

Theology of the



Westminster Standards

**A Reformed and Premillennial Study
of Christian Basics**

Jeffrey Khoo

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by

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Theology of the Westminster Standards: A Reformed and Premillennial Study of Christian Basics

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To

All FEBCians

“Holding forth the Word of Life” (Phil 2:16)

“Holding fast the Faithful Word” (Titus 1:9)

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PREFACE

This syllabus, originally titled, *Fundamentals of the Christian Faith*, was written for my Sunday School students at The Bible Church (1986-7), and Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (1988-9). It was later used by students of the Far Eastern Bible College for a “Basic Theology for Everyone” course taught in 1993. The present revision incorporates selected portions of the Westminster Confession of Faith (abbreviated WCF) with its Larger and Shorter Catechisms (abbreviated WLC and WSC respectively), and introduces the study of the Standards from a reformed and premillennial perspective.

In this book, the following theological positions are held: (1) covenant theology (contra dispensationalism), (2) the five points of Calvinism (contra the Remonstrance or Arminianism), (3) common grace and the love of God which entails the free offer of the gospel (contra hypercalvinism), (4) paedobaptism (ie, infant baptism, but contra baptismal regeneration), (5) fundamentalism (contra modernism and neo-evangelicalism), (6) cessation of the sign-gifts (contra Charismaticism), and (7) premillennialism that sees a distinction between Israel and the Church (not historic premillennialism, and contra amillennialism and postmillennialism).

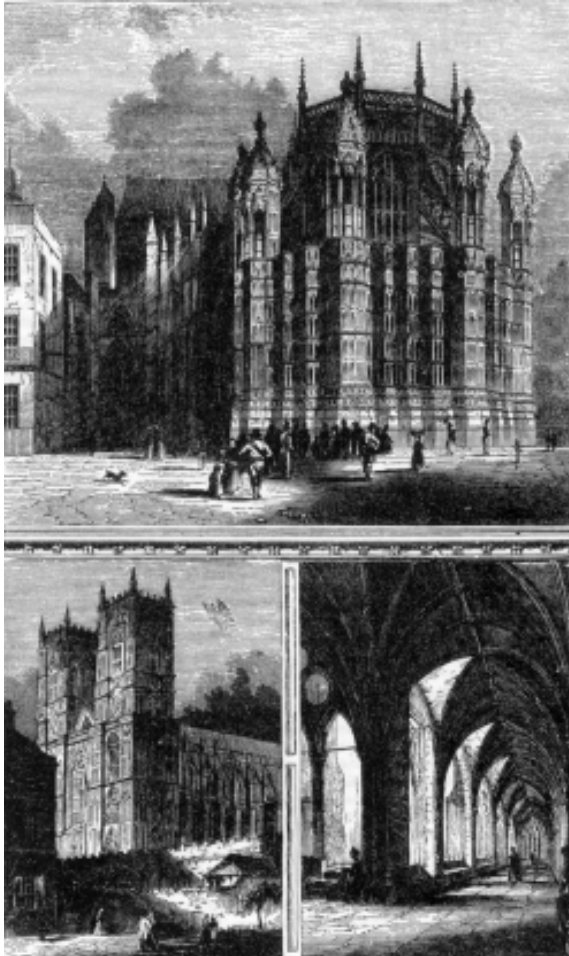
What follows is a result of eight years of theological studies at Far Eastern Bible College (1985-9), Grace Theological Seminary (1989-91), Biblical Theological Seminary (1991-2), and Trinity College & Seminary (1991-3). I must say that I am still learning, and am quite sure that I will not be able to exhaust the infinite riches of God’s Holy Word. I am particularly indebted to Dr Timothy Tow—principal of Far Eastern Bible College—who first taught me the doctrines of Calvin and of the Bible-Presbyterian Church. I am also grateful for the opportunity to teach at Far Eastern Bible College. It goes without saying that I am fully responsible for what I have written, and am solely to blame for any discrepancy or error found in this syllabus.

I do hope that this preliminary study of theology will spur you to a deeper investigation of His blessed and powerful Word, searching the Scriptures like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11).

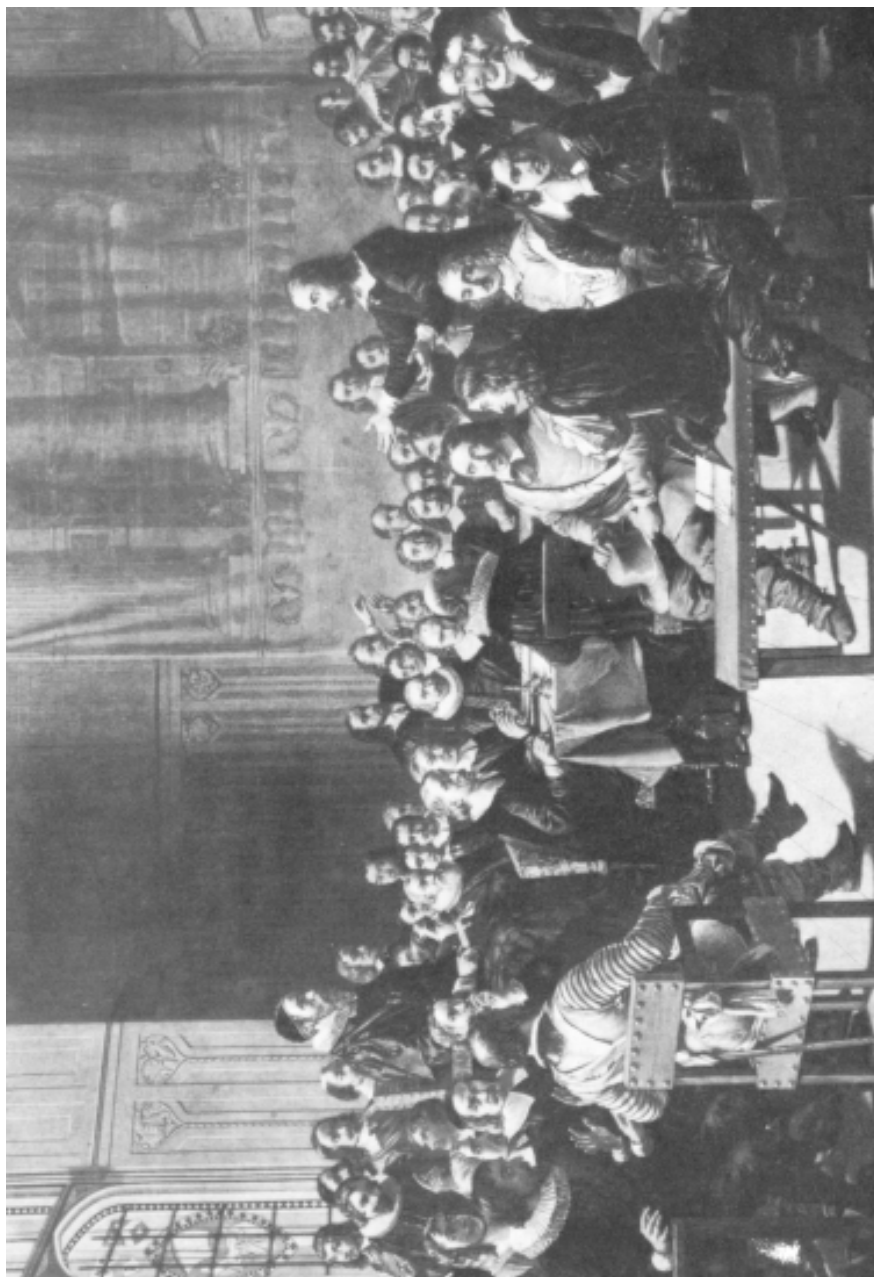
Jeffrey Khoo
Singapore, 1997

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Westminster Standards consist of the Confession of Faith itself, and its two Catechisms—the Shorter for teaching children, and the Larger for adults. Westminster Abbey in London was the place where the 121 mostly Presbyterian divines or theologians convened to formulate the Standards in the years 1643-8. The Confession today is used widely by American and British Presbyterians, and even by some Congregational and Baptist Churches.



Westminster Abbey



A Westminster Assembly Meeting
(Painting by J R Herbert, 19th century)

CHAPTER I

THEOLOGY PROPER

Theology Proper I: The Existence of God

Meaning of “Theology”

“Theology” is derived from two Greek words: *Theos*, meaning, “God,” and *logos*, meaning, “knowledge,” or “reason.” “Theology” often refers to “Systematic Theology”—the study of the *fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith* based on the Holy Bible. Theology *proper* is specifically the study of *the doctrine of God*.

Theological Presuppositions

Three basic assumptions must be adopted for a beneficial study of theology: The theologian must (1) believe that the 66 books of the Holy Bible is the infallible, inerrant, authoritative Word of God (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:21); (2) apply Calvin’s three rules of theology viz, “humility, humility, humility;” (3) accept the fact that God exists.

Scriptural Assertions for the Existence of God

The Bible does not attempt to prove that God exists. It simply asserts His existence (Gen 1:1).

WCF II:1-2, “*Of God, . . .*”—There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to 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, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

The fool says that God does not exist (Pss 14:1, 53:1). The Christian accepts the existence of God by faith (Heb 11:6). This faith is based on knowledge and reason:

Cosmological Reason

The word *kosmos* means “world.” This is the argument from “cause and effect.” How did the world come into existence? Who made this world? God did (Gen 1:1, Pss 8:3, 33:6-9, 148:5, Acts 17:24, Rom 1:19-20). Can a watch be made without a watchmaker?

Teleological Reason

The word *telos* means “end,” “outcome,” or “aim.” This is the argument from the design and purpose of the created universe. Man is living in a world which displays planning, order, and beauty. If there is a design, there must be a Designer (Ps 19:1-2, Acts 14:15-17). Observe the order of the six-day creation in Genesis 1. Consider also design and function of the human body.

Anthropological Reason

The word *anthropos* means “human being,” or “man as a moral being.” This argument appeals to the spiritual and moral nature of man.

Man is made in the image of God (Gen 1:27). As such he has:

(1) *A knowledge of God.* Man is a spiritual being capable of worship. He knows there is a spiritual realm that he will go to when he dies, and a Supreme Being that demands his worship (Acts 17:22-23).

(2) *A sense of morality* (Rom 2:12-16). He has a conscience. The ability to distinguish right from wrong is inherent within man.

(3) *An expectation of judgment* (1 Cor 15:56, Heb 9:27). Depraved man is afraid of death because in his heart he knows that there is a holy and just God who will judge and punish sin.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Is it logical for man to say that God does not exist? Give reasons.
 - (2) If it is illogical to claim that God does not exist, why is it that intelligent men continue to deny or ignore His existence?
-

Theology Proper II: The Knowability of God

Can we comprehend God? Spurgeon answered, “As well might a gnat seek to drink in the ocean, as a finite creature *comprehend* the Eternal God.” Read Deut 29:29, Ps 145:3, Isa 55:8-9, Rom 11:33.

But can we know God? Calvin wrote, “True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, *the knowledge of God*, and the knowledge of ourselves.” “Spiritual wisdom . . . consists chiefly in three things—to *know God*, his paternal favour towards us, on which depends our salvation, and the method of regulating our lives according to the rule of the law.” Read Ps 46:10, Phil 3:10, 2 Tim 1:12.

God has revealed Himself in two ways: (1) General revelation, and (2) Special revelation.

General or Natural Knowledge of God

Man has a natural knowledge of God. This knowledge of God in man is innate. Man, being made in the image of God, is a spiritual being (Gen 2:7, 2:14-15). Creation itself reveals that God exists (Ps 19:1-2, Rom 1:19-20).

Although man is able to know that God exists, he is unable to know who He really is. This is because man’s knowledge of God has been corrupted by sin (Rom 1:21-23). Consider all the false notions on God that man has: *agnosticism* (God cannot be known), *atheism* (There is no God), *deism* (God exists but does not care), *humanism* (Man is God), *materialism* (Money is God), *pantheism* (All is God, God is all), and *polytheism* (There are many Gods).

General revelation or natural knowledge does not save.

WCF I:1—Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

In order to know God in a personal way, special revelation is required.

WLC Q 2: How doth it appear that there is a God? **A:** *The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his Word and Spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.*

Special or Revealed Knowledge of God

The Written Word

True or saving knowledge comes from the light of the Holy Scriptures (Ps 19:7-11, John 20:31, 1 John 5:13). According to Calvin, the Word of God is like a pair of spectacles. It helps us to see clearly who God really is.

The Living Word

Perfect knowledge of God the Father may be found only in God the Son—the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2, 14-18; 14:8-10, 1 John 1:1-4). God the Spirit must illumine the heart and mind of sinful man before there can be any real understanding of the Written Word and true reception of the Living Word (John 16:7-15, 1 Cor 2:1-12).

WCF I:5-6—We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, 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 discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and

divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or 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: and there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, 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.

Progressive Revelation

God revealed Himself gradually and progressively through a period of time as seen in biblical history (Heb 1:1-2).

Old Testament

He revealed Himself *partially* in the OT by means of: (1) Visions and dreams (Num 12:6-8), (2) His speech (1 Sam 3:1-9), (3) Theophanies or Christophanies (Gen 18:1, 32:24-30, Josh 5:13-15), and (4) the writings of His prophets (Jer 36:1-2, Luke 16:29).

New Testament

In the NT, He revealed Himself *personally* and *completely* in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 18; 4:24-26; 14:9, Heb 1:1-3). We need the NT to fully understand the OT. Thus, “the Old is by the New explained, the New is in the Old contained,” and “the New is in the Old concealed, the Old is by the New revealed” (Eph 2:20).

We have the complete revelation of God in the 66 books of the Holy Bible. The canon is closed. Nothing is to be added to or subtracted from God's Word (1 Cor 13:8-10, Rev 22:18-19).

WSC 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.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) How would you go about explaining to an atheist that God exists?
 - (2) In evangelism, is it necessary to prove that God exists before sharing the gospel?
-

Theology Proper III: The Nature and Attributes of God

WSC Q 4: What is God? A: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

There is an inspiring story behind the WSC Q 4 told in William M Hetherington's *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, 360-1.

There is one anecdote connected with the formation of the Shorter Catechism, both full of interest and so very beautiful that it must not be omitted. In one of the earliest meetings of the committee, the subject of deliberation was to frame an answer to the question, "What is God?" Each man felt the unapproachable sublimity of the divine idea suggested by these words; but who could venture to give it expression in human language! All shrunk from the too sacred task in awestruck, reverential fear. At length it was resolved, as an expression of the committee's deep humility, that the youngest member should make the attempt. He modestly declined, then reluctantly consented; but begged that the brethren would first unite with him in prayer for divine enlightenment. Then in slow and solemn accents he thus began his prayer:— "O God, thou art a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." When he ceased, the first sentence of his prayer was immediately written by one of the brethren, read, and adopted, as the most perfect answer that could be conceived,—as, indeed, in a very sacred sense, God's own answer, given to prayer and in prayer, descriptive of himself. Who, then, was the youngest member of the committee? When we compare the birth-dates of the respective members of the committee, we find that George Gillespie was the youngest by more than a dozen years. We may, therefore, safely conclude that George Gillespie was the man



George Gillespie

who was thus spiritually guided to frame almost unconsciously this marvellous answer.

