose Power He is. He it is Who in these latter days assumed a body for the salvation of us all, and taught the world concerning the Father. He it is Who has destroyed death and freely graced us all with incorruption through the promise of the resurrection, having raised His own body as its first-fruits, and displayed it by the sign of the cross as the monument to His victory over death and its corruption.

---

### Chapter 5 Notes

1. Cor. xv. 55.
2. Heb. iv. 12.
3. Cf. Luke iv. 34 and Mark v. 7.

## APPENDIX 4

### **Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences by Dr. Martin Luther (1517) Published in:**

*Works of Martin Luther:*

*Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et Al., Trans. & Eds.  
(Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915), Vol.1, pp. 29-38*

Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place.

Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

In the Name our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said *Poenitentiam agite*, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests.
3. Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers mortifications of the flesh.
4. The penalty [of sin], therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues; for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope does not intend to remit, and cannot remit any penalties other than those which he has imposed either by his own authority or by that of the Canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.
7. God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same time, humble in all things and bring into subjection to His vicar, the priest.
8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to them, nothing should be imposed on the dying.
9. Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us, because in his decrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.
10. Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those priests who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penances for purgatory.
11. This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept.
12. In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.
13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties; they are already dead to canonical rules, and have a right to be released from them.
14. The imperfect health [of soul], that is to say, the imperfect love, of the dying brings with it, of necessity, great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater is the fear.
15. This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.
16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as do despair, almost-despair, and the assurance of safety.

17. With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.
18. It seems unproved, either by reason or Scripture, that they are outside the state of merit, that is to say, of increasing love.
19. Again, it seems unproved that they, or at least that all of them, are certain or assured of their own blessedness, though we may be quite certain of it.
20. Therefore by "full remission of all penalties" the pope means not actually "of all," but only of those imposed by himself.
21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved;
22. Whereas he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to the canons, they would have had to pay in this life.
23. If it is at all possible to grant to any one the remission of all penalties whatsoever, it is certain that this remission can be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to the very fewest.
24. It must needs be, therefore, that the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.
25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish.
26. The pope does well when he grants remission to souls [in purgatory], not by the power of the keys (which he does not possess), but by way of intercession.
27. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory].
28. It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money-box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.
29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it, as in the legend of Sts. Severinus and Paschal.
30. No one is sure that his own contrition is sincere; much less that he has attained full remission.
31. Rare as is the man that is truly penitent, so rare is also the man who truly buys indulgences, i.e., such men are most rare.
32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.
33. Men must be on their guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to Him;
34. For these "graces of pardon" concern only the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, and these are appointed by man.
35. They preach no Christian doctrine who teach that contrition is not necessary in those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionals.
36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.
37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.
38. Nevertheless, the remission and participation [in the blessings of the Church] which are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are, as I have said, the declaration of divine remission.
39. It is most difficult, even for the very keenest theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the abundance of pardons and [the need of] true contrition.
40. True contrition seeks and loves penalties, but liberal pardons only relax penalties and cause them to be hated, or at least, furnish an occasion [for hating them].

41. Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love.
42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy.
43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons;
44. Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.
45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.
46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons.
47. Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.
48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting pardons, needs, and therefore desires, their devout prayer for him more than the money they bring.
49. Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God.
50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.
51. Christians are to be taught that it would be the pope's wish, as it is his duty, to give of his own money to very many of those from whom certain hawkers of pardons cajole money, even though the church of St. Peter might have to be sold.
52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, even though the commissary, nay, even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.
53. They are enemies of Christ and of the pope, who bid the Word of God be altogether silent in some Churches, in order that pardons may be preached in others.
54. Injury is done the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons than on this Word.
55. It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.
56. The "treasures of the Church," out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.
57. That they are not temporal treasures is certainly evident, for many of the vendors do not pour out such treasures so easily, but only gather them.
58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the Saints, for even without the pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man.
59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church were the Church's poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.
60. Without rashness we say that the keys of the Church, given by Christ's merit, are that treasure;
61. For it is clear that for the remission of penalties and of reserved cases, the power of the pope is of itself sufficient.
62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.
63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last.

64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.

65. Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.

66. The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.

67. The indulgences which the preachers cry as the "greatest graces" are known to be truly such, in so far as they promote gain.

68. Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of apostolic pardons, with all reverence.

70. But still more are they bound to strain all their eyes and attend with all their ears, lest these men preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.

71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!

72. But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon-preachers, let him be blessed!

73. The pope justly thunders against those who, by any art, contrive the injury of the traffic in pardons.

74. But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use the pretext of pardons to contrive the injury of holy love and truth.

75. To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin and violated the Mother of God — this is madness.

76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned.

77. It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now Pope, could not bestow greater graces; this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the pope.

78. We say, on the contrary, that even the present pope, and any pope at all, has greater graces at his disposal; to wit, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written in I. Corinthians xii.

79. To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up [by the preachers of indulgences], is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

80. The bishops, curates and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people, will have an account to render.

81. This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

82. To wit: — "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

83. Again: — "Why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued, and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"

84. Again: — "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure love's sake?"

85. Again: — "Why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?"

86. Again: — “Why does not the pope, whose wealth is to-day greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?”
87. Again: — “What is it that the pope remits, and what participation does he grant to those who, by perfect contrition, have a right to full remission and participation?”
88. Again: — “What greater blessing could come to the Church than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day what he now does once, and bestow on every believer these remissions and participations?”
89. “Since the pope, by his pardons, seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted heretofore, since these have equal efficacy?”
90. To repress these arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christians unhappy.
91. If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.
92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, “Peace, peace,” and there is no peace!
93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, “Cross, cross,” and there is no cross!
94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;
95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

## APPENDIX 5

(From ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2009)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY

---

## Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have many beliefs in common, both adhering to the truths expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the doctrines crystallized and codified at Nicea and Chalcedon (regarding the Trinity and Christology, respectively). However, they have serious differences in their understanding of doctrines such as Scripture, salvation, purgatory, Mary, and the church.

### The Canon of Scripture

Though all the books of the Protestant Bible are found in the Catholic Bible, the Catholic Bible contains additional books (e.g., *Tobit*, *Judith*) not found in the Protestant Bible, and additional sections in certain books (e.g., Esther, Daniel) that it otherwise shares in common with the Protestant Bible. These additional books and sections—called the Apocrypha—are all related to the OT. The Catholic Bible's NT and that of the Protestant Bible are identical in all aspects.

How did this difference come about? It should be recalled that what Christians now call the “Old Testament” was once the entire Bible of the Jews and was originally written in Hebrew. Beginning in the third century B.C., a Greek translation of this Hebrew Bible was undertaken. Called the Septuagint (Gk. “seventy”; often abbreviated LXX), it is more extensive than Hebrew Scripture, and its additions are called the *apocryphal* (or hidden) *writings*, or the Apocrypha for short. Beginning in the second century A.D., a Latin translation of the entire Bible was undertaken. The version of the OT that was originally translated was the Septuagint, not the Hebrew Bible. As the church in the West began to adopt Latin as its primary language, the Latin translation *including the Apocrypha* became its Bible.

In A.D. 382 Jerome embarked on a new Latin translation of Scripture, called the Vulgate. As he commenced his work on the OT, he translated from the Hebrew Bible. He considered only the writings in the Hebrew Bible to be authoritative Scripture, and he knew that the Apocrypha never had a place in the Hebrew Bible. However, Augustine urged Jerome to include translations of the apocryphal writings. As the Vulgate became the church's new Bible, the apocryphal writings were increasingly regarded as part of canonical Scripture. Several church councils around the beginning of the fifth century A.D. ratified the Latin Vulgate. Thus, the OT with the Apocrypha (together with the NT) would be the Bible of the church. This view would go without significant challenge until the Reformation.

In the sixteenth century, one of the major disagreements between the Roman Catholic Church and the new Protestant movement was the canon of Scripture. Protestants insisted that the church's OT should match the shorter Hebrew Bible, not the Septuagint with its additional apocryphal writings. They argued that the Jewish Bible, which did not include those writings, had been the Scripture used by Jesus and the disciples; therefore, it must be considered the basis for the church's Bible. Also, some of the apocryphal writings included incorrect historical or chronological information, and had been considered unsound by the early church. Thus, the Reformers dismissed the Apocrypha from the canonical OT.

Because of this development, the Protestant Bible was different from the Roman Catholic Bible. The effects of this were far-reaching, as the Protestant churches appealed to canonical Scripture alone as the ultimate, divine authority to establish their beliefs and practices. Because the Apocrypha was considered noncanonical, it could not be used as the basis for church doctrine. This meant, e.g., that belief in purgatory and the practice of praying for the dead (which were supported by *2 Maccabees 12*, a passage in the Apocrypha) were without *biblical* support and were therefore discontinued by Protestant churches.

In summary, the Roman Catholic Bible is different from the Protestant Bible because of the presence of the Apocrypha in the Catholic OT. This divergence was the result of significant disputes about the proper source for the Bible's translation, the range of the Holy Spirit's inspiration of Scripture, and the limits of the Word of God as used by Jesus and his disciples. This continues to be a major difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

### **The Interpretation of Scripture**

Another important matter separating Roman Catholics and Protestants is over the interpretation of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church insists that the prerogative to determine the proper and authoritative interpretation of Scripture belongs solely to its magisterium, or teaching office (consisting of the pope and bishops). This was a decision that the Council of Trent made (in 1546) in response to the growing Protestant movement. Trent decreed “that no one relying on his own judgment shall, in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, distorting the Holy Scriptures in accordance with his own conceptions, presume to interpret them contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of their true sense and interpretation, has held and holds.” Thus, the Roman Catholic Church claims that it possesses the sole right to give the correct interpretation of Scripture.

Protestant churches do not have such an authoritative teaching office to decide correct and authoritative interpretations. Rather, they urge all believers to engage in careful and responsible interpretation of the Bible by observing sound interpretative principles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of divinely ordained and gifted elders (**1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9**) or pastor-teachers (**Eph. 4:11**), also taking account of the way other believers have interpreted texts, especially in published commentaries that have interacted with the history of prior interpretation. Protestantism rejects the Roman Catholic magisterium and

insists on personal Bible study because of its conviction that Scripture is clear and is necessary for all Christians, who are also made competent by the Holy Spirit for such an interpretative task. In an encouraging development since Vatican Council II (1962–1965), more and more Roman Catholics are becoming involved in Bible study and familiarizing themselves with Scripture.

### **The Sufficiency and Authority of Scripture**

Another important difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants concerns the sufficiency and authority of Scripture. From its beginning, the early church viewed Scripture as the sole and sufficient source of authoritative revelation from God. This meant that all Christians were to give their attention to the Bible, finding in it the very words of God that are to be believed and obeyed, just as God himself is to be believed and obeyed. Furthermore, it meant that God does not require or prohibit anything of Christians that is not contained in Scripture either explicitly or by implication.

But a change took place in the latter part of the Middle Ages. As the Catholic Church permitted other sources to lay claim to the title of authoritative truth, a multiple-source notion of divine revelation arose. This consisted of written Scripture, church tradition, and the magisterium (see above). This meant that Scripture alone is not sufficient for salvation and becoming Christlike. And Scripture is not the only authority for the church. It must be supplemented by tradition—teachings that Christ passed down orally to the apostles, and from them to their successors, the bishops, in the Catholic Church—and by the Church's teaching office. Against this disturbing trend the Protestant motto *sola Scriptura*—Scripture alone!—was sounded. More than a motto, however, this “formal principle of Protestantism” became a decisive point of division between Protestantism and Catholicism. It meant that Scripture alone is absolutely authoritative for doctrine and practice, and following Scripture alone is sufficient to please God in all things.

### **The Doctrine of Salvation**

Many more differences arise because of these foundational issues of the canon of Scripture, proper biblical interpretation, and the sufficiency and authority of the Bible. Another key area, the Protestant doctrine of salvation, also differs from its Catholic counterpart. According to the Protestant understanding of **Romans 3:21–4:8 and 5:15–19**, justification is the act of God by which he declares a sinful person to be no longer under judgment for his or her guilt, but forgiven and righteous instead, because the sin-bearing righteousness of Christ is accredited to the person (see also **2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9**). This declarative act is not based on any inherent goodness or any personally achieved righteousness of the sinful person, and it does not render that person morally transformed (other divine acts achieve this). Rather, justification is grounded solely on the grace of God as expressed by the atoning death of Christ. Furthermore, this gracious provision can be appropriated only by faith; salvation cannot be merited by human effort in whole or even in part through moral conduct or religious activity (**Eph. 2:8–9**).

The Roman Catholic understanding incorrectly extends justification to include other acts of God in salvation: “Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man” (Council of Trent, *Decree on Justification* 6). Accordingly, justification remains a work in process which increases or decreases in relation to the degree of inward renewal of the sinful person, rendering any assurance of salvation impossible in this life. In addition, justification is said to be conferred in (infant) baptism and continued and increased through the other Catholic sacraments. Thus, a cooperative effort between God's grace and human effort is established so that a sinful person not only expresses faith in Christ's atoning death but also, moved by love and the Holy Spirit, merits eternal life through participation in the church and good deeds. Protestants have considered this a very serious difference, since this faith-plus-human-effort view of justification is so different from the true gospel message of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone (**Rom. 4:4–5, 16; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9**).

### **The Doctrine of Eschatology**

This divergence in the doctrine of salvation leads to a difference in eschatology, or personal future hope. For Protestants, only two eternal destinies await human beings: eternal life for all who are justified by God's grace through faith in Christ alone (**John 3:16; Rom. 8:1, 33–34**), or eternal condemnation for all who reject this salvation (**John 3:18; 2 Thess. 1:5–10**). Although Roman Catholics agree with Protestants concerning these two eternal destinies, they add a third destiny: temporal punishment in purgatory for all who are on the way to final bliss. “All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1030). Purgatory is this temporal punishment as a means of final purification.

Protestants deny this doctrine. It is based on an apocryphal writing (*2 Macc.* 12:46, which is not canonical Scripture) and on misinterpreted biblical passages (**Matt. 12:31; 1 Cor. 3:15**). Furthermore, the doctrine is the logical outgrowth of the Roman Catholic misunderstanding of salvation. Purgatory makes sense with a view of justification that combines a declarative act of forgiveness with inward renovation, for if this latter renewal process is not sufficiently advanced, such a sinful person will need further purification in purgatory.

However, in the Protestant view, through justification God declares sinful persons to not be penally liable, now or ever, but righteous. He does so by the forgiveness of their sins through the cross and by the imputing of Christ's righteousness to them in and through their union with him. Therefore there can be no purging punishment in purgatory after death due to being imperfectly purified in this life. At death, with their sanctifying process completed in that moment, Christians go to be with Christ in endless joy. The Protestant doctrine of justification leaves no room for a doctrine of purgatory, because it has no need for it.

## The Role of Mary

Whereas Protestantism rivets attention on Jesus Christ, Roman Catholicism adds to this singular focus some attention to Mary, his mother. In terms of her personal history, Catholics believe in Mary's immaculate conception (she was “preserved from all stain of original sin” from the moment of her conception; *Ineffabilis Deus*), her complete sinlessness, her perpetual virginity, and her bodily assumption to heaven immediately after death (she “was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory”; *Munificentissimus Deus*).

