

Anglican Orthodox Church Communion Worldwide



Church Basic Course

an introduction to the Anglican Church from the beginning to today

Produced by
Presiding Bishop Jerry L. Ogles, DD
Anglican Orthodox Church
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WHO ARE WE?

We are a Church who can be best described as Christian. We believe nothing that cannot be proved by “certain warrant of Holy Scripture” as one of our Articles of Religion puts it. We are not Calvinists, Lutherans or even Cranmerians. We are Christians following our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We do follow it from the perspective of the Anglican Tradition.

Often described as the Middle Way, walking a straight line between Roman Catholicism and radical Protestantism, Anglicans are Christians with their roots in the Church of England. The Church came to England in the first century AD with Roman soldiers and merchants. Although there are no written records until the fifth century, legend holds that Joseph of Arimethea, who provided the tomb for the burial of Jesus Christ, brought Christianity to England in 37 AD. He is said to have built a church in Glastonbury in Somerset. Whether Joseph of Arimethea was the first to carry the faith to England or not, Christianity did arrive in England by the middle of the first century and was established there by the middle of the second century. Saint Alban, who was killed in the year 304, is believed to be the first English Christian martyr, and the British church was represented at the Council of Arles in 314 AD. When the Romans left England around 400 AD, the Church was cut off from the rest of the world. In the year 597, Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, Prior of the Abbey of Saint Andrew in Rome and recently consecrated as a bishop, as a missionary to England. There, to his surprise, he found a well-established, vibrant church already in place. King Ethelbert and his Christian wife welcomed Augustine, and the king was converted and baptized. Augustine later became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Augustine was apparently given significant latitude in allowing the English church to retain many of its deeply ingrained local customs and practices. That changed when William the Conqueror brought the by then Roman Catholic church back to England. It might be said the Church in England was taken over by the Church of Rome in 1066 AD.

Over the millennium of separation, the Church of Rome had developed a liturgical system of worship that provided an ordered approach to worship. This ordered approach instilled not only a disciplined and orderly worship, but through its weekly repetition insured the church would make inroads into the people’s hearts.

While there was much good that had come about in the intervening time, by the 1500s, the Roman Church had grown far from its first century roots with professed beliefs not only not found in biblical teaching, but contrary to the written Word as found in the Bible. The gulf between the Church of Rome and the Bible had grown so great Bibles were not allowed in churches and most priests were not allowed access to them. This meant the “Word of God” was whatever the “Church” in Rome said it was. After almost 500 years of growing heresy, a group of English clergymen and laymen lead a split from the Church of Rome and formed the Church of England. The King of England was the titular head of the Church under the religious guidance of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first Book of Common Prayer was written in 1549 to

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bring the service of the Church in line with the teachings of the Bible. In addition, King James directed the placing of Bibles in each church in the common language so they could be read and understood by the people. The King James translation of 1611 is the most widely accepted and used biblical translation.

When people from England came to the New World, they brought their religion with them, not only the Puritans, but Church of England people, too. After the Revolutionary War, our split with the English Crown, the Church here became the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

As the sun set on the British Empire, churches around the world changed names, mostly adopting the Anglican label. In the 1960s an insidious virus took hold of the Episcopal Church of the United States. People who did not believe in God, let alone the Bible, whose loyalty was not to the One True God, but rather to good feelings or perhaps the Devil took over. The church became a home for anti-establishment, anti-Christ pro-homosexual priests, then bishops. In 1979, a new prayer book was adopted, claiming to be a Book of Common Prayer with modernized language. It was not, it was actually the first attempt by the non-believers to change the Church from within. Since that time, the Episcopal Church has lost over 80 percent of its members. The declining numbers show that those who believe in everything believe in nothing and do not need to go to church to find out they are okay.

In 1963, Bishop James Parker Dees saw all this coming and founded the Anglican Orthodox Church on 17 November 1963 - the first religious body to withdraw from the Episcopal Church in the modern era. On Passion Sunday, 15 March 1964 Dees was consecrated a bishop by Bishop Wasyl Sawyna of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of North and South America, assisted by Bishop Orlando Jacques Woodward of Old Catholic succession.

The Anglican Orthodox Church is a Protestant Catholic church. That is to say we believe those things believed by all Christians for all time. We believe that nothing can or should be required to be believed for salvation that cannot be proved by certain warrant (proof) of Holy Scripture. We are very much Bible-based. In the United States of America, the church uses the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, which is 82% Scripture by word count and 100% by concept.

Rooted in the mists of the past, planning for a bright future, the AOC forms a radiant bridge. While our service can be very traditional with organ music and all, there can also be pre-service contemporary Christian guitar accompanied singing! The wording of our worship service is directly from the King James Bible, though slightly modified. It was designed not to be in the common everyday language of the people but rather to be set in a linguistic style to do justice to the Glory of God, while still easy to read and comprehend. While we know some people feel the words are archaic, other people say they are the most beautiful prayers they have ever heard.

In 1967, Bishop Dees founded the Orthodox Anglican Communion for the purpose of providing coverage to churches abroad, and soon thereafter Bishops Khurshid Alam of Pakistan and Bishop V. J. Stephen of South India affiliated with the Communion,

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recognizing Bishop Dees as Metropolitan. New national churches in Kenya, Madagascar, Great Britain, and Colombia, rapidly followed. Upon this wave of expansion and success, the theological college of the jurisdiction and the communion, was founded.

Dees died during heart surgery on 25 December 1990. The church has been led by the Bishop Jerry L. Ogles of Enterprise, Alabama since 22 October 2000. He is the Bishop of the United States and the Metropolitan of the Anglican Orthodox Church's worldwide communion, with churches across the United States and in 22 countries around the world. These include Pakistan, Indonesia, Canada, India, Liberia, Madagascar, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Central African Republic, Haiti, the Philippines, Fiji, Peru, Argentina, and the Solomon Islands.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHURCH BEFORE CHRIST CAME TO EARTH

In the beginning, God created this Universe, this solar system, this planet and all that is therein. Do not get caught up in the details. It is sufficient for you to understand that He create all that is. He did it in His Time, not ours.

When most non-believers criticize the Biblical view of creation, they do so without having even the slightest idea of what the Bible says about the beginning. If you study creation as it is laid out in the Bible, you will find that the order and method of creation is reasonably close to what "scientists" currently think happened and quite at odds with what those scientists predecessors thought. When you hear of people claiming for years Christians claimed the earth was flat; reflect how little they know of what God has told us about what He calls in the Bible the "round world." We have never thought the world was flat. Neither would anyone who had read the Bible. The rest of creation is much the same. Genesis lays out what happened, you can read there how He did it all!

Once man was on the earth, created by God, living a perfect life in the Garden of Eden, an imperfect creature with free will, he managed to get himself in trouble and blame it on his wife. Ejected from the garden, he began to make his own way. He and his progeny began to fill the earth. The first people, the first murderers, the first thieves, the first of many things. They felt no need for God's help, they could do it all on their own. Once, he wiped out the population with a flood, with Noah and his family surviving in the ark. He zapped cities, read about Sodom and Gomorrah. Eventually, God decided to pick a man here to help and to guide, to establish a chosen people. He picked Abram. After establishing a covenant with Abram, he re-named him Abraham and thus began the Jewish people.

The Jews multiplied and eventually ended up in Egypt, how they got there is an interesting story, you will love reading about it. Eventually, their guest status ran out and they went into bondage, to semi-slavery. Moses, the first real leader of the Jews, brought them out at God's direction and much prodding. He led them to the Promised Land, modern day Israel, a trip that lasted 40 years. Another interesting bit of history to read about. During the desert journey, God gave Moses The Law, a code of conduct and civil interface with 613 elements that Jews follow to this day. The chief among the laws was the Ten Commandments, or those laws, which delineate our moral standards.

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The laws were not really possible to follow. Jews not surprisingly had the first attorneys, Pharisees whose primary job was finding ways around the law. Transgressions of the law required sacrifice, serious transgression, serious sacrifice. The temple was filled with dead animals, yet the transgressions continued. The Jews knew there was to be a savior, a messiah, some time in the future, most signs in Scripture pointed to somewhere around what would become the ZERO year, the year before 1 Anno Domine.

In Israel, the Jews managed to survive, even thrive. God provided prophets, then judges to lead them in times of crisis, but the people looked to those around them and asked for a king, not just a king, but a series of kings. So, between kings and prophets, the Jews managed to survive thousands of years until the time of Christ. Sometime they listened to God and did what He Asked, other times they did "what seemed good unto them" and were almost wiped out.

As time went on, the world became somewhat more calm, somewhat more "civilized", more open to spreading a single religion throughout the known world. God waited to send His Son until the time was right.

That time was the ZERO year. The Roman Empire had pacified the known world, safe travel was possible throughout the world. A single language was spoken everywhere; oddly enough Greek, not Latin.

In the ZERO year, God sent His only begotten Son to this world.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

We are Christians. We believe in a Triune God, a single entity composed of three beings, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. We believe that the Holy Bible contains the inerrant Word of God, thus is the ultimate reference source. We look to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the place we turn whenever we have questions or disputes to settle. What does Scripture say? There are many translations, but only one Authorized Version of the Bible, that commonly known as the King James Version. This is the Bible we use and the one in which we place our trust and confidence. More on this later.

We believe we should be guided by:

Scripture • Reason • Tradition

a trifoil of a kind, as Richard Hooker put it:

"What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth. That which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason over-rule all other inferior judgments whatsoever" (Laws, Book V, 8:2; Folger Edition 2:39,8-14).

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He also said, "God is no captious sophister, eager to trip us up whenever we say amiss, but a courteous tutor, ready to amend what, in our weakness or our ignorance, we say ill, and to make the most of what we say aright."

"Scripture does not destroy nature but perfects it, Scripture presupposes reason and requires its use and that Grace presupposes nature."

Rather than stand equally as a three legged stool, Scripture – Reason – Tradition form a three corded rope or line, the strength of which comes from Scripture, the direction from Reason and the beauty from Tradition.

Scripture

Our church is rooted in Holy Scripture. Our service by phrase count is 83% scripture; we take scripture seriously. Article Six of our *Articles of Religion* says:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or thought to be requisite or necessary to salvation.

We seek through study to understand more fully the meaning of the Bible. We do not claim to find hidden meaning in the Word of God. We think, like the Constitution of the United States, the Bible means what it says. We are not complete literalists, rather we think the Bible was written to be understood by the people in terms they could appreciate. The meaning is clear to the reader and not hidden.

We believe the Word of God has the power to improve each of our lives, if only we will do what we are clearly told.

Reason

Reason is necessary for the understanding and application of scripture in all the areas in which scripture might be applied. Reason is God's greatest gift to human beings, enabling them to understand God's plan for the whole of reality, to situate themselves within it and to specify proper moral forms of human activity.

Reason means the clarity of Scripture, accessible through human thought. Revisionist moderns have taken "Reason" to refer to rational thinking over against the implied obscurity or irrelevancy of Scriptures. Rather the true meaning is that Scripture is clear and easily understandable in everything it speaks about and Church decisions should be subject to the "plain reading" of the text. Reason, after all is a gift of God, which enables us to understand God's plan for life through, not separate from, Scripture.

Tradition

Where we cannot find guidance in scripture or draw a conclusion from rational deduction, we look to the tradition of the Church.

We are all newcomers to the Church. Our Church is a direct descendant of the Church established in England about the year 37 AD. We were taken over by the Roman Church in 1066 AD and split from them in 1549 AD. We use a liturgical based service

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which follows the original 1549 service very closely. The language is not archaic; rather majestic. We are open to change, but find no value in change for the sake of change. We look to the traditions of our Church to guide us beyond Scripture and Reason, but never in conflict with them.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed is the concise statement of belief for Christians in all regions and denominations. If you do not believe the Creed, you are not a Christian. Simple. So, what is it and what does it say?

The word Creed comes from the Latin word **Credo**, which means *I believe*. The Creed as adopted by the Church at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD and modified at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD reads:

I BELIEVE in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

How did it come about?

The Nicene Creed is also called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, because the complete present form of the creed was defined by over three hundred bishops, representing the entire Christian church at the time, both East and West, including three from the Britannic Isles, in both Nicaea (325AD) and Constantinople (381AD). Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians all accept the ancient Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed was written in 325AD and completed in its present form in 381AD. The Creed started as a response to the Arian heresy that denied Jesus was fully God. The Nicene Creed is about the Trinity, and recounts the historical realities of Jesus' life. The creed is a summary of the concepts and truths found in Scripture.

Here is the Creed broken down line by line with explanations.

I believe in one God

The Greek, Latin and proper English translations begin with "I" believe, because reciting the creed is an individual expression of belief. Some "contemporary" translations use

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"we" in an attempt to moderate the Creed. The creed states the assumption of the ancient Shema: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

the Father Almighty

Jesus frequently calls God "Father" in the Scriptures, and this usage tells us God is a loving God active within His creation. God the Father is the first person (Greek hypostasis, "individual reality"), or distinction, within the Godhead. The Father is the "origin" or "source" of the Trinity. From Him, came somehow the other two. God the Father is often called "God Unbegotten" in early Christian thought.

Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

If you are a Christian you must believe God created the entire universe, those visible and those invisible. Everything that is was created by God. Some early sects, the Gnostics and Marcionites, believed that God the Father created the spirit world, but that an "evil" god (called the demiurge) created the similarly evil material world. No.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

Jesus Christ is the Lord of all. The title Lord has connotations of deity, since the Hebrew word adonai and Greek word kyrios (both meaning Lord) were applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament. Jesus is Lord and Master of all this creation. No tyrant, Jesus is Lord, teacher, counselor, friend and servant.

the only-begotten Son of God

Jesus is in a unique relationship with God the Father, His only Son. While Hebrew kings were sons of God symbolically, Jesus is the only Son of God by nature.

Begotten of his Father before all worlds

Begotten has the meaning of born, generated, or produced. God the Son is out of the essence of God the Father. Just as a child shares the same humanness as his or her parents, the Son shares the essential nature of God with the Father. Since God is eternal, the Son, being begotten of God, is also eternal. The Son is often called the Only-Begotten God in early Christian literature. Jesus was begotten of the Father before this world came into being and was present at its creation.

God of God, Light of Light

God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. The Son is not the Father, but they both are God. Just as a torch is lit one to another, the Father and Son are distinct, but both light to the world. Add in the Holy Ghost. Three in one. One of three. Not one, three, yet one. Scriptures have all three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in action at the same time at Jesus' baptism. Scripture has the Father and Son as two as well as one. In John's gospel, the Father and Son testify as two witnesses, not one (John 8:17-18). Related to this, St. Athanasius, writing during the Nicene era, said that the Father and Son are one as "the sight of two eyes is one," probably the best analogy. Another analogy is the musical C-chord. The C, E, and G notes are all distinct notes, but joined together as one chord, the sound is richer and more dynamic than had the notes been played

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individually. The chords are all equally important in producing the full, dynamic, sound of the chord, but the sound is lacking and thin if one of the notes is left out.

Very God of very God

God the Son is fully and utterly God, distinct but not separate from the Father. The ancient Arians believed that Jesus could be called god but not true God. In other words, they believed the Logos (the "Word," a popular title for Jesus in early Christian literature) was the first creation of God, necessary to mediate between the unknowable distant God (a concept borrowed from Platonic thought) and creation. Because God knew that the Logos would be perfect, the title god could be bestowed upon the Son "by participation," but "true God" was a title reserved only for the unknowable Father. This is the Ante-Nicene "Logos Theology" of St. Justin and Athenagoras taken to an unintended extreme.