WLC Q 7: What is God? A: *God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, every where present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*

Nature of God

God is a Person

God is a real, actual, distinctive, self-conscious individual or being. God said, “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod 3:14, John 8:58). He is the Self-existent One. He has existed since eternity past and will continue to exist till eternity future. He is a personal entity, and has a personal identity. As such, God is capable of having a personal relationship with man (Gen 3:8-9, Deut 14:2, Rev 3:20). He is not like an idol of wood, metal, clay, or stone. He is a living Person who hears, sees, thinks, feels, and acts (Acts 14:15, 1 Thess 1:9, Ps 94:9-10).

God is One

There is only one God, and He has revealed Himself in the Bible. Deut 6:4 says, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” See also Isa 44:6-8, 45:5, 1 Cor 8:4, 1 Tim 2:5.

WLC Q 8: Are there more Gods than one? A: *There is but one only, the living and true God.*

God is a Spirit

God is not a finite, corporeal being (John 4:24). In the Bible, human terms referring to God must be understood figuratively (see Exod 3:20, 6:6, Deut 4:34, 5:15, Isa 37:17, 59:1, Ps 11:4, cf Ps 91:4). When God appeared as man in the OT, it was God the Son who appeared in His preincarnate form (Gen 12:7, 18:1, 32:30 cf John 1:18, 2 Cor 4:6).

Attributes of God

God is infinite (Job 11:7, 1 Kings 8:27), eternal (Ps 90:2), unchangeable (Ps 102:25-27, Heb 13:8) in His:

Natural Attributes

The following are God's incommunicable attributes. These are attributes which God alone possesses.

Being

God is omnipresent (Ps 139:7-12). He is not limited by time or space. He is present everywhere and everything is present before Him. He has always existed—past, present, future (Ps 90:1-2, Isa 44:6, Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13). He will not change in His character or personality (Mal 3:6, Heb 13:8, James 1:17).

Wisdom

God is omniscient. He knows all things—past, present, future (Acts 15:18, Ps 147:4-5, 1 John 3:20, Prov 15:3, Matt 10:29-30).

Power

God is omnipotent. He is absolutely powerful over everything in both the physical and the spiritual realm (Job 42:2, Gen 18:14, Matt 19:26, Luke 1:37, Rev 19:6). It must, however, be noted that it is impossible for God to do anything against His nature and will. For example, God cannot sin (Heb 6:18).

Moral Attributes

The following are God's communicable attributes. These attributes are also found in man who is made in God's image.

Holiness

God is sinless (Lev 11:44-45). He is perfect in His moral character and judgment. He is therefore the standard of all ethical laws (Rev 4:8, Rom 7:12). The commandments of God are holy because they come from a holy God.

Justice

God is just and fair in His dealings with man. God cannot and does not overlook sin (Rom 6:23). His justice is reflected in the Law of Moses. See for example the *lex taliones* or "the law of retaliation" (Lev 24:17-22).

God's justice is also seen in Christ's death on the cross in payment for the penalty of sin so that we can receive eternal life.

Goodness

God is good and gracious (Ps 119:68, 145:9, Matt 5:45, 2 Pet 3:9).

Truth

God is characterised by truth. He is sincere, honest, and truthful. There is no falsehood in Him (Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18, 10:23). His truthful character is attested by the Scriptures which is Truth (John 8:30-32, 17:17).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) What are the differences between the God of the Bible and the gods of other religions?
- (2) How should we as Christians respond to this omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God?

Theology Proper IV: The Creative Work of God

WCF IV:1—It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Creation of the Physical World

WLC Q 15: What is the work of creation? **A:** *The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world and all things therein for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.*

God created the whole universe *ex nihilo*—out of nothing (Gen 1:1, John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 11:3, Amos 4:13, Ps 104:24-26, Rev 4:11), by divine *fiat*—the power of His word (“And God said . . .,” Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Ps 33:6, 148:5), in six literal 24-hour days (see John C Whitcomb, *The Early Earth: An Introduction to Biblical Creationism*, 28-32).

Why should the days in Genesis be seen as literal twenty-four hour days? The reasons are these: (1) The *numerical adjective* (first, second,

third . . .) connected to the word “day” defines what kind of day it is—not figurative as in “day of the Lord,” but a literal 24-hour day (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 cf Exod 20:11). (2) The qualifying phrase “*evening and morning*” suggests the beginning and ending of a day within a 24-hour period (cf Dan 8:26). (3) The *fourth commandment* of the Decalogue suggests a 7-day creation week (Exod 20:11). (4) The word “*days*” is *used with the word “years”* in Gen 1:14. For the text to make sense, the words “days” and “years” must refer to well-defined units of time.

Creation of the Spiritual World

WLC Q 16: How did God create angels? A: *God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.*

Creation of Angels

The Bible does not indicate precisely when the angels were created. However, we know that (1) they were not created before the first day (Col 1:16), (2) they could not have been created after the 6th day (Gen 1:31), and (3) they appear to have been created on the first day (Gen 1:1, Job 38:6-7). They number in the hundreds of millions (Dan 7:10, Rev 5:11, 9:16).

Nature of Angels

Angels are spiritual, incorporeal creatures (Heb 1:14, Luke 24:39, Matt 22:30, Col 1:16). They are not to be worshipped (Col 2:18-19). They are ministering spirits (Heb 1:14) serving both God (Isa 6, Rev 5:11-12) and man (Ps 91:10-12, Heb 1:14, 1 Kings 19:5-8). They are asexual and do not marry (Luke 20:34-36 cf Matt 22:29-30, Mark 12:24-25).

Fall of Angels

The angels were created good and morally perfect (Gen 1:31). Since everything was good and had not turned bad after God had created the whole universe, it is reasonable to conclude that the fall of some angels happened some time after creation. It began with an archangel by the name of Lucifer (Isa 14:12-15, Ezek 28:12-19). Pride was the cause of his downfall (1 Tim 3:6). He became the devil (Matt 13:39, John 8:44). Other angels joined him and became demons (Matt 25:41, Jude 6). They sinned without remedy (2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6). They are in a state of *confirmed*

unholiness and will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer eternal conscious torment (Matt 25:41, Rev 20:10).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) What is wrong with the theory of evolution? Discuss it in the light of Scripture.
 - (2) Can the fallen angels be saved from eternal punishment?
-

Theology Proper V: The Sevenfold Will of God

WCF V:1-4, 7, “Of Providence,”—God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure.

The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of His Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

For a full study of this subject, refer to *The Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God*, and *Has God a Plan for Your Life*, by Dr Timothy Tow.

Decretive Will

WCF III:1-2, “Of God’s Eternal Decree,”—God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

WLC Q 12: What are the decrees of God? A: *God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.*

Q 13: What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men? A: *God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth), hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for the sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.*

Q 14: How does God execute his decrees? A: *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence; according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.*

God’s decrees as revealed in Scriptures may be seen in (1) His creation of the world (Gen 1-2, Ps 33:6-9, 148:2-5), (2) His governing of world events (Gen 12:2-3, 2 Sam 7:12-13, Dan 7-11, Rev 19), and (3) His election of men and of angels (Rom 8:29-30, Eph 1:4-11; John 6:37, 39, 44).

Preceptive Will

The Preceptive Will of God is found in His laws or commandments.

WCF XIX:1-7, “Of the Law of God,”—God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and

written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.

Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.

To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof: although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of work: so as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and not under grace.

Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

The **WLC 91-148** is particularly full in its treatment of Ten Commandments:

Q 91: What is the duty which God requires of man? **A:** *The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to his revealed will.*

Q 92: What did God at first reveal unto man as the rule of his obedience? **A:** *The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all mankind in him, besides a special command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.*

Q 93: What is the moral law? **A:** *The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.*

Q 94: Is there any use of the moral law to man since the fall? **A:** *Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law; yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.*

Q 95: Of what use is the moral law to all men? **A:** *The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives; to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.*

Q 96: What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men? **A:** *The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.*

Q 97: What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate? **A:** *Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, beside the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.*

Q 98: Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended? **A:** *The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him on two tables of stone; and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus: the first four commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.*

Q 99: What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the ten commandments? **A:** *For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed: (1) That the law is perfect, and binds everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin. (2) That it is spiritual, and so reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures. (3) That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments. (4) That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included. (5) That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands, is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times. (6) That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto. (7) That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places. (8) That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.*

Q 100: What special things are we to consider in the ten commandments? **A:** *We are to consider, in the ten commandments, the preface, the substance of the commandments themselves, and several reasons annexed to some of them the more to enforce them.*

Q 101: What is the preface to the ten commandments? **A:** *The preface to the ten commandments is contained 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. Wherein God manifests his sovereignty, as being Jehovah, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works: and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivers us from our spiritual thralldom; and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.*

Q 102: What is the sum of the four commandments which contain our duty to God? **A:** *The sum of the four commandments containing our duty to God is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.*

Q 103: Which is the first commandment? **A:** *The first commandment is, Thou shall have no other gods before me.*

Q 104: What are the duties required in the first commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him.*

Q 105: What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of any thing due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious searchings into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means, and trusting in unlawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.*

Q 106: What are we especially taught by these words “before me” in the first commandment? **A:** *These words before me, or before my face, in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god: that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation: as also to persuade us to do as in his sight, whatever we do in his service.*

Q 107: 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 108: What are the duties required in the second commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.*

Q 109: What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God has appointed.*

Q 110: What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it? **A:** *The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, 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; are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations; and esteeming the observers of it*

such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

Q 111: 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 takes his name in vain.*

Q 112: What is required in the third commandment? **A:** *The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the Word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.*

Q 113: What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or anywise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.*

Q 114: What reasons are annexed to the third commandment? **A:** *The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, The Lord thy God, and, For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain, are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.*

Q 115: 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 116: What is required in the fourth commandment? **A:** *The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called the Lord's day.*

Q 117: How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified? **A:** *The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably to despatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.*

Q 118: Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors? **A:** *The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.*

Q 119: What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.*

Q 120: What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it? **A:** *The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: from the example of God, who in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be*

a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it; Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Q 121: Why is the word “Remember” set in the beginning of the fourth commandment? **A:** *The word Remember is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment, partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion; and partly, because we are very ready to forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restrains our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it comes but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.*

Q 122: What is the sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man? **A:** *The sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others: What we would have them to do to us.*

Q 123: 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 124: Who are meant by “father” and “mother” in the fifth commandment? **A:** *By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God’s ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.*

Q 125: Why are superiors styled “father” and “mother”? **A:** *Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.*

Q 126: What is the general scope of the fifth commandment? **A:** *The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.*

Q 127: What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors? **A:** *The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to*

their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Q 128: What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors? **A:** *The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.*

Q 129: What is required of superiors towards their inferiors? **A:** *It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God has put upon them.*

Q 130: What are the sins of superiors? **A:** *The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.*

Q 131: What are the duties of equals? **A:** *The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own.*

Q 132: What are the sins of equals? **A:** *The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.*

Q 133: What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it? **A:** *The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, is an express 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 134: Which is the sixth commandment? **A:** *The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.*

Q 135: What are the duties required in the sixth commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.*

Q 136: What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and: Whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.*

Q 137: Which is the seventh commandment? **A:** *The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Q 138: What are the duties required in the seventh commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.*

Q 139: What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness,*

gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

Q 140: Which is the eighth commandment? **A:** *The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.*

Q 141: What are the duties required in the eighth commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.*

Q 142: What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing land marks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depredation; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God has given us.*

Q 143: Which is the ninth commandment? **A:** *The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Q 144: What are the duties required in the ninth commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering*

of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocence; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requires; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

Q 145: What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment? **A:** *The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.*

Q 146: 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 any thing that is thy neighbor's.*

Q 147: What are the duties required in the tenth commandment? **A:** *The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.*

Q 148: What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment? A: *The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.*

Q 149: Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? A: *No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.*

“The moral law doth for ever bind all . . .” as (1) a sword (Rom 3:19-20), (2) a rod (Gal 3:24), and (3) a lamp (Ps 119:105).

All God’s precepts are not just found in the Ten Commandments, but in all of Scripture. Great blessings are bestowed upon those who abide by God’s preceptive will (Deut 4:8-9, 7:11-13, Josh 1:8, Ps 19:7-11).

Directive Will

God’s directive will is taught in Prov 3:5-6, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

WSC 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.*

The preceptive will is distinguished from the directive will in that the former is general while the latter specific or personal. The first step towards knowing His secret or personal will in our lives is to know His preceptive will. His directive will is an extension of His preceptive will (Rom 12:1-2, Pss 25:8-9, 12, 37:4).

Cooperative Will

God’s cooperative will is perhaps best explained by this maxim of Dr Timothy Tow: “Self help with God’s help is the best help.” A classic example would be the story of Abraham’s servant seeking a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:1-4, 10-21, 26-27). The cooperative will may also be seen in the work of evangelism where God is pleased to enlist the help of His people (Matt 28:18-20). In the work of sanctification, we are required to cooperate with the Lord by submitting ourselves to the ministry of the Spirit (Rom 6:11-13, 8:1-6).

Desiderative Will

The desiderative will speaks of God's heart—His desire or wish that every sinner repent and be saved. According to Murray and Stonehouse,

This will of God to repentance and salvation is universalized and reveals to us, therefore, that *there is in God a benevolent lovingkindness towards the repentance and salvation of even those whom he has not decreed to saved.*

This pleasure, will, desire, is expressed in the universal call to repentance.

Read Ezek 18:23, 32, 33:11, 2 Pet 3:9.

God offers the gospel freely, sincerely, and indiscriminately to the whole world—both elect and reprobate (John 3:16, Acts 2:21, Rom 1:16, 5:18, 1 John 2:2).

Permissive Will

WCF VI:1—Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to *permit*, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

WCF V:5—The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, *doth oftentimes leave* for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

According to Howe,

God's permissive will is His will to permit whatsoever He thinks fit to permit, or, not to hinder, while what He so wills or determines so to permit, he intends also to regulate, and not to behold as an idle unconcerned spectator, but to dispose all those permissa unto wise and great ends of His own.

The permissive will of God can be seen in God permitting Satan to test Job (Job 1:6-12). Another example is the selling of Joseph into Egypt by his brothers; God allowing it to happen in order save the nation of Israel (Gen 45:7-8, 50:20 cf Rom 8:28).

Punitive Will

WCF V:6—As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them He not only withholdeth

His grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

WLC Q 27: What misery did the fall bring upon mankind? *A: The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.*

Q 28: What are the punishments of sin in this world? *A: The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.*

Q 29: What are the punishments of sin in the world to come? *A: The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire forever.*

WCF XXXIII:2b—the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and *be punished* with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

To His enemies God is a wrathful Judge (Nah 1:2, Rom 1:18). He *punishes* them for their rebellion (Rom 6:23). This may be seen in Pharoah (Exod 7:3-4), Balaam (Num 22:19-20), and Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:20-23).