Because of this personal history and her inseparable union with her Son, “the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (*Lumen Gentium* 62; “invoked” means “prayed to”). Catholicism honors her maternal mediation and spiritual motherhood, affirming that Mary cooperates “in the birth and development of divine life in the souls of the redeemed” (*Credo of the People of God*). Furthermore, “the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship” (*Marialis Cultus* 56) as seen in the 17 festival days annually dedicated to her and the 50 “Hail Mary” prayers in the set of prayers known as the rosary.

Protestant churches acknowledge the unique role Mary played. While they agree that she is in a true sense *theotokos* (“God-bearer,” i.e., the one to whom she gave birth is fully God), admire her faith and obedience (**Luke 1:26–38**), acknowledge her suffering (**Luke 2:35; John 19:25–27**), and call her “blessed” (**Luke 1:48**), they repudiate the above-stated Catholic beliefs about her. Protestants, as did the other early disciples, recognize that Mary struggled to understand the significance of her Son Jesus (**Mark 3:20–35; Luke 2:25–35; 11:27–28; John 2:1–11; 19:25–27**). She also confessed that she was in need of a “Savior” (**Luke 1:47**) and bore other children after Jesus (see note on **Matt. 13:55–56**). Protestants maintain that the claims made by Roman Catholicism about her share in her Son's mediation, and the fitness of praying to her, are either the result of poor interpretation of Scripture or arise from unchastened church tradition.

## The Role of the Church

Protestantism and Roman Catholicism also differ on the role of the church as a means of the grace that is necessary for salvation. At the heart of the Catholic doctrine of the church is the idea of the *sacramental economy*: As Redeemer, Jesus Christ accomplished salvation through the Paschal (Easter) mystery—his passion, death, and resurrection—that occurred in history and that gave birth to the sacramental reality of the Church. As High Priest, he continues to accomplish salvation through the Church, working originally through the apostles and now through their successors, the bishops, who teach, govern, and sanctify the Church through the gospel and the seven sacraments. Thus, it is through the Roman Catholic Church alone that the fullness of salvation is extended to a sinful world.

This teaching is held to be particularly true because the Church dispenses the grace of God through its sacraments, which are necessary for salvation: baptism (which regenerates a sinful person who in most cases is an infant); confirmation (by which the empowerment of the Holy

Spirit is conferred); the Eucharist (which represents the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, a reality that is ever-present in the Catholic Mass, as the bread and the wine are transubstantiated into his body and blood through the power of the Holy Spirit at the request of the priest); penance (or reconciliation for all post-baptismal sins); marriage; holy orders (for men ordained to the priesthood); and the anointing of the sick.

No Protestant denomination or church has a view of the church that even remotely resembles this Roman Catholic idea of the sacramental economy. Furthermore, Protestants have always rejected the notion of seven sacraments, maintaining that only two—baptism and the Lord's Supper—were ordained by Christ (**Matt. 26:26–29; 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:17–34**), with accompanying tangible signs (water; bread and wine).

## Conclusion

Despite the many points of doctrine they hold in common, there remains a vast difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Their Bibles are different, their idea of interpretation is different, and their view of Scripture's clarity, authority, sufficiency, and necessity is different. And because of these differences, Protestant and Roman Catholic theologies also diverge on the crucial doctrines of salvation, purgatory, Mary, and the church.

# Eastern Orthodoxy

## Historical Background of Orthodoxy

Eastern Orthodoxy consists of a family of churches, largely in countries to the east of Rome, that rejected the authority of the pope and separated from the Roman Catholic Church in A.D. 1054. The most prominent Orthodox churches are the Greek Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox, but Orthodoxy also includes other groups such as Syrian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, and Coptic Orthodox.

The division in 1054 was prompted by objections to the pope's endorsement of the addition of the Latin clause *filioque* (“and the Son”) to the Nicene Creed, so that it said that “the Holy Spirit . . . proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*” (a reference to the eternal relations between the Son and the Holy Spirit). But issues of ecclesiastical authority were probably more significant than the specific doctrinal issue. Orthodox churches include about 218 million adherents today, compared to 1.1 billion Roman Catholics and about 830 million Protestants.

Orthodoxy comprises a range of autocephalous and autonomous churches, the Russian and Greek being the most prominent. (*Autocephalous* churches are federations of local churches over which no outside jurisdiction can claim authority. They are *autonomous* churches in that they have authority over their own internal matters, though they require the approval of another church for such things as the appointment of a chief hierarch, or church leader.)

During the first millennium the predominantly Latin-speaking West and the predominantly Greek-speaking East drifted apart linguistically, culturally, and theologically. Rome's claims to universal jurisdiction and its addition of the *filioque* clause led to severed relations. Following this, many countries in the East, overrun by the Muslims, had limited freedom, both politically and ecclesiastically. Constantinople, or Byzantium (modern Istanbul), the capital of the Christian East, was conquered in 1453. In the twentieth century, Orthodoxy in Russia and Eastern Europe lived under Communist rule, suffering intense persecution.

Orthodoxy's doctrinal basis is the teachings of the seven ecumenical councils (between A.D. 325 and 787), with reference especially to the Trinity and Christology. Evangelicals agree with most of these dogmatic decisions.

Orthodoxy is highly visual, with icons dominating its churches. Its ancient liturgy, rooted in the fourth century, is central to its theology and life.

### **Positive Elements of Orthodoxy That Evangelicals Can Learn From**

#### *The Trinity*

The Orthodox liturgy is full of Trinitarian prayers, hymns, and doxologies; the Trinity is a vital part of belief and worship, whereas in the West it often appears as little more than an arcane mathematical riddle. Paul describes our relationship with God in Trinitarian terms: “through [Christ] we . . . have access in one Spirit to the Father” (**Eph. 2:18**).

#### *Union with Christ and God*

Crucial to Orthodox theology is “deification,” in which humans (while remaining humans) are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, transformed by divine grace, and in this sense become “partakers of the divine nature” (**2 Pet. 1:4**). Though talk of deification sounds alarming to many evangelicals, the difference is largely one of emphasis. Orthodoxy has maintained a focus on the union of the three persons in God, the union of deity and humanity in Christ, the union of Christ and the church (central in the NT, e.g., **John 14:18–24; 17:20–23; Eph. 1:3–14**), and the union of the Holy Spirit and the saints. In contrast, the West has often emphasized the juridical aspects of doctrine, such as the doctrines of atonement and justification.

#### *Freedom from Concerns Raised by the Enlightenment*

Due to its historical avoidance of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century (with its emphasis on the primacy of reason), Orthodox theology never became preoccupied with unbelieving critical challenges to and revisions of the faith, which in the West have often bred a detached, academic approach to theology divorced from the life of the church. This is evident in Orthodoxy's firm belief in heaven, hell, and the return of Christ—topics that many in the West (esp. among more liberal Protestant groups) have sidelined due to possible embarrassment. There is strong commonality here between evangelicals and the Orthodox.

## *Unity of Theology and Piety*

In Orthodoxy, the knowledge of God is received and cultivated by prayer and meditation aided by the Holy Spirit, in battle against the forces of spiritual darkness. Therefore, asceticism and monasticism have had a contemplative character in Orthodoxy. By contrast, since the Enlightenment, Western theology has centered in academic institutions, many of them unconnected to the church. Orthodoxy has profoundly integrated liturgy, piety, and doctrine.

## **Agreements between Evangelicalism and Orthodoxy**

The ecumenical councils' declarations on the Trinity and Christ show the extensive agreement between Orthodoxy and evangelicalism, despite their disagreement on the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed. Although they have different emphases, Orthodoxy and evangelicalism agree on the Bible's authority, on sin, and on the fall (however, the Orthodox do not accept the specific Augustinian doctrine of original sin). They also agree on Christ's death and resurrection (although the Orthodox regard the atonement more as conquest of death than payment for the penalty of sin), the Holy Spirit, the return of Christ, the final judgment, heaven, and hell.

Historically the justification controversy of the Reformation was not an issue in the Eastern church, but there is generally an underlying consensus between the East and several Reformation doctrines in the West. Eastern patristic writers occasionally spoke of salvation as a gift of God's grace, and of faith as a gift of God; the famous Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner") attests to Orthodoxy's rejection of good works contributing to justification. In a similar way, there are echoes in the West of something like the Orthodox doctrine of "deification"—which is no more incompatible with justification by faith than are the doctrines of sanctification and glorification.

Additionally, the Orthodox doctrine of the church resonates with many evangelical concerns. Orthodox opposition to Rome is underlined by Cyprian's stress on the unity of the church, the parity of bishops, and the equality of all church members—a model of the church close to post-Reformation Anglicanism.

## **Significant Misunderstandings**

### *Evangelical Misunderstandings of Orthodoxy*

Orthodoxy's use of icons (visual representations of Christ and the saints) has bothered evangelicals, who argue that it can easily tend toward idolatry and worship of images of God. However, the Second Council of Nicea (A.D. 787) emphatically denied that icons are worshiped. Following John of Damascus, it distinguished between honor (Gk. *proskynēsis*) given to saints and icons, and worship (Gk. *latreia*) owed to the indivisible Trinity alone. Icons are regarded as windows to the spiritual realm, betokening in the church's worship on earth the presence of the saints in heaven. Moreover, the idea of image (Gk. *eikon*) is prominent in the Bible. The whole creation reveals the glory of God (**Ps. 19:1** ff.; **Rom. 1:18–20**).

On Scripture and tradition (the teaching of the church), both sides appeal to both sources. There is an overwhelming biblical emphasis in Orthodox liturgy—the Bible has been translated into the local vernacular wherever Orthodox missionaries have gone—while the Reformation did not ignore tradition but had a high view of the teaching of the church. The issue is not the Bible alone vs. tradition; it is which has the decisive voice, the last word over the other? For evangelicalism, the Bible is unequivocally the Word of God (e.g., **2 Tim. 3:16**), while all human councils may err, and therefore the Bible must finally judge the tradition that seeks to expound it. For Orthodoxy, however, the decisions of the early church councils and church fathers often function in practice as equal to the Bible in authority.

### *Orthodox Misunderstandings of Evangelicalism*

The Orthodox confuse the Protestant doctrine of predestination with Islamic fatalism. But the Bible teaches *both* the absolute sovereignty of God *and* the full responsibility of man, since God's decrees also take into account the free actions of secondary causes. The Orthodox mistakenly believe that the doctrine of predestination is monothelitism (the heresy that Christ had only his divine will but no human will). The idea that predestination short-circuits the human will is misplaced.

Many Orthodox polemicists accuse evangelicals of ignoring the church's part in salvation. However, the classic Protestant confessions attest that the church is integral to the process of salvation, the Christian faith being found in the Bible and taught by the church. Orthodoxy at this point confuses classic Protestantism with the view of later individualist views.

### **Substantive Disagreement**

#### *The Eastern Tendency to Downplay the Preaching of God's Word*

Largely due to historical events (the depredations of Islam) and despite Orthodoxy's heritage of superlative preaching (Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen), worship in the East is more visual than worship in evangelical churches. Sermons are part of the liturgy, but the focus is as much on the icons and the symbolic movements of the clergy. Gregory of Nyssa stressed God's visible revelation in creation, along with the ambiguity and inadequacy of language.

The way Calvin resolved this question was to understand the knowledge of God in auditory terms: God's Word must be heard by us in faith. For Calvin, God reveals himself *in his Word* by the Holy Spirit. In the Word read and proclaimed, God addresses us personally. We cannot see him but we hear him. His verbal revelation is true and reliable, and the preaching, teaching, and meditative study of it comprise the prime channel of God's grace.

### *The Relationship between Scripture and Tradition*

For Orthodoxy, tradition is a living, dynamic movement, the Bible existing within it and not apart from it. Orthodoxy also believes in biblical authority but as part of a larger whole. Evangelicals believe that the Bible is the ultimate authority.

### *The Palamite Doctrine of the Trinity*

The influential archbishop of Thessalonica, Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), promoted a distinction, later widely accepted in Orthodoxy, between the unknowable essence (being) of God and his “energies.” But this view has driven a wedge between God in himself and God as he has revealed himself, threatening our knowledge of God with profound agnosticism, since we have no way of knowing whether God is as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. This formulation defies rational discourse, since it tells us that we cannot say anything definitive about who God is, with the result that the Christian life is reduced to noncognitive mystical contemplation. It introduces into God a division, not a distinction.

### *The Veneration of Mary and the Saints*

Orthodoxy considers it possible, legitimate, and desirable for Christians to ask Mary and other departed saints to intercede with God on their behalf. But neither Jesus nor Paul ever suggest that this is possible or acceptable.

The point is not that request for prayer is made to saints as such, for all Christians ask *living* saints to intercede with God for them. What evangelicals object to is the belief that *departed* saints can receive our prayers and so intercede on our behalf. The Bible does not encourage us to put our hope in the prayers of departed saints; it directs our hope to Christ, his return, and the resurrection, not to contact with saints departed (**1 Thess. 4:13–18**; cf. **1 Samuel 28**; **1 Chron. 10:13**; **1 Tim. 2:5**).

Orthodoxy insists that the incarnation mandates icons of Christ, since God has chosen to reveal himself in human form. Evangelicals are equally emphatic that the second commandment prohibits the use of images in worship, and many think that using icons of Christ as aids to worship oversteps acceptable boundaries in that regard. Both sides claim the other is heretical; Orthodoxy considers evangelicals guilty of Manicheism, entailing a deficient view of matter, while evangelicals argue that icons of Christ imply a Nestorian abstraction of Christ's humanity. (Manicheism holds that there are two coequal realities, spirit and matter, which are respectively good and evil. Nestorianism is a heresy that separated Christ's divine and human natures.)

### *Synergism in Salvation*

The East has a vigorous doctrine of free will and an implacable opposition to the Reformed teaching on predestination and the sovereignty of God's grace in Christ. In this aspect,

Orthodoxy is farther away from the Reformation than is Rome. The difference in respective weighting of grace and the human will is far-reaching. It entails differing understandings of the extent of human sin and the nature of Christ's work.

### **Compared with Rome, How Far Away from Protestantism Is Orthodoxy?**

There are ways in which Orthodoxy is closer to classic Protestantism than is Rome. Both were forced into separation from the Roman Church, and both agree in their opposition to the claims of the papacy. The structure of Orthodox churches is much closer to that of Reformed churches, especially the Anglican church. The Orthodox recognition of the parity of all believers, and the autonomy and autocephalous nature of local churches, is far closer to Reformed polity than is the Roman hierarchy. Hence, Orthodoxy does not have the same accumulation of authoritative dogmas as Rome. Moreover, the Orthodox stress on the Bible opens up a large commonality of approach.

There are, however, ways in which Orthodoxy is further removed from evangelicalism than is Rome. Protestantism shares the Roman Catholic understanding of the Trinity. Orthodoxy's stance on the *filioque* controversy, and its distinction between the essence of God and the divine energies, produce a different form of piety. Western faith is centered in Christ; the East's is more focused on the Holy Spirit. As Orthodox theologian Kallistos Ware put it, Rome and Protestantism share the same questions, but supply different answers; with Orthodoxy, the questions themselves are different.

## APPENDIX 6

# THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (also known simply as the *Shorter Catechism*) was written in the 1640s by English and Scottish church scholars and pastors. The assembly also produced the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger Catechism. The three documents are considered by many Protestants to be the grandest doctrinal statements to come out of the English Reformation. Completed in 1647, it was presented to parliament on 14 April 1648.