Begotten, not made

Some today (Jehovah's Witnesses) and in the past (Arians) have suggested God created Jesus like God would an angel. The creed tells us that just as when a woman gives birth she does not create a child out of nothing, being begotten of God, the Son is not created out of nothing. Since the Son's creation from the Father occurred before time was created, begotten refers to a permanent relationship as opposed to an event within time.

Being of one substance with the Father

Father and Son share the same substance or essence of divinity. That is, the Father and Son both share the qualities and essential nature that make one in reality God. However, sharing the same substance does not mean they share identity of person. While certainly an inadequate example, think of three humans: they share a common nature, the essential qualities and essence of humanity, but are not the same person (although unlike the persons of the Trinity, humans do not share one will).

By whom all things were made

Through The Son, as Word of God, all things have been created. As Logos, the Son is the agent and artificer of creation.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven

Jesus came from heaven, from a reality other than our own. While the creed says "down," it is important to remember that our language is limited by our very narrow view of the time space continuum. Heaven is may or may not be "up," just as God may or may not be a biologically male father. This is the best we can do within our limits.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man

God the Son became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a virgin through the Holy Ghost. God truly became human in Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is a real human being, not simply a spirit or ghost. The incarnation of God in Christ is the ultimate act of love, because rather than

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sending an angel or good human to accomplish the redemption and restoration of creation, God Himself became human.

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried

Jesus died on a cross, suffered as humans do, truly died, and was laid in a tomb. The Nicene Creed is more than just metaphysical speculation and includes important historical details. Notice that in addition to being "true God from true God," Jesus is fully human as well. The early Docetists, named from the Greek word *dokeo*, "to seem," believed Jesus only seemed to be human, but was not, and simply went through the motions of being human. Thus, when Jesus ate, they said, he only pretended to eat. Docetism was a very early heresy, addressed by the Gospel and Letters of St. John, as well as in St. Ignatius' letters in AD 110 AD.

And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures

Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say. Just as Jesus truly died, he truly rose from the dead three days later. The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience. However, Jesus was not just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection. Rejection of the bodily resurrection is a rejection of the foundation of Christianity.

And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father:

Jesus left this world after His resurrection in a manner likened to a Saturn V launch. In ancient science, heaven was thought to be above the sky (notice how on a starry night the sky looks like a dome that one could pierce through, if one could get that high). In the Scriptures, Jesus is said to ascend to heaven. Whatever happened that day, Luke had to render the event into his own scientific paradigm, so he said Jesus "went up" to heaven. Again, we are limited by our language and own time space experience. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, i.e. sharing authority with the Father, and not just literally sitting next to the Father.

And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

Jesus will come again to judge both the living and dead. His kingdom will not be destroyed, despite all of humanity's efforts. Jesus, like God the Father, is timeless. He is, was and always will be. Likewise His Kingdom.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life

The Holy Ghost is the "breath" God breathed to give life to the world in Genesis. His light illuminates our path after our birth as Paul's New Man in Christ. The original Nicene Creed of 325AD ended right here with the Holy Ghost. The remainder of the Creed was approved at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. However, most scholars believe that the text of the full creed dates prior to this council, and that the bishops simply gave their approval to a local creed already in use. The reason these additions were included in the Nicene Creed is that some 4th century Christians denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The names given to these heretics were Macedonians (named after a heretical bishop) or pneumatomachi ("fighters against the Spirit").

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Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son

The Son is said to be begotten, while the Spirit is said to proceed. Both words convey that the Son and Spirit are in special relationships to the Father, yet also fully divine.

Filioque Clause - the phrase "and the Son," in Latin, filioque, was not in the original text of the creed, but was added in Western Churches over time as a tool against Arians in the Gothic lands. There are theological and historical justifications for the addition or exclusion of the filioque. The Eastern Churches oppose the addition of the filioque, while Western churches accept it. Actually, despite current division on the matter, the issue has been pretty much theologically resolved. The Western Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that "proceeds from the Father and the Son" means "proceeds from the Father through the Son." The Western Church also acknowledge the procession through the Son is not metaphysical, but economic (i. e. describing the Spirit's actions). Also, Eastern Catholics (those Eastern Churches in communion with Rome) do not say the filioque, and remain in full communion with the Western Church. The Eastern Orthodox Churches seem willing to allow the interpretation "through the Son," because it seemingly destroys the monarchy of the Father within the Holy Trinity. The filioque remains a major division between Eastern and Western Christianity, mainly because the Western Church added the filioque to the Nicene Creed without Eastern input. Much ado about nothing.

Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified

The Holy Spirit is God as are the Father and the Son, and is due the same worship as the Father and the Son.

Who spake by the Prophets

As the Holy Ghost gives us insight and understanding today, so it is believed He gave the same to the Old Testament prophets.

And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church

The creed affirms the belief in the Catholic (universal) Church, whose origins are ancient and historical, going back to the Apostles themselves. This is the universal church tracing its ancestry, roots and beliefs back to the apostles themselves. The ordained ministry claims an Apostolic Succession, wherein apostles appointed leaders, who themselves appointed new leaders to replace them, a process continuing to this day. Many churches claim this Apostolic Succession, however much of the so-called Apostolic Succession appears to be more properly termed Apostate Succession. Apostolic Succession is only valid with valid spiritual successors. Many lay their claim to Apostolic Succession based on a theological succession of adherence to the Word, rather than a pedigree of hand to hand contact, many a hand of which could be correctly said was at best misguided.

The claim to literal Apostolic line today is found primarily in the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

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It should also be pointed out that deacons, priests and bishops do not have special powers. What they have are special responsibilities that are given to them along with their title. If they carry out those particular special responsibilities in the proper manner, they will achieve extraordinary results. An awesome responsibility and challenge that, if accepted and met, produces awesome results. If not, they are just substandard men in black or purple shirts.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins

Baptism or initiation has often been called Christening and the name we are given there is our Christian name, our last name being our surname. In Baptism, our life is dedicated to Christ. Hence the term Christening. Christians believe through the waters of baptism, God forgives us of our sins, and we are born again. This belief in baptism's saving power is ancient and universally acknowledged in the early Christian writings. If someone has been validly baptized in the name of the Trinity, then baptism has definitely "taken" and re-baptism is unnecessary.

And the Life of the world to come

The end of the Creed addresses the end of life here on earth and talks about the world to come. Christians have the promise of a bodily resurrection with a new and glorified physical body from Christ. The Creed affirms that bodily resurrection, as promised by Christ. Heaven is a place to look forward to, not to fear. Christ describes the experience of this world as "looking darkly, as through a glass." This came from the time when "glass" was translucent, rather than transparent. CS Lewis describes Earth as The Shadowlands, in comparison to the reality of heaven. We are not sure what to expect in heaven, except He will see us their tonight and we will not be disappointed.

Amen

So be it.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

What it really means is that everyone is imperfect. The only way to get in to heaven is to be accounted as perfect. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to provide a way for us to be accounted as perfect. We will not attain perfection here on earth, but if we believe on Him and act on those beliefs, we will be accounted as perfect, get in to heaven, have eternal life. The eternal life starts right now and our life here on earth will be better than if we did not follow Him. The handbook for all this is the Holy Bible, the most accurate version currently available is the King James or Authorized Version.

Christianity is not a solitary religion, it is based on a body of believers acting together, supporting each other. It is a religion that requires not just diction, but action. A religion that provides eternal life for free, but requires you to live the life you have been given.

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WHO DO WE PRAY TO?

God. The one and only True Triune God.

In the Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the Sixteenth Chapter, Verses 26-27, we read:

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

If we are not to pray to Jesus to ask God for us, why would we pray to Saint Bob the Generic?

We pray to God, direct, with no intermediary; we do ask for what we want in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We do not pray to anyone but God.

SACRAMENTS

There are two sacraments, no more. There are other rites, services, and events, but only two sacraments. The Book of Common Prayer has an unbeatable summary of them in the Offices of Instruction on Page 292:

HOW many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

Answer. Christ hath ordained two Sacraments only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Question. What do you mean by this word Sacrament?

Answer. I mean by this word Sacrament an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive this grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Question. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

Answer. There are two parts in a Sacrament; the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace.

Question. What is the outward and visible sign or form in Baptism?

Answer. The outward and visible sign or form in Baptism is Water; wherein the person is baptized, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Question. What is the inward and spiritual grace in Baptism?

Answer. The inward and spiritual grace in Baptism is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; whereby we are made the children of grace.

Question. What is required of persons to be baptized?

Answer. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God to them in that Sacrament.

Question. Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?

Answer. Because, by the faith of their Sponsors, infants are received into Christ's Church, become the recipients of his grace, and are trained in the household of faith.

Question. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?

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Answer. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Question. What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?

Answer. The outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper is, Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

Question. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

Answer. The inward part, or thing signified, is the Body and Blood of Christ, which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Question. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers in the Lord's Supper?

Answer. The benefits whereof we are partakers in the Lord's Supper are the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the Bread and Wine.

Question. What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?

Answer. It is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, with stedfast purpose to lead a new life; to have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and to be in charity with all men.

Article 25 of the Articles of Religion provides the Church's position on sacraments:

XXV. Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments are not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

What about Baptism?

First, let us review the applicable article:

XVII. Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

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The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Regeneration And Baptism Church Association Tract 193

John Charles Ryle
Bishop Of Liverpool

1. What is Baptism?

It is a holy ordinance or sacrament appointed by Christ, for the continual admission of new members into His Church. Every Christian begins his Church membership by being solemnly baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Baptism, also, is a sign of regeneration or new birth, and has a most wholesome effect, as the Twenty-fifth Article says, in those who receive it worthily. Moreover, St. Paul says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.)

2. Do all baptized persons receive inward spiritual benefit from the outward ordinance of baptism with water?

Most certainly not, to all appearance. Myriads are outwardly baptized every year, who, from the font to the coffin, and from their births to their deaths, never give the slightest evidence that they have grace in their hearts, or have received any inward spiritual benefit at their baptism. They live and die apparently without knowledge, faith, repentance, obedience to God, or meetness for heaven. In fact, notwithstanding their baptism, they exhibit no more Christianity in their lives and characters than many heathens.

Judas Iscariot, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, and others mentioned in Scripture, were baptized but certainly not regenerate.

3. What is regeneration?

It is that complete change of heart and character which the Holy Spirit works in a person when he becomes a real Christian. The Church Catechism calls it "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." It is the same thing as being "born again," or "born of God," or "born of the Spirit."

"Except a man be born again" means "except a man be regenerate." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" that is, he is "born again, or regenerate." (John iii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 17.)

4. What are the marks and evidences of regeneration?

They are laid down for us so clearly and plainly in the First Epistle of St. John, that he who runs may read them. It is written there, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," — "Every one

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that doeth righteousness is born of Him," —"Every one that loveth is born of God," — "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," —"He that is begotten of God keepeth himself." (1 John iii. 9; 1 John v. 1; 1 John ii. 29; 1 John iv. 7; 1 John v. 4; 1 John v. 18.) If plain English words have any meaning, these texts mean that he who has these marks is "born again" or "regenerate," and he who has them not is not regenerate.

5. Have all regenerate persons these marks of regeneration in the same degree of depth, strength, clearness, and distinctness?

Most certainly not. There is a wide difference between the highest and lowest measure of grace possessed by those who are "born again." There are real and true Christians who are only "babes" in spiritual attainments, and there are others who are "strong," and vigorous, and able to do great things for Christ. (1 John ii. 12-14.) The Scripture speaks of little faith and great faith, of little strength and great strength. One thing only is certain, —every regenerate person has more or less the marks of regeneration, and he who has none of them is not born again. (Matt. xiv. 31, xv. 28; Rev. iii. 8; Rom. xv. 1.)

6. But are not all baptized persons regenerate, and does not regeneration always accompany baptism?

Certainly not. Myriads of baptized persons have not a single scriptural mark of regeneration about them, and never had in their lives. They know nothing whatever of "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness." On the contrary, they too often live in sin, and are enemies of all righteousness. To say that such persons are "regenerate" on account of their baptism, is to say that which seems flatly contrary to the First Epistle of St. John. The Church Catechism says that baptism contains two parts, —the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace. But the Catechism nowhere says that the sign and the grace always go together.

7. But does not the Baptismal Service of the Church Prayer Book say of every baptized child, "this child is regenerate," and does it not tell us to thank God that it hath "pleased Him to regenerate the infant?" What can this mean? How can it be explained?

The Baptismal Service uses these expressions in the charitable supposition that those who use the service, and bring their children to be baptized, are really what they profess to be. As Bishop Carleton says, "All this is the charity of the Church; and what more can you make of it?"—As Bishop Downname says, "We are to distinguish between the judgment of charity and the judgment of certainty."

8. But is this explanation of the language of the Baptismal Service honest, natural, and just? Is it the real meaning which ought to be put on the words?

It is the only meaning which is consistent with the whole spirit of the Prayer Book. From first to last the Prayer Book charitably assumes that all who use it are real, thorough Christians. This is the only sense in which the Burial Service can be interpreted, or the Service for Adult Baptism, or for the Churching of Women. This is the only sense in which we can teach children the Church Catechism. We bid them say,

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"The Holy Ghost sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." Yet no man in his senses would say that all children who say the Catechism are really "sanctified" or really "elect," because they use these words. On the contrary, large numbers of children never show the slightest evidence of sanctification or election.

9. But ought we not to believe that all who use Christ's ordinances receive a blessing as a matter of course?

Certainly not. The benefit of Christ's ordinances depends entirely on the spirit and manner in which they are used. The Scripture expressly says that a man may receive the Lord's Supper, "unworthily," and eat and drink "to his own condemnation." The Articles of the Church of England declare that in such only as receive sacraments "rightly, worthily, and with faith," they have a wholesome effect and operation. The famous Hooker teaches that "all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of His grace." To maintain that every child who is baptized with water is at once regenerated and born again, appears to turn the sacrament of baptism into a mere form, and to contradict both Scripture and Articles.

10. But do not all infants receive baptism worthily, since they offer no obstacle to the grace of baptism? and are they not consequently all regenerated, as a matter of course, the moment they are baptized?

Certainly not. No infant is of itself worthy to receive grace, because, as the Catechism says, it is "born in sin and a child of wrath." It can only be received into the Church and baptized on the faith and profession of its parents or sponsors. No true missionary thinks of baptizing heathen children without friends or sponsors. The Church Catechism asks the question, "Why are Infants baptized?" But it does not give as an answer, "Because they offer no obstacle to grace," —but "because they promise repentance and faith by their sureties." Let us always remember that an infant has no title to baptism but the profession of its sureties. Surely when these sureties know nothing of repentance or faith, or of what they are promising, common sense points out that the infant is not likely to get much inward benefit from the sacrament. In plain words, if parents or sponsors bring an infant to baptism in utter ignorance, without faith or prayer or knowledge, it is monstrous to suppose that this infant must, nevertheless, receive regeneration. At this rate it would matter nothing in what way sacraments are used, whether with ignorance or with knowledge, and it would signify nothing whether those who use them were godly or ungodly. The children of believing and of unbelieving parents would receive precisely the same benefit from baptism. Such a conclusion seems unreasonable and absurd.

11. But does not St. Paul say in his Epistles that Christians are "buried with Christ in baptism;" and that baptized persons have "put on Christ"? (Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 12.)