To His children, God is a loving Father. He *chastises* them when they are disobedient (Heb 12:5-6 cf, Prov 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15,17). Examples of God exercising His *chastitive will* may be found in the life of David (2 Sam 11-12, see especially 12:11-12, 15-18), and of Jonah (Jon 1-2).

WCF V:5—The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to *chastise* them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that

they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) When we are at the crossroads of life, or need to make important decisions, how can we know what is God's will?
 - (2) If everything is already predestined, why is there a need to pray? Can prayer change things?
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Theology Proper VI: The Holy Trinity

WCF II:1-3, "*Of God, and of the Holy Trinity,*"—There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to 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, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

WSC 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.*

WLC Q 9: How many persons are there in the Godhead? A: *There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.*

Q 10: What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? A: *It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.*

The Trinity in the Scriptures

Although the word “Trinity” is not found in the Scriptures, it is nonetheless an entirely biblical word and doctrine. The teaching that the one living and true God is tri-personal is progressively revealed in the Bible. Although it is not so clearly revealed in the OT, it is very clear in the NT where we see the Son becoming man, and the Spirit working powerfully through the Church.

Old Testament Evidences

All three Persons of the Godhead were involved in the creation of the world. The Holy Spirit is mentioned in Gen 1:2. The plurality of the Godhead is indicated by the pronouns “us,” and “our.” (Gen 1:26, 11:7).

The Angel of the LORD mentioned in Gen 16:10,13, 22:11-16, 31:11-13, Exod 3:2,4, Josh 5:13-15, 6:2, is also called the LORD (*Yahweh*). His special Angel (Exod 23:20-21, 32:34, 33:14 cf Isa 63:9) is the 2nd Person of the Holy Trinity—the preincarnate Christ.

The Spirit of God is consistently referred to as a distinct Person within the Godhead (Gen 1:2, Exod 31:3-4, Job 26:13, Zech 4:6, Isa 63:10-11, Ps 51:11).

New Testament Evidences

In Matt 3:16-17, we find (1) the 2nd Person—God the Son—being baptised, (2) the 3rd Person—God the Spirit—descending like a dove, and (3) the 1st Person—God the Father—speaking from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus' missionary commandment to the Church in Matt 28:19 uses the singular "name" for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This proves the unity of the Trinity (or Triunity).

There is a functional hierarchy within the Godhead. The Father is always referred to as the One who sends the Son (John 3:16, Gal 4:4, Heb 1:6, 1 John 4:9), and it is the Son who sends the Spirit (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, Gal 4:6).

When we pray, we pray to God the Father (Matt 6:6,9; 7:11), through Jesus Christ His Son (John 14:13, 15:16), and in the Holy Spirit our Helper (Rom 8:26-27).

Other NT texts on the Trinity are 2 Cor 13:14—the apostolic benediction, and Rev 4:8—the thrice holy God.

The clearest Scriptural evidence for the Trinity is 1 John 5:7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

The Trinity under Attack

The following are heresies which deny the Trinity:

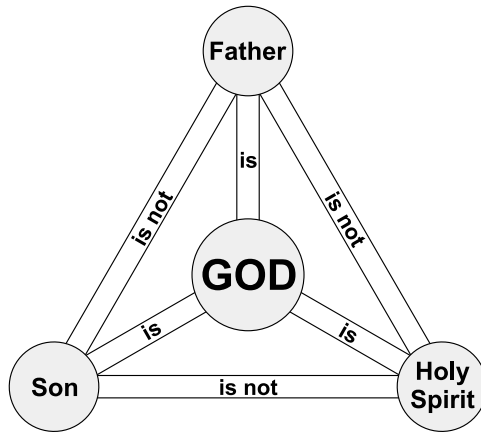
Unitarianism teaches that there is one God, but this God does not exist in 3 Persons. Even if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are allowed into the picture, only the Father is God.

Sabellianism is the belief that there is only one person in the Godhead who appears at different times in different forms—sometimes as the Father, sometimes as the Son, and sometimes as the Spirit.

Arianism denies that Jesus Christ is God. Christ is referred to as a created being who has reached the highest level of creaturely existence. Arians see Jesus as "a god," but not "God Himself" (cf John 1:1).

Summary

There is only one God. In this oneness there is a threeness. There are 3 Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the Godhead; not separated or divided, but distinguished; the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father; the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God.



Doctrine of the Trinity Illustrated

Questions for Discussion

- (1) How would you refute the Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching on the Trinity?
 - (2) What is the Roman Catholic understanding on the Trinity. Does making Mary the Mother of God pose a problem to the doctrine of the Trinity?
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CHAPTER II

ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology I: Man in His Perfect State

WCF IV:2—After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

WLC Q 17: How did God create man? A: *After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.*

Man in the Image of God

Man is made in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen 1:26). “Image” and “likeness” are synonymous terms used interchangeably.

Since God is a spirit, the “image of God” in man is *not physical* but *spiritual resemblance* (Gen 2:7).

Man was made morally clean (Gen 1:31) and upright (Eccl 7:29). *Man is able to relate to God*—to worship Him, and to have fellowship with Him (Gen 3:8-9). *Man is endowed with intelligence*, and has the power of speech and the ability to reason (Gen 2:19-20). *Man is appointed governor of the world* accountable to God who is Ruler over all (Gen 1:26-28, 9:1-2, 6-7, Ps 8:4-9). *Man is an immortal being*. His immortality

is given by and derived from God (Gen 2:7). At death, the body returns to the ground (Gen 3:19), but the soul returns to God (Eccl 12:7).

The very fact that man is made in the image of God makes the incarnation of Christ possible (John 1:14, Rom 8:3, Phil 2:6-8, Heb 2:14-18 cf John 10:33-36). Christ was able to come in the likeness of man because man originally was made in the likeness of God.

Man is a Two-part Being

Man being both material and non-material is made up of (1) body, and (2) soul or spirit. These two parts are not only distinguishable, but also separable (Gen 3:19, Luke 23:43,46, Eccl 12:7).

The body is that part which allows man to subsist on earth. The body is important because it houses the soul-spirit. Man is incomplete without his body. Although the soul is separated from man's body at the point of death, yet there will be a resurrection of the body when both body and soul are united again (1 Cor 15:50-54).

The soul or spirit is that part of man which relates to God (John 4:24, Rom 8:16). The terms "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably (Gen 41:8, Isa 26:9 cf Ps 42:1,2,6, Matt 20:28 cf Matt 27:50). They both refer to the non-material part of man (Heb 4:12, 1 Thess 5:23 cf Gen 2:7, Matt 10:28, Luke 1:46-47, 2 Cor 7:1).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Why do some people think of man as a three-part being? Are the reasons given valid?
 - (2) Are we disembodied spirits during the period between death and the resurrection?
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Anthropology II: Man under the Covenant of Works

WCF VII:1-2, "*Of God's Covenant with Man*,"—The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

WSC Q 12: What special act of providence did God exercise towards 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 pain of death.*

Nature of the Covenant of Works

A covenant in the biblical sense is an agreement between God and man where God promises to bless man if and when he keeps the stipulation(s) laid down by Him.

WCF IX:1-2, “Of Free-Will,”—God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.

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 yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.

In the covenant of works, Adam was the representative and federal head of the human race. Therefore, whatever he did, he did on behalf of all mankind (Rom 5:12,19). Adam was under probation in the Garden. He was subjected to a test. He was given freedom of will to choose between God and self, between obedience or rebellion (Gen 2:15-17). Eternal life was not automatically given; it had to be earned. God promised Adam eternal life if he obeyed (Rom 7:10). Disobedience incurred the penalty of eternal death (Rom 6:23).

Significance of the Two Trees

The tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were *real, historical* trees.

Tree of Life

The tree of life *symbolises* eternal life (Gen 3:22-24 cf Rev 2:7, 22:2,14). Man was free to partake of the tree of life *before* he became sinful. *It is symbolic* of life and obedience. It should be seen in the same way the sacrificial system of the OT, and the sacraments of the NT are seen as symbolic of a believer’s faith in God. Adam in the Garden was under

probation. He was not in a position of permanent spiritual sonship yet. If he had chosen to eat of the fruit of this tree, he would have been elevated to this blessed position eternally, and his posterity would have enjoyed the same.

The tree of life is not magical. The idea that eating the fruit will bring about physical longevity and immunity from disease is false. Neither is the tree mythical. The mythical view denies the historicity of the Genesis account.

Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil must also not be seen in the magical and mythical, but *symbolical sense*. The phrase “good and evil” is to be understood *ethically or morally*. (Deut 1:39, 30:15, 2 Sam 14:17, 1 Kings 3:9, Isa 5:20, 7:15-16, Amos 5:14-15, Mic 3:2). This knowledge that is spoken of is *not pure cognitive knowledge*. (We can infer from Gen 2:16-17 that Adam knew in his mind the evil of disobedience and the good of obedience even before he sinned.) This knowledge rather *is experiential knowledge*. It is the *knowledge of action and commitment* (Gen 3:6 cf 1 John 2:15-17). The eating of the forbidden fruit was an act of disobedience towards God. This resulted in physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Man became an enemy of God. It is separation from the presence of God, and a severance of relationship with Him (Gen 2:17 cf Rom 6:23).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Was not Adam already perfect and without sin in the Garden when he was created? Why then did he not have eternal life?
- (2) Why must God put man to the test? Could He not grant eternal life to Adam at the very outset?

Anthropology III: Man in His Fallen State

WCF VI:1-6, “Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof,”—Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

WLC Q 21: Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him? *A: Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.*

Q 22: Did all mankind fall in that first transgression? *A: The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.*

Q 23: Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? *A: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.*

Q 24: What is sin? *A: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.*

Q 25: 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 that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.*

Q 26: How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?
A: *Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.*

Q 27: What misery did the fall bring upon mankind? **A: *The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.***

Q 28: What are the punishments of sin in this world? **A: *The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.***

Q 29: What are the punishments of sin in the world to come? **A: *The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire forever.***

Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden

The account of man's fall in Gen 2:16-27 and 3:1-7 is historically true and accurate. Man's fall was due to an outright disobedience of the expressed command of God not to eat of the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16-17).

How did Man Fall?

The serpent, being more crafty than any of the other animals, was possessed by Satan to tempt Eve (3:1-7). God's Word was: (1) *doubted*—"Yea, hath God said . . . ?" (v1), (2) *distorted*—"Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden" (cf Gen 2:16), and (3) *denied*—"Ye shall not surely die" (cf 2:17).

Eve took the bait hook, line, and sinker. Consider her handling of God's Word. God's Word was: (1) *omitted*—"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden" (omission of "every" and "freely" [cf 2:16]), (2) *added to*—"neither shall ye touch it" (God only said, "do not eat it" cf 2:17), and (3) *diluted*—"lest ye die" (God said, "*surely die*" cf 2:17).

Disaster strikes when man yields to temptation: (1) *lust of the flesh*—“tree was good for food,” (2) *lust of the eyes*—“pleasant to the eyes,” and (3) *pride of life*—“to be desired to make one wise.” (Gen 3:6 cf 1 John 2:16).

What Happened to Man after the Fall?

Man became *totally depraved* (Gen 6:5). His nature is *totally corrupted* by sin (Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-12). Man is *dead in sin* (Eph 2:1), and is not able to respond to spiritual things (1 Cor 2:13-14). He is *born in sin*, and *bent on sinning*.

WCF IX:3-5, “Of Free-Will,”—Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

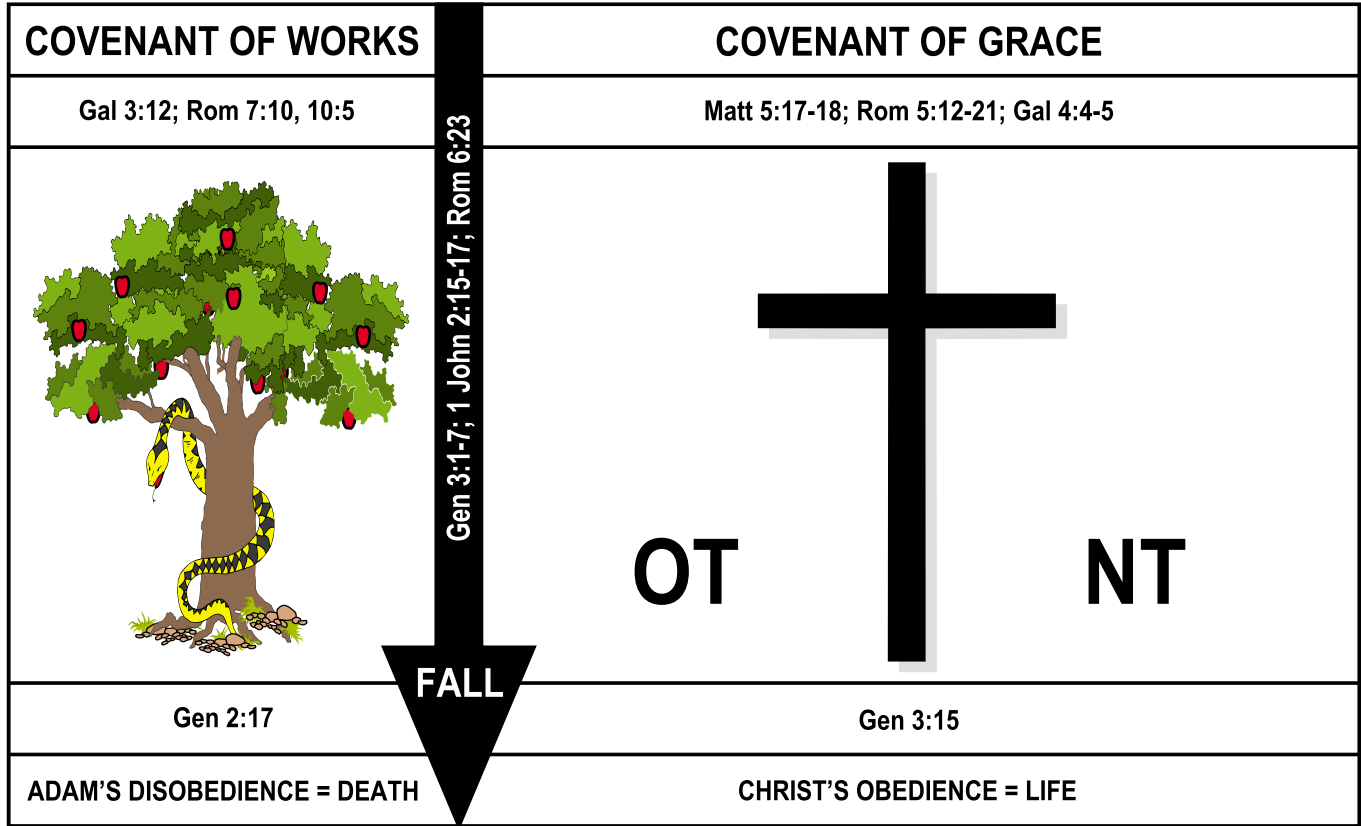
Adam, being the federal head, represented the whole human race. Thus, Adam’s first sin is judicially *imputed* to his descendents (Rom 5:12-21). Man is not born good, but conceived and born in sin (Ps 51:5).