The purpose of the Shorter Catechism is to educate children and lay persons in matters of doctrine and belief. The WSC is in a simple question and answer format to facilitate memorization. Typically, the parents and the church would use the shorter catechism to train their children in the ways of the Lord. New converts are also given the WSC as well as the Confession of Faith and Holy Scripture to study. The Free Church of Scotland still presents a bible to a child who can answer all 107 questions accurately at one sitting.

The catechism is composed of 107 questions and answers. The first 12 questions concern God as Creator. Questions 13-20 deal with original sin and the fallen state of man's nature. Questions 21-38 concern Christ the Redeemer and the benefits that flow from redemption. The next set of questions, 39-84, discuss the ten commandments. Questions 85-97 teach concerning the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The final set of questions 98-107 teach and explain the Lord's prayer. This organization mimics the earlier Heidelberg Catechism of the continental Reformed churches.

In 1675 the Presbyterian Thomas Vincent in London published a popular exposition called *The Shorter Catechism Explained*. Later Reformed catechisms such as the 1693 Baptist Keach's Catechism mimic the Westminster catechism on most points except infant baptism. Many reformers rightly protested the practice of infant baptism as a remnant of Roman Catholicism that needed to be reformed, given that the Bible is clear that only believers should be baptized. Hence, many – while they loved the WSC – chose to use other confessions, most notably the 1689 London Confession of Faith, which is essentially the WSC without the Roman Catholic infant baptism and other sacramental elements.

## Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. 3. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. 4. *What is God?*

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Q. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. 6. *How many persons are there in the godhead?*

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Q. 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. 8. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. 9. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q. 10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q. 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q. 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Q. 13. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q. 14. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Q. 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Q. 17. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q. 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Q. 19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Q. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.

Q. 21. *Who is the redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Q. 23. *What offices doth Christ execute as our redeemer?*

A. Christ, as our redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. 24. *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. 25. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. 26. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Q. 27. *Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. 28. *Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Q. 30. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Q. 31. *What is effectual calling?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Q. 33. *What is justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q. 34. *What is adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of, the sons of God.

Q. 35. *What is sanctification?*

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q. 36. *What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification,

adoption and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Q. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Q. 39. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. 40. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

Q. 41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Q. 42. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

A. The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Q. 43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Q. 44. *What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us that because God is the Lord, and our God, and redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Q. 45. *Which is the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 46. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Q. 47. *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Q. 48. *What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?*

A. These words before me in the first commandment teach us that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.

Q. 49. *Which is the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Q. 50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Q. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Q. 52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Q. 53. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 54. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.

Q. 55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

Q. 56. *What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q. 57. *Which is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Q. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.

Q. 59. *Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed

the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.

Q. 60. *How is the sabbath to be sanctified?*

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath day.

Q. 63. *Which is the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 64. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors or equals.

Q. 65. *What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Q. 66. *What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and

prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Q. 67. *Which is the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 68. *What is required in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Q. 69. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Q. 70. *Which is the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech and behavior.

Q. 72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

Q. 73. *Which is the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 74. *What is required in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q. 75. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.

Q. 76. *Which is the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 77. *What is required in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q. 78. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.

Q. 79. *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Q. 80. *What is required in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

Q. 81. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

Q. 82. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.

Q. 83. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q. 84. *What doth every sin deserve?*

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Q. 85. *What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. 86. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 87. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

Q. 88. *What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q. 89. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Q. 90. *How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Q. 91. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Q. 92. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Q. 93. *Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 94. *What is baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Q. 95. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's supper?*

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Q. 97. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?*

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. 98. *What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Q. 99. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's prayer.

Q. 100. *What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, Our Father which art in heaven, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Q. 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?*

A. In the first petition, which is, Hallowed be thy name, we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Q. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?*

A. In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?*

A. In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q. 104. *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*

A. In the fourth petition, which is, Give us this day our daily bread, we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Q. 105. *What do we pray for in the fifth petition?*

A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q. 106. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

A. In the sixth petition, which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 107. *What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen*, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen*.

# The Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)

With slight revisions by C. H. Spurgeon

This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. It is not issued as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby you may be fettered, but as a means of edification in righteousness. It is an excellent, though not inspired, expression of the teaching of those Holy Scriptures by which all confessions are to be measured. We hold to the humbling truths of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of lost sinners. Salvation is through Christ alone and by

faith alone."  
**C. H. Spurgeon**

---

## Contents

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. The Holy Scriptures                 | 18. Assurance of Salvation                       |
| 2. God and the Holy Trinity            | 19. The Law of God                               |
| 3. God's Decree                        | 20. The Gospel and Its Influence                 |
| 4. Creation                            | 21. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience  |
| 5. Divine Providence                   | 22. Worship and the Sabbath Day                  |
| 6. The Fall of Man, Sin and Punishment | 23. Lawful Oaths and Vows                        |
| 7. God's Covenant                      | 24. The Civil Magistrate                         |
| 8. Christ the Mediator                 | 25. Marriage                                     |
| 9. Free Will                           | 26. The Church                                   |
| 10. Effectual Calling                  | 27. The Communion of Saints                      |
| 11. Justification                      | 28. Baptism and the Lord's Supper                |
| 12. Adoption                           | 29. Baptism                                      |
| 13. Sanctification                     | 30. The Lord's Supper                            |
| 14. Saving Faith                       | 31. Man's State After Death and the Resurrection |
| 15. Repentance and Salvation           | 32. The Last Judgement                           |
| 16. Good Works                         |  |
| 17. The Perseverance of the Saints     |  |

---

## 1. The Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so much that man is left without any excuse, they are not sufficient to provide that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation.

Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare His will to His church;

- and afterward, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church, protecting it against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world,

- it pleased the Lord to commit His revealed Truth wholly to writing. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are most necessary, those former ways by which God revealed His will unto His people having now ceased.

2. Under the title of Holy Scripture (or the written Word of God) are now contained all the following books of the Old and New Testament:-

#### OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

#### OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans. 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

All these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

3. The books commonly called 'The Apocrypha' not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon or rule of Scripture and are therefore of no authority to the church of God, nor are they to be approved of or made use of any differently from other human writings.
4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, depends not on the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God its Author (Who is Truth itself). Therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.
5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the people of God to gain a high and reverent estimation of the Holy Scriptures. We may be similarly affected by the nature of the Scriptures—the heavenliness of the contents, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, the full disclosure it makes of the only way of man's salvation, together with many other incomparable excellencies and entire perfections. By all the evidence the Scripture more than proves itself to be the Word of God.

Yet, notwithstanding this, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth of Scripture and its divine authority, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture, to which nothing is to be added at any time, either by new revelation of the Spirit, or by the traditions of men.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.

There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and church government which are common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word which are always to be observed.

7. All things in scripture are not equally plain in themselves, nor equally clear to everyone, yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and revealed in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the educated but also the uneducated may attain a sufficient understanding of them by the due use of ordinary means.
8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of its writing was most generally known to the nations) were immediately inspired by God, and were kept pure through subsequent ages by His singular care and providence. They are therefore authentic, so that in all controversies of religion, the church must appeal to them as final.

But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have a right to, and an interest in the Scriptures, and who are commanded to read and search them in the fear of God, the Scriptures are therefore to be translated into the ordinary language of every nation into which they come, so that, with the Word of God living richly in all, people may worship God in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

9. The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself, and therefore whenever there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other passages which speak more clearly.
10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and by which must be examined all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, and doctrines of men and private spirits can be no other than the Holy Scripture, delivered by the Spirit. And in the sentence of Scripture we are to rest, for it is in Scripture, delivered by the Spirit, that our faith is finally resolved.

## 2. God and the Holy Trinity

1. The Lord our God is the one and only living and true God; Whose subsistence is in and of Himself
  - Who is infinite in being and perfection; Whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself;
  - Who is a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions
  - Who only has immortality
  - Who dwells in the light which no man can approach, Who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute;
  - Who works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory;
  - Who is most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;
  - Who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin;
  - Who is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him;
  - and Who, at the same time, is most just and terrible in His judgements, hating all sin and Who will by no means clear the guilty.
2. God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and from Himself, is unique in being all- sufficient, both in Himself and to Himself, not standing in need of any creature which He has made, nor deriving any glory from such.
  - On the contrary, it is God Who manifests His own glory in them, through them, to them and upon them. He is the only fountain of all being; from Whom, through Whom, and to Whom all things exist and move.
  - He has completely sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do through them, for them, or to them whatever He pleases.
  - In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependant on the creature.
  - Therefore, nothing is for Him contingent or uncertain.
  - He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.

- To Him is due from angels and men whatever worship, service, or obedience, they owe as creatures to the Creator, and whatever else He is pleased to require from them.

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit. All are one in substance, power, and eternity; each having the whole divine essence, yet this essence being undivided.

The Father was not derived from any other being; He was neither brought into being by, nor did He issue from any other being.

- The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.

- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

- All three are infinite, without beginning, and are therefore only one God, Who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties, and also their personal relations.

- This doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and our comfortable dependence on Him.

---

### 3. God's Decree

1. God has decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things which shall ever come to pass.

- Yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with any in the committing of sins, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

- In all this God's wisdom is displayed, disposing all things, and also His power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.

2. Although God knows everything which may or can come to pass under all imaginable conditions, yet He has not decreed anything because He foresaw it in the future, or because it would come to pass under certain conditions.
3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace. Others are left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.
4. Those angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and the number of them is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind who are predestinated to life, God chose before the foundation of the world was laid, in accordance with His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. God chose them in Christ for everlasting glory, solely out of His free grace and love, without anything in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him to choose.
6. As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so, by the eternal and completely free intention of His will, He has foreordained all the means. Accordingly, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam:
  - are redeemed by Christ,
  - are effectually called to faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season,
  - are justified, adopted, sanctified,
  - and are kept by His power through faith unto salvation;
  - neither are any but the elect redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.
7. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, in order that men who are heeding the will of God revealed in His Word, and who are yielding obedience to it, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their eternal election.

So shall this doctrine provide cause for praise, reverence, admiration of God, and also provide cause for humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all who sincerely obey the Gospel.

---

#### 4. Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world and all things in it both visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.
2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasoning and immortal souls, rendering them fit to live that life for Him for which they were created;
  - being made in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and having the power to fulfil it;
  - and yet living under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will which was subject to change.

3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. While they kept this command they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over all other creatures.

---

## 5. Divine Providence

1. God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, upholds, directs, disposes and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created.

- God governs according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchanging counsel of His own will;

- for the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, boundless goodness, and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, Who is the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that nothing happens to anyone by chance, or outside His providence, yet by His providence He orders events to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.
3. God, in His ordinary providence makes use of means, yet He is free to work outside, above, and against them at His pleasure.
4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extends even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions of both angels and men.

- This is not merely by a bare permission, but by a form of permission in which He included the most wise and powerful limitations, and other means of restricting and controlling sin. These various limitations have been designed by God to bring about his most holy purposes.

- Yet, in all these affairs, the sinfulness of both angels and men comes only from them and not from God, Who is altogether holy and righteous, and can never be the author or approver of sin.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves, for a time, His own children to various temptations, and to the corruptions of their own hearts, in order to chastise them for the sins which they have committed, or to show them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness still in their hearts, so that they may be humbled and aroused to a more close and constant dependence upon Himself for their support, and that they may be made more watchful against future occasions of sin. Other just and holy objectives are also served by such action by God.

Therefore whatever happens to any of His select is by His appointment, for His glory, and for their good.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a righteous judge, blinds and hardens for former sin, from them He not only withholds His grace, by which they might have been enlightened in their understanding and affected in their hearts, but sometimes He also withdraws the gifts which they had and exposes them to certain objects which their corrupt state will make the occasion of sin.

- God gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, so that eventually they harden themselves under the same influences which God uses for the softening of others.

7. As the providence of God in general reaches to all creatures, so, in a more special manner, it takes care of His church, and governs all things to the good of His church.

---

## 6. The Fall of Man, Sin and Punishment

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which secured life for him while he kept it, and although God warned him that he would die if he broke it, yet man did not live long in this honour.

- Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, seduced Adam by her, and he, without any compulsion, wilfully transgressed the law of their creation and the command given to them by eating the forbidden fruit.

- And this act God, according to His wise and holy counsel, was pleased to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

2. Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them. For from this, death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.
3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and their corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. Their descendants are therefore conceived in sin, and are by nature the children of wrath, the servants of sin, and the subjects of death and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free.
4. All actual transgressions proceed from this original corruption, by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.
5. During this life the corruption of nature remains in those who are regenerated, and although it is pardoned and mortified through Christ, yet this corrupt nature and all its motions are truly and properly sinful.

---

## 7. God's Covenant

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to Him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life except by some voluntary condescension on God's part, and this He has been pleased to express in the form of a covenant.
2. Moreover, as man had brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace. In this covenant He freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring from them faith in Him that they may be saved, and promising to give to all who are appointed to eternal life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.
3. This covenant is revealed through the Gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by further steps until the full revelation of it became complete in the New Testament. The covenant of salvation rests upon an eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect. It is solely by the grace of this covenant that all the descendants of fallen Adam who have ever been saved have obtained life and blessed immortality, because man is now utterly incapable of gaining acceptance with God on the terms by which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

---

## 8. Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things, and the Judge of all the world. To the Lord Jesus He gave, from all eternity, a people to be His seed. These, in time, would be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified by the Lord Jesus.
2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being true and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of the same substance and equal with Him;
  - Who made the world, and Who upholds and governs all things which He has made,
  - did, when the fullness of time had come, take upon Himself man's nature, with all its essential properties and common infirmities, with the exception of sin.
  - He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowing her, so that He was born to a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, in accordance with the Scriptures.

- Thus two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion;

- So that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, yet He is one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

3. The Lord Jesus, His human nature thus united to the divine, once in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him so that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety, a position and duty which He did not take upon Himself, but was called to perform by His Father. And the Father also put all power and judgement in His hand, and gave Him commandment to exercise the same.
4. This office and duty of Mediator and Surety the Lord Jesus undertook most willingly. To discharge it, He was made under the law, and perfectly fulfilled it, and He underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered. He was made sin and was made a curse for us; enduring the most grievous sorrows in His Soul with the most painful sufferings in His duty. He was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, but His body did not undergo any decomposition. On the third day He rose from the dead with the same body in which He had suffered, with which He also ascended into Heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.
5. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up to God, has fully satisfied the justice of God, has procured reconciliation, and has purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father has given to Him.
6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His incarnation yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit arising from His payment were communicated to the elect in all ages from the beginning of the world through those promises, types, and sacrifices in which He was revealed and signified as the seed which should bruise the serpent's head, and also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.
7. Christ, in His work of Mediator, acts according to both natures, each nature doing that which is proper to itself. Yet, because of the unity of His person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.
8. To all those for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, He certainly and effectually applies and communicates this redemption, making intercession for them, uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing to them in the Word and by the Word the mystery of salvation. He persuades them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit, and overcome all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom. This is achieved in such a manner and by such ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation, and it is all by free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it.