No doubt St. Paul says so. But the persons of whom he said this, in all human probability, were not baptized in infancy, but when they were grown up, and in days too when faith and baptism were so closely connected that the moment a man believed he confessed his faith publicly by baptism. But there is not a single passage in the New Testament which describes at length the effect of baptism on an infant, nor a single text

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which says that all infants are born again, or regenerated, or buried with Christ in baptism. As Canon Mozley says, "Scripture nowhere asserts, either explicitly or implicitly, the regeneration of infants in baptism." (Mozley's Baptismal Controversy, p. 34.) Beside this, we are expressly told that Simon the sorcerer, after his baptism, had "no part" in Christ, and his "heart was not right in the sight of God." Simon, therefore, could not have been regenerated, or born again in baptism. (Acts viii. 21.)

12. But does not St. Peter say, "Baptism doth also save us?" and if it saves us, must it not also regenerate us? (1 Pet. iii. 21.)

No doubt St. Peter says so. But those who quote this text should not stop at the words "save us," but read carefully on to the end of the sentence. They will then see that St. Peter distinctly fences and guards his statement by saying that the baptism which "saves" is not the mere outward application of water to the body, but the baptism which is accompanied by the "answer of a good conscience toward God." Moreover, it is a curious fact that St. Peter, who uses the expression "baptism saves," is the very same apostle who told Simon after baptism that he was "in the bond of iniquity," and his "heart was not right in the sight of God." (Acts viii. 21.)

13. But does not our Lord Jesus say to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"? (John iii. 5.) Does not that prove that all who are baptized with water are regenerate?

Certainly not. It proves nothing of the kind. The utmost that can be made of this famous and often quoted text is, that it shows the necessity of being "born of water and the Spirit" if we would be saved. But it does not say that all who are baptized, or "born of water," are at the same time "born of the Spirit." It may prove that there is a connection sometimes between baptism and regeneration, but it does not supply the slightest proof that an invariable connection always exists.

14. But may it not be true that all baptized persons receive the grace of regeneration in baptism, and that it remains within them like a dormant seed, alive, though at present bearing no fruit?

Certainly not. The Apostle St. John expressly forbids us to suppose that there can be such a thing as dormant, or sleeping grace. He says, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) This witness is true. When there can be light which cannot be seen, and fire without heat, then, and not till then, there may be grace that is dormant and inactive. The well-known words, "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee" (2 Tim. i. 6), are far too often addressed to the baptized, as if they referred to some gift received in baptism.

Yet common sense will tell any one who refers to his Bible that these words were not used at all about baptism, but about ordination. (1 Tim. iv. 14.)

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15. But does not this view of regeneration, according to which many baptized persons are not regenerate at all, and receive no benefit whatever from their baptism, do great dishonour to one of Christ's sacraments, and tend to bring it into contempt?

Not at all. The truth is exactly the other way. To say that infant baptism confers grace mechanically, as a chemical solution produces an effect on a photographic plate, and that if water and certain words are used by a thoughtless, careless clergyman over the child of thoughtless, ignorant parents, the child is at once born again, —to say, furthermore, that an immense spiritual effect is produced by baptism when no effect whatever can be seen, all this, to many thinking persons, seems calculated to degrade baptism. It tends to make observers suppose that baptism is useless, or that regeneration means nothing at all.

He that would do honour to baptism should maintain that it is a high and holy ordinance, which, like every ordinance appointed by Christ, ought not to be used without solemn reverence; and that no blessing can be expected unless it is used with heart, and knowledge, and faith, and prayer, and followed by godly training of the child baptized. Above all, he should maintain that when baptism does good, the good will be seen in the life and ways of the baptized. Those who do not feel satisfied about this matter will do well to study attentively the strong language which God uses about His own ordinances, when used formally and carelessly, in the prophet Isaiah. (Isa. i. 11, 12.) What did the prophet mean when he wrote these words: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs." He evidently meant that God's own ordinances may be made perfectly useless by man's misuse of them.

16. But may we not believe that regeneration means nothing more than a change of state, and does not mean a moral and spiritual change at all? May we not believe that it is a mere ecclesiastical word, signifying nothing more than admission to a state of Church privilege? And may we not then say that every person baptized is regenerated in baptism.

Of course we may say and believe anything we please in a free country like England, and this idea of an ecclesiastical regeneration cuts the knot of some difficulties, and has always satisfied some minds. But it is an insuperable difficulty that the word "regeneration" is never once used in this sense in the New Testament. Moreover, the parallel expression "born of God," in St. John's First Epistle, most certainly means a great deal more than being admitted into a state of ecclesiastical privilege! To say, for instance, "Whosoever is baptized doth not commit sin, —and overcometh the world," would be ridiculous, because untrue. Moreover, the Church Catechism distinctly teaches that the inward and spiritual grace in baptism is not a mere ecclesiastical change, but "a, death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." Moreover, the Homily for Whitsunday expressly describes regeneration as an inward and spiritual change. One thing is very certain, no plain reader of the Bible ever seems to understand how a person can be "regenerate" and yet not saved.

The poor and simple-minded cannot take in the idea of ecclesiastical regeneration.

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The Doctrine Of Baptism - Bishop James Parker Dees

The doctrines of baptism, baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, and related subjects are one of the divisive factors between many good Christian people who otherwise would be much closer together. Our doctrine of baptism is one that we think is biblical and meaningful and true and, when participated in in faith, is productive of spiritual regeneration.

We recognize that probably there are some people in some churches who hold to the concept that going through the outward form of baptism is sufficient to procure one's soul's salvation eternally. We do not. We believe unequivocally in the biblical doctrine of salvation which is given by the grace of God as we receive His Holy Spirit which He gives to us on account of our faith in Him and in His dear Son, Christ our Lord. Jesus' blood shed on the cross for our redemption effects the regeneration of the natural man from the fallen world into the realm of the Kingdom of God . Our Lord said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God ," and "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God ." We hold fast to this and to the great Pauline and Augustinian and Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith alone, justification sola fide. The outward act of baptism does not procure one's regeneration and justification, but it is an outward evidence of the faith resident in the inner man which is acceptable with God, and which God is pleased to bless with His Spirit which brings with it regeneration.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the sign of the covenantal union between God and His people. By virtue of the parents' faith, their male children were circumcised at the age of eight days. It is obvious that at this age the child was unable to express any faith, and thus, they were included in the covenant mercies of God by virtue of the parents' faith. Under the new covenant, baptism represents this union. A great number of the early Christians came from a Jewish background. It is inconceivable that there would not have been considerable turmoil if the sign of the new covenant relationship had excluded the youngest and very special members of their families. The fact that there is no record of contention regarding this issue is evidence by its absence that early Christian baptism included infants.

In addition, there are several incidents in the New Testament in which we are told that an individual was baptized along with his whole house. Cornelius, the Philippian jailor, and Lydia are examples. It is a reasonable assumption that children were included in the household. There are also scriptural examples of divine intervention in the lives of children on the basis of the faith of their parents; the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, the nobleman's son, and the lunatic son being examples.

On Pentecost at the end of his sermon, St. Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children" (Acts 2:38,39).

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If we believe in the value or efficacy of intercessory prayer in other circumstances, there is no logical reason to exclude it in the case of infant baptism. We believe that God hears and answers the prayers of Christian parents by giving His Holy Spirit in a special way to the child who is baptized. It is then the obligation of the parents and godparents to bring up the child in a Christian context with a view toward coming to Christ through faith. The child must later accept or ratify this faith for himself, and he indicates this outwardly at confirmation when he takes upon himself the promises made on his behalf at his baptism.

Holy Communion and the AOC

There has been a continuing interest in the nature of the Lord's Supper - its nature, how it represents a Communion of the Body of Christ with the Lord, how it must be individually prepared for, and precisely what blessings ensue therefrom. Bishop JC Ryle was a courageous defender of the faith and has many published works on the Holy Communion - one of which I include below. I include the below in view of some serious questions regarding this matter that have increasingly arising of late.

Bishop Jerry Ogles

First, let us review the applicable articles:

XVIII. *Of the Lord's Supper.*

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXIX. *Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.*

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

Any postulation that exceeds the clear definition of Scripture and the Thirty-Nine Articles is to be discounted. This represents the position of the AOC on the Lord's Supper.

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Here is the paper by Bishop Ryle:

The Lord's Supper by JC Ryle

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.”
1 Corinthians 11:28.

The words which form the title of this paper refer to the subject of vast importance. That subject is the Lord's Supper.

Perhaps no part of the Christian religion is so thoroughly misunderstood as the Lord's Supper. On no point have there been so many disputes, strifes, and controversies for almost 1800 years. On no point have mistakes done so much harm. The very ordinance which was meant for our peace and profit has become the cause of discord and the occasion of sin. These things ought not to be!

I make no excuse for including the Lord's Supper among the leading points of “practical” Christianity. I firmly believe that ignorant views or false doctrine about this ordinance lie at the root of some of the present divisions of professing Christians. Some neglect it altogether; some completely misunderstand it; some exalt it to a position it was never meant to occupy, and turn it into an idol. If I can throw a little light on it, and clear up the doubts in some minds, I will feel very thankful. It is hopeless, I fear, to expect that the controversy about the Lord's Supper will ever be finally closed until the Lord comes. But it is not too much to hope that the fog and mystery and obscurity with which it is surrounded in some minds, may be cleared away by plain Bible truth.

In examining the Lord's Supper I will be content with asking four practical questions, and offering answers to them.

- I. Why was the Lord's Supper ordained?
- II. Who ought to go to the Table and be communicants?
- III. What may communicants expect from the Lord's Supper?
- IV. Why do many so-called Christians never go to the Lord's Table?

I think it will be impossible to handle these four questions fairly, honestly, and

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impartially, without seeing the subject of this paper more clearly, and getting some distinct and practical ideas about some leading errors of our day. I say “practical” emphatically. My chief aim in this volume is to promote practical Christianity.

I. In the first place, “why was the Lord’s Supper ordained?” It was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we thereby receive. The *bread* which in the Lord’s Supper is broken, given, and eaten, is meant to remind us of Christ’s body given on the cross for our sins. The *wine* which is poured out and received, is meant to remind us of Christ’s blood shed on the cross for our sins. He who eats that bread and drinks that wine is reminded, in the most striking and forcible manner—of the benefits Christ has obtained for his soul, and of the death of Christ as the hinge and turning point on which all those benefits depend.

Now, is the view here stated the doctrine of the New Testament? If it is not, forever let it be rejected, cast aside, and refused by men. If it is, let us never be ashamed to hold it close, profess our belief in it, pin our faith on it, and steadfastly refuse to hold any other view, no matter who teaches it.

In subjects like this we must call no man master. It matters little what great theologians and learned preachers have thought fit to put forth about the Lord’s Supper. If they teach more than the Word of God contains—they are not to be believed. I take up my Bible and turn to the New Testament. There I find no less than four separate accounts of the first appointment of the Lord’s Supper. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul, all four describe it: all four agree in telling us what our Lord did on this memorable occasion. Only two tell us the reason why our Lord commanded that His disciples were to eat the bread and drink the cup. Paul and Luke both record the remarkable words, “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” Paul adds his own inspired comment: “*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*” (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26). When Scripture speaks so clearly, why can’t men be content with it? Why should we mystify and confuse a subject which in the New Testament is so simple?

The “continual remembrance of Christ’s death” was the one grand object for which the Lord’s Supper was ordained. He who goes further than this is adding to God’s Word, and does so to the great peril of his soul.

Now, is it reasonable to suppose that our Lord would appoint an ordinance for so simple a purpose as “remembering His death?” It most certainly is! Of all the facts in His earthly ministry none are equal in importance to that of His death. It was the great settlement for man’s sin, which had been appointed in God’s promise from the foundation of the world. It was the great redemption of almighty power, to which every sacrifice of animals, from the fall of man, continually pointed. It was the grand end and purpose for which the Messiah came into the world. It was the cornerstone and foundation of all man’s hopes of pardon and peace with God. In short, Christ would have lived, and taught, and preached, and prophesied, and performed miracles in vain, if He had not *crowned it all by dying for our sins as our Substitute on the Cross!* His death was our life. His death was the payment of our sin-debt to God. Without His death we would have been the most miserable of all creatures!

No wonder that an ordinance was specially appointed to remind us of our Savior’s death. It is the one thing which poor, weak, sinful man needs to be continually

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reminded. Does the New Testament authorize men to say that the Lord's Supper was ordained to be a *sacrifice*, and that in it Christ's *literal* body and blood are present under the forms of bread and wine? Most certainly not! When the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "This is my Body," and "this is my Blood," He clearly meant, "This *bread* in my hand is an symbol of my Body, and this cup of *wine* in my hand contains a symbol of my Blood." The disciples were accustomed to hear Him use such language. They remembered His saying, "The *field* is the world, and the *good seed* stands for the sons of the kingdom. The *weeds* are the sons of the evil one" (Matthew 13:38). It never entered into their minds that He meant to say He was holding His own body and His own blood in His hands, and literally giving them His literal body and blood to eat and drink! Not one of the writers of the New Testament ever speaks of the Lord's Supper as a *sacrifice*, or calls the Lord's Table an *altar*, or even hints that a Christian minister is a *sacrificing priest*. The universal doctrine of the New Testament is that after the *one* offering of Christ on the cross, there remains no more need of sacrifice.

If anyone believes that Paul's words to the Hebrews, "*We have an altar*" (Hebrews 13:10), are a proof that the Lord's table is an altar, I remind him "Christians have an altar where they partake. That altar is Christ our Lord—who is Altar, Priest, and Sacrifice, all in One." Throughout the Communion Service the one idea of the ordinance continually pressed on our attention is that of a "remembrance" of Christ's death. As to any *presence of Christ's natural body* and blood under the forms of bread and wine, the clear answer is that "the natural body and blood of Christ are in heaven, and not here." Those Roman Catholics who delight in talking of the "altar," the "sacrifice," the "priest," and the "real presence" in the Lord's Supper—would do well to remember that they are using language which is entirely non-Biblical.

The point before us is one of vast importance. Let us lay hold upon it firmly, and never let it go. It is the very point on which our Reformers had their sharpest controversy with the Roman Catholics, and went to the stake, rather than give way. Sooner than admit that the Lord's Supper was a sacrifice, they cheerfully laid down their lives. To bring back the doctrine of the "real presence," and to turn the communion into the Roman Catholic "mass," is to pour contempt on our Martyrs, and to upset the first principles of the Protestant Reformation. No, rather, it is to ignore the plain teaching of God's Word, and do dishonor to the priestly office of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Bible teaches expressly that the Lord's Supper was ordained to be "a remembrance of Christ's body and blood," and not a sacrificial offering. The Bible teaches that Christ's substituted death on the cross was the *perfect* sacrifice for sin, which never needs to be *repeated*. Let us stand firm in these two great principles of the Christian faith. A clear understanding of the intention of the Lord's Supper is one of the soul's best safeguards against the delusions of false doctrine.

II. In the second place, let me try to show "WHO ought to receive the Lord's Supper?" What kind of people were meant to go to the Table and receive the Lord's Supper?

I will first show, **who ought NOT to be partakers of this ordinance.** The ignorance which prevails on this, as well as on every part of the subject, is vast, lamentable, and appalling. If I can contribute anything that may throw light upon it, I will feel very thankful. The principal giants whom John Bunyan describes, in "Pilgrim's Progress," as dangerous to Christian pilgrims, were two, *Pope* and *Pagan*. If the good old Puritan had

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foreseen the times we live in, he would have said something about the giant *Ignorance!*

(a) It is *not* right to urge **all professing Christians** to go to the Lord's Table. There is such a thing as fitness and preparedness for the ordinance. It does not work like a medicine, independently of the state of mind of those who receive it. The teaching of those who urge all their congregation to come to the Lord's Table, as if the coming must necessarily do everyone good—is entirely without warrant of Scripture. No, rather, it is a teaching which is calculated to do immense harm to men's souls, and to turn the reception of the Lord's Supper into a mere *religious form*. *Ignorance* can never be the mother of acceptable worship, and an ignorant communicant who comes to the Lord's Table without knowing *why* he comes—is altogether in the wrong place!