What are the Consequences of the Fall?

The fall led to (1) *spiritual* punishment (Rom 8:7-8, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 2:3); (2) *temporal* punishment (a) *on the woman*: she will suffer great pain during childbirth (Gen 3:16a), and she is placed under the authority of man (Gen 3:16b cf 1 Cor 11:3, Eph 5:22); (b) *on the ground*: the earth, being cursed, will no longer be as productive as before (Gen 3:17-18); and (c) *on man*: he will undergo great hardships in his livelihood (Gen 3:19); and (3) *eternal* punishment (Matt 13:41-42, Rev 21:8).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Can good works bring one to heaven? Why not?
- (2) How can we say that man is totally depraved when we see many people doing good things?



Covenant Theology Illustrated

Anthropology IV: Man under the Covenant of Grace

WCF VII:3-6, “*Of God’s Covenant with Man*,”—Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old testament.

Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the new testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.

WLC Q 30: Does God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? *A: God does not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy delivers his elect out of it, and brings them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.*

Q 31: With whom was the covenant of grace made? *A: The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.*

Q 32: How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant? *A: The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provides and offers to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring*

faith as the condition to interest them in him, promises and gives his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he has appointed them to salvation.

Q 33: Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner? **A:** *The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.*

Q 34: How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament? **A:** *The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all foreshadow Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.*

Q 35: How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament? **A:** *Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.*

Q 36: Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace? **A:** *The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.*

Nature of the Covenant of Grace

Gracious

The covenant was instituted by God after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden when the first gospel was preached (Gen 3:15). It was initiated by God even though man did not deserve to be saved (Gen 3:21, 4:1-5 cf Heb 9:22).

Irrevocable

Since God is faithful and true, He will fulfill and accomplish what He has promised (Gen 17:1-8, 2 Sam 23:5, Heb 13:20). Although man may

violate the stipulations of the covenant, the covenant relationship cannot be broken (Heb 10:23, 1 Thess 5:24).

Unconditional

Man's salvation is not dependent on good works or personal merit (Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5). It is dependent on the finished work of Christ in His life and in His death (Gal 2:20, 4:4-5, Matt 3:15, 5:17-18, Heb 4:14-16, 10:10-12, John 1:29,36).

WCF XIV, "Of Saving Faith,"—The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word, by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but 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.

Uniform

(1) The *promise* is the same—"I will be your God!" (Gen 17:7, Exod 19:5, 20:1, Deut 29:13, 2 Sam 7:14, Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10). (2) The *gospel* is the same—"Salvation is of the Lord" (Ps 3:8, Jon 2:9, Isa 43:11, Acts 4:12, Rev 7:10; eg, Abraham [Gal 3:8-9, Luke 24:27, John 5:46, 8:56]). (3) The *means of salvation* is the same—"by grace through faith" (Hab 2:4, Rom 4:9-25, Gal 3:7-9, Heb 11:6). (4) The *Mediator* is the same—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb 13:8, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Gen 3:21, 4:4).

WCF VIII:6—Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was

revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and today the same, and forever.

The *sacraments* are the same. In the OT, they are the passover and circumcision. In the NT, they are the Lord's supper and water baptism. Although the sacraments of the OT and NT differ in form or mode, they have the same significance and function. They are *signs and seals* of the covenant of grace (Gen 17:10-11, Rom 4:11, 1 Cor 5:7, Col 2:11-12). Under the covenant, OT infants born to Jewish families are circumcised (Gen 17:12). Similarly, NT infants born to Christian families are baptised (Acts 2:39, 1 Cor 7:14).

Administrative Differences between OT and NT

Rituals

There are more rituals in the OT: (1) *Sacrifices and offerings*—burnt offering (Lev 1), grain offering (Lev 2), peace offering (Lev 3), sin offering (Lev 4-6). (2) *Feasts and festivals*—Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod 12:1-20, 23:15), Feast of Weeks (Exod 23:16, Lev 23:15-21), Feast of Tabernacles (Exod 23:16, Lev 23:33-43), Day of Atonement (Lev 16).

There are less rituals in the NT: (1) *Holy Communion* or the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:23-26), (2) *Water baptism* (Matt 28:19). See also Gal 4:9-11, Col 2:16-17, Heb 9:1-15, 10:1-10. And (3) *the Lord's day* or Christian Sabbath which is Sunday (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:1-2).

Revelation

In the OT, God revealed Himself (1) *through types* (1 Cor 10:11, Heb 10:1)—Lamb (Gen 4:4), Bronze Serpent (Num 21:9), Shewbread (Exod 25:30), Manna (Exod 16:35), Kinsman-Redeemer (Isa 59:20), Rock (Exod 17:6); and (2) *by spectacular means*—visions and dreams (Num 12:6), His voice (1 Sam 3:4-15), angels (Gen 19:1), personal appearances (Gen 18:1).

In the NT, God revealed Himself through (1) *His Son* (Heb 1:1-2), and (2) *the Bible* (2 Tim 3:16, Rev 22:18-19).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) How did Abraham see the day of Christ (John 8:56)?
 - (2) How does God's covenant relationship with His people help us understand infant baptism?
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CHAPTER III

CHRISTOLOGY

Christology I: The Deity and Humanity of Christ

WCF VIII:1-3, “*Of Christ the Mediator*,”—It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King the Head and Saviour of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people, to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; to the end 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. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

WLC Q 36: Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace? A: *The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.*

Q 37: 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, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.*

Q 38: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God? A: *It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.*

Q 39: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man? A: *It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.*

Q 40: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person? A: *It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.*

Deity of Christ

Divine Names

Jesus Christ is called: (1) God (John 1:1, 20:28, Heb 1:8, Titus 2:13, 1 John 5:20). (2) Son of God (Matt 26:53-65, Luke 22:70, John 10:36). He is the *only begotten* Son of God (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9). Note that He is *begotten*, *not created*.

WLC Q 10: What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? A: *It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son, from all eternity.*

(3) I AM (John 8:58 cf Exod 3:13-14): (a) I am the bread of life (John 6:35), (b) I am the light of the world (John 9:5), (c) I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7,9), (d) I am the good shepherd (John 10:11,14), (e) I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), (f) I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), (g) I am the true vine (John 15:1,5). (4) KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev 19:16).

Divine Attributes

Jesus Christ is all powerful (Matt 28:18), all knowledgeable (John 16:30, Col 2:3), all present (Matt 18:20), and fully God (Col 2:9).

Divine Functions

Jesus Christ created the world (John 1:3), upholds all things (Col 1:17, Heb 1:3), forgives sins (Mark 2:5-10, Luke 7:48), raises people from the dead (John 6:39, 40, 54; 11:26, 41-44).

Divine Worship

Worship is due only to God (Matt 4:10, Acts 14:14-15, 10:25-26, Rev 22:8-9). Jesus demands, receives, and accepts worship (John 5:23, 20:28, Matt 14:33, Luke 24:52).

Humanity of Christ

His Incarnation

Jesus Christ came in the flesh by birth through the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gen 3:15, Isa 7:14, Matt 1:18-25, John 1:14, Gal 4:4). He “emptied” Himself to become man (Phil 2:5-8).

WLC Q 46: What was the estate of Christ’s humiliation? A: *The estate of Christ’s humiliation was that low condition, wherein he for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.*

He emptied Himself of what? Not of His deity, but only of:

- (1) The outward manifestation of His divine essence (*shekinah* glory). This he forsook in order to become man both in nature (essence), and form (flesh). He was fully man (1 John 1:1-13, John 1:14, 17:5, 2 Pet 1:16-18 cf Matt 17:1-13)
- (2) The heavenly position of divine kingship. He vacated His heavenly throne in order to become a *doulos*—a bond-slave (Phil 2:7). His voluntary humiliation led to His subsequent exaltation (Phil 2:9-11).
- (3) The independent use of His divine attributes. Note that although He gave up the independent exercise of His divine attributes, *He did not, in any way, give up His possession of them* (John 3:13, Col 2:9).

His Human Development and Constitution

Like any other human being, Jesus had to go through the process of birth and physical growth (Luke 2:41-52). His body consisted of real human flesh, blood and bones (Heb 2:14, Luke 24:39). His body was subjected to the infirmities of the natural body like hunger (Matt 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and tiredness (John 4:6, Matt 8:24). He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

WLC Q 47: How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth? A: *Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased in the fulness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.*

His Human Names

Jesus Christ was called “Son of man” (Luke 19:10), and was known as “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

Summary

Jesus Christ is the God-Man. He is 100% God and 100% Man. “Christ is one person and His natures are without mixture, without change, without division, without separation” (Council of Chalcedon, AD 451).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Could Jesus have saved us if He did not become man?
 - (2) Is Jesus still God and Man now that He has completed His redemptive mission and is no longer on earth but in heaven?
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Christology II: The Miracles of Christ

Definition of Miracle

A miracle is a wondrous act performed, or event caused directly by God, or by means of His power that goes beyond the laws of nature, and of human ability.

Scope of Christ's Miracles

In His ministry, Christ showed that He had power over *nature* (Matt 8:23-27), *demons* (Matt 8:16, 28-32; 9:32-33), *diseases* (Matt 8:1-15, 9:1-8, 20-22), *physical handicaps* (Matt 9:27-31), and *death* (Matt 9:18-19, 23-26).

Purpose of Christ's Miracles

Authentication

Christ performed miracles primarily to (1) *authenticate His person*. His ability to perform miracles by His own power proved His deity (John 5:8 cf Acts 3:6). His miracles proved His ability to forgive sins which in turn proved His deity since only God could absolutely forgive sins (Matt 9:1-8).

His miracles were also to (2) *authenticate His mission*. In the OT, the prophets of Israel were given the power to perform miracles in order to prove their ministry as God's messengers to an otherwise skeptical people (see Moses in Exod 4:1-9, and Elijah in 1 Kgs 17:17-24). Jesus' miracles validated His ministry as the Messianic Prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15 cf Acts 3:22, 7:37, John 6:1-14, 7:31,40; see also John 3:2, 5:36, 11:42, 20:30-31, Luke 7:19-23). As the Moses-like Prophet, He fulfilled the offices of not only Prophet, but also Priest and King.

WLC Q 42: Why was our Mediator called Christ? A: Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

Q 43: How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? A: Christ executes the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

Q 44: How does Christ execute the office of a priest? A: Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.

Q 45: How does Christ execute the office of a king? A: Christ executes the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them; in bestowing

saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

Revelation

Christ's miracles revealed (1) His *sinlessness* (John 9:16), and (2) His *compassion* (Matt 9:36, 14:14, Mark 1:41).

Christ's miracles were not meant to (1) *sensationalise His ministry* (Matt 4:6-7, 16:4), (2) *be a primary feature of His ministry* (ie preaching not healing—Mark 1:32-39), and (3) *be used as a means of winning converts* (John 6:26-27, 63-68, Luke 16:19-31). Jesus performed many miracles before the Scribes and Pharisees, yet they spoke evil of Him and sought to kill Him (Matt 12:14, 24). How many of the 5,000 who were fed miraculously became true disciples? Many left Him (John 6:66). At the end of His ministry, there were only 120 who genuinely believed (Acts 1:15). Miracles, in and of themselves, do not save. They function rather as *pointers*—pointing to Jesus for only He saves (Rom 10:17, John 20:31).

Conclusion

Apart from Christ, the ability to perform miracles was given to a special group of people, namely, the Prophets and Apostles for the purpose of authenticating their God-given message and ministry (Mark 16:16-20 cf Acts 2:43, 5:12, 2 Cor 12:12). Thus, the sign-gifts of healing, demon-casting, prophesying etc, were withdrawn when the Apostles passed away, and when the NT was completed.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Are miracles necessary for evangelism?
 - (2) Does Christ continue to work miracles from heaven today?
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Christology III: The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ

WCF VIII:4-5, "*Of Christ the Mediator*,"—This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

WSC 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.*

What Caused Christ to Die for His People?

There are 2 factors that caused Christ to die for us: (1) *The sin of man*. Man being totally corrupted by sin (Ps 53:1-3, Prov 20:9, Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-18, 3:23) is under God's wrath (Rom 1:18, 5:5). Man being totally helpless to save himself from sin (Rom 3:19-20, Isa 64:6, Jas 2:10, Matt 5:21-22, 27-28) needs another to be Saviour. (2) *The love of God*. Out of His own good will and pleasure, God chose to save sinners (John 3:16, Eph 1:9-11, Rom 5:6-8, Gal 1:4, Col 1:19-20). The benevolence of God and the justice of God must be seen together (Rom 6:23). Christ had to satisfy the justice of God for man to be redeemed.

Why Must Christ Die to Save His People?

There are 2 reasons why Christ must suffer and die for us: (1) *The penalty of sin must be paid*. God is holy and thus cannot overlook sin. He hates sin, and sin calls for divine retribution (Exod 34:7, Num 14:18, Nah 1:3). Man is sinful and thus faces the death penalty (Gen 2:17, Rom 6:23). There is no way man can offer himself as a sacrifice to atone for his own

sins. God requires one who is pure and blameless, and only Christ fulfills that requirement (Exod 12:5, Lev 4:3, 1 Pet 1:19).

(2) *The demands of the Moral Law must be met.* Salvation must be earned. Only the righteous can enter heaven. If a person wants eternal life, he must keep perfectly the laws of God (Matt 19:17, Rom 7:10). Salvation was lost to man since Adam failed the test. Man is thus born in sin, and in his life manifests that sinful nature he is born with. He needs a Saviour to earn righteousness on his behalf by keeping the law perfectly (Gal 4:4-5, Rom 10:4).

WLC Q 48: How did Christ humble himself in his life? **A:** *Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled; and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.*

Q 49: How did Christ humble himself in his death? **A:** *Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.*

Q 50: Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death? **A:** *Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which has been otherwise expressed in these words, he descended into hell.*

How Did Christ Save His People?

Jesus Christ saved us as our: (1) *Substitute*. Our sins were "laid upon" Christ. He was our Sin-bearer (Isa 53:6,12, John 1:29, Heb 9:28, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Pet 2:24, 3:18). (2) *Ransom*. God bought us back to Himself by paying the price of redemption (Matt 20:28, 1 Pet 1:18-19, 1 Tim 2:6, Gal 3:13). The price was the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7, 1 Pet 1:18-19). This ransom is paid to God. (3) *Propitiation*. As a propitiatory Sacrifice, Christ *covered* our sins, and *appeased* the wrath of God (Rom 3:25, 1 John 2:2). (4) *Reconciliation*. Christ reconciled us to God. We were once enemies of God, but are now become friends of God (Rom 5:10, 2 Cor 5:18, Eph 2:16, Col 1:20). This is a one-way reconciliation. Sinful man being the guilty party is reconciled to the righteous God, and not the other way round.