9. This office of Mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, Who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. Free Will of God, and this office may not be transferred from Him to any other, either in whole or in part.
  10. This number and order of offices is essential. Because of our ignorance we need His prophetic office. Because of our alienation from God and the imperfection of the best of our service, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us to God as acceptable. Because of our aversion to, and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and keeping from spiritual enemies, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us until we reach His heavenly kingdom.
- 

## 9. Free Will

1. God has indued the will of man, by nature, with liberty and the power to choose and to act upon his choice. This free will is neither forced, nor destined by any necessity of nature to do good or evil.
  2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but he was unstable, so that he might fall from this condition.
  3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability of will to perform any of the spiritual good which accompanies salvation. As a natural man, he is altogether averse to spiritual good, and dead in sin. He is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself for conversion.
  4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into a state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin, and by grace alone He enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. But because of his remaining corruptions he does not only (or perfectly) will that which is good, but also wills that which is evil.
  5. The will of man will only be made perfectly and immutably free to will good alone in the state of glory.
- 

## 10. Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God has predestinated to life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time to effectually call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death which they are in by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives to them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills, and by His almighty power, causes them to desire and pursue that which is good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, yet in such a way that they come absolutely freely, being made willing by His grace.
2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not on account of anything at all foreseen in man. It is not made because of any power or agency in the creature who is

wholly passive in the matter. Man is dead in sins and trespasses until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit. By this he is enabled to answer the call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it. This enabling power is no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

3. Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, Who works when, where, and how He pleases. So also are all elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.
4. Others are not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may experience some common operations of the Spirit, yet because they are not effectually drawn by the Father, they will not and cannot truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men who do not embrace the Christian religion be saved, however diligent they may be to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the requirements of the religion they profess.

---

## 11. Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calls He also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting them as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone. They are not justified because God reckons as their righteousness either their faith, their believing, or any other act of evangelical obedience. They are justified wholly and solely because God imputes to them Christ's righteousness. He imputes to them Christ's active obedience to the whole law and His passive obedience in death. They receive Christ's righteousness by faith, and rest on Him. They do not possess or produce this faith themselves, it is the gift of God.
2. Faith which receives Christ's righteousness and depends on Him is the sole instrument of justification, yet this faith is not alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all the other saving graces. And it is not a dead faith, but works by love.
3. Christ, by His obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified, and by the sacrifice of himself through the blood of His cross, underwent instead of them the penalty due to them, so making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on their behalf. Yet because He was given by the Father for them, and because His obedience and satisfaction was accepted instead of theirs (and both freely, not because of anything in them), therefore they are justified entirely and solely by free grace, so that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.
4. From all eternity God decreed to justify all the elect, and Christ, in the fullness of time, died for their sins, and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit, in due time, actually applies Christ to them.
5. God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may because of their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure. In that condition they will not usually have the light of God's countenance restored to them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

6. The justification of believers during the Old Testament period was in all these respects exactly the same as the justification of New Testament believers.
- 

## **12. Adoption**

1. God has vouchsafed, that in Christ, His only Son, and for His sake, all those who are justified shall be made partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number of the children of God and enjoy their liberties and privileges. They have His name put upon them, and receive the Spirit of adoption. They have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, 'Abba, Father!' They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a father, yet they are never cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption, when they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.
- 

## **13. Sanctification**

1. Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having had a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are then further sanctified in a very real and personal way. Because of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection. and by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed. The different lusts of the body of sin are increasingly weakened and mortified, and Christ's people are increasingly quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to practise all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
  2. This sanctification extends throughout the whole person, yet it remains imperfect in this life. Some remnants of corruption live on in every part, and from this arises a continuous war between irreconcilable parties - the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
  3. In this war, although the remaining corruption for a time may greatly prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part overcomes. And so the saints grow in grace perfecting holiness in the fear of God; pressing after a heavenly life in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word, has prescribed to them.
- 

## **14. Saving Faith**

1. The grace of faith by which the elect are enabled to believe, so that their souls are saved, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily brought into being by

the ministry of the Word. It is also increased and strengthened by the work of the Spirit through the ministry of the Word, and also by the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God.

2. By this faith a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because this Word has the authority of God Himself. Also, by this saving faith, a Christian apprehends an excellency in the Word which is higher than in all other writings and everything else in the world, because the Word shows forth the glory of God, revealing His attributes, showing the excellency of Christ's nature and offices, and also the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations. - So the Christian is enabled to cast his soul upon the Truth he has believed, and to see and respond to the different kinds of teaching which different passages of Scripture contain. Saving faith equips him to perceive and obey the commands, hear the threatenings with fear and respect, and to embrace the promises of God for this life and the life to come. - But the first and most important acts of saving faith are those directly to do with Christ, when the soul accepts, receives, and rests upon Him alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.
3. This faith, although it differs in degree, and may be weak or strong, even at its very weakest is in an entirely different class and has a different nature (like other aspects of saving grace) from the kind of faith and common grace which is possessed by temporary believers. Therefore, though it may be frequently assailed and weakened, it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, Who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

---

## 15. Repentance and Salvation

1. Those of the elect who are converted in riper years, having lived some time in the state of nature, and in this state served various lusts and pleasures, God gives repentance which leads to life, through an effectual call.
2. Because there is not one person who does good and commits no sin, and because the best of men may fall into great sins and provocations through the power and deceitfulness of their own indwelling corruption and the prevalency of temptation, God has mercifully provided in the covenant of grace that when believers sin and fall they shall be renewed through repentance to salvation.
3. Saving repentance is an evangelical grace by which a person who is made to feel, by the Holy Spirit, the manifold evils of his sin, and being given faith in Christ, humbles himself over his sin with godly sorrow, detestation of his sin and self-abhorrency. In such repentance the person also prays for pardon and strength of grace, and has a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit's power, to walk before God and to totally please Him in all things.
4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, on account of the body of death, and the motions of it, it is therefore every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.
5. Such is the provision which God has made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers in the way of salvation, that although even the smallest sin

deserves damnation, yet there is no sin great enough to bring damnation on those who repent. This makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

---

## 16. Good Works

1. Good works are only those works which God has commanded in His Holy Word. Works which do not have the warrant of Scripture, and are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions are not good works.
2. Good works, performed in obedience to God's commandments, are these: the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. By these believers express and show their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the Gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, Whose workmanship they are; created in Christ Jesus to perform good works, and to have fruits of holiness which lead to eternal life.
3. Their ability to do these good works does not in any way come from themselves, but comes wholly from the Spirit of Christ. To enable them to do good works, alongside the graces which they have already received, it is necessary for there to be a further real influence of the same Holy Spirit to cause them to will and to do of His good pleasure. But believers are not, on these grounds, to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless given a special motion by the Spirit, but they must be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.
4. Those who attain the greatest height which is possible in this life in their obedience to God, are still so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much which they are bound to do in their duty to God.
5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life from the hand of God because of the great disproportion between our best works and the glory to come, and because of the infinite distance which is between us and God. With our works we cannot profit or satisfy God concerning the debt we owe on account of our sins. When we have done all we can, we have only done our duty, and are still unprofitable servants. And in any case, in so far as our works are good they originate from the work of the Holy Spirit. Even then, the good works are so defiled by us, and so mixed with weakness and imperfection, that they could not survive the severity of God's judgement.
6. Yet, quite apart from the fact that believers are accepted through Christ as individual souls, their good works are also accepted through Christ. It is not as though the believers are (in this life) wholly unblameable and unreprouable in God's sight, but because He looks upon them in His Son, and is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although it is accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.
7. Works performed by unregenerate men, although they may in essence be things which God commands, and they may be good and beneficial both to themselves and others, yet because they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith, and are not done in a right manner according to the Word, and because it is not their underlying purpose to bring glory to God, therefore they are sinful, and cannot please God, nor can they make a man fit to receive grace from God. And yet, for unregenerate men to neglect such works is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

---

## 17. The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, and has effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they will certainly persevere in that state to the end and be eternally saved. This is because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and therefore He continues to beget and nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the spirit which lead to immortality. And though many storms and floods arise and beat against the saints, yet these things shall never be able to sweep them off the foundation and rock which they are fastened upon by faith. Even though, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sight and feeling of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet God is still the same, and they are sure to be kept by His power until their salvation is complete, when they shall enjoy the purchased possession which is theirs, for they are engraved upon the palm of His hands, and their names have been written in His Book of Life from all eternity.
2. This perseverance of the saints does not depend on them - that is, on their own free will. It rests upon the immutability of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father. It also rests upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and upon the union which true saints have with Him. - It rests upon the oath of God, and upon the abiding of His Spirit.

- It depends upon the seed of God being within them and upon the very nature of the covenant of grace.

- All these factors give rise to the certainty and infallibility of the security and perseverance of the saints.

3. The saints may, through the temptation of Satan and the world, and because their remaining sinful tendencies prevail over them, and through their neglect of the means which God has provided to keep them, fall into grievous sins. They may continue in this state for some time, so that they incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit, suffer the impairment of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their conscience wounded, and hurt and scandalise others. By this they will bring temporal judgements upon themselves. Yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved, through faith in Christ Jesus, to the end.

---

## 18. Assurance of Salvation

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions that they are in the favour of God and in a state of salvation, such a hope on their part will perish. Yet those who truly

believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, and who endeavour to walk in all good conscience before Him, may be certainly assured in this life that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And such a hope shall never make them ashamed.

2. This assurance is not merely a conjectural persuasion nor even a probable persuasion based upon a fallible hope. It is an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel. It is also founded upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit in connection with definite promises made in the Scriptures, and also on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, and who uses the experience of assurance to keep our hearts both humble and holy.
3. This infallible assurance is not so joined to the essence of faith that it is an automatic and inevitable experience. A true believer may wait long and fight with many difficulties before he becomes a partaker of it. Yet, being enabled by the spirit to know the things which are freely given to him by God, he may, without any extraordinary revelation attain this assurance by using the means of grace in the right way. Therefore it is the duty of every one to give the utmost diligence to make his calling and election sure, so that his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness for carrying out the duties of obedience. These duties are the natural fruits of assurance, for it is far from inclining men to slackness.
4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation in various ways shaken, diminished, or intermitted. This may be because of their negligence in preserving it, or by their falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit, or by some sudden or forceful temptation, or by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and causing even those who fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light. Yet, believers are never left without the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren that sincerity of heart and that conscience about their spiritual duty. Out of these things, by the operation of the Spirit, their assurance can in due time be revived, and in the meantime the presence of these graces preserves them from utter despair.

---

## 19. The Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience which was written in his heart, and He gave him very specific instruction about not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By this Adam and all his descendants were bound to personal, total, exact, and perpetual obedience, being promised life upon the fulfilling of the law, and threatened with death upon the breach of it. At the same time Adam was endued with power and ability to keep it.
2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the Fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in the ten commandments, and written in two tables, the first four containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.

3. Besides this law, commonly called the moral law, God was pleased do give the people of Israel ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances. These ordinances were partly about their worship, and in them Christ was prefigured along with His attributes and qualities, His actions, His sufferings and His benefits. These ordinances also gave instructions about different moral duties. All of these ceremonial laws were appointed only until the time of reformation, when Jesus Christ the true Messiah and the only lawgiver, Who was furnished with power from the Father for this end, cancelled them and took them away.
4. To the people of Israel He also gave sundry judicial laws which expired when they ceased to be a nation. These are not binding on anyone now by virtue of their being part of the laws of that nation, but their general equity continue to be applicable in modern times.
5. The moral law ever binds to obedience everyone, justified people as well as others, and not only out of regard for the matter contained in it, but also out of respect for the authority of God the Creator, Who gave the law. Nor does Christ in the Gospel dissolve this law in any way, but He considerably strengthens our obligation to obey it.
6. Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned by it, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, because as a rule of life it informs them of the will of God and their duty and directs and binds them to walk accordingly. It also reveals and exposes the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts and lives, and using it for self-examination they may come to greater conviction of sin, greater humility and greater hatred of their sin. They will also gain a clearer sight of their need of Christ and the perfection of His own obedience. It is of further use to regenerate people to restrain their corruptions, because of the way in which it forbids sin. The threatenings of the law serve to show what their sins actually deserve, and what troubles may be expected in this life because of these sins even by regenerate people who are freed from the curse and undiminished rigours of the law. The promises connected with the law also show believers God's approval of obedience, and what blessings they may expect when the law is kept and obeyed, though blessing will not come to them because they have satisfied the law as a covenant of works. If a man does good and refrains from evil simply because the law encourages to the good and deters him from the evil, that is no evidence that he is under the law rather than under grace.
7. The aforementioned uses of the law are not contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but they sweetly comply with it, as the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do freely and cheerfully those things which the will of God, which is revealed in the law, requires to be done.

---

## 20. The Gospel and Its Influence

1. The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable for life, God was pleased to promise Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect and bringing to life within them faith and repentance. In this promise the substance of the Gospel was revealed and shown to be the effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

2. This promise of Christ and the salvation which comes by Him, is revealed only by the Word of God. The works of creation and providence with the light of nature do not reveal Christ or His grace even in a general or obscure way. How much less, therefore, can those who are devoid of the revelation of Christ by the promise (or the Gospel) be enabled by the light of nature to arrive at saving faith or repentance.
3. The revelation of the Gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the Gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.
4. Although the Gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and as such is totally sufficient to accomplish this, yet more is necessary if men who are dead in trespasses are to be born again, brought to life or regenerated. It is necessary for there to be an effectual, insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul to produce in them a new spiritual life. Without this no other means will bring about their conversion to God.

---

## 21. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the Gospel, lies in their freedom from the guilt of sin and the condemning wrath of God, from the rigours and curse of the law, and in their deliverance from this present evil world, from bondage to Satan, from dominion of sin, from the harm of afflictions, from the fear and sting of death, from the victory of the grave, and from everlasting damnation. - This liberty is also seen in their free access to God, and their ability to yield obedience to Him not out of slavish fear, but with childlike love and willing minds. All these freedoms were also experienced in substance by true believers under the Old Testament law, but for New Testament Christians this liberty is further enlarged, for they have freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law to which the Jewish church was subjected. They also have greater boldness of access to the throne of grace and fuller communications of the free Spirit of God than believers under the law normally experienced.
2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from all doctrines and commandments of men which are in any respect contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. Thus to believe such doctrines or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience. The requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.
3. They who on pretence of Christian liberty practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, pervert the main purpose of the grace of the Gospel to their own destruction. They completely destroy the object of Christian liberty, which is that we, being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.

---

## 22. Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shows that there is a God Who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is just and good, and Who does good to all. Therefore He is to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God has been instituted by Himself, and therefore our method of worship is limited by His own revealed will. He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan. He may not be worshipped by way of visible representations, or by any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.
2. Worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures. And since the Fall, worship is not to be given without a mediator, nor by any other mediation than that of Christ.
3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, is one part of natural worship, and this God requires of all men. But to be accepted it must be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, and according to His will. It must be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and corporate prayer must be made in a known language.
4. Prayer is to be made for lawful things, and for all kinds of people who are alive now or who shall live in the future, but not for the dead, nor for those who are known to have sinned the 'sin leading to death'.
5. The reading of the Scriptures, preaching and hearing the Word of God, the teaching and admonishing of one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as well as the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, are all parts of the worship of God. These are to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear. Also to be used in a holy and reverent manner on special occasions are times of solemn humiliation, fastings, and thanksgivings.
6. Under the Gospel neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth, whether in private families daily, in secret by each individual, or solemnly in the public assemblies. These are not to be carelessly or wilfully neglected or forsaken, when God by His Word and providence calls us to them.
7. As it is the law of nature that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, should be set apart for the worship of God, so He has given in His Word a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding upon all men, in all ages to this effect. He has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy for Him. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ this was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ it was changed to the first day of the week and called the Lord's Day. This is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week having been abolished.
8. The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord by those who, after the necessary preparation of their hearts and prior arranging of their common affairs, observe all day a holy rest from their own works, words and thoughts about their worldly employment and recreations,

and give themselves over to the public and private acts of worship for the whole time, and to carrying out duties of necessity and mercy.