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” “Recognizing the body of the Lord,”—that is to understand what the elements of bread and wine represent, and why they are appointed, and what is the particular use of remembering Christ's death—is an essential qualification of a true communicant. God commands *all* people everywhere to *repent* and *believe* the Gospel (Acts 17:30), but He does not in the same way, or in the same manner, command everybody to come to the Lord's Table. No! this thing is not to be taken lightly, or carelessly! It is a solemn ordinance, and solemnly it ought to be used!

(b) But this is not all. **Sinners living in open sin**, and determined not to give it up, ought never to come to the Lord's Table. To do so is a positive insult to Christ, and to pour contempt on His Gospel. It is nonsense to profess we desire to remember Christ's death, while we cling to sin—the accursed thing which made it needful for Christ to die! The mere fact that a man is continuing in sin is clear evidence that he does not care for Christ, and feels no gratitude for the offer of redemption. The ignorant Roman Catholic who goes to the priest's confessional and receives absolution, may think he is fit to go to the Roman Catholic mass—and after mass may return to his sins. He never reads the Bible—and knows no better! But the professing Christian who habitually breaks any of God's commandments, and yet goes to the Lord's Table, as if it would do him good and wipe away his sins—is very guilty indeed. So long as he chooses to continue his wicked habits—he cannot receive the slightest benefit from the Lord's Table—and is only adding sin to sin! To carry unrepented sin to the Lord's Table, and there receive the bread and wine, knowing in our own hearts that we and wickedness are yet friends—is one of the worst things man can do, and one of the most hardening to the conscience. If a man must have his sins, and can't give them up, let him by all means stay away from the Lord's Supper! There is such a thing as “eating and drinking in an unworthy manner” and to our own “judgment.” To no one do these words apply so thoroughly, as to an unrepentant sinner.

(c) **Self-righteous people** who think that they will be saved by their own works, have no business to come to the Lord's Table. Strange as it may sound at first, these people are the *least* qualified of all to receive the Lord's table. They may be outwardly correct, moral and respectable in their lives, but so long as they trust in their own goodness for salvation they are entirely in the wrong place at the Lord's Supper. For what do we declare at the Lord's Supper? We publicly profess that we have no goodness, righteousness, or worthiness of our own, and that all our hope is in Christ. We publicly profess that we are guilty, sinful, corrupt—and naturally deserve God's wrath and condemnation. We publicly profess that Christ's *merit* and not ours; Christ's

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righteousness and not ours—is the only cause why we look for acceptance with God. Now what has a self-righteous man to do with an ordinance like this? Clearly nothing at all.

One thing at any rate, is very clear: a self-righteous man has no business to receive the Lord's Supper. The Communion Service of the Church bids all communicants declare that "they do not presume to come to the Table trusting in their own righteousness, but in God's numerous and great mercies." It tells them to say, "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Your table," "the memory of our sins is grievous to us; the burden of them is intolerable." How many self-righteous professing Christians can ever go to the Lord's Table, and take these words into his mouth—is beyond my understanding! It only shows that many professing Christians use the "forms" of worship without taking the trouble to consider what they mean.

The plain truth is that the Lord's Supper was not meant for dead souls, but for living ones. The *careless*, the *ignorant*, the *willfully wicked*, the *self-righteous*, are no more fit to come to the Lord's Table than a dead corpse is fit to sit down at a king's feast! To enjoy a spiritual feast we must have a spiritual heart, and taste, and appetite. To suppose that the Lord's Table can do any good to an unspiritual man—is as foolish as to put bread and wine into the mouth of a dead person! The *careless*, the *ignorant*, and the *willfully wicked*, so long as they continue in that state, are utterly unfit to come to the Lord's Supper. To urge them to partake is not to do them good, but harm.

The Lord's Supper is not a *converting* or *justifying* ordinance. If a man goes to the Table unconverted or unforgiven, he will be *no better* when he comes away (actually *worse* due to the associated judgments for coming unworthily).

But, after all, the ground having been cleared of error, the question still remains to be answered, **Who are the sort of people who ought to receive the Lord's Supper?** I answer that by saying, people who have "examined themselves to see whether they have truly repented of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life—have a true faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death—they are in love with all men."

In a word, I find that a worthy communicant is one who possesses three simple marks and qualifications—repentance, faith, and love. Does a man truly *repent* of sin and hate it? Does a man put his *trust* in Jesus Christ as his only hope of salvation? Does a man live in *love* towards others? He who can truly answer each of these questions, "I do," he is a man that is Scripturally qualified for the Lord's Supper. Let him come boldly. Let no barrier be put in his way. He comes up to the Bible standard of communicants. He may draw near with confidence, and feel assured that the great Master of the banquet is not displeased.

Such a man's **repentance** may be very much *imperfect*. Never mind! Is it real? Is he *truly* repentant? His **faith** in Christ may be very weak. Never mind! Is it real? A penny is as much true currency as is a one hundred dollar bill. His **love** may be very defective in quantity and degree. Never mind! Is it genuine? The grand test of a man's Christianity is not the *quantity* of holiness he has, but whether he has any true holiness all. The first twelve communicants, when Christ Himself gave the bread and wine, were weak indeed—weak in knowledge, weak in faith, weak in courage, weak in patience, weak in love! But eleven of them had something about them which outweighed all

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defects—they were real, genuine, sincere, and true!

Forever let this great principle be rooted in our minds—that the only worthy communicant is the man who has demonstrated *repentance* toward God, *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and practical *love* toward others. Are you that man? Then you may draw near to the table, and take the ordinance to your comfort. Anything less than this I dare not change in my standard of a communicant. I will never encourage someone to receive the Lord's Supper—who is careless, ignorant, and self-righteous! I will never tell anyone to keep away until he is perfect, and to wait until his heart is as holy as an angel's. I will not do so, because I believe that neither my Master nor His Apostles would have done so. Show me a man that really feels his sins, really leans on Christ, really struggles to be holy—and I will welcome him in My Master's name. He may feel weak, erring, empty, feeble, doubting, wretched, and poor. But what does that matter? Paul, I believe, would have received him as a right communicant, and I will do likewise.

III. In the third place, let us consider “what BENEFIT communicants may expect to get by receiving the Lord's Supper.” This is a point of grave importance, and one on which many mistakes abound. On no point, perhaps, connected with this ordinance are the views of Christians so vague and indistinct and undefined. One common idea among men is that “receiving the Lord's Supper must do them some good.” Why, they can't explain. What good, they can't exactly say. But they have a loose general notion that it is the right thing to be a communicant, and that somehow or other it is of value to their souls! This is of course nothing better than ignorance. It is unreasonable to suppose that such communicants can please Christ, or receive any real benefit from what they do.

If there is any principle clearly laid down in the Bible about any act of religious worship, it is this that it must be with *understanding*. The worshiper must at least understand *something* about what he is doing. Mere bodily worship, unaccompanied by mind or heart—is utterly worthless. The man who eats the bread and drinks the wine, as a mere matter of form, because it is the “right” thing to do, without any clear idea of what it all means, derives no benefit. He might just as well stay at home!

Another common idea among men is that, “taking the Lord's Supper will help them get to heaven, and take away their sins.” To this false idea you may trace up the habit in some churches of going to the Lord's Table once a year, in order, as an old farmer once said, “to wipe off the year's sins.” To this idea again, you may trace the too common practice of *sending for a minister in time of sickness*, in order to receive the ordinance before death. Yes, how many take comfort about their relatives, after they have lived a most ungodly life, for no better reason than this, that they took the Lord's Supper when they were dying! Whether they repented and believed and had new hearts—they neither seem to know or care. All they know is that “they took the Lord's Supper before they died.”

My heart sinks within me when I hear people resting on such evidence as this. Ideas like these are sad proofs of the ignorance which fills the minds of men about the Lord's Supper. They are ideas for which there is not the slightest warrant in Scripture. The sooner they are cast aside and given up—the better for the Church and the world. Let us settle it firmly in our minds—that the Lord's Supper was not given to be a means either of *justification* or of *conversion*. It was never meant to give grace—where there is

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no grace already; or to provide pardon—when pardon is not already enjoyed. It cannot possibly provide what is lacking, with the absence of repentance to God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an ordinance for the penitent, not for the impenitent; for the believing, not for the unbelieving; for the converted, not for the unconverted.

The unconverted man, who fancies that he can find a “shortcut” to heaven by taking the Lord’s Supper, without treading the well-worn steps of *repentance* and faith—will find to his cost one day, that he is totally deceived! The Lord’s Supper was meant to *increase* and help the grace that a man has—but not to *impart* the grace that he does not have. It was certainly never intended to make our peace with God, to justify, or to convert. The simplest statement of the benefit which a truehearted communicant may expect to receive from the Lord’s Supper, is the strengthening and refreshing of our souls—clearer views of Christ and His atonement, clearer views of all the offices which Christ fills, as our Mediator and Advocate, clearer views of the complete redemption Christ has obtained for us by His substituted death on the cross, clearer views of our full and perfect acceptance in Christ before God, fresh reasons for deep repentance for sin, fresh reasons for lively faith—these are among the leading returns which a believer may confidently expect to get from his attendance at the Lord’s Table. He who eats the bread and drinks the wine in a right spirit—will find himself drawn into closer communion with Christ, and will feel to know Him more, and understand Him better.

(a) Right reception of the Lord’s Supper has a “**humbling**” effect on the soul. The sight of the bread and wine as emblems of Christ’s body and blood, reminds us how sinful sin must be, if nothing less than the death of God’s own Son could make satisfaction for it, or redeem us from its guilt. Never should we be so “clothed with humility,” as when we receive the Lord’s Supper.

(b) Right reception of the Lord’s Supper has a “**cheering**” effect on the soul. The sight of the bread broken, and the wine poured out, reminds us how full, perfect, and complete is our salvation! Those vivid emblems remind us what an enormous price has been paid for our redemption. They press on us the mighty truth—that believing on Christ, we have nothing to fear, because a sufficient payment has been made for our debt. The “precious blood of Christ” answers every charge that can be brought against us. God can be “just and the one who justifies, those who have faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

(c) Right reception of the Lord’s Supper has a “**sanctifying**” effect on the soul. The bread and wine remind us how great is our debt of gratitude to our Lord, and how thoroughly we are bound to live for Him who died for our sins. They seem to say to us, “Remember what Christ has done for you—and ask yourself whether there is anything too great to do for Him!”

(d) Right reception of the Lord’s Supper into hearts, has a “**restraining**” effect on the soul. Every time a believer receives the bread and the wine, he is reminded what a serious thing it is to be a Christian, and what an obligation is laid on him to lead a consistent life. Bought with such a price as that which the bread and wine call to his recollection, ought he not to glorify Christ in body and spirit, which are His? The man that goes regularly and intelligently to the Lord’s Table finds it increasingly hard to yield to sin and conform to the world.

Such is a brief account of the benefits which a right-hearted communicant may

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expect to receive from the Lord's Supper. In eating that bread and drinking that cup, such a man will have his *repentance* deepened, his *faith* increased, his *knowledge* enlarged, his habit of *holy living* strengthened. He will realize more of the "real presence" of Christ in his heart. Eating, that bread by faith, he will feel closer communion with the body of Christ. Drinking that wine by faith, he will feel closer communion with the blood of Christ. *He will see more clearly what Christ is to him, and what he is to Christ.* He will understand more thoroughly what it is to be "one with Christ, and Christ one with him." He will feel the roots of his soul's spiritual life watered, and the work of grace in his heart established, built up, and carried forward.

All these things may seem and sound like foolishness to a natural man, but to a true Christian these things are light, and health, and life, and peace. No wonder that a true Christian finds the Lord's Supper a source of blessing! Remember, I do not pretend to say that all Christians experience the full blessing of the Lord's Supper, which I have just attempted to describe. Nor do I say that the same believer will always find his soul in the same spiritual frame, and always receive the same amount of benefit from the ordinance. But I boldly say this: you will rarely find a true believer who will not say that he believes the Lord's Supper is one of his best helps and highest privileges. He will tell you that if he were deprived of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis he would find the loss of it a great detriment to his soul. There are some things of which we never know the value of, until they are taken from us. So I believe it is with the Lord's Supper. The weakest and humblest of God's children gets a blessing from this ordinance, to an extent of which he is not aware.

IV. In the last place, I have to consider "why it is that so many so-called Christians never come to the Lord's Supper." It is a simple matter of fact, that myriads of people who *call* themselves Christians never come to the Table of the Lord. They would not endure to be told that they deny the faith, and are not in communion with Christ. When they worship, they attend a place of Christian worship; when they hear religious teaching, it is the teaching of Christianity; when they are married, they use a Christian service. Yet all this time they never come to the Lord's Supper! They often live on in this state of mind for many years, and to all appearance are not ashamed. They often die in this condition without ever having received the ordinance, and yet profess to feel hope at the last, and their friends express a hope about them. And yet they live and die in open disobedience to a plain command of Christ! These are simple facts. Let anyone look around him, and deny them if he can.

Now why is this? What explanation can we give? Our Lord Jesus Christ's last injunctions to His disciples are clear, plain, and unmistakable. He says to all, "Eat, drink: do this in remembrance of Me." Did He leave it to our discretion whether we would obey His injunction or not? Did He mean that it was not significant whether His disciples did or did not keep up the ordinance He had just established? Certainly not! The very idea is absurd, and one certainly never dreamed of in apostolic times. Paul evidently takes it for granted that every Christian would go to the Lord's Table when it was available. A class of Christian worshipers who never came to the Table, was a class whose existence was unknown to him.

What, then, are we to say of that number which fail to receive the Lord's Supper, unabashed, unhumbled, not afraid, not the least ashamed? Why is it? How is it? What does it all mean? Let us look these questions fairly in the face, and endeavor to give an

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answer to them.

(1) For one thing, many fail to go to the Table because they are utterly careless and thoughtless about true religion, and ignorant of very first principles of Christianity. They go to church, as a matter of form—but they neither know, nor care anything about what is done at church! Christianity has no place either in their hearts, or heads, or consciences, or wills, or understandings. It is a mere affair of “words and names,” about which they know little—and have little concern. There were very few such false Christians in Paul’s times, if indeed there were any. There are far too many in these last days of the world. They are the dead-weights of the Churches, and the scandal of Christianity. What such people need is light, knowledge, grace, a renewed conscience, a changed heart. In their present state they have no part of Christ; and dying in this state they are thrown into hell. Do I wish them to come to the Lord’s Supper? Certainly not, till they are converted. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

(2) For another thing, many *professing* Christians do not receive the Lord’s Supper because they know they are living in the habitual practice of some sin, or in the neglect of some Christian duty. Their conscience tells them so long as they live in this state, and do not turn away from their sins, they are unfit to come to the Table of the Lord. Well, they are so far quite right! I wish no man to be a communicant if he cannot give up his sins. But I warn these people not to forget that if they are unfit for the Lord’s Supper in that condition, they will be lost eternally. The same sins which disqualify them for the ordinance, most certainly disqualify them for heaven. Do I want them to come to the Lord’s Supper as they are? Certainly not! But I do want them to repent and be converted, to cease to do evil, and to break off from their sins. Forever let it be remembered, that the man who is unfit for the Lord’s Supper—is unfit to die!