The Two-fold Obedience of Christ

Christ saved us through His (1) *active obedience* by keeping the Moral Law perfectly as our Representative (Matt 3:15, 5:17-18, John 15:10, Rom 10:4, 2 Cor 5:21), and (2) *passive obedience* by submitting Himself willingly to die on the cross as our Substitute (Isa 53:6-7, John 1:29, 10:14-18, Phil 2:8).

What Did Christ's Death Accomplish?

In dying for us, Jesus purchased (1) our *adoption* to become sons and daughters of God (Gal 3:13, 4:5), and (2) our *freedom* from the bondage of sin, death, and Satan (Rom 6:6-7, 14, 1 Cor 15:54-57).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) If Jesus had died on the cross without living a full and sinless life, will His death save us?
- (2) If Jesus had died by strangulation on a hangman's noose, and not by bleeding on the cross, can His death save us?

Christology IV: The Resurrection of Christ

WCF VIII:4, "*Of Christ the Mediator*,"—This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

WLC Q 51: What was the estate of Christ's exaltation? *A: The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehends his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.*

Q 52: How was Christ exalted in his resurrection? *A: Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death (of which it was not possible for him to be held), and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life), really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the*

Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of quick and dead: all which he did as a public person, the head of his church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

Q 53: How was Christ exalted in his ascension? A: Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.

Q 54: How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God? A: Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and does gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnishes his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and makes intercession for them.

The Christian Faith hinges on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-4, 12-19). It is vital that we know the evidences for the resurrection in the light of the Scriptures.

The Trials of Jesus

Jesus went through a total of 6 trials before His crucifixion: (1) 3 Jewish trials—before Annas (John 18:12-14), Caiaphas (Matt 26:57-58), and the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66-71); and (2) 3 Roman trials—twice before Pilate (Luke 23:1-7, Luke 23:13-25), and once before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:8-11). Truly, Jesus was sentenced to die by crucifixion.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Crucifixion is a form of torture which causes death by bleeding. The victim is nailed to a wooden cross (John 20:25, Col 2:14). It was a death most painful. Note also that before Jesus was crucified, he was whipped (John 19:1), crowned with thorns (Matt 27:29), and beaten by the soldiers (Matt 27:30). It was also a death most humiliating—Jesus was shamefully exposed (Matt 27:28, Mark 15:20, 24), verbally abused (Mark 15:17-20), crucified with criminals (Mark 15:27), and made a public spectacle (Mark 15:29, Luke 23:35).

There is no doubt that Jesus died on the cross. This we know for sure because (1) the soldiers—expert executioners—confirmed that Jesus was truly dead, and thus did not break his legs (John 19:33), and (2) Pilate gave permission for Joseph of Arimathea to take the body of Jesus only after he had ascertained that Jesus was certified dead (Mark 15:44-45).

The Burial of Jesus

The Jewish burial in those days was quite an elaborate process. (John 19:39-40). The procedure is as follows: (1) first, the body is washed with warm water, (2) then the body is embalmed with 100 pounds of aromatic spices to prepare the body for burial, and (3) finally, the body is wrapped up with white cloth. The whole encasement would be about 120 pounds. If Jesus had not died on the cross, but simply fainted (so the swoon theory), He would certainly have died from the Jewish burial process.

Jesus was placed in a solid rock tomb. It was hewn out of solid rock (Luke 23:53). It was not a cave where he could have escaped through a secret tunnel. The entrance of the tomb was covered by a huge rock (Matt 27:60). The rock weighed about 2 tonnes. It is without doubt that Jesus' body was in the tomb until the time of the resurrection.

The Guarding of Jesus' Tomb

The tomb was guarded by a Roman security unit consisting of 4-16 armed soldiers (Matt 27:65). The cowardly disciples could not have possibly overwhelmed the soldiers, and stolen the body of Jesus.

Moreover, a Roman seal was stamped on the rock enclosing the tomb (Matt 27:66). The seal represented the power and authority of Caesar. Anyone who broke the seal faced capital punishment. The Roman soldiers would definitely not risk tampering with the sealed tomb.

Appearances of Christ after His Resurrection

Jesus showed Himself alive to many people after He rose from the dead: (1) to the women on the way home from the empty tomb (Matt 28:9-10), (2) to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14), (3) to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-33), (4) to Peter (Luke 24:34), (5) to the Apostles without Thomas (Luke 24:36-43), (6) to the Apostles with Thomas (John 20:26-29), (7) to the Seven who were fishing in Galilee (John 21:1-23), (8) to the Apostles with 500 other disciples (1 Cor 15:6), (9) to James (1

Cor 15:7), (10) to the disciples on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:3-12), and (11) to Paul (Acts 9:3-6).

Jesus truly rose from the dead, and is alive today. Those who say that those appearances of Jesus were hallucinations of the disciples must surely concede that it is impossible for 500 people to experience the same hallucination at the same place, and at the same time.

Nature of Christ's Resurrection Body

The resurrected body of Christ is a *physical* one. He was not a ghost, phantom, or spirit. He had flesh and bones (Luke 24:36-43). He could be touched (John 20:20). He had the scars of His crucifixion (John 20:24-29). He had the ability to consume food (John 21:12-15).

The resurrected body of Christ is a *supernatural* one. He was able to enter a completely locked and bolted room (John 20:19, 26). He was able to appear and disappear all of a sudden (Luke 24:31).

His body is thus (1) incorruptible (1 Cor 15:42), (2) glorified (1 Cor 15:43), (3) powerful (1 Cor 15:43), (4) spiritual (1 Cor 15:44), and (5) heavenly (1 Cor 15:47).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Why must Jesus rise from the dead in order for Christianity to be true?
 - (2) Is it correct to say that Jesus' resurrected body is neither fleshly or fleshy since it is a "spiritual body" as described by Paul in 1 Cor 15:44?
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CHAPTER IV

PNEUMATOLOGY

Pneumatology I: The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit

WCF II:3—In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

WLC Q 10: What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? *A: It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.*

Q 11: How does it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father? *A: The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.*

The Holy Spirit is a Person

The Spirit *possesses the attributes of a person*. He has (1) intellect (1 Cor 2:10-11), (2) a mind (Rom 8:27), (3) emotions (Eph 4:30), (4) a will (1 Cor 12:11, Acts 15:6-11), and (5) He intercedes and prays for us (Rom 8:26).

The Spirit *is treated like a person*. He can be (1) lied to (Acts 5:3), (2) resisted (Acts 7:51), (3) grieved (Eph 4:30), (4) blasphemed (Matt 12:31), and (5) insulted (Heb 10:29).

Jesus Himself regarded the Spirit as a person. He called the Spirit “Comforter” (John 14:26), and not “comfort.” He is called *another* Comforter (John 14:16). He is *another of the same kind—another person* like Christ.

The Holy Spirit is God

The Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of deity: (1) *His divine attributes*—omniscience (1 Cor 2:11-12), omnipresence (Ps 139:7), omnipotence (Ps 104:30, Job 33:4); (2) *His divine works*—creation of the world (Gen 1:2), inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21, 2 Tim 3:16), incarnation of Christ (Luke 1:35); (3) *His divine association*—He is called Jehovah (Acts 28:25-37), and is the third person of the Holy Trinity (Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 John 5:7); (4) *His divine names*—the Spirit of God (Gal 1:2), the Spirit of His Son (Gal 4:6), the Spirit of your Father (Matt 10:20), the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9), and the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13); (5) *His divine honour*—to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme against God (Mark 3:28-30), and to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God Himself (Acts 5:3-4); (6) *His divine perfection*—the sevenfold Spirit of God (Isa 11:2; in Scripture, the number 7 conveys the idea of perfection), and the seven spirits of God (Rev 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6; Revelation employs symbolical language. It does not mean that there are seven personal spirits. It tells us of the Spirit's perfect fullness. It is evident that there is one Spirit, and that this Spirit is God).

The Eternal Procession of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is an *eternal* Being (Heb 9:14). He existed since *eternity past*, and will exist into *eternity future*. The Holy Spirit is the same in essence with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:4, 2 Cor 3:18, literally, “from the *Lord Spirit*”).

The Holy Spirit is *under* the Father and the Son. There is a *functional hierarchy* within the Godhead. The Son is obedient to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is obedient to the Son (John 14:28, 1 Cor 11:3). God the Father sent God the Son into the world (John 3:17, 17:8, 18). The Holy Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son (John 14:16, 15:26). There is a relationship within the Godhead, and that relationship exists among *persons*.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) The Jehovah's Witnesses say that the Holy Spirit is not a person but a force or influence. How would you refute this heresy?

- (2) Is it correct to say that though Joseph was not the father of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was, since Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the power of the Spirit?
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Pneumatology II: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

WCF X:1-2, "*Of Effectual Calling*,"—All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

WSC 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.*

The Convicting Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit convicts sinners (John 16:8-11). He convicts them of:

- (1) *Sin*. This refers to the sinful state man is in. Man stands condemned if he refuses to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:18).
- (2) *Righteousness*. This refers to the righteousness found in Christ. Man can be righteous only in Jesus Christ (Phil 3:9).

(3) *Judgment*. This refers to the end-time judgment of the Great White Throne. Satan, the demons, and the finally impenitent will suffer eternal conscious torment on that day (Heb 2:14, Rev 20:11-15).

The sin of blasphemy against the Spirit is an unpardonable sin (Matt 12:24-32, Mark 3:22-30, Luke 12:10). How is this sin against the Spirit committed, and who are the people who commit this sin? Let us consider the historical context: Jesus from the beginning of His public ministry had preached the good news of salvation, done good, and performed many miracles which in no uncertain terms proved His deity and Messiahship (John 10:37-38). But the Jewish religious leaders wilfully chose not to believe in Him. When they could find no fault in His message, or His works, they attacked His person, accusing Him of doing all His miracles by the power of the devil when it was clearly the work of the Spirit. This sin is unpardonable because the only avenue of pardon through the convicting work of the Spirit has been rejected.

How may the unpardonable sin be committed today? The greatest sin that anyone can commit, which leads to eternal damnation, is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (John 3:18). The constant, persistent, voluntary, wilful, decisive rejection of the gospel is tantamount to the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. The consequences of the unpardonable sin are: (1) *God abandons* the man totally to his own destruction (Jer 7:13-16, Heb 10:26-27). (2) *God judicially hardens* or blinds the person to the truth (Matt 13:15, John 12:37-40). This happened to Pharaoh who hardened his own heart 4 times (Exod 7:14, 8:15, 19, 32) before God hardened his heart (Exod 9:12, 10:1, 20, 27, 14:8, Rom 1:24). (3) The sinner finds it *impossible to repent* (Heb 6:6). This may be seen in the case of Judas Iscariot who though remorseful committed suicide (Matt 27:3-5 cf 2 Cor 7:10).

Is it possible for Christians to commit the unpardonable sin? Calvin answered, “he who has been truly regenerated by the Spirit cannot possibly fall into so horrid a crime.”

The Baptising Work of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Spirit is a one-time event for the Christian when he receives Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour (John 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 1:13, Rom 8:9). It is not a subsequent experience after conversion. There is only “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:5). The baptising work of the Spirit in the Apostolic Church is recorded

in Acts 2:1-21, 8:15-17, 10:1-11:18, 19:1-7. A subsequent experience may be found in Acts 2, 8, 19, but note that there was no second baptism in Acts 10. There is no absolute pattern here. The Church was in a period of transition. The situation then was unique. It was a special time when the NT was in the process of being written, Jews were ushered into a new way of worship, and Gentiles were brought into the kingdom like never before. The Spirit operated in a special way to wean the infant Church out of the old system and mindset. The Church having reached maturity with the establishment of normative church life, the special and spectacular features of the apostolic age were no longer necessary, and have since been withdrawn. Refer to Robert G Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, 81-107.

The Filling Work of the Holy Spirit

The filling of the Spirit is the complete control of the Spirit over the life of the Christian when he totally surrenders himself to the Spirit's sanctifying work (Eph 5:18, Gal 2:20, 5:16).

WCF XVI:3—Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual *influence of the same Holy Spirit* to work in them to will, and to do, of his good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a *special motion of the Spirit*; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

WCF XIX:7—Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; *the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man* to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

What happens when we are filled with the Spirit? (1) We will produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25). (2) We will be eager to share the gospel, and be effective in serving God (Acts 2:4, 4:31, 6:3-8, 7:54-55). (3) We will love His Word and His people (Acts 2:41-47). (4) We will enjoy coming to church to worship God, and have fellowship with other Christians (Eph 5:18-21).

What must we do to be filled with the Spirit? (1) We must confess and repent of our sins (1 John 1:9). (2) We must acknowledge our spiritual wretchedness and be fully dependent on God (1 John 1:10). (3) We must read the Bible daily and attend Sunday School or Bible study classes (1

Pet 2:2). (4) We must pray privately as well as corporately in Church by attending prayer meetings (Heb 10:25). (5) We must have constant fellowship with Christians by attending fellowship meetings (Heb 10:25). (6) We must submit ourselves to water baptism, and partake of the Lord's Supper. (7) We must serve the Lord with whatever gifts we have (1 Cor 12:4-11 cf Eph 4:11-13). (8) We must preach the gospel (Matt 28:18-20 cf Acts 8:4). (9) We must give to the Lord out of a cheerful heart (2 Cor 9:7). (10) We must be ready to suffer for Christ's sake (2 Tim 2:12, Matt 16:24).

The Grieving of the Holy Spirit

WCF XVII:3—Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and *grieve his Holy Spirit*, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

WCF XVIII:4—True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and *grieveth the Spirit*; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and be the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

The Spirit is grieved when we disobey the Word of God, and live unholy lives (Eph 4:30, 1 Thess 5:19). There are the (1) *sins of the flesh* like factions, divisions, strife, jealousy, envy, gluttony, fornication, etc (1 Cor 3:3, 5:1, 6:1-8, Eph 4:25-31); and (2) *sins of the spirit* like pride, unbelief, etc (Prov 6:16-19, 8:13, 16:5, 18, 21:4). Dr Chia Yu Ming of Spiritual Training Theological Seminary, Nanking, China, said, "The sins of the spirit are ten times worse than the sins of the flesh."

WLC Q 150: Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God? **A:** *All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.*

The body is the temple of the Spirit. We must not desecrate it (1 Cor 3;16-17, 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:21).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) In light of what Jesus said in John 16:7, was the Holy Spirit active in the Old Testament especially in His convicting, baptising, and filling work?
 - (2) Are Christians in danger of committing the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit when they judge that the Charismatic phenomena of tongues-speaking, healing, demon-casting, prophesying etc, are not of God?
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Pneumatology III: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Basic Understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Bible lays down these foundational principles for a proper understanding of the spiritual gifts: (1) The gifts of the Spirit are given only to believers (1 Cor 12:1-3). (2) Every believer will possess at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:7). (3) The Spirit determines which gift or gifts a believer should have (1 Cor 12:11). (4) Spiritual gifts are not to be used as a gauge for spiritual maturity (1 Cor 12:12-26). (5) No spiritual gift is common to all believers (1 Cor 12:27-30). (6) Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the Church (Eph 4:11-12).