---

### **23. Lawful Oaths and Vows**

1. A lawful oath is an act of religious worship, in which the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falsity of it.
  2. Only by the name of God can a righteous oath be sworn, and only if it is used with the utmost fear of God and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly or rashly by the glorious and awesome name of God, or to swear by any other name or thing, is sinful, and to be regarded with disgust and detestation. But in matters of weight and moment, for the confirmation of truth, and for the ending of strife, an oath is sanctioned by the Word of God. Therefore a lawful oath being imposed by a lawful authority can rightly be taken in such circumstances.
  3. Whoever takes an oath sanctioned by the Word of God is bound to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and affirm or confess to nothing except that which he knows to be true. For by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked and because of them this land mourns.
  4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words. without equivocation or mental reservation.
  5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all the utmost care and faithfulness. But monastical vows (as in the Church of Rome) of a perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, so far from being degrees of higher perfection, are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.
- 

### **24. The Civil Magistrate**

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory and the public good. For this purpose He has armed them with the power of the sword, agement of those that do good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.
2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and carry out the duties of a magistrate when called upon. In the performance of such office they are particularly responsible for maintaining justice and peace by application of the right and beneficial laws of the nation. Also, to maintain justice and peace, they may lawfully (under the New Testament) engage in war if it is just and essential.
3. Because civil magistrates are established by God for the purposes previously defined, we ought to be subject to all their lawful commands as part of our obedience to God, not only to avoid punishment, but for conscience sake. We ought also to make supplications and

prayers for rulers and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

---

## 25. Marriage

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. It is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.
  2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and for preventing uncleanness.
  3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry if they are able with judgement to give their consent. But it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore those who profess the true religion should not marry with infidels or idolaters. Nor should those who are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with those who are wicked in their life or who maintain heretical teaching condemned to judgement.
  4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word, nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties so that such persons may live together as man and wife.
- 

## 26. The Church

1. The universal Church, which may be called invisible (in respect of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) consists of the entire number of the elect, all those who have been, who are, or who shall be gathered into one under Christ, Who is the Head. This universal Church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all.
2. All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the Gospel and obedience to Christ on its terms, and who do not destroy their profession by any errors which contradict or overthrow Gospel fundamentals, or by unholy behaviour, are visible saints and may be regarded as such. All individual congregations ought to be constituted of such people.
3. The purest churches under Heaven are subject to mixture and error, and some have degenerated so much that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless Christ always has had, and always will (to the end of time) have a kingdom in this world, made up of those who believe in Him, and make profession of His name.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In Him, by the appointment of the Father, is vested in a supreme and sovereign manner all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church. The Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be head of the Church, but he is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, who the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

5. In the exercise of the authority which has been entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus calls to Himself from out of the world, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those who are given to Him by His Father, so that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience which He prescribes to them in His Word. Those who are thus called, He commands to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and for the due performance of that public worship, which He requires of them in the world.
6. The members of these churches are saints because they have been called by Christ, and because they visibly manifest and give evidence of their obedience to that call by their profession and walk. Such saints willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving themselves up to the Lord and to one another, according to God's will, in avowed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.
7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to the Lord's mind as declared in His Word, He has given all the power and authority which is in any way required for them to carry on the order of worship and discipline which He has instituted for them to observe. He has also given all the commands and rules for the due and right exercise of this power.
8. A particular church gathered and completely organised according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church are bishops or elders and deacons. These are to be appointed for the peculiar administration of ordinances and the execution of power or duty with which the Lord has entrusted them and to which He has called them. This pattern of church order is to be continued to the end of the world.
9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of bishop or elder in a church, is that he is to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church itself. Such a person should be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the laying on of hands of the eldership of the church (if there be any previously appointed elder or elders). The way of Christ for the calling of a deacon is that he is also to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church and set apart by prayer, with the laying on of hands.
10. Because the work of pastors is to apply themselves constantly to the service of Christ in His churches by the ministry of the Word and prayer, and by watching for their souls as they that must give an account to Him, the churches to which they minister have a pressing obligation to give them not only all due respect, but also to impart to them a share of all their good things, according to their ability. This must be so done that the pastors may have a comfortable supply and that they may not have to be entangled in secular affairs, and may also be able to exercise hospitality towards others. All this is required by the law of nature and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, Who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.
11. Although an obligation lies on the elders or pastors of the churches to be urgently preaching the Word by virtue of their office, yet the work of preaching the Word is not exclusively confined to them. Therefore others who are also gifted and qualified by the Holy Spirit for the task, and who are approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.
12. All believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches when and where they have opportunity so to do, and all who are admitted into the privileges of a church, are

also under the censures and government of that church, in accordance with the rule of Christ.

13. No church members, because of any offence which has been given them by a fellow member, once they have performed their prescribed duty towards the person who has caused the offence, may disturb church order in anyway, or be absent from the meetings of the church or the administration of any ordinances on account of any such offence. On the contrary, they are to wait upon Christ in the further proceedings of the church.
14. Each church and all its members are obligated to pray constantly for the good and prosperity of all Christ's churches everywhere, and to help forward everyone who comes into their district or calling, by the exercise of their gifts and graces. It clearly follows that when churches are planted by the goodness of God they ought also to hold fellowship among themselves to promote peace, increasing love and mutual edification as and when they enjoy an opportunity to do so to their advantage.
15. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in matters of doctrine or administration, which concern the churches in general or any single church, and which affects their peace, union, and edification, or when any members of a church are injured because of any disciplinary proceedings not consistent with the Word and correct order, it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together do, through their appointed messengers meet to consider, and give their advice about the matter in dispute, and to report to all the churches concerned. However, when these messengers are assembled, they are not entrusted with any real church power, or with any jurisdiction over the churches involved in the problem. They cannot exercise any censure over any churches or persons, or impose their determination on the churches or their officers.

---

## 27. The Communion of Saints

1. All saints who are united to Jesus Christ, their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, although they are not by this made one person with Him, have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obligated to the orderly performance of such public and private duties as lead to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.
2. Saints, by their profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as advance their mutual edification. They are also to give relief to each other in outward things according to their different needs and abilities to meet them. This communion or fellowship, though chiefly exercised by saints in their immediate circle of fellow believers such as families, and churches, is also to be extended (according to the rule of the Gospel) to all the household of faith, as God gives the opportunity. This means all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, However, their communion with one another as saints does not take away or infringe the personal ownership which each man has of his goods and possessions.

---

## 28. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in His Church to the end of the world.
2. These holy appointments are to be administered only by those who are qualified and called to administer them, according to the commission of Christ.

---

## 29. Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be to the person who is baptised - a sign of his fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Christ; of remission of sins; and of that person's giving up of himself to God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.
2. Those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects for this ordinance.
3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, in which the person is to be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
4. Immersion - the dipping of the person in water - is necessary for the due administration of this ordinance.

---

## 30. The Lord's Supper

1. The Supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night on which He was betrayed to be observed in His churches until the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth of the sacrifice of Himself in His death. It was also instituted by Christ to confirm believers in all the benefits of His death; - for their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him; - for their further engagement in and commitment to all the duties which they owe to Him; - and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with their fellow believers.
2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor is there any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin (of the living or the dead). There is only a memorial of that one offering up of Christ by Himself upon the cross once for all, the memorial being accompanied by a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God for Calvary. Therefore, the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, being injurious to Christ's own sacrifice, which is the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.
3. The Lord Jesus has, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine (so setting them apart from a common to a holy use) and to

take and break the bread, then to take the cup, and to give both to the communicants, also communicating themselves.

4. The denial of the cup to the people, the practices of worshipping the elements, lifting them up or carrying them about for adoration, or reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ.
5. The outward elements in this ordinance which are correctly set apart and used as Christ ordained, so closely portray Him as crucified, that they are sometimes truly (but figuratively) referred to in terms of the things they represent, such as the body and blood of Christ. However in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.
6. The doctrine commonly called transubstantiation, which maintains that a change occurs in the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood, when consecrated by a priest or by any other way, is repugnant not only to Scripture but even to common sense and reason. It overthrows the nature of the ordinance, and both has been and is the cause of a host of superstitions and of gross idolatries.
7. Worthy receivers, outwardly taking the visible elements in this ordinance, also receive them inwardly and spiritually by faith, truly and in fact, but not carnally and corporally, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death. The body and blood of Christ is not present corporally or carnally but it is spiritually present to the faith of believers in the ordinance, just as the elements are present to their outward senses.
8. All ignorant and ungodly persons who are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ are equally unworthy of the Lord's Table, and therefore cannot without great sin against Him, take a share in these holy mysteries or be admitted to the Supper while they remain in that condition. Indeed those who receive (the elements) unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgement to themselves.

---

### **31. Man's State After Death and the Resurrection**

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and undergo corruption, but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God Who gave them. The souls of the righteous are then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise where they are with Christ, and look upon the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and under darkness, reserved to the judgement of the great day. The Scripture acknowledges no other place than these two for souls separated from their bodies.
2. At the last day, those of the saints who are still alive shall not sleep but shall be changed. And all the dead shall be raised up with their own, same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, and these bodies shall be united again to their souls for ever.
3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour. The bodies of the just shall, by His Spirit be raised to honour, and made conformable to His own glorious body.

---

## 32. The Last Judgement

1. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to Whom all power and judgement is given by the Father. In this day not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but also all people who have lived upon the earth. They shall appear before the tribunal of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done when in the body, whether good or evil.
2. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and also His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. Then shall the righteous go into everlasting life and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward in the presence of the Lord. But the wicked, who know not God and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.
3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there will be a day of judgement, both to deter all men from sin and to give greater consolation to the godly in their adversity, so also He will have the date of that day kept unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and always be watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come. Also, so that men may be affected in such a way that they ever say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Amen.

## APPENDIX 8

(From ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2009)

# LIBERALISM AND EVANGELICALISM

---

### Liberal Protestantism

Liberal Protestantism can best be understood if one begins with a brief look at the thinkers most influential in its development.

### Immanuel Kant

Liberal Protestantism arose out of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. To understand liberalism and its view of the Bible, one must grasp something of this Enlightenment influence. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) produced what he called a “Copernican revolution” in epistemology (the study of how one comes to know what is known). In contrast to the geocentric Ptolemaic worldview (the sun and other planets were understood to orbit around the earth), Copernicus had correctly come to see the solar system heliocentrically (the planets, including the earth, orbit around the sun). Kant's thinking underwent a similar massive paradigm shift. He had believed that *external* objects determine what one sees and claims to know about the world. But Kant came to believe that one's mind contains certain structures called “intuitions” (e.g., space and time) and “categories” (e.g., cause and effect) that provide all the color, shape, relations, location, temporality, and spatiality that one “sees” of the external world. A person may think, e.g., that he is seeing a towering green fir tree out the window, but in fact he simply cannot know what he is seeing. All he can know is that his mind is producing the colors, shapes, relations, and other aspects that give him the impression of what he claims to “see” as a fir tree. Therefore, the towering green fir tree is, in a very real sense, the creation of the person's own mind. Yes, something is “out there,” but what is actually seen, in the way that it is actually seen, is the result of the mind “shaping” the external data into what the person perceives.

Kant distinguished, then, between two realms of reality. The *noumenal* realm referred to the actual external world that exists outside of the mind (what Kant called “the thing in itself”). Of this realm nothing can be known except that something external “is” (i.e., exists). Just what it is—e.g., how big or tall, or what color or shape—cannot be known at all. The *phenomenal* realm, however, is “the thing as it appears.” Whatever that “thing in itself” is, at least a person can know this: it appears to him as tall and green with broad, sweeping branches, and so it appears to him to be a fir tree. So “the thing in itself” cannot be known, and one can know only “the thing as it appears.”

## Friederich Schleiermacher

The German theologian almost universally recognized as the father of modern theological liberalism, Friederich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) was heavily influenced by Kant's philosophy. Schleiermacher applied the same “Copernican revolution” to theology that Kant had applied to epistemology. Schleiermacher proposed that the study of God must consider both the noumenal and phenomenal realms of knowledge. Certainly God himself would rightly be located within the “noumenal realm” (the realm of the “thing in itself” that would be beyond human ability to know). As many in the mystical tradition of the church had already affirmed, God is beyond human comprehension or knowledge and exists in a “cloud of unknowing.” Schleiermacher adapted this tradition within the Romanticism of his day and combined it with Kant's notion of God existing within the noumenal realm. God “in himself,” then, cannot be known. But in the “phenomenal realm” (the realm of God “as he appears” to someone), God can be known. That is, although one cannot know God as he actually is, one can know his own *experience* of God.

Schleiermacher resisted the “cultured despisers of religion” of his day. From the very fact that religious experience is universal and has always been an integral part of the experience of human cultures through time, he argued that it is evident that humans generally have this phenomenal experience of God. In fact, argued Schleiermacher, religion rightly understood should be seen as one's own “feeling of absolute dependence” before some supreme deity. Theology, then, cannot be *the study of God himself* but should rather be understood as *the study of the human experience of God*, in different ways and throughout different cultures. Theology does not attempt to describe God objectively but rather expresses ways in which thoughtful religious people experience their personal “God-consciousness” or “feeling of absolute dependence.” The religious liberalism stemming from Schleiermacher, then, was “immanentistic” (i.e., that God-awareness, not God himself, is the heart of religion) and “anti-authoritarian” (i.e., that subjective experience takes precedence over Scripture, tradition, church declarations, and creedal statements).

### The Effect of Liberalism on the Doctrine of Scripture

The implications of this liberal shift from the study of God to the study of humanity's religious experience were enormous. One very important part of this shift was a radically different view of the Bible. Previously, the Bible had been thought of as divine revelation. That is, the God who created humankind and sent his Son to redeem them from their sin had actually revealed truth about himself and his plan of salvation, and this revelation was given in God's own Word, the Bible. But with Schleiermacher's Copernican revolution in theology, the Bible could no longer be “God's word,” since God cannot be known and no word from him is possible. What is the Bible, then? For Schleiermacher and the liberal tradition that followed, the Bible was the product of various religious cultures and peoples, who recorded their own experiences with God as they imagined him to be. The Bible, then, contributed more directly to a “sociology of religions” inquiry than it did to a traditional “theology” (i.e., study of God). Since the Bible was merely the product of human cultures, over vast times, and through ancient and primitive understandings

of the world, it certainly could not be understood as presenting truth that would be binding on anyone today, even if it did contain certain religious insights helpful for people of all times. Much less should the Bible be seen as divine truth, since God is beyond anyone's tangible grasp, and no book—including the Bible—could be *God's* word to humanity.

The nineteenth century, then, saw this liberal view of the Bible extended as historical-critical approaches to study of the Bible were developed. Two areas that received especially heated criticism were (1) the biblical teachings on the origins of the world and of human and other life on earth, and (2) the biblical teachings regarding Jesus' eternal existence, supernatural origin, miracles, atoning death, and bodily resurrection. A naturalistic understanding of the world had begun to prevail among the educated elites in Europe and America, and the very notion of supernatural intervention through miracles was deemed both unscientific and unnecessary in accounting for the world. The publication by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) signaled for liberals not only the negation of miracles in explaining life but the end of any need for God's supernatural intervention in any form in accounting for life here on earth.