(3) For another thing, some are not communicant because they imagine that it will add to their responsibility. They are not, as many, ignorant and careless about religion. They even attend church regularly and listen to the preaching of the gospel. But they say they dread coming to the Lord’s Table and making a confession and a profession. They fear that they might afterwards fall away, and bring scandal on the cause of Christianity. They think it wisest to be on the *safe* side, and not commit themselves at all. Such people would do well to remember, that if they avoid responsibility of one kind by not coming to the Lord’s Table, they incur responsibility of another kind, quite as grave, and quite as injurious to the soul. They are responsible for *open disobedience* to a command from of Christ. They are shrinking from doing that which their Master continually commands His disciples—confessing Him before men.

No doubt it is a serious step to come to the Lord’s Table and receive the bread and the wine. It is a step that none should take lightly and without self-examination. But it is “no less a serious step to walk away and refuse the ordinance,” when we remember Who invites us to receive it, and for what purpose it was appointed! I warn the people I am now dealing with—to be careful what they are doing. Let them not flatter themselves that *it can ever be a wise, a prudent, a safe line of conduct to neglect a plain command of Christ!* They may find at length, to their cost, that they have only increased their guilt and forsaken their mercies!

(4) For another thing, some false Christians stay away from the Lord’s Supper because they believe they are not yet worthy. They wait and stand still, under the mistaken notion that no one is qualified for the Lord’s Supper unless he feels within

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him, something like perfection. They pitch their idea of a communicant so high that they despair of attaining to it. Waiting for inward perfection they live, and waiting for it they die. Now such people would do well to understand that they are completely mistaken in their estimate of what “worthiness” really is.

They are forgetting that the Lord’s Supper was not intended for *unsinning angels*, but for men and women subject to weakness, living in a world full of temptations, and needing mercy and grace every day they live! *A sense of our own utter unworthiness is the best worthiness that we can bring to the Lord’s Table.* A deep feeling of our own entire indebtedness to Christ for all we have and hope for, is the best feeling we can bring with us. The people I now have in view, ought to consider seriously whether the ground they have taken up is defensible. If they are waiting until they feel in themselves perfect hearts, perfect motives, perfect feelings, perfect repentance, perfect love, perfect faith—they will wait forever. There never were such communicants in any age—certainly not in the days of our Lord and of the Apostles—there never will be as long as the world stands. No, rather, the very thought that we feel literally worthy, is a symptom of secret self-righteousness, and proves us unfit for the Lord’s Table in God’s sight. Sinners we are, when we first are saved—sinners we will be—until we die! Converted, changed, renewed, sanctified—but sinners still (though not like before—sin is not the *pattern* of a believer’s new life). In short, no man is really worthy to receive the Lord’s Supper who does not deeply feel that he is a “miserable sinner.”

(5) In the last place, some object going to the Lord’s Table because they see others partaking who are not worthy, and not in a right state of mind. Because others eat and drink unworthily, they refuse to eat and drink at all. Of all the reasons taken up by those refusing to come to the Lord’s Supper to justify their own neglect of Christ’s ordinance, I must plainly say—I know none which seems to me so foolish, so weak, so unreasonable, and so unscriptural as this. It is as good as saying that we will never receive the Lord’s Supper at all! When will we ever find a body of communicants on earth, of which all the members are converted and living perfect lives? It is setting up ourselves in the most unhealthy attitude of judging others. “Who are you, that you judge another person?” “What is that to you? You must follow me” (John 21:22). It is depriving ourselves of a great privilege, because others profane it and make a bad use of it. It is pretending to be wiser than our Master Himself. It is taking up ground for which there is no warrant in Scripture.

Paul rebukes the Corinthians sharply, for the irreverent behavior of some of the communicants; but I cannot find him giving a single hint that when some came to the Table unworthily, others ought to draw back or stay away. Let me advise the non-communicants I have now in view, to beware of being wise above that which was written. Let them study the parable of the Wheat and Tares, and mark how both were to “grow together *until* the harvest” (Matthew 13:30). Perfect Churches, perfect congregations, perfect bodies of communicants, are all unattainable in this world of confusion and sin. Let us covet the best gifts, and do all we can to check sin in others; but let us not starve our own selves, because others are ignorant sinners, and turn their food into poison. If others are foolish enough to eat and drink unworthily, let us not turn our backs on Christ’s ordinance, and refuse to eat and drink at all.

Such are the five common excuses why myriads in the present day, though *professing* themselves Christians, never come to the Lord’s Supper. One common remark may be

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made about them—there is not a single *reason* among the five, which deserves to be called “good,” and which does not condemn the man who gives it. I challenge anyone to deny this. I have said repeatedly that I want no one to come to the Lord’s Table who is not properly qualified. But I ask those who stay away never to forget that the very reasons they assign for their conduct, are their condemnation. I tell them that they stand convicted before God of either being very ignorant of what a communicant is, and what the Lord’s Supper is; or else of being people who are not *living* right—and are unfit to *die*.

In short, to say, I am a noncommunicant, is as good as saying one of three things—

I am living in sin—and cannot come;

I know Christ commands me—but I will not obey Him;

I am an ignorant man—and do not understand what the Lord’s Supper means.

I know not in what state of mind this book may find the reader of this paper, or what his opinions may be about the Lord’s Supper. But I will *conclude* the whole subject by offering to all some **WARNINGS**, which I venture to think are highly required by the times.

(1) In the first place, “do not neglect” the Lord’s Supper. The man who coolly and deliberately refuses to use an ordinance which the Lord Jesus Christ appointed for his profit—may be very sure that his soul is in a very wrong state. There is a judgment to come; there is an account to be rendered of all our conduct on earth. How anyone can look forward to that judgment day, and expect to meet Christ with comfort and in peace, if he has refused all his life to commune with Christ at His Table, is a thing that I cannot understand. Does this hit home to you? Be careful what you are doing!

(2) In the second place, do not receive the Lord’s Supper “carelessly, irreverently, and as a matter of form.” The man who goes to the Lord’s Table, and eats the bread and drinks the wine, while his heart is far away—is committing a great sin, and robbing himself of a great blessing. In receiving the Lord’s Table, as in every other means of grace, everything depends on the state of mind and heart, in which the ordinance is used. He who draws near without repentance, faith, and love—and with a heart full of sin and the world—will certainly be nothing better, but rather worse! Does this hit home to you? Be careful what you are doing!

(3) In the third place, “do not make an idol” of the Lord’s Supper. The man who tells you that it is the first, foremost, chief, and principal precept in Christianity, is telling you that which he will find it hard to prove. In the great majority of the books of the New Testament the Lord’s Supper is not even named. In the letter to Timothy and Titus, about a minister’s duties, the subject is not even mentioned. To repent and be converted, to believe and be holy, to be born again and have grace in our hearts—all these things are of far more importance than to be a communicant. Without them we cannot be saved. Without the Lord’s Supper we can be saved. Are you tempted to make the Lord’s Supper override and overshadow everything in Christianity, and place it above prayer and preaching? Be careful. Pay attention what you are doing!

(4) In the fourth place, “do not use the Lord’s Supper irregularly.” Never be absent when the Lord’s Supper is administered. Make every effort to be in attendance. Regular habits are essential to the maintenance of the health of our bodies. Regular use of the

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Lord's Supper is essential to the well-being of our souls. The man who finds it a burden to attend on every occasion when the Lord's Table is spread, may well doubt whether all is right within him, and whether he is ready for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. If Thomas had not been absent when the Lord appeared the first time to the assembled disciples, he would not have said the foolish things he did. Absence made him miss a blessing. Does this hit home to you? Be careful what you are doing!

(5) In the fifth place, "do not do anything to bring discredit" on your profession as a communicant. The man who after attending the Lord's Table runs into sin—does more harm perhaps than any unsaved sinner. *He is a walking sermon on behalf of the devil!* He gives opportunity to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. He helps to keep people away from Christ. Lying, drinking, immoral, dishonest, selfish communicants—are the helpers of the devil, and the worst enemies of the Gospel. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age!" Titus 2:11-12. Does this hit home to you? Be careful what you are doing!

(6) In the last place, "do not despair" and be cast down, if with all your desires you do not feel that you get a lot of good from the Lord's Supper. Very likely you are expecting too much. Very likely you are a poor judge of your own state. Your soul's *roots* may be strengthening and growing—while you *think* that you are not growing. Very likely you are forgetting that earth is not heaven, and that here we walk by *faith* and not by *sight*, and must expect nothing perfect. Lay these things to heart. Do not think harsh things about yourself without cause.

To every reader into whose hands this paper may fall, I commend the whole subject of it as deserving of serious and solemn consideration. I am nothing better than a poor or fallible man myself. But if I have made up my mind on any point it is this—that there is no truth which demands such plain speaking, as truth about the Lord's Supper!

FORMS OF WORSHIP

There are two basic forms of worship, Liturgy and Free Flow. Free Flow depends on how the worship leader feels that day and seldom repeats itself. On the odd occasion he gets it right, it can be very rewarding. The alternate is a liturgy, that is an established formula for public worship in a church which uses prescribed forms. It is a set form of worship. The service is the same, with minor variations, every Sunday. Unlike some churches, it is not free flow based on the desires or whims of the pastor or congregation. Use of a liturgy insures that everything is covered every Sunday and throughout the Christian Year. A liturgy gives a needed and reassuring semblance of order in an otherwise sometimes disorderly world. The choice of readings for each Sunday insures the highlights of the Bible are covered each year, but does not discourage reading of the Bible. Quite the contrary, additional Bible reading is encouraged. At least once a day, if possible. The liturgical service is contained within our Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

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MORNING PRAYER - *Dennis Campbell - Bishop, Anglican Orthodox Church Diocese of Virginia*

What and Why in Morning Prayer

This is a review of the various parts of the order for Morning Prayer. It is always good to be reminded of why we do certain things, especially the more important things in life, like prayer and worship.

We have gathered for something very important, something that is so central to our being that without it it can truly be said our souls are dead. We have gathered to worship God. And we are going to go back through history, and we are going to worship God the way the Church has worshiped Him for more than 2,000 years, and the way Israel worshiped Him for thousands of years before that. We are going to worship liturgically. "Liturgy" means "the work of the people," and the intent of liturgy is to bring us together that we may worship God with one heart, one mind, and one voice. A hymn has words and structure so many people can sing as one. Liturgy has words and structure so many people can worship as one.

Worship is vital to the Christian life. In worship we lay aside the things of earth to focus on God alone. In worship we give unto God the honour, reverence, love, and obedience we owe to our Lord and Saviour. Worship unites the Church, so we are never only individuals worshipping alone, but always part of the body of Christ serving God together in one everlasting concert of prayer.

Worship is a way of life. In one sense, everything we do is (or should be) an act of worship. We worship God with our work. We worship God by our actions in the home. We worship God by the way we treat others. All of these things are part of our service to God, and are to be conducted with an attitude of reverence and worship.

There are also certain times that are set aside specifically for worship. Sunday is a time set aside by God for worship. On this day He calls His people together for the formal worship services of the Church (Heb. 10:25). Scripture also shows that we should set aside times every day specifically for worshipping God. From the morning and evening sacrifices of the Old Testament to the daily prayers of the New Testament, we follow the examples of Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Anna, the Apostles, and even our Lord Himself, who opened and closed each day in worship.

The Anglican Orthodox Church continues our Lord's practice of daily worship. We begin our days with Morning Prayer, and end them with Evening Prayer. We follow a beautiful order of worship, with Bible readings and prayers that have been prayed by God's people for generations. Some people may be unfamiliar with our liturgy, so our purpose today is to make it more understandable, in the hope that its beauty and Biblical fidelity may be known and appreciated, and that you may find it more accessible and edifying.

Preparing to Worship

Prior to the Processional, or, opening Hymn, we will spend several minutes in quiet prayer. We are in the presence of The Being who is far greater than anything we can imagine or understand. He is wonderful in His mercy and terrible in His wrath.

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Therefore it is important that we prepare our hearts for worship. Habakkuk 2:20 tells us to keep silence before Him. The same idea is found in Psalm 46:10, which tells us to be still and know that He is God. A major aspect of worship is this holy stillness before God, and an important part of the preparation for worship is putting on an attitude of stillness and waiting. Clothe your soul with reverence and humility as you come before His throne. Take a few moments to be still and quiet physically while you invite stillness and quiet into your soul. Let your mind be filled with quietness, and peace. Let God reach into your being. Be still, be quiet, be reverent, and know that God is God. This is a good time to locate the hymns, Scripture readings, and Collects for the day. Please do so quietly, as others are also in prayer.

The Opening Sentences, pages 3-5

After the Processional Hymn, during which the ministers and others will proceed to the front of the church, the minister will read one or more verses from the Bible. We always come to God as needy people. We have hurts and problems and broken dreams and shattered hopes. We need Him to heal our souls and fix our lives. But He is God. He is great and mighty, and faultless. Will He receive us? Will He stoop to hear our prayers? Will He bother to help us, small and weak as we are? Yes. He invites us to come to Him. He welcomes us with gentle words. We always conclude the Opening Sentences with the words from Philippians 1:2 and Ephesians 1:7: "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." "In whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."

The Exhortation to Confession and the General Confession, pages 5-6

From the very earliest times God's people have confessed their sins as part of the worship service. In the presence of God's infinite goodness we become acutely aware of our own faults and failures. We have neglected opportunities to do right, and we have done what we knew to be evil. We have hurt others, we have offended God, and we have done so with the full knowledge that we were doing it. We need to confess our sins and turn them all over to God's redemptive power. Without confession we can go no further into worship. Without confession the rest of our worship is empty to us and insulting to God. The Prayer Book calls this ancient prayer "A General Confession" because it confesses sin generally rather than specifically. But in private and family prayer, as well as in public worship, we can also confess our specific sins, either by observing a time of silent confession after the General Confession, or by inwardly confessing them "between the lines" as we outwardly say the prayer. "Wherefore I pray and beseech you... to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of heavenly grace."

The Declaration of Absolution, page 7

Those who truly confess their sins and believe in Christ through Biblical faith, find in God a patient, loving Father who gladly forgives our sins. He willingly heals our souls and gives us His peace in our deepest being. A major point of the Bible is to declare that God freely forgives all who confess their sins and believe His holy Gospel. We note that the minister does not forgive sins. That power belongs to God alone. The minister simply declares, or, proclaims, the Good News that God forgives those who

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are truly in Christ. There is power in the knowledge of our forgiveness. It is peace to our souls to know our guilt is pardoned and our souls are freed from Hell. On that day when we stand before God on the other side of the grave, He will not cast us out of His presence because of our sins; He will welcome us into Himself because of our forgiveness through Christ.

The Lords' Prayer, page 7

Now we call upon God as upon our Loving Father, praying the very words Christ gave to us in "the Lord's Prayer."

The Versicles and Gloria Patri, pages 7-8

Since true worship is impossible unless God enables it, the versicles ask God to open our lips that we may show forth His praise. They are followed by a fervent expression of praise in the Gloria Patri. This is followed by another call, "Praise ye the Lord," and the response, "The Lord's Name be praised."