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Spirit fall under two categories: (1) *General grace-gifts*: All the gifts of the Spirit are called *charismata*, which means, “grace-gifts.” The NT lists of spiritual gifts are found in Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:4-11, 28-30, Eph 4:11. (2) *Special grace-gifts*: These are the spectacular gifts of the Spirit given to the Apostles of Christ to authenticate the divine origin of their office and ministry (Mark 16:17-20 cf Acts 2:43, 5:12, 2 Cor 12:12).

The sign-gifts may be divided into 2 kinds: (1) *Work signs* (healing, exorcism, raising the dead, and the like), and (2) *Word signs* (prophecy, knowledge, tongues). The Work signs, and Word signs though distinguishable are inseparable. The demonstration of miracles is always

accompanied by the revelation of the mysteries of the Gospel of Christ (Acts 3:1-11, 14:3, 19:11, 20).

Temporariness of Sign Gifts

The miraculous gifts of the Spirit occurred especially during the exceptional days of Moses, of the prophets, of Christ, and of the Apostles for the purpose of: (1) *introducing a period of divine revelation* (OT—written in the time of Moses and of the Prophets; and NT—written in the time of Christ and the Apostles), and (2) *authenticating the messengers of divine revelation* (eg Moses [Exod 4:1-9], Elijah [1 Kings 17:23-24], Christ [John 10:24-25, Acts 2:22], and the Apostles [2 Cor 12:12]).

The gift of performing miracles has been withdrawn. It has already accomplished its purpose and is no longer needed. With the completion of the Holy Bible, divine revelation ceased (1 Cor 13:10).

Absence of Apostles

The Apostles were a special class of people. The Apostle Paul in defence of his Apostleship appealed to the fact that his God-given ability to perform miracles proved that he was truly an Apostle (2 Cor 12:11-12).

There are 7 reasons why we do not and cannot have Apostles today: (1) The Church was founded upon the Apostles (Eph 2:19-20). (2) The Apostles had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 9:1, 1 Cor 15:7-8, Acts 1:21-26). (3) The Apostles were chosen personally by Christ (Matt 10:1-4). (4) The Apostles were authenticated by miraculous signs (Mark 16:17-20 cf Acts 2:43, 5:12, 14:3, 15:12, 19:11-12). (5) The Apostles had absolute authority over the affairs of the Church (Acts 5:1-11, 19:13-17, 2 Cor 13:2-3, Gal 1:8, Jude 17). (6) The Apostles were infallible in their preaching (1 Thess 2:13), writing (Eph 2:20, 2 Pet 1:20-21), and ministry (1 Cor 11:1). (7) The Apostles have an eternal and unique place of honour in God's kingdom (Rev 21:14).

No one today can claim to have the above qualifications. The Apostles were a unique group of people appointed by the Lord to carry out His will during a specific period of time. The sign-gifts they possessed had to pass away with them. The infallible revelatory ministry of the Apostles may be inferred from this statement of the Westminster divines,

WCF XXXI:3—All synods or councils, since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith, or practice; but to be used as a help in both.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Is the Charismatic movement biblical in its doctrines and practices?
 - (2) Is the gift of speaking in tongues the gift of languages or of ecstatic utterances?
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CHAPTER V

SOTERIOLOGY

Soteriology I: The Five Points of Calvinism

History



John Calvin

Calvinism is that system of theology derived from the great French Reformer—John Calvin (1509-1564). According to Dr Timothy Tow, “Calvinism is Paulinism systematised.”

The 5 points of Calvinism were drafted by the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) for the purpose of counteracting the 5 points of the Remonstrance or Arminianism. Calvinism’s 5 points can be easily remembered by the acrostic TULIP.

Total Depravity

WCF VI:2-4—By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

WCF IX:3—Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Total depravity does not mean that man is not able to do good towards his fellow men. It does however mean that man's nature is wholly sinful, corrupt, and perverse to the extent that sin has affected all his parts rendering him absolutely incapable of saving himself from the judgment to come (Gen 6:5, Isa 64:6-7, Jer 17:9). Even when man performs good works, his motives for doing so are often not pure.

Since Adam's fall, man is born in sin and is by nature spiritually dead. Given the choice, man will choose to reject rather than obey the gospel (Pss 51:5, 58:3, Rom 3:10-12, 5:12).

Total depravity is the *most important* point of all the 5 points of Calvinism. The other 4 points hinge on this first point.

Unconditional Election

WCF III:1-8, "Of God's *Eternal Decree*,"—God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.

These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto: and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified,

adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

WLC Q 13: What has God especially decreed concerning angels and men? *A: God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; and in Christ has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extends or withholds favor as he pleases), has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.*

WSC 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.*

God was under no obligation whatsoever to save anyone. However, out of His own good will and pleasure, He chose some to be saved (Eph 1:4-5). When we speak of God's election, it is not (1) *God seeing beforetime that we were going to believe on Him and therefore chose us*. If we are indeed capable of choosing Him, He would not have to choose us (John 15:16). Neither is it (2) *God knowing beforehand that we were going to be comparatively good people, and therefore chose us*. If this was the case, salvation would then be by works, and not by grace (Deut 7:7, Eph 2:8-10).

God exercised His will independently, and chose us unconditionally. We do not deserve His salvation. For having mercifully chosen us to be His children, we thank Him deeply. You may ask, "Is not God unfair to

choose only some, and not all?" Read Rom 9:14-24. The correct question is not "Have I been chosen or not?" but "Do I believe in Jesus Christ or not?" If you believe in Christ, then you are among those whom God had chosen (John 3:16-18, 15:16, Acts 16:30-31).

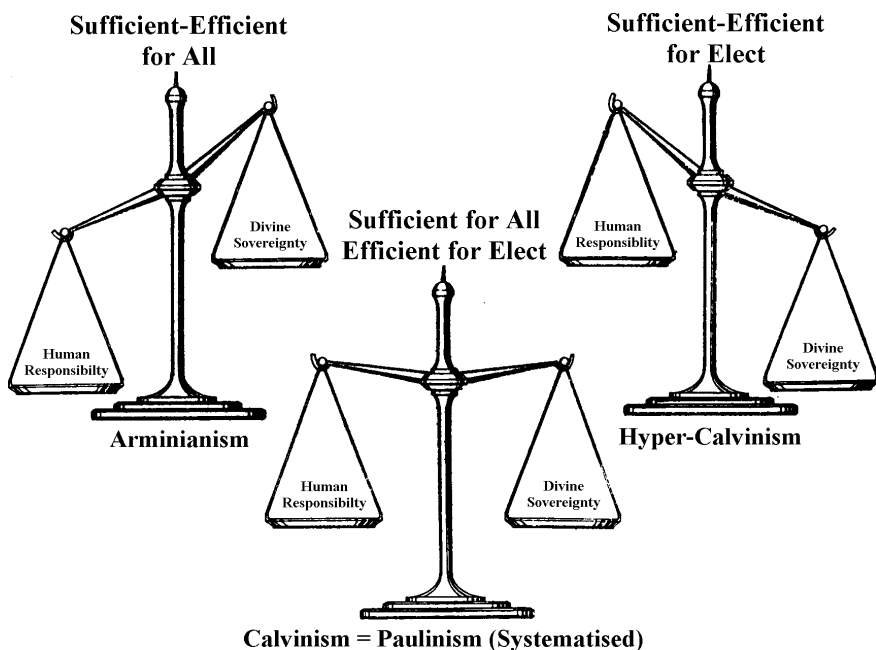
Limited Atonement

WCF VIII:1—It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King the Head and Saviour of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people, to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

WLC Q 44: How does Christ execute the office of a priest? *A: Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.*

How did God go about redeeming those whom He had elected to save? The penalty of sin had to be paid, and the law of God had to be kept if the elect are going to be saved. So God had to send His only begotten Son—

Which View of the Atonement Do You Take?



the Lord Jesus Christ—to do the work of redemption. Christ thus saved us through His twofold—active and passive—obedience.

Christ's death is not limited in its (1) *sufficiency* (the atonement is infinite in its value and power), and its (2) *availability* (the atonement is genuinely applicable and sincerely offered to all). See Calvin's commentary on John 3:16, Acts 2:21, Rom 1:16, 5:18, 2 Pet 3:9.

Christ's death is limited in its (1) *efficiency* (the atonement procured and secured the salvation of only the elect), and (2) *design* (the atonement was intended to save only the elect). See Matt 1:21, Eph 5:25, John 6:38-39, 10:11, 14-18, 24-29.

The atonement of Christ is "sufficient for all, efficient for the elect" (Augustine and Calvin).

Irresistible Grace

WCF X:1-2, "Of Effectual Calling,"—All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

WSC 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.*

WLC Q 66: What is that union which the elect have with Christ? **A:** *The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.*

Q 67: What is effectual calling? **A:** *Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he does, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his Word and Spirit; savingly*

enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.

Q 68: Are the elect only effectually called? **A:** *All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.*

God calls His chosen ones individually to Himself. There are two kinds of call: (1) *Outward call*. This is a general call of the gospel to both elect and non-elect issued by the preacher. The outward call itself does not save. (2) *Inward call*. This is a special call whereby the Spirit convicts the heart of sin, and enables the sinner to understand the gospel, and to believe in Christ. The gift of faith is imparted at this time. One cannot effectively resist this call (John 6:37, 44, Rom 8:14, 30).

Perseverance of the Saints

WCF XVII:1-3, “Of the Perseverance of the Saints,”—They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God’s displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

WCF XVIII:1-4, “Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation,”—Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God, and estate of salvation (which hope of theirs shall perish): yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus,

and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and be the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

WLC Q 79: May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace? *A: True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*

Q 80: Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation? *A: Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may,*

without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

Q 81: Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved? **A:** *Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.*

“Once saved always saved.” The elect will never lose their salvation because it is God who preserves them to the very end. A person truly born again will reach heaven one day because God always keeps His promises, and He never fails (Rom 8:30-39, John 10:28, Phil 2:12-13, Matt 10:22, Mark 13:13).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Why is the first point of Calvinism the most important point of all 5 points?
- (2) If we are “once saved always saved,” then how are we to understand Hebrews 6:4-6 which apparently speaks of someone who has received God’s grace, and yet was lost at the end?

Soteriology II: Justification

WCF XI:1-6, “*Of Justification*,”—Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever

accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, in as much as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.

God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and, although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

The justification of believers under the old testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the new testament.

WLC Q 70: What is justification? *A: Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardons all their sins, accepts and accounts their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.*

Q 71: How is justification an act of God's free grace? *A: Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepts the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.*

Q 72: What is justifying faith? *A: Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.*

Q 73: How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God? A: Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness.

Q 74: What is adoption? A: Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.

Meaning of Justification

WSC 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.

Justification is not righteousness infused (ie made righteous), but righteousness imputed (ie declared righteous). It is “just as if we have not sinned.” The Hebrew word *tsadaq* and the Greek word *dikaioo* are legal terms used by a judge to pronounce a person to be without guilt (Deut 25:1, Ps 32:2, Rom 4:2-8). Justification is therefore the judicial act of God whereby a sinner is declared not guilty in relation to the Moral Law on account of the perfect obedience and sacrificial death of Christ.

Means of Justification

Justification is not obtained by good works (Rom 3:10), but received by God's grace (Rom 3:24-25). A person will not and cannot be justified by keeping the law (Gal 2:16, 21, Rom 3:28), but by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1,9, 2 Cor 5:21, Eph 2:7-8). We are justified by *grace alone*, through *faith alone*, in *Christ alone*.

Results of Justification

The following things take place at the point of justification: (1) We have peace with God (Rom 5:1). (2) We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ (Rom 4:6, 2 Cor 5:19-21). (3) We stand righteous before God just as if we have not sinned (Rom 3:21, 25, 4:6-7). (4) We are freed from the bondage of sin (Rom 3:24, 25, 5:9). (5) We are spared from the wrath of God to come (1 Thess 5:1-9).

WCF XII:1, “*Of Adoption*,”—All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him, as by a Father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Do we become sinlessly perfect after we are justified? Explain the “Christian Struggle” of Romans 7:14-21.
 - (2) How does the Roman Catholic doctrine of faith differ from the Protestant doctrine of faith?
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Soteriology III: Sanctification

WCF XIII:1-3, “*Of Sanctification*,”—They, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

WLC Q 75: What is sanctification? *A: Sanctification is a work of God’s grace, whereby they whom God has, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving*

graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.

Q 76: What is repentance unto life? **A:** *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.*

Q 77: Wherein do justification and sanctification differ? **A:** *Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputes the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuses grace, and enables to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued: the one does equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.*

Q 78: Whence arises the imperfection of sanctification in believers? **A:** *The imperfection of sanctification in believers arises from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.*

Meaning of Sanctification

The Greek word for sanctification is *hagiazō* meaning “to set apart as sacred to God,” “to make holy,” “to consecrate,” “to purify,” “to cleanse.” Sanctification is the purifying work of God whereby He enables the believer to forsake sin, and obey His Word, thereby becoming more and more like Christ. That we need to go through the process of sanctification after justification precludes sinless perfection in this present earthly life.

Distinction between Justification and Sanctification

The following are the differences between justification and sanctification: (1) Whereas justification is a *one-time* act of God, sanctification is an *ongoing* activity of God. (2) Whereas justification is God's work for us from the *outside*, sanctification is God's work on us from the *inside*. (3) Whereas justification happens *during* conversion, sanctification occurs

after conversion. (4) Whereas justification concerns the *root* of salvation, sanctification concerns the *fruit* of salvation.

Author of Sanctification

The triune God is eternally sanctified because He is infinitely and absolutely holy (Lev 21:8, Isa 6:3, Rev 4:8). God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are said to sanctify believers: (1) the Father sanctifies (1 Thess 2:23), (2) the Son sanctifies (Eph 5:26, Heb 2:11, 9:12, 14, 13:12), and (3) the Spirit sanctifies (Rom 15:16, 2 Thess 2:13). It is God's will that Christians be sanctified (1 Thess 4:3).

Means of Sanctification

The Lord uses the following means to sanctify His children:

(1) *The Word of God* is the primary means (John 17:17, 1 Pet 1:22, 2:2).

WLC Q 155: *How is the Word made effectual to salvation? A: The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.*

(2) *The Sacraments*—water baptism and the Lord's Supper are means of grace (1 Cor 11:23-24, 29).

WSC 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.*

(3) *His disciplinary action* is applied when we stray away from Him (Ps 119:71, Rom 2:4, Heb 12:10).

WCF V:5—The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

WLC Q 195: *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),*

acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and ensnare us; and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations, but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them: we pray, that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh, and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin; or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation: or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof: that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.