### **Albrecht Ritschl**

Another German theology professor, Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), took Schleiermacher's insights and applied them particularly to the question of the meaning of Jesus' life. For Ritschl, Jesus was the supreme embodiment of God-consciousness and God-dependence. While being threatened by hostile forces, Jesus nonetheless trusted absolutely in God's love and power. He is therefore the Archetypal Man, a model for affirming value and worth in dependence on God. For Ritschl, the moral value of Christ and Christianity was central, for this provides the means by which contemporary people, in the community of the church, may overcome hostile pressures by dependence on God. So even though the historical facts of Jesus' life could never be known or verified, the moral value of Jesus' life constitutes the religious significance of Jesus for people today.

### **Adolf von Harnack**

German theologian and historian Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), raised in the home of an orthodox Christian scholar, was influenced by Ritschlian liberalism. He came to see the orthodox Christian tradition as being wrongly preoccupied with doctrines and standards of belief while missing the primary thrust of Jesus' teachings, namely, the moral responsibility to live out the righteousness of the kingdom. One must separate the essential “kernel” of the gospel (i.e., Christ's kingdom and its victory over evil) from the dispensable “husk” of the gospel (i.e., changing forms of life and thought). When this is done, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is exposed for every new generation, and the law of love is seen to govern all relationships.

## The Effect of Liberalism on Other Doctrines

Given the prominence of Darwinist evolutionary theory and historical criticism (which attacked the historical reliability of the Bible) at the beginning of the twentieth century, liberalism was clearly prevailing over the defenders of orthodoxy. Under attack by liberalism were such cardinal doctrines as the special creation of Adam and Eve, the literal fall of Adam into sin, the virginal conception of Christ, the incarnation of Christ as fully God and fully human, the miracles that Christ and others performed, the substitutionary atoning death of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ—and underlying all of these, the full divine inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture, which teaches these doctrines as historically and theologically real and true. And of course, since conceptions such as sin, wrath, and hell were rejected, the gospel of liberalism was morphed into the so-called social gospel. Saving of souls was replaced with relieving people's present physical and social needs. The “good news” that liberals proclaimed was of a loving God who, through Christ's example of care for the poor and outcast, calls his people to help bring in the kingdom by showing love to others. The growing liberalism of the mainline Christian denominations of the early twentieth century was pervaded by an optimism regarding human nature that casts off human sinfulness and depravity, and an exclusive attention to God's love that turns a deaf ear to notions of God's anger and just judgment. Human reason had replaced revelation as the only reliable source for knowledge, and scientific naturalism had made it clear that the supernaturalist dogmas of orthodoxy simply had to be discarded if Christianity was to survive in this brave new world.

## A Blow to the Optimism of Liberalism

The outbreak of the First World War was a blow to the optimistic outlook of liberalism. Many younger liberals became disenchanted with their heritage and followed the lead of Karl Barth (1886–1968) and Emil Brunner (1889–1966) toward a somewhat more conservative movement called “neo-orthodoxy.” But liberalism's influence continued, particularly through the mainline denominations and many prestigious institutions of higher education. Gordon Kaufman, for over 30 years professor of theology and divinity at Harvard Divinity School, in 1981 published a book whose title beautifully captures the liberal mind-set—*The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God*. Since liberalism does not have divine revelation to read and study, and since it regards the Bible as a collection merely of human opinion and experience of God, theological liberals are left with only their own experience, reason, and imagination. Replacing the divine revelation in Scripture on which evangelicals depend is the imagination of their own human minds. Rather than receiving the revelation of God, they construct from their own thoughts the concept of God that they believe are most helpful to an ailing world.

## Conclusion

Protestant liberalism today continues to have significant influence. It represents the underlying theological position held by most of the leadership and professors in the theological seminaries of several mainline denominations in the United States (such as the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church, the American Baptist

Convention, the Presbyterian Church–USA, and the United Church of Christ), though all these denominations still have some conservative evangelical congregations, teachers, and people within them as well. In addition, Protestant liberalism is the most common viewpoint in campus ministry offices in secular universities, and also among the professors who teach the Bible in religion departments of those universities. (Campus parachurch ministries, however, tend to be more in line with evangelical Protestantism.)

But liberalism's disregard for the church's long-standing claim that Scripture is divinely inspired and authoritative has left its adherents with an authority residing only in their own minds, and with understandings of what is acceptable that are mere echoes of secular values. Reason replaces revelation, cultural relativism replaces absolute truth, human optimism replaces divine salvation—and in all this, the gospel and historic orthodox faith is lost. The sad heritage of liberalism is a warning to all Christians to continue firm in the conviction that Scripture alone is God's inspired and authoritative Word from which one learns the truth that alone can set people free.

### Evangelical Protestantism **Reformation (16th Century)**

Evangelical Protestantism arose out of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The commitment of Martin Luther (1483–1546) to *sola Scriptura*—i.e., to “Scripture alone” as the only absolute and ultimately authoritative written revelation of God—along with other factors, brought about a separation from the **Roman Catholic Church**. Roman Catholicism had understood other sources of revelation to be equal in authority to Scripture. Catholics understood the Bible to include several apocryphal books in addition to the 66 books accepted by Protestants as canonical Scripture; significantly, they also extended infallibility to church dogma pronounced by the magisterium (the pope and the bishops) and by the pope when speaking *ex cathedra* (lit., “out of his chair”). (This latter point was formally defined only in 1870, but most Catholics had taken it for granted since the Middle Ages.) This Roman Catholic extension of infallibility and authority was the backdrop for *sola Scriptura*, one of the heart-cries of the Reformation. This proclaimed Scripture alone as possessing complete infallibility and exclusive absolute authority for the church. One tangible effect of the Protestant commitment to the exclusive divine authority of Scripture for faith and practice was the diligent and courageous production of numerous translations of the Bible into the native languages of various countries and peoples. Protestants believed then, as now, that the Bible is for all the people of God. Only as people can read and study the Bible for themselves will they be able to learn well the teaching of God's Word and, in the manner of the Bereans of old (**Acts 17:11**), be able to assess various and divergent views of Scripture and in teaching.

### **Protestantism (17th–18th Centuries)**

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the rise and spread of various Protestant groupings that formed into denominations, some more directly tied to the “magisterial Reformers” Martin Luther and John Calvin (1509–1564) (e.g., Lutheranism, Presbyterianism,

Anglicanism), and others that were indebted to that tradition yet differed from both Luther and Calvin, particularly in the doctrines of the church and salvation (e.g., Methodists, Baptists, Mennonites). But what these various Protestant groups had in common was a continued commitment to the Bible as the final written revelation of God, in contrast to the Roman Catholic tradition from which they all had retreated. Especially important during these centuries was the Protestant Scholastic reinforcement of the full divine inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture. Pastors and theologians such as William Ames (1576–1633), John Gerhard (1582–1637), John Owen (1616–1683), John Quenstedt (1617–1688), Francis Turretin (1623–1687), Peter von Maastricht (1630–1706), Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), and John Wesley (1703–1791) strongly defended the full inspiration and authority of Scripture. While differing, sometimes vigorously, on what Scripture taught on various doctrines, they affirmed the truthfulness and authority of the Bible to which they appealed. The sixteenth-century cry of *sola Scriptura* was echoed with force and vitality in the various seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Protestant traditions stemming from the Reformation.

### **Protestant Liberalism (19th Century)**

The rise of **Protestant liberalism** in the nineteenth century had a chilling effect on Christian confidence in the Bible as fully divine and authoritative. Following principles made popular in the Enlightenment (an 18th-century intellectual movement in European and American philosophy and culture), liberal scholars and teachers such as Friederich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), and Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) called into question the historicity of the narrative accounts in both the OT and the NT, and they rejected the Bible's many claims to be testifying to God's supernatural activity. As a result, a line of demarcation was established over the divine authorship and full infallibility and authority of the Bible, with liberal Protestants rejecting it and evangelical Protestants accepting it. Add to this the rising liberal biblical scholarship and the developments in evolutionary biology through the publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809–1882), and one can clearly understand the mounting pressure that evangelicals faced in defending their long-standing conviction that Scripture is God's Word and hence is utterly true.

### **Fundamentalism (19th–20th Centuries)**

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the outbreak of what came to be called the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. The conservative and evangelical defenders of the truthfulness and authority of Scripture eventually came to be known as “fundamentalists” because they devoted themselves to defending and preserving for the church the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith that were being denied and ridiculed by so-called “modernists” (i.e., liberals). Influential scholarly defenders of Christian orthodoxy in the face of mounting liberalism included B. B. Warfield (1851–1921), R. A. Torrey (1856–1928), and J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937). They labored hard to interact with liberal attacks against the fundamentals of the faith through their teaching, preaching, and prodigious efforts in writing.

A massive project was undertaken in 1909 to assemble a formidable collection of essays written by recognized conservative scholars defending the major doctrines being assailed by liberals. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, published in 12 volumes from 1910 to 1915, was mailed to pastors and missionaries throughout the world. These volumes contained no fewer than 90 chapters defending against liberal higher criticism such doctrinal fundamentals as the historicity and truthfulness of the Bible, the virgin birth and deity of Christ, the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, the saving death of Christ, and justification by faith, as well as a number of chapters devoted to the errors of liberalism, Darwinism, Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, and other false teachings of the day. Hope was high that liberalism might thus be answered and that a strong orthodoxy would prevail in mainline denominations and churches.

The 1920s saw only increased conflict, however, between fundamentalists and modernists. In religious institutions of higher education and within the mainline denominations, fundamentalist positions and arguments were routinely rejected in favor of more “tolerant” understandings that accorded with modern learning. The most symbolically important defeat to fundamentalism came with the Scopes “Monkey Trial” of 1925. John T. Scopes was tried for his teaching of Darwinist evolution in a Tennessee public school. Defending him was Clarence Darrow, a highly respected Chicago lawyer, and prosecuting the case against him was William Jennings Bryan, well known both as a fundamentalist Presbyterian and for his national political involvements. Although Bryan won the case against Scopes, Darrow publicly ridiculed Bryan's fundamentalist position in ways that were picked up by the national media and published throughout the country. As a result, fundamentalism was decisively rejected by intellectual elites as a repressive and backward set of views, resistant to modern learning and advancement. Along with this rejection of fundamentalism was a rejection of the fundamentalist commitment to the inerrant Bible, the only absolutely authoritative written revelation from God.

The next 20-plus years witnessed a marked departure from the aggressive and culture-confronting approach of the earlier work of Warfield, Torrey, and Machen. Post-1925 fundamentalism came to be characterized more by retreat and separation from the culture than by an effort to engage and transform that broader culture. While fundamentalists continued to hold fast to the authority of Scripture, they knew that their views of the Bible and its teachings were largely rejected by the increasingly secular media and schools of higher education. As a result, they tended to become more isolationist, regularly highlighting the Bible's call to “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (**2 Cor. 6:17**, κλν). Furthermore, because of liberalism's advocacy of the “social gospel” in place of the traditional Christian gospel of faith in Christ for personal salvation from the wrath of God because of human sin, fundamentalists tended to view most kinds of social involvement with a high degree of suspicion, fearing that the “saving of souls” might be displaced by caring for human physical and social needs. In short, the fundamentalism of the decades immediately following the Scopes trial retreated from any aggressive intellectual engagement on behalf of the Bible's truth with the culture's most educated elites, and also withdrew from any intentional effort to address the physical and social needs of society.

## Evangelicalism (20th Century)

Responding to this trend were people such as Harold John Ockenga (1905–1985) and Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003). Ockenga and Henry were typical of a group of young evangelicals in the 1940s who were fully in agreement with fundamentalist commitments to the inerrancy and authority of Scripture and its attending orthodox beliefs, yet were deeply disturbed by the fundamentalist retreat from culture. Henry wrote what would become a clarion call to fundamentalists to reengage the culture, both intellectually and socially. His first published book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947), questioned the separatist mind-set of fundamentalism. Henry called for a new and vibrant defense of evangelical faith in the face of the best (or worst) that liberals could produce, and for a recommitment to join social action with gospel witness such that true evangelical love and care for others might be manifest along with sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Also in 1947, Ockenga and Charles E. Fuller (1887–1968) cofounded Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California) with hopes that a vibrant intellectual evangelical approach to the study of Scripture might take place in full engagement with and in response to liberal scholarship. Charter faculty members were Wilbur M. Smith (1894–1977), Everett F. Harrison (1902–1999), Harold Lindsell (1913–1998), and Carl Henry. In 1956, under the auspices of L. Nelson Bell and Billy Graham, Henry became the first editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, a magazine intended to bring evangelical scholarship and editorial commentary into evangelical homes across the country, much as *The Christian Century* had for decades conveyed more liberal viewpoints predominantly to those in mainline denominations.

Much health and vitality was evident in the evangelical movement of the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s. Consider just some of the organizations and institutions that began during these years: Tyndale Fellowship and Tyndale House (1944) in the UK, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (1947), the Evangelical Theological Society, World Vision (1950), the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (1950), Campus Crusade for Christ (1951), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (1954), Bible Study Fellowship (1959), Youth With A Mission (1960), Operation Mobilization (1960), National Black Evangelical Association (1963), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1969), Food for the Hungry (1971), Prison Fellowship (1976), and Focus on the Family (1977). So strong was the evangelical presence throughout the country that *Newsweek* declared 1976 “The Year of the Evangelical.”

Along with this growth and increased influence, however, some of the underpinnings of biblical authority were eroding. On December 1, 1962 (so-called Black Saturday), Fuller Theological Seminary took steps to remove “inerrancy” from its doctrinal statement regarding Scripture, and this was just one notable indication of a divide within various segments of evangelicalism between those who understood divine inspiration to entail biblical inerrancy and those who denied this. So in the 1960s and 1970s, evangelical growth was paralleled by evangelical division over the inerrancy of Scripture.

In 1977 a prominent group of concerned conservative evangelicals met to design a meeting to take place the next year to define the “inerrancy” of Scripture. The International Council on

Biblical Inerrancy met in Chicago in October 1978 for the first of what would be three summits. Out of this first summit came “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,” the most widely used and definitive statement on its subject for the conservative evangelical movement. At its November 2006 annual meeting, the Evangelical Theological Society adopted the Chicago Statement as its own defining declaration of the inerrancy of Scripture.

### **Evangelical Protestantism Today**

Evangelical Protestantism today consists of hundreds of denominational groups and parachurch organizations, and represents numerous theological streams (such as the Bible-believing segments of Reformed, Arminian, Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, dispensational, Restorationist, charismatic, and Pentecostal groups as well as many independent groups with mixtures of these traditions). In spite of the differences among these traditions, evangelicals are united in the belief that the Bible is not a merely human record of people’s religious experiences (the position of Protestant liberalism) but is actually the Word of God.

Under the large umbrella of those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God remains a continued division over what the divine inspiration of Scripture entails. Some deny the complete truthfulness of Scripture, and this inevitably leads to rejecting certain biblical teachings that one finds objectionable for one reason or another. Others, usually referred to as conservative evangelicals, continue to uphold, defend, and celebrate the full truthfulness of Scripture, since it is, in part and in whole, the very inspired (lit., “breathed out”) Word of God (**2 Tim. 3:16**). Clearly, the evangelical heritage that stems from the Reformers through the early fundamentalist defenders of the Bible to the fathers of contemporary evangelicalism would call readers to affirm, with them, the complete truthfulness of all that the Bible teaches, for all of the Bible is none other than the full Word of God.