The Venite, page 9

Venite exultemus Domino means "Come let us exalt [or, worship] the Lord," and is comprised of the first seven verses of Psalm 95, and verses 9 and 13 from Psalm 96.. This short canticle is a "Call to Worship." In a sense, everything we have been doing up to this point has been preparing us to enter fully into the heart of worship. We have heard God's words of grace. We have confessed our sins and opened our hearts to God. We have heard the promise of forgiveness to all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel. We have prayed to Him as unto a loving and generous Father, and we have asked Him to open our lips that we may show forth His praise. In this way, the Liturgy has proclaimed the Gospel. It has told us of our sins, and of our need of God's forgiveness. It has led us to the Throne of Grace to confess our sins, and it has declared God's absolution and forgiveness of our sins through the cross of Christ. In the Liturgy, we have also professed our faith in Christ. We have recognised that our forgiveness allows us to call upon God as our God, and as our Heavenly Father, for we have been brought into the fellowship and enjoyment of God. So, thus far, the service has reminded us what God has done for us. It has been a worshipful recitation of the great story of Salvation through the cross of Christ.

The Venite brings us to a major turning point. From hence forth the service is about our response to what God has done; our response is, worship. So we sing His praise. We hear His Word. We seek Him in sincere prayer. We give our tithes and offerings, but most of all we give our hearts and selves to His service and love forever. The Venite calls and invites us to worship God. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord."

Reading and Hearing the Scriptures

If worship is essential to the life of the soul, Scripture is essential to worship. You have already noticed that the Liturgy is filled with the Bible. It has so much Bible in it that it has been called the Bible in devotional form. We believe the Bible is the Word of God, and that it is the absolute authority for all that we are to believe about God, and how we are to serve and worship Him. Naturally, a major part of the Liturgy,

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then, is the reverent and attentive reading and hearing of Scripture. We read at least three passages of Scripture in Morning Prayer. First is the Psalm or Psalms appointed for the service, followed by the Gloria Patri. Next the "Lessons" are read. Usually the first will be in the Old Testament and the second will be in the New Testament. After each reading we give thanks for the Word by singing a short Psalm or song called a canticle. Reading and hearing the Scriptures is one of the most important parts of worship. God is speaking to us. Let us reverently hear the Word of God.

The Apostles' Creed, page 15.

The last canticle is followed by an affirmation of the foundational doctrines of the Bible. This is done by reciting, in unison, a summary of Biblical doctrines called the Apostles' Creed. Let us affirm the truth of Scripture.

The Prayer Service

On page 16 the one leading the service prays for you. It is a very short prayer, but it asks much. It asks God to give you a sense of His presence. It asks God to assure you of His willingness to hear your prayers. It asks Him to give you a sincere desire to seek Him with the very essence of your being, because that's what prayer really is. "The Lord be with you" is the leader's prayer that God will do these things for you.

In return, you pray for the leader, saying, "And with thy spirit." You are asking God to do the same things for the leader. This is followed by the invitation to prayer, "Let us pray."

Collect for the Day This prayer gathers and directs our prayers. It deals with the particular emphasis or doctrine of the day or season, and is always related to the Scripture Lessons for that Sunday. It is also said at Morning and Evening Prayer throughout the week. So, the Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent, on page 92, is prayed in daily prayers all week. Some Collects are to be prayed daily during an appointed season. Thus the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent, page 90, is to be said daily until Christmas Day. The Collects are found in pages 90-269 of the Prayer Book. Most of them are very ancient prayers which have expressed our faith through many generations.

Collect for Peace The Collect for the Day is followed by the daily prayers for Morning Prayer, beginning with the Collect for Peace found on page 17. This prayer has been in use in England for more than 1,400 years, but is much older than that. Reminding us that God is the author of peace, that knowledge of Him is eternal life, and that His service is perfect freedom, it helps us remember that peace comes not from our outward circumstances, it comes to us as the gift of God. In this Collect we ask Him to give us peace that we may serve Him.

Collect for Grace asks God to keep us from sin and danger, that all our doings may be righteous in His sight. It is a simple and earnest prayer that God will keep us from spiritual harm on the one hand, and in good works and holy living on the other.

Other daily prayers follow, including prayers for civil servants, clergy and congregations, the wonderful intercessory Prayer For All Conditions of Men, and a

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beautiful Thanksgiving and dedication to holy living. To these may be added other prayers, such as those on pages 35-53, The Litany, pages 54-59, or prayers on pages 587-600.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom page 20. John Chryostom (349-407) was known for his Biblical knowledge and ability to preach clearly and faithfully. Archbishop of Constantinople in the later 300s, he was banished by the emperor for his fearless preaching. His prayer recognises that it is God who enables His people to make our common prayers to Him, and trusts God to answer our prayer in the way that will most help us know His truth in this world, and everlasting life in the next.

This prayer reminds us that, in Church, we do not pray in isolation; we make our "common supplications" to God. The same is true during the week. As we pray we are part of the voice of prayer offered unto God by the Catholic (Universal) Church. We who pray by the words and prayers of the Liturgy are especially aware that we pray with one another in the same "common" prayers each day.

The Grace, page 20 is an Apostolic blessing from 2 Corinthians 13:14. It closes the service of Morning and Evening Prayer as it has done for generations.

The Prayers, now completed, are followed by:

The Offering and Doxology

The Sermon¹

The Recessional, or closing hymn, during which the ministers, acolytes, and choirs will proceed to the back of the church building. When the hymn is completed a minister will conclude with prayer, after which the acolyte will extinguish the candles, and the minister will say, "Here endeth the order of Morning [Evening] Prayer.

One of the most striking things about the Liturgy is its simplicity. Its words are direct, earnest, and simple. They are not flowery embellishments designed to please people. They are the earnest words of people who truly love God and truly mean what they say in worship. Whether offered in great cathedrals with professional choirs, in country chapels with out of tune pianos, in small rooms never intended to serve as a church, or in homes with no music or added hymns, the Liturgy offers up our worship and prayers to God with dignity and sincerity. And since it is taken directly or indirectly right from the Bible, we know we are worshiping according to His will. Your worship has pleased God.

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¹ As those who attend The Church of the Faithful Centurion will note, we say the Collect for the Day directly after the Creed, then have our Sermon and Offertory at that point. We feel the service flows well that way and it is consistent with the order in Holy Communion. There is actually no rubric driven position for the Sermon in Morning or Evening Prayer. Many follow Bishop Dennis' format, some do not.

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BIBLE VERSIONS

Bishop's Letter on Bible Versions

Jerry L. Ogles, DD
Presiding Bishop, Anglican Orthodox Communion Worldwide
Latimer Hall School of Divinity
Chancellor, Faith Theological Seminary

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Psalm 12:6-7)

This letter is to explain why the AOC uses the King James Version of the Bible rather than "modern" Bible versions and demonstrate how far from God's Word they have ventured. Bear in mind the attitudes and decadence of our modern American society are partially attributable to the low view of Holy Scripture represented in the NIV, ESV, NRSV, etc.

Either God has preserved His Word through all time, or He has not; but according to Psalm 12:6-7, He has indeed preserved it. If we accept the argument of modern so-called Higher Critics, God did not preserve His Word and it has been up to them to restore it to us in a highly diluted version. It poisons our youth, and confuses the elderly.

Most modern versions are based on what they term NuText, or the Westcott-Hort Text. These two men were men who ridiculed the Gospels and searched endlessly for ways and means of undermining it. When a fellow by the name of Tichendorf discovered a fresh, unworn manuscript of the New Testament in the basement of the Vatican - where it has reposed without use for fifteen centuries, he hailed it as a spectacular find. It was called the *Vaticanus* - a manuscript which, though in their possession for centuries, the Roman Church refused to use in translating the New Testament. Tichendorf found another manuscript in the dustbin of a monastery in the Sinai about to be discarded (in the 19th century) which came to be known as the *Sinaiticus*. Both pieces of manuscript evidence omit entire verses and passages of scripture. Strangely, where verses are omitted, the manuscript leaves a blank where the verses should appear. These two manuscripts, and fragments of others of spurious nature, comprise approximately 5% of all manuscript evidence underlying the Westcott-Hort translations such as the RSV, NIV, ESV, NRSV, Modern English, etc.

Conversely, the Received Text (*Textus Receptus*) of the Great Reformation is based on 95% of available manuscript evidence. It is important, too, to point out these 95% of manuscript evidences agree in every particular point with each other while the Westcott-Hort does not even agree among the 5% of those parts of evidence. The new versions are developed, promoted and pushed by corporations with a copyright to insure good profits. The KJV is not restricted by copyright in all countries except England in which the copyright resides in the Crown who places no restrictions of the Bible.

The new versions omit the name of Jesus in many places where the distinction is important. The NIV and ESV attack in many points the divinity of Christ. It is perhaps

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for this reason these new versions are based on the same manuscript evidence as the New World Translation used by Jehovah Witnesses who do not believe Jesus is Divine. Please examine the following verses:

We who believe are sons and daughters of God. We read this in Romans -¹⁴ *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* ¹⁵ *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* ¹⁶ *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:* (Romans 8:14-16)

And – ⁴ *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* ⁵ *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* ⁶ *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* ⁷ *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.* (Galatians 4:4-7)

The two passages cited above are only two of many in which God calls us sons, but distinguishes our sonship from the Sonship of His only Begotten Son.

Now, please observe John 3:16 in the King James Bible, or any other Received Text (Reformation) Bible:

KJV or AV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

NOTE: only Begotten in the Greek is Begotten is monogenhvß or Monogenes - meaning only issue of the parent. Monos - only; genes meaning of the very substance of the Father

This is important, for Jesus is not like us. He is the actual issue of the Father having His nature, likeness, righteousness, and divinity. We are not, even though we are accounted sons and daughters. But how are we different from Christ if we are also sons of God? It is by virtue of our ADOPTION as sons and daughters into the natural family of God through His one True Son, Jesus Christ. At first reading, this may seem not an important distinction but, in actuality, it is the MOST important distinction.

See what the other more “modern” translations actually say:

NIV

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

HCSB

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

ESV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

New Living Translation

For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who

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believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

NRSV

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The above travesty of translators changing the meaning of God's very word invokes the judgment of Revelations 22:18-19: *18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* (Revelation 22:18-19)

There are two reasons these errors are very profound:

1. The fact that God calls us 'sons' in several parts of scripture, and then refers to Jesus as His 'only son' leads to distrust of the Word. Was God lying when He called Jesus His only Son, or when he calls us (and Adam) sons? So the veracity of Scripture is debased by such intentional error in translation.
2. It is important that we understand the important distinction between us and Christ. He had no sin nature as we have. He is of the same substance with the Father, and we are ADOPTED. This is a profound point in Doctrine of the Reformation Church.

The above discrepancy is only one of many, many errors of these new versions which attempt to lead our youth away from that solid foundation and Rock, Jesus Christ.

You might check to see if these sample verses are in your NEW bibles: Matthew 17:21, 23:14, Mark 9:44, Mark 9:46, and a host of others. See if the validity of the most grace-filled passage in the New Testament (John 8:1-11) or the last verses of Mark 16:9-20 regarding the resurrection of Christ is called into question by the so-called more reliable manuscripts (meaning the spurious manuscripts of the NuText). The NuText would have the Gospel of Mark end without a resurrection but rather in fear: *"And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid."* (Mark 16:8)

We have an excellent twelve lesson course called the Manuscript Course we offer free of charge to any of your people who would like to see how the wool is being pulled over many eyes by these false and spurious versions that advance a One World agenda. If they can remove Christ as a Person of the Godhead, then it will be quite easy to merge with Buddhist, Moslems, Hindus, etc, under the coming One World Religion. The course is administered by email through the Latimer Hall School of Divinity by Rev. Jack Arnold of California – jack@latimerhall.org.

Please let me know if any would be interested in having their eyes opened to these modern deceptions. If we cannot even agree as to where we may discover the Word of God, how can we be united in spirit and in truth?

Jerry L. Ogles, Presiding Bishop

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Codex Sinaiticus (*also known as Codex Aleph*)

Codex Sinaiticus was discovered by Constantin von Tischendorf, a German evolutionist theologian, at St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai. He discovered the first part in 1844 and the second part in 1859.

Following is the story of how Tischendorf found the Codex Sinaiticus:

"In the year 1844, whilst travelling under the patronage of Frederick Augustus King of Saxony, in quest of manuscripts, Tischendorf reached the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. Here, observing some old-looking documents in a basketful of papers ready for lighting the stove, he picked them out, and discovered that they were forty-three vellum leaves of the Septuagint Version. Some enemies of the defense of the King James Bible have claimed that the manuscripts were not found in a "waste basket," but they were. That is exactly how Tischendorf described it. "I perceived a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian told me that two heaps like this had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers..." (Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript, p. 23). John Burgon, who was alive when Tischendorf discovered the Codex Sinaiticus and also personally visited St. Catherine's to research ancient manuscripts, testified that the manuscripts "got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent." (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 319, 342)

So, it certainly appears to me that the Orthodox monks evidently had long since decided that the numerous omissions and alterations in the manuscript had rendered it useless and had stored it away in some closet where it had remained unused for centuries. Yet Tischendorf promoted it widely and vigorously as representing a more accurate text than the thousands of manuscripts supporting the Textus Receptus. Furthermore, he assumed that it came from about the 4th century, but he never found any actual proof that it dated earlier than the 12th century.

Consider these facts and oddities relating to the Codex Sinaiticus:

The Sinaiticus was written by three different scribes and was corrected later by several others. (This was the conclusion of an extensive investigation by H.J.M. Milne and T.C. Skeat of the British Museum, which was published in *Scribes and Correctors of Codex Sinaiticus*, London, 1938.) Tischendorf counted 14,800 corrections in this manuscript (David Brown, *The Great Uncials*, 2000). Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener, who published *A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus* in 1864 testified: "The Codex is covered with alterations of an obviously correctional character—brought in by at least ten different revisers, some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional, or limited to separate portions of the manuscript, many of these being contemporaneous with the first writer, but for the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century." Thus, it is evident that scribes in bygone centuries did not consider the Sinaiticus to represent a pure text. Why it should be so revered by modern textual critics is a mystery.

A great amount of carelessness is exhibited in the copying and correction. "Codex

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Sinaiticus 'abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance.' On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament." (John Burgon, The Revision Revised) It is clear that the scribes who copied the Codex Sinaiticus were not faithful men of God who treated the Scriptures with utmost reverence. The total number of words omitted in the Sinaiticus in the Gospels alone is 3,455 compared with the Greek Received Text (Burgon, p. 75).

Mark 16:9-20 is omitted in the Codex Sinaiticus, but it was originally there and has been erased.

Codex Sinaiticus includes the apocryphal books (Esdras, Tobit, Judith, I and IV Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus) plus two heretical writings, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas is filled with heresies and fanciful allegorizing, claiming, for example, that Abraham knew Greek and baptism is necessary for salvation. The Shepherd of Hermas is a gnostic writing that presents the heresy that the "Christ Spirit" came upon Jesus at his baptism.

Lastly, Codex Sinaiticus (along with Codex Vaticanus), exhibits clear gnostic influence. In John 1:18 "the only begotten Son" is changed to "the only begotten God," thus perpetuating the ancient Arian heresy that disassociates the Son Jesus Christ with God Himself by breaking the clear connection between "God" of John 1:1 with "the Son" of John 1:18. We know that God was not begotten; it was the Son who was begotten in the incarnation.

http://www.1611kingjamesbible.com/codex_sinaiticus.html/

WHY DO WE USE THE KING JAMES OR AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE?

We look to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the place we turn whenever we want help or guidance, have questions or disputes to settle. What does Scripture say? There are many translations, but only one Authorized Version of the Bible, that commonly known as the King James Version. This is the Bible we use and the one in which we place our trust and confidence.

Why the King James Version?

The Preservation of the Bible By Faithful Churches²
From *Biblical Bible Translating* by Charles V. Turner, PhD.