Aspects of Sanctification

Sanctification has three aspects: (1) *Positional*—our cleansing by the blood of Christ at the point of conversion (Acts 20:32, 1 Cor 1:2, 6:11, Heb 10:10, 14, Jude 1), (2) *Progressive*—the continual process of consecration as we become more and more like Christ (Rom 6:11-13, 8:2-4, 12:1, 2 Cor 3:18, 2 Pet 3:18), and (3) *Permanent*—the reception of our glorified and sinless bodies at the future resurrection (Rom 8:30, 1 Cor 15:57, 1 Thess 5:22-23).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) From your own personal experience, share how God's Word has been sanctifying your life.
 - (2) What happens when a Christian backslides? What is the difference between backsliding and apostatising?
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CHAPTER VI

ECCLESIOLOGY

Ecclesiology I: The Church

WCF XXV:1-6, “*Of the Church*,”—The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.

There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof.

Meaning of *Ekklesia*

The Greek *ekklesia* means an assembly or a gathering. When it is used with reference to a Christian assembly, it means “Church.” *Ekklesia*

comes from 2 words—“out of,” and “to call.” It has the idea of separation. Christians are said to be called out ones—called out of the world to be a holy people unto God (Rom 8:30, 1 Cor 1:1 cf 2 Cor 6:17).

Definitions of the Church

The Church has the following distinctions: (1) *The Church visible, local, and militant* consists of all who profess to be Christian whether counterfeit or genuine. She is presently bearing a witness for Christ in this world. Being militant in this present age while on earth, she is constantly fighting against the forces of darkness in every area of life (Eph 6:10-18).

(2) *The Church invisible, universal, and triumphant* consists of all whom God has chosen to be saved. She will finally be victorious in the future age when Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth and in heaven for eternity (Heb 12:22-23).

Designations of the Church

The Church is called: (1) *Body of Christ*. It emphasises the spiritual unity of believers to Christ (Eph 1:22-23 cf Col 1:18, Eph 4:2-6). Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph 5:21-23). Members of the Church are interdependent on one another in the spiritual work of building up the church (Rom 12:5, Eph 4:25, 1 Cor 12:12-27).

(2) *Bride of Christ*. It emphasises the purity of the Church, and God’s love for her (2 Cor 11:2, Eph 5:25-27, Rev 19:7, 21:2, 9, 22:12). Christ is the Bridegroom (John 3:29).

(3) *Temple/Building of God*. It emphasises the presence of God in the Church (1 Cor 3:16, 1 Pet 2:5). Christ is the cornerstone (Eph 2:20-21).

(4) *Pillar and Ground of Truth*. It emphasises the responsibility of the Church to defend the Word of God (1 Tim 3:15).

Purpose of the Church

The Church is called to (1) *worship* the one living and true God (Eph 1:4-6), (2) *preach* the gospel of Christ to the world (Matt 28:18-20), and (3) *edify* fellow believers in the faith (Eph 4:11-15).

WCF XXI:1-8, “Of Religious Worship, and the Christian Sabbath,”—The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, and praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is

instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.

Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of His Spirit, according to His will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

Prayer is to be made for things lawful; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence, singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: beside religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.

Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the Gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as, in private families daily, and in secret, each one by himself; so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calleth thereunto.

As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only

observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

WCF XXVI:1-3, “*Of the Communion of Saints*,”—All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of His Godhead; or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Can a Church consist of just one member? Is there a minimum number of members required for a Church to exist?
- (2) Can the Roman Catholic Church be part of the Church visible, local, and militant, or the Church invisible, universal, and triumphant?

Ecclesiology II: The Holy Bible

WCF I:1-10, “*Of the Holy Scripture*,”—Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh

the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these

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

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, 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 discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or 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: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, 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.

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

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 the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and

private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Names of the Bible

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek *biblion* which means “book.” In its specialised sense, it refers to the Holy Book—the Bible. The Bible is also called *graphie* which means “writing” (2 Tim 3:16). It is translated “Scripture” (Mark 12:10) or “Scriptures” (Mark 12:24). The “Word of God” is the most definitive term (Mark 7:13, Rom 10:17, 2 Cor 2:17, Heb 4:12, 1 Thess 2:13).

Books of the Bible

Although the Bible is just one Book, it is also a library of books (altogether 66), divided into the OT (39 books), and the NT (27 books).

Old Testament

According to Luke 24:44, the Hebrew OT is divided into 3 parts: (1) *The Law*: Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut; (2) *The Prophets*: Josh Judg-Ruth, 1-2 Sam, 1-2 Kgs, Isa, Jer-Lam, Ezek, Hos, Joel, Amos, Obad, Jon, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zeph, Hag, Zech, Mal; and (3) *The Writings*: Pss, Prov, Job, Cant, Eccl, Esth, Dan, Ezra-Neh, 1-2 Chr.

The English OT however is divided into 5 parts: (1) *Law*: Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut; (2) *History*: Josh, Judg, Ruth, 1 Sam, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, 2 Kgs, 1 Chr, 2 Chr, Ezra, Neh, Esth; (3) *Poetry*: Job, Pss, Prov, Eccl, Cant; (4) *Major Prophets*: Isa, Jer, Lam, Ezek, Dan; and (5) *Minor Prophets*: Hos, Joel, Amos, Obad, Jon, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zeph, Hag, Zech, Mal.

New Testament

The NT consists of (1) *the Gospels*: Matt, Mark, Luke, John; (2) *the Acts of the Apostles*; (3) *the Epistles*: *Pauline*—Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 Thess, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus, Phlm, Heb; *General*—Jas, 1 Pet, 2 Pet, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude; and (3) *the Book of Revelation*.

Inspiration of the Bible

The inspiration of the Bible is taught in 2 Tim 3:16. The word “inspired” comes from the Greek word *theopneustos* which literally means “God-

breathed.” Inspiration should be understood as “Godspiration.” It is not human but divine inspiration.

God used human writers to pen His words. These men were specially chosen by God, and perfectly guided by the Spirit to put the very words of God on paper so that the Bible will be absolutely free from error (2 Pet 1:21).

Since the Bible is inspired, it must be:

(1) *Infallible*. The Bible is perfect. However, it is important to note that the term “infallible” is understood differently by neo-evangelicals. By infallible, they mean only on matters of faith or salvation. According to them, when the Bible deals with science, history, or geography, it is capable of making mistakes.

(2) *Inerrant*. The Bible is absolutely without mistakes in all that it records.

(3) *Authoritative*. The Bible demands our absolute belief or obedience in all of its contents.

The doctrine of biblical inspiration is further defined by these 2 terms:

(1) *Verbal inspiration*—every word of the Bible is inspired (Matt 5:18), and (2) *Plenary inspiration*—all of the Bible is inspired (2 Tim 3:16).

Limited inerrancy teaches that the Bible merely *contains* the Word of God, and neoorthodoxy teaches that the Bible *becomes* the Word of God only when it convicts or inspires us. Both views are heretical.

The Bible is the Word of God absolutely, and objectively. In it, God reveals His singular purpose—the redemption of His people through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ—to the glory of His name.

Conclusion

The Bible is complete. None is to add to it or subtract from it (Rev 22:18-19). John W Burgon—Dean of Chichester—said,

The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Why are the apocryphal books not part of the Holy Scriptures?
 - (2) Explain how you would study the Bible using the synthetic and analytic methods.
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Ecclesiology III: The Sacraments

WCF XXVII: 1-5, *“Of the Sacraments,”*—Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained.

The sacraments of the old testament in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.

WLC Q 162: What is a sacrament? A: *A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.*

Q 163: What are the parts of a sacrament? A: *The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.*

Q 164: How many sacraments has Christ instituted in his church under the New Testament? A: *Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his church only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

The Significance of the Sacraments

Means of Grace

The sacraments are means of grace because spiritual blessings are bestowed by God upon believers who appropriate them by faith.

The Roman Catholic Church has 7 sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Confession, Holy Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. It is taught that the outward physical observance of these sacraments is necessary for salvation. Such an idea ought to be rejected because the sacraments in and of themselves do not save. Salvation comes ***“only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them”*** (WSC Q 91). In any case, Christ instituted only 2 sacraments (Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 11:23) and not seven.

The sacraments serve to help sinful people understand in pictorial language the Gospel that is expressed in the written Word. Blessings are bestowed only when we observe them by faith.

Outward Signs of Inward Grace

The sacraments are signs and seals (Gen 17:11, Rom 4:11). They visibly represent the things that should have already happened in the heart, namely, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, and sanctification.

Water Baptism

WCF XXVIII:1-7, “Of Baptism,”—Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life. Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world.

The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.

Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.

Although it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it: or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.

WLC Q 165: What is Baptism? A: *Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ has ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.*

Q 166: Unto whom is Baptism to be administered? A: *Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.*

Q 167: How is our Baptism to be improved by us? A: *The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as*

those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

General Truths on Baptism

The following are truths on water baptism generally accepted by Protestant churches: (1) Baptism is instituted by Christ (Matt 28:19, Mark 16:15-16). (2) Baptism must be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19-20). (3) Water is used for baptism (Matt 3:11, 16, Acts 8:36-37). (4) Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace (Rom 4:11). (5) Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Christ and identification with Him (Rom 6:3-5). (6) Baptism is symbolic of cleansing or purification (Acts 2:38, 22:16, Heb 10:22).

Mode of Baptism

There are two ways whereby a person may be baptised: (1) by *immersion*, or (2) by *pouring or sprinkling*; the former requiring more water, the latter less. Baptists argue for immersion because, according to them, the words *bapto* and *baptizo* mean “to immerse” or “to submerge.” However, according to Charles Hodge, “the words *bapto*, and *baptizo*, and their cognates, are used with such latitude of meaning, as to prove the assertion that the command to baptize is a command to immerse, to be utterly unauthorized and unreasonable.” The act of cleansing or purification, for instance, in the OT was done by way of sprinkling (Num 8:6-7, 19:13, 18-20).

It really does not matter whether one is baptised by immersion or sprinkling. The important thing is whether one is already washed in the heart by the blood of Christ. The observations of these 2 men are noteworthy: Dr John Sung said, “More faith less water, less faith more water.” Dr Timothy Tow says, “Water more or less, the Gospel is the best.”

Infant Baptism

The gracious covenant God established with man is the basis for which infant baptism is practised. The covenant God made with Abraham was familial in nature (Gen 17:9-13). The infants born to Abraham were to be circumcised as a sign of the covenant. Not only did Abraham belong to

the covenant, his children were also under it. They were recipients of the covenant promises too.

The OT and NT are essentially the same. The Mediator, the means of salvation, the promise of eternal life, are the same in both OT and NT (Acts 2:38-39, 1 Cor 7:14).

The only difference between both covenants is in *the administration of the covenant sign and seal*. In the OT, it was circumcision; in the NT, it is water baptism (Rom 4:11, 1 Cor 5:7, Col 2:11-12). Water baptism is Christian circumcision. The participants of both ceremonies remain the same. In the OT, circumcision is performed on both adults (ie proselytes—Gentiles who embraced the Jewish faith), and infants (ie those born to Jewish parents). In the NT, baptism is performed on both adults (ie those who become Christians as grown-ups), and infants (ie babies born to Christian parents).

Infant baptism seeks to remind Christian parents of their responsibility to faithfully bring up their child in the fear and knowledge of God. When they offer their infants up for baptism, they are claiming God's covenant promises that He cares for the whole family, and will on His part protect, guide, and help the child to understand the Gospel leading eventually to salvation (Deut 6:7-10).

Recommended book: John P Sartelle, *Infant Baptism: What Christian Parents Should Know* (New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985). See also J O Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1962), 2:259-66.

Lord's Supper

WCF XXIX, "Of the Lord's Supper,"—Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His Church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.

In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to His Father; nor any real sacrifice made it all, for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God, for the same: so that the

popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect.

The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about, for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to the common sense, and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions; yea, of gross idolatries.

Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements, in this sacrament, do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive, and feed upon, Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, nor corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to the outward senses.

Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament; yet, they receive not the thing signified thereby; but, by their unworthy coming thereunto, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore, all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table; and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.

WLC Q 168: What is the Lord's Supper? **A:** *The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.*

Q 169: How has Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? **A:** *Christ has appointed the ministers of his Word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.*

Q 170: How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein? **A:** *As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.*

Q 171: How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it? **A:** *They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.*

Q 172: May one who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper? **A:** *One who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account has it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak*

and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

Q 173: May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? **A:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ has left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.*

Q 174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it? **A:** *It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.*

Q 175: What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? **A:** *The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider: How they have behaved themselves therein, and with: What success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.*

Institution of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is symbolic of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God—on the cross. In the OT, it was the Passover which looked forward to the death of Christ (Exod 12:1-4 cf John 1:29, 1 Cor 5:7). In the NT, it is the Lord's Supper which points back to the death of Christ (Luke 22:14-20, 1 Cor 11:23-26).

Meaning of the Lord's Supper

The following are the various views on the Lord's Supper:

(1) *Transubstantiation*. This is the Roman Catholic view which teaches that the elements magically change into the actual or literal flesh and blood of Christ. This view is wrong.

(2) *Consubstantiation*. This is the Lutheran view which teaches that though the elements do not change into the actual body and blood of Christ, Christ is nevertheless “in, with, under” the bread and wine. This view is also wrong.

(3) *Commemoration*. This brethrenistic view though not incorrect is inadequate. It teaches that the elements merely represent the body and blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper has no spiritual effect on the believer who partakes of it whatsoever.

(4) *Calvinistic view*. The correct view is the spiritual presence view taught by John Calvin. Presbyterians teach that though the elements represent the body and blood of Christ, Christ is spiritually present in the bread and wine. The partaking of the bread and cup is a spiritual act. When we do so by faith, we are spiritually blessed by the Lord (cf 1 Cor 11:27-32).

Similarities and Differences Between Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper

WLC Q 176: Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree? **A:** *The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.*

Q 177: Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ? **A:** *The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.*

Questions for Discussion

- (1) If a person was saved and baptised by immersion in a Baptist Church, but later wants to be Presbyterian, should he be baptised again?
 - (2) Is infant baptism a biblical doctrine? If so, how would you attempt to explain it to your friend who is still not convinced.
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Ecclesiology IV: Biblical Separation

WCF XX:4—And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another, they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity (whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation), or to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church.

WCF XXX:1-4, “*Of Church Censures*,”—The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed; by virtue whereof, they have power, respectively, to retain, and remit sins; to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word, and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel; and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offenses, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper for a

season; and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

Definition of Separation

There are 2 kinds of separation, personal and ecclesiastical. (1) *Personal separation* is that purposeful removal of oneself from all worldly philosophies and sinful activities; and (2) *ecclesiastical separation* is that disciplinary measure exercised by a Christian or church against another Christian or church due to doctrinal impurity or positional compromise.

Separation in the Scriptures

Separation in the Old Testament

In the Law

The doctrine of separation is intrinsic to the covenant God made with Israel. Israel, as God's chosen nation, is a precious possession of God (Exod 19:5-6). As a "peculiar treasure," she is specially favoured by God, different from all others. Israel was commanded to separate herself from the pagan nations (Deut 7:1-6, Exod 23:32-33, 34:11-27), and as a separated nation, reflect the holiness of God (Lev 20:26). Israel was told to separate herself from the heathen nations so that she could bear witness to the fact that there is but one living and true God, and besides Jehovah, there is no Saviour.