### **Evangelical Protestantism and Global Christianity**

Although often regarded as a Western religion, Christianity (which had its birth in Asia) has always been much broader than its European expression and is today a genuinely global religion. During the first two centuries of the Christian era, the centers of Christianity were in Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The faith spread rapidly, so that by the second century A.D. the church was in India, and Christians were in major centers of the Persian Empire. Christian communities were in Ethiopia by the fourth century and in China by the seventh century. It was only after about the fourteenth century that Europe, and later North America, became the heartland of Christianity. Even after the rise of Western European Christianity, however, Christian communities continued to exist elsewhere, including in lands conquered by Muslims in Arabia and Persia.

Furthermore, during the last half of the twentieth century Christianity experienced a dramatic shift in demographics, so that by the early twenty-first century roughly two-thirds of all Christians were located—not in Europe and North America—but in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The Christian church has experienced explosive growth in places such as China, South

Korea, Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana. Many factors contributed to this change, including the decline of Christianity in parts of Europe, the modern missionary movements of the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, and the evangelizing efforts of indigenous Christians.

The Bible has been central to the growth of the Christian church worldwide. Early Protestant missionaries such as William Carey, Adoniram Judson, and Hudson Taylor were motivated by the message of the Bible and convinced that all people should have the opportunity to respond to it. Moreover, from early times the Bible has been translated into local languages, and the Protestant missionary movements of the past three centuries have emphasized biblical translation. The translatability of the Bible into local languages (1) is a recognition of the capacity of all people in all cultures to understand and respond to the Word of God in their own language; (2) gives dignity to local linguistic and cultural expressions; and (3) provides resources for social change. Thus, there is remarkable diversity within global Christianity today, historian Lamin Sanneh observes:

More people pray and worship in more languages and with more differences in styles of worship in Christianity than in any other religion. Well over three thousand of the world's languages are embraced by Christianity through Bible translation, prayer, liturgy, hymns, and literature. More than 90 percent of these languages have a grammar and a dictionary at all only because the Western missionary movement provided them, thus pioneering arguably the largest, most diverse and most vigorous movement of cultural renewal (p. xx).

While the rapidly growing Christian communities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia are in some ways distinctive, and not simply mirror images of denominations and movements in the West, they also have much in common with Western evangelicalism. Most are theologically conservative and embrace worldviews which acknowledge the reality of the supernatural. Most have not been influenced by Enlightenment rationalism and higher-critical approaches to Scripture; they regularly take the Bible in a straightforward manner, with utmost seriousness.

Protestant Christianity is undergoing massive cultural shifts and realignments worldwide, but there are common commitments and institutions which provide cohesion to those identifying themselves as evangelicals. The Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Association (WEA) have been significant in shaping evangelical identity worldwide, and both are based upon strong commitments to the full authority of the Bible. The Lausanne Movement, which grew out of the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, produced the Lausanne Covenant, widely recognized and accepted as a statement of evangelical theological commitment unifying Christians across the globe. The Covenant embraces “the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority” of the Bible as the “written word of God, without error in all that it affirms.” The WEA is an international network of churches in over 120 nations and over 100 international organizations which together represent over 400 million evangelical Christians worldwide. The WEA statement of faith affirms belief in the Bible as “divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy” and “the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.”

Although there are significant differences among evangelicals throughout the world, they are united by a common commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all of life and the authority of the Bible as God's divinely inspired written revelation.

## CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICAL STATEMENTS

---

# The Cambridge Declaration

April 20, 1996

Evangelical churches today are increasingly dominated by the spirit of this age rather than by the Spirit of Christ. As evangelicals, we call ourselves to repent of this sin and to recover the historic Christian faith.

In the course of history words change. In our day this has happened to the word "evangelical." In the past it served as a bond of unity between Christians from a wide diversity of church traditions. Historic evangelicalism was confessional. It embraced the essential truths of Christianity as those were defined by the great ecumenical councils of the church. In addition, evangelicals also shared a common heritage in the "solos" of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation.

Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.

### **Sola Scriptura: The Erosion of Authority**

Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided, far too often, by the culture. Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions and what it offers, than does the Word of God. Pastors have neglected their rightful oversight of worship, including the doctrinal content of the music. As biblical authority has been abandoned in practice, as its truths have faded from Christian consciousness, and as its doctrines have lost their saliency, the church has been increasingly emptied of its integrity, moral authority and direction.

Rather than adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers, we must

proclaim the law as the only measure of true righteousness and the gospel as the only announcement of saving truth. Biblical truth is indispensable to the church's understanding, nurture and discipline.

Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the seductive images, cliches, promises and priorities of mass culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preacher's opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given.

The work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth.

**Thesis One: Sola Scriptura**

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

**Solus Christus: The Erosion of Christ-Centered Faith**

As evangelical faith becomes secularized, its interests have been blurred with those of the culture. The result is a loss of absolute values, permissive individualism, and a substitution of wholeness for holiness, recovery for repentance, intuition for truth, feeling for belief, chance for providence, and immediate gratification for enduring hope. Christ and his cross have moved from the center of our vision.

**Thesis Two: Solus Christus**

We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

## **Sola Gratia: The Erosion of The Gospel**

Unwarranted confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature. This false confidence now fills the evangelical world; from the self-esteem gospel, to the health and wealth gospel, from those who have transformed the gospel into a product to be sold and sinners into consumers who want to buy, to others who treat Christian faith as being true simply because it works. This silences the doctrine of justification regardless of the official commitments of our churches.

God's grace in Christ is not merely necessary but is the sole efficient cause of salvation. We confess that human beings are born spiritually dead and are incapable even of cooperating with regenerating grace.

### **Thesis Three: Sola Gratia**

We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

## **Sola Fide: The Erosion of The Chief Article**

Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. This is the article by which the church stands or falls. Today this article is often ignored, distorted or sometimes even denied by leaders, scholars and pastors who claim to be evangelical. Although fallen human nature has always recoiled from recognizing its need for Christ's imputed righteousness, modernity greatly fuels the fires of this discontent with the biblical Gospel. We have allowed this discontent to dictate the nature of our ministry and what it is we are preaching.

Many in the church growth movement believe that sociological understanding of those in the pew is as important to the success of the gospel as is the biblical truth which is proclaimed. As a result, theological convictions are frequently divorced from the work of the ministry. The marketing orientation in many churches takes this even further, erasing the distinction between the biblical Word and the world, robbing Christ's cross of its offense, and reducing Christian faith to the principles and methods which bring success to secular corporations.

While the theology of the cross may be believed, these movements are actually emptying it of its meaning. There is no gospel except that of Christ's substitution in our place whereby God imputed to him our sin and imputed to us his righteousness. Because he bore our judgment, we now walk in his grace as those who are forever

pardoned, accepted and adopted as God's children. There is no basis for our acceptance before God except in Christ's saving work, not in our patriotism, churchly devotion or moral decency. The gospel declares what God has done for us in Christ. It is not about what we can do to reach him.

**Thesis Four: Sola Fide**

We reaffirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

**Soli Deo Gloria: The Erosion of God-Centered Worship**

Wherever in the church biblical authority has been lost, Christ has been displaced, the gospel has been distorted, or faith has been perverted, it has always been for one reason: our interests have displaced God's and we are doing his work in our way. The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and lamentable. It is this loss that allows us to transform worship into entertainment, gospel preaching into marketing, believing into technique, being good into feeling good about ourselves, and faithfulness into being successful. As a result, God, Christ and the Bible have come to mean too little to us and rest too inconsequentially upon us.

God does not exist to satisfy human ambitions, cravings, the appetite for consumption, or our own private spiritual interests. We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success.

**Thesis Five: Soli Deo Gloria**

We reaffirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

**A Call To Repentance & Reformation**

The faithfulness of the evangelical church in the past contrasts sharply with its

unfaithfulness in the present. Earlier in this century, evangelical churches sustained a remarkable missionary endeavor, and built many religious institutions to serve the cause of biblical truth and Christ's kingdom. That was a time when Christian behavior and expectations were markedly different from those in the culture. Today they often are not. The evangelical world today is losing its biblical fidelity, moral compass and missionary zeal.

We repent of our worldliness. We have been influenced by the "gospels" of our secular culture, which are no gospels. We have weakened the church by our own lack of serious repentance, our blindness to the sins in ourselves which we see so clearly in others, and our inexcusable failure to adequately tell others about God's saving work in Jesus Christ.

We also earnestly call back erring professing evangelicals who have deviated from God's Word in the matters discussed in this Declaration. This includes those who declare that there is hope of eternal life apart from explicit faith in Jesus Christ, who claim that those who reject Christ in this life will be annihilated rather than endure the just judgment of God through eternal suffering, or who claim that evangelicals and Roman Catholics are one in Jesus Christ even where the biblical doctrine of justification is not believed.

The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals asks all Christians to give consideration to implementing this Declaration in the church's worship, ministry, policies, life and evangelism.

For Christ's sake. Amen.

**Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals Executive Council (1996)**

- Dr. John Armstrong
- The Rev. Alistair Begg
- Dr. James M. Boice
- Dr. W. Robert Godfrey
- Dr. John D. Hannah
- Dr. Michael S. Horton
- Mrs. Rosemary Jensen
- Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
- Dr. Robert M. Norris
- Dr. R.C. Sproul
- Dr. Gene Edward Veith
- Dr. David Wells
- Dr. Luder Whitlock
- Dr. J.A.O. Preus, III

This declaration may be reproduced without permission. Please credit the source by citing the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

# Danvers Statement

The Danvers Statement is an official statement of the complementarian Christian view of gender roles. It is not the product of any particular Christian denomination, but has been endorsed or cited by many Christian groups. It was first published by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) in Wheaton, Illinois in November 1988.

## **The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Rationale**

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;
2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;
3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;
4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;
5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;
6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
9. the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized

and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;

10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

## **Affirmations**

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26–27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21–24; 1 Cor 11:7–9; 1 Tim 2:12–14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16–18, 21–24, 3:1–13; 1 Cor 11:7–9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1–7, 12, 16).
  - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
  - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26–27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21–33; Col 3:18–19; 1 Tim 2:11–15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
  - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their

husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).

- In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious, or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).
  8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
  9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).
  10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

— Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, November, 1988

# THE GOSPEL COALITION

## THEOLOGICAL VISION FOR MINISTRY

**This is... a statement of how we intend to discharge Christian ministry and interact with our culture in biblical and theological faithfulness.**

### **I. How should we respond to the cultural crisis of truth? (The epistemological issue)**

For several hundred years, since the dawning of the Enlightenment, it was widely agreed that truth—expressed in words that substantially correspond to reality—does indeed exist and can be known. Unaided human reason, it was thought, is able to know truth objectively. More recently, postmodernism has critiqued this set of assumptions, contending that we are not in fact objective in our pursuit of knowledge, but rather interpret information through our personal experiences, self-interests, emotions, cultural prejudices, language limitations, and relational communities. The claim to objectivity is arrogant, postmodernism tells us, and inevitably leads to conflicts between communities with differing opinions as to where the truth lies. Such arrogance, they say explains, in part, many of the injustices and wars of the modern era. Yet postmodernism's response is dangerous in another way: its most strident voices insist that claims to objective truth be replaced by a more humbly "tolerant" and inclusively diverse subjective pluralism—a pluralism often mired in a swamp that cannot allow any firm ground for "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." Such a stance has no place for truth that corresponds to reality, but merely an array of subjectively shaped truths. How shall we respond to this cultural crisis of truth?

1. We affirm that truth is correspondence to reality. We believe the Holy Spirit who inspired the words of the apostles and prophets also indwells us so that we who have been made in the image of God can receive and understand the words of Scripture revealed by God, and grasp that Scripture's truths correspond to reality. The statements of Scripture are true, precisely because they are God's statements, and they correspond to reality even though our knowledge of those truths (and even our ability to verify them to others) is always necessarily incomplete. The Enlightenment belief in thoroughly objective knowledge made an idol out of unaided human reason. But to deny the possibility of purely objective knowledge does not mean the loss of truth that corresponds to objective reality, even if we can never know such truth without an element of subjectivity. See CS-(2).
2. We affirm that truth is conveyed by Scripture. We believe that Scripture is pervasively propositional and that all statements of Scripture are completely

true and authoritative. But the truth of Scripture cannot be exhausted in a series of propositions. It exists in the genres of narrative, metaphor, and poetry which are not exhaustively distillable into doctrinal propositions, yet they convey God's will and mind to us so as to change us into his likeness.

3. We affirm that truth is correspondence of life to God. Truth is not only a theoretical correspondence but also a covenantal relationship. The biblical revelation is not just to be known, but to be lived (Deut 29:29). The purpose of the Bible is to produce wisdom in us—a life wholly submitted to God's reality. Truth, then, is correspondence between our entire lives and God's heart, words and actions, through the mediation of the Word and Spirit. To eliminate the propositional nature of biblical truth seriously weakens our ability to hold, defend, and explain the gospel. But to speak of truth only as propositions weakens our appreciation of the incarnate Son as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the communicative power of narrative and story, and the importance of truth as living truly in correspondence to God.
4. How this vision of truth shapes us.
  1. We adopt a "chastened" correspondence—theory of truth that is less triumphalistic than that of some in the older evangelicalism. But we also reject a view of truth that sees truth as nothing more than the internally coherent language of a particular faith—community. So we maintain, with what we hope is appropriate humility, the principle of sola Scriptura.
  2. Though truth is propositional, it is not only something to be believed, but also to be received in worship and practiced in wisdom. This balance shapes our understanding of discipleship and preaching. We want to encourage a passion for sound doctrine, but we know that Christian growth is not simply cognitive information transfer. Christian growth occurs only when the whole life is shaped by Christian practices in community—including prayer, baptism, the Lord's Supper, fellowship, and the public ministry of the Word.
  3. Our theoretical knowledge of God's truth is only partial even when accurate, but we nevertheless can have certainty that what the Word tells us is true (Luke 1:4). It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we receive the words of the gospel in full assurance and conviction (1 Thess 1:5).