The English language New Testament is a result of translating a Greek text into English. However, there are several different Greek Texts, each one different from the other. Which one is the translator to translate into another language? For example, the 1973

² <http://www.baptisttranslators.com/content/view/51/50/>

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edition of the United Bible Societies Greek text by Aland, Black, Martini, Metzger, and Wilgren is very much different from the 1881 Greek text of Westcott and Hort. The Westcott and Hort text is different from the American Bible Society Greek text by Nestle, and the Nestle text is different from the Greek text by the Trinitarian Bible Society. The many Greek texts are represented by even more English translations. There are over two hundred different translations of the New Testament in the English language. Which one is a translator to use as the basis for his translation into another language?

The Need for a Standard

Someone has wisely said that a man who owns only one watch knows what time it is, but a man who has two watches is never quite sure. This certainly is the case as far as the translations of the Bible are concerned. Because there are so many translations of the Scriptures, all claiming to be God's Word, many people are not sure "what time it is." That is to say, they are not sure which translation is truly God's Word. There was a time when there was a translation in the English language that was accepted as the Bible. It was the King James Version. When we wanted to know what God had said, we went to our Authorized Version and read there the words of God, but now there are many "Bibles" all claiming to be the words of God. Now no one is quite sure which translation is the Word of God.

When there are many biblical authorities the result is that there is no authority at all. When we select which version of the Bible is authoritative for us, the Bible loses its independent authority. The only authority remaining resides in the selector and his personal basis for selecting this version or that version. By so doing we undermine all biblical authority and we ourselves become the authority instead.

The situation today, where many translations all claim to be God's Word, exists largely because of the amount of money to be gained by publishing yet another trendy translation of God's unchanging Word. One can make a lot of money by making a catchy, clever translation of God's Holy Word. Why does the English language need over two hundred translations when there are over 3,000 ethnic languages that do not have one word of Scripture? I suppose the money that should have been used to publish God's Word in these languages has been used up on English language readers who want their ears tickled by yet another trendy translation. The fact that there are so many translations of the Bible in English, while 3,000 Bibleless linguistic groups have nothing, reflects a serious sickness in the spiritual condition of English-speaking Christians.

The Erosion of Authority

However, there is an even more serious issue involved. It is the matter of authority. The authority of God's Word in the English language has been eroded because of these many translations. There are many translations, all claiming to be God's Word. Who decides which one is God's Word? You do. You choose which one you believe to be the Word of God. However, there is a problem with this. Who put you in charge of deciding which translation is the Word of God? If one translation does not suit your prejudice, you can usually find one that will. God's Word no longer has authority over you. You have, due to your picking and choosing of translations, become the authority

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over God's Word! When there are two or more authorities, the result is there is no authority at all. Your feeble judgment becomes the authority as to which translation is right. This is the reason for the severity of the many English translations problem. The many translations have robbed the Word of God of its authority and left man's intellect in charge of deciding whether he would have this version or that version to rule over him. The result is the deplorable state of modern man where "every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes." Each man becomes an authority unto himself, and confusion reigns.

There must be Only One Authority

Because of the confusion caused by so many translations in English, the King James Version stands out more than ever as the one authoritative Bible in the English language. We do not accept the King James Version because of some sentimental connection to it nor because of it's old-fashioned Elizabethan English, nor because it is the oldest translation in use today. We accept it because it is the most accurate and reliable translation in the English language today. There are some tried and true reasons for accepting the King James Version as the standard for English speaking people.

First, the King James Version, New Testament, is a translation of the *Textus Receptus* Greek text. This leaves the King James Version as the only translation of the New Testament that is based entirely on the *Textus Receptus*. All other English language translations since 1881 have followed modern "scholarship" and based their translations on texts other than the *Textus Receptus* Greek text. There are good reasons why the *Textus Receptus*, and the King James Version which is a translation of it, is the only valid text of the New Testament that should be translated into other languages.

The *Textus Receptus*, hereafter referred to as the T. R., is the only Greek text of the New Testament that has not been badly mangled by subjection to the presuppositions of modern intellectualism. Modern Greek scholars have, because of the criteria they set up themselves, deleted many verses, phrases, and words from the original Greek text.

Examples of Deletions

For example, in Matthew 6:13, the last part of the verse reads, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." In all the above Greek texts, except the T. R., these words are deleted. They are considered by modern Greek scholars as invalid. They have deleted them from their text. If a translator were to translate from any other text but the T. R., he would leave these words out of his translation because in the other texts these words are not there to be translated. If they are there, they have been relegated to a footnote that implies that these words are not a part of Scripture.

Again, in Colossians 1:14, the King James reads, "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The words "through his blood" have been deleted by every text except the *Textus Receptus*.

Again, in Romans 8:1, the words "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" have been deleted in all the Greek texts except the T. R. There are many other such deletions. The *Textus Receptus* is the only text that has not been badly mutilated by such deletions. All the other texts have been growing shorter and shorter over the years as "scholars"

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took their lead from the rationalism of Lachmann and whittled away more and more of the New Testament Greek text. Because of this deleting of more and more of the New Testament Greek text, it has now become obvious that this cutting down of the New Testament Greek text is not genuine scholarship but prejudiced rationalism working under the disguise of textual criticism.

The Development of Textual Criticism

How then has such a situation developed? It came about in this way. When the books of the New Testament were originally written at the hand of Luke, Paul, and others, they became the precious possession of local churches. These churches recognized these writings as different from commonly written communications. The churches recognized the apostolic books and letters as the inspired Word of God. The letters and books of the New Testament began to be copied and passed around to other churches in the first, second and third centuries. Of course, in the copying of these books and letters, there were small errors made in the copying. They were much like the typographical errors we make while typing. In addition to this, the copies were worn out with constant use resulting in the words nearer the edge of the parchment or papyrus being worn off the page. Some times, especially in the first and second centuries, false teachers deliberately changed the text in an effort to support their false teachings, but it was always a simple matter to correct an errant text by comparing it with the faithful inerrant copies held in trust by many faithful churches. This brought the errant copies back to the standard set by the original text. The only thing the churches had to do was check with several other churches and find out what the reading was in the other church copies. By doing this, the churches insured a valid text, and by this means, the text was preserved in its original form.

Identifying the Correct Text

This process continued down through the centuries until the present day. Faithful churches would decide the validity of the Greek text by consulting the church copies of the particular text under question and would judge its validity based on the copies held in trust by the other churches. If one church had an erroneous copy, the six or seven valid copies that were kept in trust by faithful churches soon corrected it. The six or seven correct copies, that all said the same thing, were judged the correct reading. This reading was used to correct the deviating copies.

The Biblical Basis for Textual History

The above scenario is based on the Scriptures that show that this indeed happened as described above. For example: II Peter 3:15, 16 says, "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." In these verses Peter clearly says that the words of Paul were equated with ". the other scriptures." Peter believed the words of Paul to be the inspired Word of God. Peter wrote this in a time when there were those who did "wrest" the Scriptures. That is, those who took some words in Paul's letters and wrested them. To wrest them has the meaning of, "to put them on the rack of torture" in order to force them to say what their torturers wanted them to say. This clearly shows that the early churches were on the look out for those who would pervert their Scriptures. The

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early churches were aware of this problem and took great care to avoid the twisting of their Scriptures by false teachers who would deliberately try to change the original reading of Scripture. Peter warned the Christians to watch out for this very thing.

The Churches Circulate Scriptures

That these Scriptures were passed from one church to another church is clearly indicated in Colossians 4:16 where it says, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." This verse shows that there was a sharing of copies of the Word of God from church to church. Because such a prominent leader as Peter considered the words of Paul as Scripture and said that he knew about those who would wrest the Scripture, is it not evident that the churches would take even greater care to watch over these Scriptures? This is obviously the case because the early churches, led by the Holy Spirit, rightly concluded that the words of Paul were the inspired Word of God. They took every precaution to watch over these Scriptures by comparing them with faithful copies held in trust by other churches. Although false teachers deliberately changed the text in an effort to support their false teachings, it was a simple matter to correct a text and bring it back to the original reading.

Naturally, when the first Greek New Testament was printed in 1516, the readings, which varied with the majority of the other texts, were disallowed and the readings of the majority were accepted. This is how the churches had preserved the Word of God for 1,516 years. By this simple, but completely accurate method, the Word of God was watched over by the Holy Spirit who worked through the churches who were faithful custodians of the Scriptures they cherished.

Karl Lachmann, the Rationalist

This process of preserving the pure Word of God through faithful local churches continued on without interruption until 1831 when Karl Lachmann, a German rationalist, began to apply to the New Testament Greek text the same criteria that he had used in editing texts of the Greek classics. Lachmann had been studying such Greek classics as Homer's Iliad. These Greek writings were mere stories, but Lachmann was trying to get back to what Homer and other Greek authors had originally written. The Greek classics had been thoroughly altered over the years. So many alterations of the Greek classics had been made that no one was sure what the original author had written. Lachmann wanted to know what the original text had been, so he developed a textual criticism process whereby he would try to sort out the original text from the badly corrupted modern text.

After this, someone got the "bright idea" that Lachmann's process should be applied to the New Testament. Lachmann had set up a series of presuppositions and rules for arriving at the original text of the Greek classics that were hopelessly corrupted. He now began with these same presuppositions and rules to correct the New Testament. He began with the presupposition that the New Testament was as hopelessly corrupted as the Greek classics. He had made a very dangerous mistake. A similar process in the copying of the Greek classics did not match the loving and reverent care given to the copying of the Word of God by faithful churches. The Greek classics were hopelessly corrupted but this was not true of the New Testament. Extremely careful scribes had

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taken great pains to copy New Testament manuscripts. These scribes knew the exact number of words and letters that were in the original copies. They counted the words and letters each time a new copy was made to insure that nothing had been added or deleted. In addition to this, faithful churches carefully guarded their precious copies of Scripture to protect them from heretical changes that may have been inserted in other copies of the text.

The Greek New Testament

Before Lachmann, a Dutch theologian named Desiderius Erasmus had published the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516. Erasmus had collected all the available manuscripts of the Greek New Testament books and had decided which variant reading was the original one based on the reading in the majority of the texts. He followed the same method that had been used by the churches through the centuries, namely, correcting an errant reading by the reading in the majority of the texts, which had been preserved by the churches. This text became known as the *Textus Receptus*. The words, *Textus Receptus*, are Latin words meaning the Received (Accepted) text. When Erasmus published the TR., the churches accepted it as the only valid text of the Greek New Testament. Though the text of Erasmus was revised slightly in later editions, there were no rival texts, which claimed to be based on better scholarship and better manuscripts, until Lachmann came along in 1831.

Pandora's Box Opened

Following Lachmann's lead, B.T. Westcott, and F. J.A. Hort produced their first textual critical edition of the Greek New Testament in 1881. It was based almost entirely upon the same presuppositions of Lachmann's textual criticism. These two men used most of Lachmann's rules of textual criticism and came up with a few of their own. They applied these rules to the Greek text of the New Testament as produced by Erasmus and came up with a different Greek New Testament based on the scholarship of Lachmann and that of their own. The point of departure had been made. No longer were the majority of manuscripts, preserved by faithful churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their "ignorance" and by their expertise would deliver to the churches a purer text of the New Testament. Dr. Gresham Machen, the greatest Greek scholar and theologian in American history, called this kind of scholarship "the tyranny of the experts."

Similarly, Charles H. Spurgeon preached the same theme in a sermon entitled, "The Greatest Fight in the World." He said, "We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly; but we shall not set up instead of him a horde of little popelings fresh from college. Are these correctors of Scripture infallible? Are we now to believe that infallibility is with learned men? Now, Farmer Smith, when you have read your Bible, and have enjoyed its precious promises, you will have, to-morrow morning, to go down the street to ask the scholarly man at the parsonage whether this portion of the Scripture belongs to the inspired part of the Word, or whether it is of dubious authority. We shall gradually be so bedoubted and becriticized, that only a few of the most profound will know what is Bible, and what is not, and they will dictate to all the rest of us. I have no more faith in their mercy than in their accuracy: they will rob us of all that we hold most dear, and glory in the cruel deed. This same reign of terror we

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shall not endure, for we still believe that God revealeth himself rather to babes than to the wise and prudent, and we are fully assured that our own old English version of the Scriptures is sufficient for plain men for all purposes of life, salvation, and godliness. We do not despise learning, but we will never say of culture or criticism, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" Machen had it right and so did Spurgeon. Textual criticism by the "experts" is a horde of little popelings who by their assumed infallibility have the gall to tell us what is God's Word and what is not. Such is the tyranny of the experts.

After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora's box had been opened and all the evils of German rationalism began to tear at the Foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. This has continued until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. Today the situation involves almost as many different texts of the Greek New Testament as there are scholars. Each scholar decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. Consequently, each new edition of the Greek New Testament has led to a smaller and smaller New Testament. If Satan has his way, this would continue until all of the New Testament would cease to exist.

1,881 Years Without the Experts

Until 1881, the churches had accepted one text of the New Testament, the one preserved by faithful churches in the majority of the manuscripts. Since 1881 and the Westcott and Hort text, there has not been a text accepted by all Christians. Since 1881 there has been controversy and confusion (which by the way, is reflected in the many modern translations all claiming to be the Word of God and all different from each other). Some say it is the United Bible Society's Greek text and the English translation of it that is God's Word. Others say, no, it is the Nestle Greek text and the English translation of it that is God's Word. Now it comes down to the tyranny of the experts. What do the scholars say? Each scholar says something different than the other. This leaves the King James Version standing like a lighthouse on the storm swept shore, for it is the only English translation of the New Testament based entirely upon the text that has been passed on to us by faithful churches.

It comes down to two choices: accept the text handed down by faithful churches for two thousand years or accept the findings of modern textual critics, no two of which fully agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns. There is no standard. We are left like a ship at sea without a rudder to guide it.

Since 1881, all the critical texts of the Greek New Testament are a little shorter than the one published before it. Westcott and Hort had a few hundred variant readings. Metzger's edition has three to four thousand variant readings, many of which he has deleted from the text without so much as a footnote to tell you it has been deleted. The modern critical texts have steadily become shorter and shorter. This is a clear indication that there is a "snake in the woodpile somewhere."

The Rules of Modern Textual Criticism

These textual critics have rules that they follow in deciding if a word, phrase, or sentence should be allowed in or taken out of Scripture. To give you an idea of some of the rules, here is one of them:

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In general, the more difficult reading is to be preferred, particularly when the sense appears on the surface to be erroneous, but on more mature consideration it proves itself to be correct.

This statement is very vague. It says "In general:" which means sometimes but not always. Who decides when the rule applies and when it does not apply? On what basis is such a decision made? We are not told. Then it says, "The more difficult reading." Who decides when a reading is more difficult than another one and on what basis? Again, we are not told. Then the rule says, "particularly when the sense appears on the surface to be erroneous." Who decides when this "sense" or that "sense" is "on the surface" and "erroneous?" The scholars do. Then it says in a question begging statement that "on a more mature consideration it proves itself to be correct." Who decides which consideration is the mature one? Naturally, the same self-appointed scholars do. This "rule" allows a textual critic to read the Greek New Testament variants and decide which reading is the more difficult, which sense is the surface meaning and which consideration is the mature one. Somehow, these experts get down into a "deeper knowledge" that allows them to include or exclude a verse of the Greek New Testament. Their decisions to include or exclude words and verses from the Bible are based on what the scholars think. It is no longer the Word judging them. They can now judge the Word. This is nothing more than the old first century Gnosticism which feeds on the pride of man in his intellect and leads to the destruction of the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Another rule followed by textual critics says:

In general, the shorter reading is to be preferred.