In the Prophets

The law of separation was violated by the Israelites when they were in the land of Canaan. God sent His prophets to warn them against backsliding and apostasy, and that judgment would come if they refused to repent. The consequences of non-separation can be seen in the following cases: (1) The case of Samson whose love for Delilah led to his downfall (Judg 15-16). (2) The case of David who did the right thing but in the wrong way (2 Sam 6:1-11 cf Num 7:9, 1 Sam 6:8). (3) The case of Solomon who became an idol worshipper because of his foreign wives (1 Kgs 11:1-8 cf Eccl 7:26). (4) The case of the wicked priests who mixed the clean with the unclean (Ezek 22:26).

In the Writings

The doctrine of separation is taught in the OT poetical books. (1) Ps 1:1 talks about the blessedness of a separated life. (2) Prov 4:14-15 advises God's people to stay clear of the wicked. (3) 2 Chr 17-19 records the notorious case of Jehoshaphat's compromise. (4) Ezra 10:10-11 finds the Jewish returnees putting away their foreign wives.

Separation in the New Testament

In the Gospels

Jesus taught separation when He was with us: (1) Jesus said that He did not come to bring peace but division (Matt 10:34). (2) Jesus taught the Church how to discipline wayward believers (Matt 18:15-19). (3) Jesus described Christians as being in the world but not of the world (John 17:14-17).

In the Acts of the Apostles

The Apostle Paul for example separated himself from hardened unbelievers in the synagogue of Ephesus to teach the Christian disciples in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-9).

In the Epistles

(1) "Be not conformed to this world (Rom 12:1-2). (2) "Mark them . . . avoid them" (Rom 16:17). (3) "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor 15:33 cf Hag 2:11-13). (4) "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor 6:14), "come out . . . , be ye separate" (2 Cor 6:17), "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness" (2 Cor 7:1). (5) "Have no fellowship with . . . but rather reprove" (Eph 5:11). (6) "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess 5:22). (7) "Withdraw . . . have no company with . . . admonish" (2 Thess 3:6, 14-15). (8) "Withdraw from . . . shun" (1 Tim 6:3-5, 2 Tim 2:16-21). (9) "a heretick . . . reject" (Titus 3:10). (10) "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts But be ye holy" (1 Pet 1:14-16). (11) "Receive not those who abideth not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 7:11). (12) "Earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3).

In Revelation

In Rev 18:4, the Lord commanded His people to separate themselves from the harlot church with the following injunctions: “Come out . . . be not partakers . . . receive not.”

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Is the allegation that separatists are unloving valid? Can love be divorced from truth?
 - (2) Why is there a need to earnestly contend for the faith today?
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CHAPTER VII

ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology I: Life After Death

WCF XXXII:1-3, “*Of the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead,*”—The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see 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, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up, with the self-same bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls forever.

The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour: the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour; and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

The Intermediate State

The intermediate state is “that realm or condition in which souls exist between death and the resurrection” (Boettner). For the Christian, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8). The reprobate, on the other hand, is now in a place of torment till the judgment day (Luke 13:27-28, 16:23-24, Jude 6-7, Rev 20:11-15). At this point in time, those who have passed away, be they believers or unbelievers, are said to be in their intermediate state.

The intermediate state is described by Jesus in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). The following is a description of the

intermediate state: (1) The souls of the departed are truly alive, and fully conscious. (2) The wicked are experiencing tremendous pain, and suffering. (3) The redeemed are said to be in “Abraham’s bosom.” (4) Verbal communication is possible. (5) Heaven and hell are separated by a great chasm. (6) The souls of men are waiting for the resurrection of the body (Luke 14:13-14, John 5:29, Rev 20:4-6). (7) The departed cannot return to communicate with the living (cf Exod 22:18, Lev 20:6, 27, Deut 18:10-12).

False Doctrines on the Intermediate State

Soul Sleep

This view says that when man dies, his soul enters into a state of unconsciousness. Taught by Seventh-day Adventists, it contradicts Luke 16:19-31, and 2 Cor 5:8.

Annihilation

This view says that when the finally impenitent dies, he will cease to exist. There is no such a place called hell. Taught by Jehovah’s Witnesses, and now by so-called evangelicals like Clark Pinnock and John Stott, it contradicts Eccl 12:7, Matt 25:46, Rom 2:8-10, Rev 14:11, 19:20, 20:10.

Purgatory

This view says that those who die without being thoroughly cleansed of venial sins (ie forgivable sins) will have to undergo a process of purification in a “half-way house” before they can enter heaven. Taught by Roman Catholics; it contradicts Luke 23:43, 2 Cor 5:8-10, Heb 9:12, 14, 22).

WSC 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 in Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.*

Questions for Discussion

- (1) What will the resurrected and glorified body be like? Discuss in the light of 1 Cor 15.
 - (2) How can a loving God send people to hell?
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Eschatology II: The End of the World

WCF XXXIII:1-3, “*Of the Last Judgment*,”—God hath appointed a day (*which word in Scripture in reference to the last things may represent a period of time including the thousand years following the visible, personal and premillennial return of Christ*), wherein he will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth 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 in the body, whether good or evil [*words in italics added by the Bible-Presbyterian Church*].

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 of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Time of the Second Coming of Christ

We do not know the exact time of the Lord’s coming (Matt 24:36). However, we can know the nearness of it (Luke 21:31, 1 Thess 5:2-6). In any case, the Lord’s coming is always imminent.

Signs of the Second Coming of Christ

The following signs indicate the nearness of Christ’s return: (1) False Christs (Matt 24:5, Mark 13:6, Luke 21:8), (2) wars and rumours of war (Matt 24:6-7a, Mark 13:7-8a, Luke 21:9-10), (3) natural calamities (Matt 24:7b, Mark 13:8b, Luke 21:11), (4) persecution (Matt 24:8-13, Mark 13:9-13, Luke 21:12-19). (5) evangelisation of the whole world (Matt 24:14, Mark 13:10), (6) apostasy (Matt 24:11-12, 23, 24, Mark 13:9-11,

THE LORD RETURNS TO EARTH KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS		HE REIGNS 1000 YEARS	FINAL JUDGMENT	"BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW" Rev 20:5
<p>The Lord shall descend from heaven, the dead in Christ shall rise first, we shall be changed.</p> <p>1 Cor 15:52 1 Thess 4:16, 17</p>	<p>Believers caught up to meet the Lord in the air; appear at</p> <p>a) Judgment Seat of Christ - 2 Cor 5:10 b) Wedding Supper of the Lamb - Rev 19:9</p> <p>Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints - Jude 14</p> <p>All Israel shall be saved - Zech 12:10 - Rom 11:26</p> <p>ALL on the earth hide from WRATH OF THE LAMB - Rev 6:15, 16</p> <p>ANTICHRIST RULES Rev 13</p> <p>OLIVET</p>	<p>a) OT Prophecies fulfilled: "Paradise regained"</p> <p>b) LORD'S PRAYER ANSWERED</p> <p>c) We shall reign with the Lord 1000 years. - Rev 5:10; 20:6</p> <p>d) Israel restored, at the head of the nations.</p> <p>GOD'S KINGDOM COME</p> <p>The CREATION delivered from bondage of corruption - Rom 8:21</p>	<p>Satan loosed, deceives nations. God's fire consumes them - Rev 20:7-9</p> <p>EARTH BURNT UP</p> <p>2 Pet 3:10</p>	<p>NEW HEAVEN</p> <p>NEW JERUSALEM</p> <p>NEW EARTH</p> <p>PREPARED FOR THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE - Rev 21:27</p>
<p>FIRST RESURRECTION</p>	<p>GREAT TRIBULATION (7 Years)</p>	<p>ARMAGEDDON</p>	<p>SECOND RESURRECTION</p> <p>Rev 20:5, 13</p>	<p>GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT</p> <p>"every man according to their works" - Rev 20:13</p>
<p>Full Redemption of Saints and Creation Rom 8:22, 23</p>		<p>Satan bound, cast into bottomless pit Rev 20:1-3</p>		
		<p>LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE PREPARED FOR SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS Rev 20:10-15</p>		

An Eschatological Timetable

Luke 21:22-24 cf 2 Thess 2:3, 1 Tim 4:1-2, 2 Tim 3:1-5), and (7) the regathering of Israel (Isa 11:11-12, Zech 10:9-12 cf Matt 24:32-33).

The Great Tribulation

Taught in the OT as: (1) the day of the Lord (Isa 2:12, 13:6, 9, Ezek 13:5, 30:3, Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14, Amos 5:18, 20, Obad 15, Zeph 1:7, 14, Zech 14:1, Mal 4:5), (2) the day of God's vengeance (Isa 34:8, 63:1-6), (3) the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7), (4) the 70th week of Daniel (Dan 9:27).

Mentioned in the NT as (1) the day of the Lord (Acts 2:20, 1 Thess 5:2, 2 Thess 2:2, 2 Pet 3:10). (2) the great day of His wrath (Rev 6:17), (3) the hour of His judgment (Rev 14:7), (4) the end of the world (Matt 13:40, 49), (5) the tribulation (Matt 24:21, 29).

The Rapture

The Rapture refers to the sudden catching up of the saints from this world when Jesus returns in the clouds. This doctrine is found in the OT through the following cases: the translation of Enoch (Gen 5:24), and of Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11). In the NT, the doctrine is taught by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 15:51-53 and 1 Thess 4:13-18.

When will it happen? There are 5 views on the rapture: (1) pre-tribulational, (2) mid-tribulational, (3) post-tribulational, (4) partial, (5) pre-wrath. The rapture of the saints will occur before God judges the world with His *wrath* during the 7-year Tribulation period. This dreadful period is called "the great day of His *wrath*" (Rev 6:17, 11:18, 15:1, 7, 16:1, 19, 19:15). Paul assures us, "*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess 5:9).

Manner of the Second Coming of Christ

When Christ returns, He will do so (1) personally (Acts 1:11), (2) physically (Acts 1:11, Rev 1:7), (3) visibly (Matt 24:27, 30, 26:64, Col 3:4, Titus 2:13), (4) suddenly (Matt 24:37-44, 1 Thess 5:2-3, Rev 3:3, 16:15), (5) gloriously (Titus 2:13), (6) victoriously (Rev 19:11-16).

Purpose of the Second Coming of Christ

Jesus will return to (1) destroy both the demonic and human forces of Satan (Rev 19:11-20:2), (2) to usher in the millennium (Rev 20:4-6), (3) to judge the finally impenitent at the Judgment of the Great White Throne

(Rev 20:11-15), and (4) to reward His saints at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:12-15, Col 3:24, 2 Cor 5:10).

The Millennium

The word “millennium” is derived from the Latin “*mille*” meaning “thousand,” and “*annus*” meaning “year.” Thus, “millennium” means “a thousand years.” In theological terms, when correctly understood, the millennium is Christ’s rule on earth for 1,000 years after His return (Rev 20:4, 6).

In our study of the Bible, it is important that we observe this basic rule of interpretation: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense” (David Cooper). Unless there are compelling contextual reasons against taking a word in its literal sense, we should understand a word in its most natural or common sense. Thus, 1,000 years means literally 1,000 years. Israel means Israel, and Church means Church. There is a distinction between Israel and the Church. There are many promises in the OT given to national Israel especially with regard to the promised land which can only find fulfillment in the millennium (Isa 11:1-9, Jer 31:31-36, 33:14-26). It is wrong to spiritualise or allegorise away God’s promises to Israel and make them apply to the Church.

God promised David a kingdom that will last forever (2 Sam 7:12-23). This kingdom has a physical aspect (Zech 14:9). The Son of David will be King over all the earth. This obviously was not fulfilled by Solomon. It will be fulfilled only by Christ (Luke 1:31-33, Acts 1:6). Christ will sit upon the throne of his father David and rule over the whole world from Jerusalem (Isa 24:23, Jer 3:17, Mic 4:2). God will keep His promise to Israel (Ps 89:34-37). There will be a physical reign of Christ for a millennium right here on a rejuvenated earth (Rev 20:4, 6).

Characteristics of the Millennium

The millennium will be characterised by:

(1) A recognition of God’s authority. Christ—the King of kings, and Lord of lords—will sit upon the throne of David (Isa 11:1-5, Jer 33:14-17). He will govern the whole world (Mic 4:1-2) with absolute power and authority (Ps 2:9, Rev 19:15-16).

(2) Righteousness and peace (Isa 2:4, 11:4-5). Christ will rule with justice and equity. There will be peace in the world. However, during this period,

the sinful nature of man is not yet eradicated. We know this because at the end of the millennium, many of the earth's inhabitants will join with Satan to rebel against the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 20:7-9).

(3) A universal knowledge of the Lord. Everyone will know who Jesus Christ is (Isa 11:9, Hab 2:14).

(4) Harmony between mankind and the animal kind (Isa 6:8), and harmony within the animal kingdom itself (Isa 65:25).

(5) Productivity of the land (Isa 35:6-8, 43:19-20, 55:13, Ezek 34:26, Joel 2:21-24).

(6) Longevity. Man will live for hundreds of years (Isa 65:20).

(7) Worship (Zech 8:20-24). A millennial temple is described in Ezek 40-46.

During the millennium, the glorified saints will rule with Christ (1 Cor 6:2, 2 Tim 2:12, Rev 5:10, 20:4).

At end of the millennium, Satan will be released from imprisonment for a short season to deceive the world for one last time. Satan and company will be defeated, judged at the Great White Throne, and cast into hell forever (Rev 20:7-15). The old heaven and earth will finally face a fiery destruction (2 Pet 3:10). We will then be ushered into eternity, glorifying the Lord, and enjoying His presence in a new heaven and a new earth forever (Rev 21).

Questions for Discussion

- (1) What are the three views of the millennium. Why is the premillennial view the correct view?
 - (2) How should the knowledge that Christ is coming back soon affect the way we live our lives?
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The existence of a Confession of Faith is ever a standing defense against the danger of any Church lapsing unawares into heresy. ... Nothing essential is omitted [from the WCF]; and nothing is extended to a length disproportioned to its due importance. ... It contains the calm and settled judgment of these profound divines on all previous heresies and subjects of controversy which had in any age or country agitated the Church. ... Each error is condemned, not by a direct statement and refutation of it, but by a clear, definite, and strong statement of the converse truth. There was, in this mode of exhibiting the truth, singular wisdom combined with equally singular modesty. Every thing of an irritating nature is suppressed, and the pure and simple truth alone displayed; while there is not only no ostentatious parade of superior learning, but even a concealment of learning.

Dr William Hetherington

The significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed is to be found in the three facts that, historically speaking, they are the final crystallization of the elements of evangelical religion, after the conflicts of sixteen hundred years; scientifically speaking, they are the richest and most precise and best guarded statement ever penned of all that enters into evangelical religion and of all that must be safeguarded if evangelical religion is to persist in the world; and, religiously speaking, they are a notable monument of spiritual religion.

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