## **II. How should we read the Bible? (The hermeneutical issue)**

1. Reading "along" the whole Bible. To read along the whole Bible is to discern the single basic plot—line of the Bible as God's story of redemption (e.g., Luke 24:44) as well as the themes of the Bible (e.g., covenant, kingship, temple) that run through every stage of history and every part of the canon, climaxing in Jesus Christ. In this perspective, the gospel appears as creation, fall, redemption, restoration. It brings out the purpose of salvation, namely, a

renewed creation. As we confess in CS–(1), [God] providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

2. Reading “across” the whole Bible. To read across the whole Bible is to collect its declarations, summons, promises, and truth–claims into categories of thought (e.g., theology, Christology, eschatology) and arrive at a coherent understanding of what it teaches summarily (e.g., Luke 24:46–47). In this perspective, the gospel appears as God, sin, Christ, faith. It brings out the means of salvation, namely the substitutionary work of Christ and our responsibility to embrace it by faith. As we confess in CS–(7), Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
3. How this reading of the Bible shapes us
  1. Many today (but not all) who major in the first of these two ways of reading the Bible—that is, reading along the whole Bible—dwell on the more corporate aspects of sin and salvation. The cross is seen mainly as an example of sacrificial service and a defeat of worldly powers rather than substitution and propitiation for our sins. Ironically, this approach can be very legalistic. Instead of calling people to individual conversion through a message of grace, people are called to join the Christian community and kingdom program of what God is doing to liberate the world. The emphasis is on Christianity as a way of life to the loss of a blood–bought status in Christ received through personal faith. In this imbalance there is little emphasis on vigorous evangelism and apologetics, on expository preaching, and on the marks and importance of conversion/the new birth.
  2. On the other hand, the older evangelicalism (though not all of it) tended to read across the Bible. As a result it was more individualistic, centering almost completely on personal conversion and safe passage to heaven. Also, its preaching, though expository, was sometimes moralistic and did not emphasize how all biblical themes climax in Christ and his work. In this imbalance there is little or no emphasis on the importance of the work of justice and mercy for the poor and the oppressed, and on cultural production that glorifies God in the arts, business, etc.
  3. We do not believe that in best practice these two ways of reading the Bible are at all contradictory, even though today, many pit them against each other. We believe that on the contrary the two, at their best, are integral for grasping the meaning of the biblical gospel. The gospel is the declaration that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has come to reconcile individuals by his grace and renew the whole world by and for his glory.

### III. How should we relate to the culture around us? (The contextualization issue)

1. By being a counter–culture. We want to be a church that not only gives support to individual Christians in their personal walks with God, but one that also shapes them into the alternative human society God creates by his Word and Spirit. (See below, point 5c.)
2. For the common good. It is not enough that the church should counter the values of the dominant culture. We must be a counter–culture for the common good. We want to be radically distinct from the culture around us and yet, out of that distinct identity, we should sacrificially serve neighbors and even enemies, working for the flourishing of people, both here and now, and in eternity. We therefore do not see our corporate worship services as the primary connecting point with those outside. Rather, we expect to meet our neighbors as we work for their peace, security, and well–being, loving them in word and deed. If we do this we will be “salt” and “light” in the world (sustaining and improving living conditions, showing the world the glory of God by our patterns of living; Matt 5:13–16). As the Jewish exiles were called to love and work for the shalom of Babylon (Jer 29:7), Christians too are God’s people “in exile” (1 Peter 1:1; James 1:1). The citizens of God’s city should be the best possible citizens of their earthly city (Jer 29:4–7). We are neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic about our cultural influence, for we know that, as we walk in the steps of the One who laid down his life for his opponents, we will receive persecution even while having social impact (1 Peter 2:12).
3. How this relationship to culture shapes us.
  1. We believe that every expression of Christianity is necessarily and rightly contextualized, to some degree, to particular human culture; there is no such thing as a universal a–historical expression of Christianity. But we never want to be so affected by our culture that we compromise gospel truths. How then do we keep our balance?
  2. The answer is that we cannot “contextualize” the gospel in the abstract, as a thought experiment. If a church seeks to be a counter–culture for people’s temporal and eternal good, it will guard itself against both the legalism that can accompany undue cultural withdrawal and the compromise that comes with over–adaptation. If we seek service rather than power, we may have significant cultural impact. But if we seek direct power and social control, we will, ironically, be assimilated into the very idolatries of wealth, status, and power we seek to change.
  3. The gospel itself holds the key to appropriate contextualization. If we over–contextualize, it suggests that we want too much the approval of the receiving culture. This betrays a lack of confidence in the gospel. If we under–contextualize, it suggests that we want the trappings of our

own sub–culture too much. This betrays a lack of gospel humility and a lack of love for our neighbor.

#### **IV. In what ways is the gospel unique?**

This gospel fills Christians with humility and hope, meekness and boldness, in a unique way. The biblical gospel differs markedly from traditional religions as well as from secularism. Religions operate on the principle: “I obey, therefore I am accepted,” but the gospel principle is: “I am accepted through Christ, therefore I obey.” So the gospel differs from both irreligion and religion. You can seek to be your own “lord and savior” by breaking the law of God, but you can also do so by keeping the law in order to earn your salvation.

Irreligion and secularism tend to inflate self–encouraging, uncritical, “self–esteem”; religion and moralism crush people under guilt from ethical standards that are impossible to maintain. The gospel, however, humbles and affirms us at the same time, since, in Christ, each of us is simultaneously just, and a sinner still. At the same time, we are more flawed and sinful than we ever dared believe, yet we are more loved and accepted than we ever dared hope.

Secularism tends to make people selfish and individualistic. Religion and morality in general tend to make people tribal and self–righteous toward other groups (since their salvation has, they think, been earned by their achievement). But the gospel of grace, centered on a man dying for us while we were his enemies, removes self–righteousness and selfishness and turns its members to serve others both for the temporal flourishing of all people, especially the poor, and for their salvation. It moves us to serve others irrespective of their merits, just as Christ served us (Mark 10:45).

Secularism and religion conform people to behavioral norms through fear (of consequences) and pride (a desire for self–aggrandizement). The gospel moves people to holiness and service out of grateful joy for grace, and out of love of the glory of God for who he is in himself.

#### **V. What is gospel–centered ministry?**

It is characterized by:

- 1. Empowered corporate worship.**

The gospel changes our relationship with God from one of hostility or slavish compliance to one of intimacy and joy. The core dynamic of gospel–centered ministry is therefore worship and fervent prayer. In corporate worship God’s people receive a special life–transforming sight of the worth and beauty of God, and then give back to God suitable expressions of his worth. At the

heart of corporate worship is the ministry of the Word. Preaching should be expository (explaining the text of Scripture) and Christ-centered (expounding all biblical themes as climaxing in Christ and his work of salvation). Its ultimate goal, however, is not simply to teach but to lead the hearers to worship, individual and corporate, that strengthens their inner being to do the will of God.

**2. Evangelistic effectiveness.**

Because the gospel (unlike religious moralism) produces people who do not disdain those who disagree with them, a truly gospel-centered church should be filled with members who winsomely address people's hopes and aspirations with Christ and his saving work. We have a vision for a church that sees conversions of rich and poor, highly educated and less educated, men and women, old and young, married and single, and all races. We hope to draw highly secular and postmodern people, as well as reaching religious and traditional people. Because of the attractiveness of its community and the humility of its people, a gospel-centered church should find people in its midst who are exploring and trying to understand Christianity. It must welcome them in hundreds of ways. It will do little to make them "comfortable" but will do much to make its message understandable. In addition to all this, gospel-centered churches will have a bias toward church planting as one of the most effective means of evangelism there is.

**3. Counter-cultural community.**

Because the gospel removes both fear and pride, people should get along inside the church who could never get along outside. Because it points us to a man who died for his enemies, the gospel creates relationships of service rather than of selfishness. Because the gospel calls us to holiness, the people of God live in loving bonds of mutual accountability and discipline. Thus the gospel creates a human community radically different from any society around it. Regarding sex, the church should avoid both the secular society's idolization of sex and traditional society's fear of it. It is a community which so loves and cares practically for its members that biblical chastity makes sense. It teaches its members to conform their bodily being to the shape of the gospel—abstinence outside of heterosexual marriage and fidelity and joy within. Regarding the family, the church should affirm the goodness of marriage between a man and a woman, calling them to serve God by reflecting his covenant love in life-long loyalty, and by teaching his ways to their children. But it also affirms the goodness of serving Christ as singles, whether for a time or for a life. The church should surround all persons suffering from the fallenness of our human sexuality with a compassionate community and family. Regarding money, the church's members should engage in radical economic sharing with one another—so "there are no needy among them" (Acts 4:34). Such sharing also promotes a radically generous commitment of time, money, relationships, and living space to social justice and the needs of the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, and the economically and physically weak. Regarding power, it is visibly committed to

power-sharing and relationship-building among races, classes, and generations that are alienated outside of the Body of Christ. The practical evidence of this is that our local churches increasingly welcome and embrace people of all races and cultures. Each church should seek to reflect the diversity of its local geographical community, both in the congregation at large and in its leadership.

**4. The integration of faith and work.**

The good news of the Bible is not only individual forgiveness but the renewal of the whole creation. God put humanity in the garden to cultivate the material world for his own glory and for the flourishing of nature and the human community. The Spirit of God not only converts individuals (e.g., John 16:8) but also renews and cultivates the face of the earth (e.g., Gen 1:2; Psalm 104:30). Therefore Christians glorify God not only through the ministry of the Word, but also through their vocations of agriculture, art, business, government, scholarship—all for God’s glory and the furtherance of the public good. Too many Christians have learned to seal off their faith-beliefs from the way they work in their vocation. The gospel is seen as a means of finding individual peace and not as the foundation of a worldview—a comprehensive interpretation of reality affecting all that we do. But we have a vision for a church that equips its people to think out the implications of the gospel on how we do carpentry, plumbing, data-entry, nursing, art, business, government, journalism, entertainment, and scholarship. Such a church will not only support Christians’ engagement with culture, but will also help them work with distinctiveness, excellence, and accountability in their trades and professions. Developing humane yet creative and excellent business environments out of our understanding of the gospel is part of the work of bringing a measure of healing to God’s creation in the power of the Spirit. Bringing Christian joy, hope, and truth to embodiment in the arts is also part of this work. We do all of this because the gospel of God leads us to it, even while we recognize that the ultimate restoration of all things awaits the personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ (CS-[13]).

**5. The doing of justice and mercy.**

God created both soul and body, and the resurrection of Jesus shows that he is going to redeem both the spiritual and the material. Therefore God is concerned not only for the salvation of souls but also for the relief of poverty, hunger, and injustice. The gospel opens our eyes to the fact that all our wealth (even wealth for which we worked hard) is ultimately an unmerited gift from God. Therefore the person who does not generously give away his or her wealth to others is not merely lacking in compassion, but is unjust. Christ wins our salvation through losing, achieves power through weakness and service, and comes to wealth through giving all away. Those who receive his salvation are not the strong and accomplished but those who admit they are weak and lost. We cannot look at the poor and the oppressed and callously call them to pull themselves out of their own difficulty. Jesus did not treat us that way. The gospel replaces superiority toward the poor with mercy and

compassion. Christian churches must work for justice and peace in their neighborhoods through service even as they call individuals to conversion and the new birth. We must work for the eternal and common good and show our neighbors we love them sacrificially whether they believe as we do or not. Indifference to the poor and disadvantaged means there has not been a true grasp of our salvation by sheer grace.

## Conclusion

The ministry we have outlined is relatively rare. There are many seeker-driven churches that help many people find Christ. There are many churches seeking to engage the culture through political activism. There is a fast-growing charismatic movement with emphasis on glorious, passionate, corporate worship. There are many congregations with strong concern for doctrinal rigor and purity and who work very hard to keep themselves separate from the world. There are many churches with a radical commitment to the poor and marginalized.

We do not, however, see enough individual churches that embody the full, integrative gospel balance we have outlined here. And while, in God's grace, there is an encouraging number of bright spots in the church, we see no broad movement yet of this gospel-centered ministry. We believe such a balance will produce churches with winsome and theologically substantial preaching, dynamic evangelism and apologetics, and church growth and church planting. They will emphasize repentance, personal renewal, and holiness of life. At the same time, and in the same congregations, there will be engagement with the social structures of ordinary people, and cultural engagement with art, business, scholarship, and government. There will be calls for radical Christian community in which all members share wealth and resources and make room for the poor and the marginalized. These priorities will all be combined and will mutually strengthen one another in each local church.

What could lead to a growing movement of gospel-centered churches? The ultimate answer is that God must, for his own glory, send revival in response to the fervent, extraordinary, prevailing prayer of his people. But we believe there are also penultimate steps to take. There is great hope if we can unite on the nature of truth, how best to read the Bible, on our relationship to culture, on the content of the gospel, and on the nature of gospel-centered ministry. We believe that such commitments will drive us afresh toward Scripture, toward the Christ of Scripture, toward the gospel of Christ, and we will begin to grow in our ability, by God's grace, as churches, to "act in line with the truth of the gospel" (Gal 2:14). We are ashamed of our sins and failures, grateful beyond measure for forgiveness, and eager to see afresh the glory of God and embody conformity to his Son.

Del Rey Bible Institute is

## ***LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD CH101 MEN***

Do you love Christ? Are you marked by the fruit of Spirit?

Do you enjoy and know God's word?

Do you have a good reputation and character?

Are you an active member in good standing at DRC?

Do you have gifts in teaching others?

Are you willing to be trained?

Are you interested in teaching this class?

If you said “yes” to the above questions, let your instructor know, because we are always looking for new DRBI instructors. If you would be interested in this class we would require that you take it twice faithfully and then get familiar with the extra reading to prepare yourself for teaching the class. You don't have to be a “Bible Scholar” BUT you have to know your Church History (and theology)!

### **Extra Reading List for Instructors of CH 101:**

Mark Dever. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. B&H Academic, 2012.

Diana Severance. *Feminine Threads: Women in the Tapestry of Christian History*. Christian Focus, 2011.

Steven Lawson. *Pillars of Grace*. Reformation Trust Publishing, 2011.

Bryan Litfin. *Getting to Know the Church Fathers*. Brazos, 2007.

Henry Bettenson. *Documents of the Christian Church*. Oxford, 2011.

Andreas Kostenberger and Michael Kruger (ed.). *The Heresy of Orthodoxy*. Crossway, 2010.

Robert Letham. *The Holy Trinity*. P&R Publishing, 2004.

Robert Baker and John Landers. *A Summary of Christian History*. Third Edition. B&H Publishing, 2005.

D. Jeffrey Bingham. *Pocket History of the Church*. IVP Academic, 2002.

Glenn Usry and Craig Keener. *Black Man's Religion*. InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Philip Jenkins. *The Lost History of Christianity*. Harper One, 2009.

Rodney Stark. *The Triumph of Christianity*. Harper One, 2012.

Rodney Stark. *The Victory of Reason*. Random House, 2006.

Rodney Stark. *The Rise of Christianity*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

Rodney Stark. *God's Battalions*. Harper One, 2010.

Rodney Stark. *For the Glory of God*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

Erwin Lutzer. *The Doctrines That Divide*. Kregel, 1998.

Earle E. Cairns. *Christianity Through the Centuries*. Zondervan, 1996.

James P. Eckman. *Exploring Church History*. Crossway, 2004.

John Hannah. *Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine*. Nav Press, 2001.

Alister McGrath. *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*. HarperOne, 2008.

Gregg Allison. *Historical Theology*. Zondervan, 2011.

Robert Wilken. *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity*. Yale, 2012.

Justo Gonzales. *The Story of Christianity*. Prince Press, 1999.

Robert Letham. *Through Western Eyes: Eastern Orthodoxy A Reformed Perspective*. Mentor, 2007.

Roger Olson. *The Story of Christian Theology*. InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Ron Rhodes. *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations*. Harvest House, 2005.

Bruce Shelley. *Church History In Plain Language*. Updated 4th Edition. Thomas Nelson, 2012.

James White. *The Roman Catholic Controversy*. Bethany House, 1996.

Francis Schaeffer. *How Should We Then Live?* Crossway, 2005.

Gregory Boyd. *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*, Baker 2009

Robert Spencer. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam*. Regnery, 2005.

Anthony Esolen. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Western Civilization*. Regnery, 2008.

Thomas Woods. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*. Regnery, 2004.