If a textual variant is the longer reading, then choose the shorter textual variant as the most valid one. Who says so? The scholars do. In textual criticism, you can make up your own rules and follow them to your own preconceived ends.

Another rule of textual criticism says:

That reading which involves verbal dissidence is usually to be preferred to one which is verbally concordant.

This vague language means that one should choose the variant reading which clashes most with the grammatical structure of the book rather than the reading which is most in harmony with its grammatical structure. This meaningless jargon allows each scholar to choose whatever he wants.

Therefore, it comes down to accepting what the scholars say or accepting what the majority of the manuscripts say. One must either accept the correct reading based on the majority of manuscripts, or he may follow a few manuscripts that have a reading that is different from the majority of the manuscripts. On the other hand, one can ask the scholars which variant is the right one and they will say, "Well, for certain reasons the few manuscripts with the variant reading are right." They base their decisions on the "external evidences" and "internal probabilities" developed by German rationalism.

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This is just the old first century Gnosticism warmed over and is not the right way to go about deciding the text of the Holy Scriptures. The textual critic is flying into the face of thousands of years of history when the text of the New Testament was preserved, not by scholars, but by faithful churches. For nearly two thousand years, the churches never applied these vague rules of textual criticism in order to determine what the correct reading of Scripture was. Faithful churches preserved accurate copies of the New Testament that had been passed on to them. Eighteen hundred years later the scholars came along and said, "No, your text is as corrupted as the Greek classics, and besides you cannot determine the right reading on the basis of the majority of the manuscripts. You must now determine the correct reading on the basis of scholarly principles."

No Two Greek Scholars Agree

So now, the correct reading is "up for grabs." One Greek scholar says one reading is right, while another says it is not. There is mass confusion much like the ridiculous uncertainty of modern art. Well, that is how the situation came to be, but that does not mean that is what it should be. God is not the author of confusion. God inspired the Scriptures by causing them to be written by holy men of God who were controlled by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21). Moreover, after God inspired His Word, he did not abandon it to be protected by mere man's scholarship. Through faithful churches, He watched over the transmission of the Scriptures from one century to the next. True, this transmission was done by copyists who made mistakes in their copying, but there was always the checking of manuscripts with those of other faithful churches to insure that the text was transmitted without error. God not only took great care to inspire men to write the Scriptures under the control of the Spirit, He also took great care to preserve those Scriptures. When God sent His Son into the world as the Living Word, he did not abandon Him but preserved His life until it was time for Jesus to die on Calvary. Even then, he raised Him from the dead to triumph over all His enemies. Similarly, God did not send His written Word into the world and abandon it to the whims of men. He watched over His Word to preserve it just as He preserved the Living Word. Without the preservation of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture would be in vain. God guarded his Word through faithful churches who carefully checked their copies of manuscripts with those of other churches. The result is that today there are over 5,000 manuscripts of various books of the Greek New Testament and some complete New Testaments all of which, in the majority of manuscripts, agree. If we need to decide what is the right text, we can go by what the reading is in the majority of the manuscripts.

Because of the extreme care taken by Scripture copyists and the reverent care of faithful churches over their Scriptures, God has preserved a text in the majority of the manuscripts that is the same as the original Greek New Testament!

Which Books are Canonical? (Authentically a Part of Scripture)

Churches formally affirmed the canon of the New Testament in 397 AD. However, all the books of the New Testament had already been judged by faithful churches to be authentic a long time before that. The churches rejected other books as not being Scripture. Those rejected books were the unauthenticated books that claimed to have a special vision of God's truth. These apocryphal books were rejected by the churches as not being drawn from the "wells of salvation." There was no mark of divine inspiration

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on them. The churches decided the issue of which books were a part of Scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Since God, through the churches, took great care to preserve which books should go into the New Testament, He most certainly preserved, through faithful churches, which words and verses should go into that New Testament. Because we know that God, through the churches, preserved the larger units (the books of the New Testament), it follows that He also preserved the smaller units of that New Testament (the individual verses). The smaller part of the New Testament (the verses) is part of the larger part of the New Testament (the books). Since we know that the books of the New Testament were preserved when the churches decided which books should be a part of the Canon of Scripture, therefore we know that God has also preserved the smaller part of the New Testament (the verses). God preserved individual verses by preserving the majority of the manuscripts that were without error and by using the churches to correct the few erring manuscripts by the majority of correct ones.

The Majority of Manuscripts Agree

For example, it is quite reasonable to assume that at the scene of an accident, nine people witness it and report it accurately to the police. One person for some reason says it happened differently. Normally the account given by the nine is considered the true one. This is especially true when the witnesses are reliable and have no reason to falsify the facts. It is the same with 5,000 manuscripts of New Testament books that exist today. The overwhelming majority of these manuscripts agree as to what a variant reading should be. Faithful churches for over 1,900 years have accepted this evidence as final. So should we.

What Did the Author of the Book Say?

However, more important than these reasons is the word of the Lord Jesus on the matter. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus quotes from the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 8:3 which says, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In this verse Jesus sanctions every word of Scripture as God's Word. He says every word comes out of the mouth of God, not only from men's minds. In Matthew 24:35 Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." He declared that his words would not pass away. We have his promise on it. We may believe Jesus or the textual critic whose basic assumption is that the New Testament is hopelessly corrupted. In Matthew 5:18 Jesus said that not "one jot or one tittle should pass from the law." This is speaking of the Old Testament but is equally applicable to the New Testament because the Author of both is the Holy Spirit. In this verse, Jesus declares that it is easier for heaven and earth to be destroyed than it is for the smallest part of a letter of Scripture to be destroyed. The jot and tittle are small marks that go under a letter. Jesus said that not even these would be lost. His argument is that if the smallest part of Scripture (the jot and tittle) would be preserved, then certainly the larger parts (the words) would be preserved as well.

In John 10:35 Jesus bases his argument on a single letter in a word. The whole argument is based on the difference between theos "God" and theoi "gods." This is the difference between the last letter being an -s or an -i. The suffix -s indicates singular and the suffix -i indicates plural. The Lord based his argument on the single letter -i. This proves that

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Jesus was conscious of the fact that not only were the words of Scripture preserved without error, he was also conscious of the fact that the very letters and even the small jots under the letters were preserved without error. If Jesus bases an argument on a single letter in Scripture, and he says that not even a part of a letter will be destroyed, then He must know more about Scripture than we do.

Should We Believe the Scholars or Jesus?

One can accept the vague musings of scholars or the clear words of Jesus who said that the smallest particle of God's Word would not be destroyed. Jesus said that God would preserve His Word, and that is exactly what has happened. God not only inspired holy men to write his Word, he used faithful churches to preserve that Word even unto the present day. We have God's unerring Word in the *Textus Receptus*, because it is based on the majority of manuscripts preserved by the churches.

Since 1881, many Christians have followed Westcott and Hort into error. Even many of the major Bible societies have fallen into this error. As for Baptist Bible Translators Institute, we stand with those faithful churches that have preserved God's Word through the centuries. We stand on the Word of God in the King James Version, because it is the only translation in the English language that is free from the presuppositions of modern Gnosticism. There is no reason for us to move into the Gnostic's camp where it is a matter of one opinion versus another opinion. We must not follow anyone's opinion. If we do, we will be shifting constantly and every man doing that which is right in his own eyes-the deplorable state of modern man.

The Conclusion of the Matter

It is clear that God has preserved His Word through the centuries down to our present day. We have the many manuscripts that have been preserved by God through His faithful churches. It is a simple matter of reading them and finding what is the correct reading in the majority of the manuscripts. We accept it on that basis. God has seen to it that faithful churches have by this method preserved these manuscripts and kept them pure through the centuries unto the present time. Therefore, we can know beyond a shadow of doubt that we have the Scriptures down to the very word, to the very letter, and to the smallest part of a letter. The Lord Jesus said we would. Whom do you believe?

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Every organization has a structure. Someone has to be in charge. The Anglican Orthodox Church is very clear on who our leader is - Jesus Christ. We are a Christian Church, we must follow Jesus Christ. No one here can override or waiver His Instructions or those of the Father. Here on the surface of the earth, we also have a structure. When the Apostles established churches, they left an organization behind, which we follow, of a three level ministerial hierarchy. The Apostles left each area in the charge of an overseer or bishop, with a minister in charge of each little group, assisted by a deacon. When the Church of England re-formed during the Reformation, one of the guiding principals beyond the return to Scripture as the ultimate earthly authority was that of a National Church. In the words of Henry VIII, "No one shall make decisions about an Englishman other than an Englishman." The Anglican Church

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has developed as a series of National Churches in association or communion with each other.

What that translates out to in today's words is an organization built up like this:

Parish	The local congregation or group of people who worship, learn and work together. This group is headed by a Minister (Priest) or Deacon
Diocese	A group of parishes geographically associated under the leadership of a Bishop
National Church	One or more dioceses that cover a country, sometimes called an Archdiocese. This entity is headed by a Bishop, sometimes called an Archbishop
Worldwide Communion	All of the national churches who come together in like mind or communion, sharing the same biblical view and mindset. This is the final layer here on earth. This organization is headed by a Bishop, often called the Presiding Bishop.

While the technical titles of the ordained persons are Deacon, Priest and Bishop, it must be understood none of these people are Mediatory Priests in the Aaronic sense. They do not make sacrifices on behalf of the congregation. We have One Priest who made a sacrifice one time of Himself for all mankind for all time. With this firmly in mind, most AOC priests go by the title of Minister or Pastor, their position is priest, however. A few try to avoid the title, but cannot avoid the responsibility which comes with the office.

Our ordained persons, often referred to as clergy, have no special powers. They have accepted special responsibilities, which if carried out properly will produce special results. They do not possess magic spells or elixirs.

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PRAYER

A Christian life requires one to live a life in harmony with God's purpose. To do that requires God's help. God knows that, which is why He sent the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Counselor, that Third God Guy. When we pray, we pray to worship, to ask for God's help in various ways; one of those is guidance and inspiration. That is the Holy Ghost's job. When we are baptized, we are filled with the Holy Ghost by whatever name He is called by. Yet, it seems over time He leaks out. We constantly need topping off. That is one of the major reasons we pray. We pray that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

To that end, we should attempt to pray daily, morning and night. As Anglicans, we have a head start. The Book of Common Prayer. The Book started out with Thomas Cranmer's first version in 1549, a compilation of old well tried prayers and newly put together prayers for every event. There are few occasions for which the Book of Common Prayer does not have an appropriate prayer.

As our Lord and Savior commanded us, we celebrate the Holy Communion on Sundays, starting on Page 67³, if we have a minister available. That takes care of Sunday morning, but there are six more days and Sunday night. What about the rest of the time?

The Book of Common Prayer has what are called Daily Offices at the very front of the book. They are an ancient form or order of prayer that goes back over a millennium. There is one Order for Morning and one for Evening. They are set form and cover all the bases. They form a complete church service, but don't require a minister. Anyone can say them, the whole thing! They don't take long, about 18 minutes if you read them aloud. There is a lot there, but the main points are:

- The Lord's Prayer
- A reading from the Psalms of David (covering the whole Book of Psalms each month)
- A portion of the Old Testament (covering the entire Bible each year)
- A portion of the New Testament (covering the entire Bible each year)
- Collects – Single thought prayers, including the Collect for the Day from the Sunday of the week.

The fact is that only a very small number of people will actually read the Daily Office each morning and night. The fact also is that we need to start our day with God, focusing our efforts in alignment with His goals; we need to end our day with reflection on the day past and how we did in aligning our efforts with those goals. So, what to do?

At the very end of the Prayer Book, there is a Morning and Evening Prayer, a Shorter Form, which allows you to shorten the Daily Office to about three minutes, getting all the essentials. It also tells you that if you are really pressed for time to just say the Lord's Prayer; that takes about a minute. If you cannot spend a minute for God, you are done for.

³ This is the page reference for the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, others are similar.

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The essence of Christian living is social and exteriorly focused. It is far better to just say the Lord's Prayer with your family or friends than it is to say the entire office by yourself. Pray, help, grow closer to God.

THE ROLE OF MEN IN THE CHURCH

In the Anglican Orthodox Church the roles of ordained ministers, that is bishops, priest (ministers) and deacons is taken only by men.

Our Lord has revealed that He wants the headship principle to be upheld in the church. It is for this reason that the Lord has restricted the pastoral office to men. (I Timothy 2:11-14 and I Corinthians 14:34)

The same principle applies to woman suffrage in the church. Scripture forbids the women "to have authority over a man," (I Timothy 2:12)

This principle does not forbid consultation between men and women in the church. Informal meetings or forums may be held, therefore, at which women may have opportunity to seek information and express their views. But the final decisions are to be made by the men. The Lord himself has placed this responsibility upon the men and they are to carry this out in a manner that is sensitive to the feelings and wishes also of the women.

It must be understood that in the church, like a marriage, the Second in Command is and must be the man, and the man must make all decisions for the good of the entity, that is marriage or church, not himself. He, like Jesus, must put the Will of God first. At all times, God must be the Commander of the entity. Once a man thinks it is his church, not God's the end of that church has come.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

As in the family, women have a critical role. Scripture clearly encourages women to use their talents in areas of church work which do not conflict with the headship principle or ordained ministry.

There is much for women to do in church. In Romans, Chapter 16, Saint Paul commends Phoebe to the Christians at Rome as a servant (diakonos) of the church at Cencreae and sends greetings to women who had been of assistance to him. He mentions Priscilla and her husband Aquilla as "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (v.3) and a certain Mary "who labored much for us." (v.6) And in his letter to the Phillippians he urges the congregation to "help those women who labored with me in the gospel," (4:2) Nor should we forget the many women who ministered to our Lord during his earthly ministry whose names are recorded in the Gospels. Women may, for example, lend their counsel in open congregational forums; teach parochial school, Sunday school, vacation Bible school; direct choirs; serve on committees in advisory capacities; assist the pastor and elders in calling on the sick, shut-ins and singles; and also assist in works of charity in the congregation and community.

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Women used their talents in the Lord's service and they were commended for it. The church today can learn from the early church to do the same, but always within the parameters which God himself has established. We should not concentrate on what women are not to do rather than on what they are to do. There is so much to do, that not having some fields open to them is not an issue. The other thing to be remembered is that men only hold authority if they meet the responsibility.

Women's participation in the work of the Gospel is a blessing to the church. God has given the ministry of the Gospel to all believers; it is the office of the pastoral ministry that he has restricted to qualified men.

For Christian men to take their leadership responsibilities seriously, they need the encouragement of Christian women to fulfill their obligations and duties of leadership.

Christianity is not a religion of individuals, but of teams.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH WITH REGARD TO THE COUNTRY

When the Church of England was re-formed in the mid-1500s under the guidance of King Henry VIII and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, one of the key principles was that of a National Church. For too long, the Pope had claimed to be the Chief Temporal Ruler of the World. He claimed the Temporal as well as spiritual role of the Supreme King, insisting that all nations' rulers be subservient to him. Now, popes had always been pretty realistic about their actual power, while building strength, they claimed dominion while in actuality allowing the various nations to proceed as desired. However, from time to time they exercised their authority. This had happened before with Henry II and Thomas Beckett. It came again with Henry VIII. This time, the pope picked a man who had at least as much ecclesiastic training as himself and who was a first rate intriguer on a par or, as it turned out, slight better than the pope.

Henry established a national church, which had as its primary temporal principle, "Nothing shall be decided about an Englishman, except by and Englishman." As England expanded around the globe, turned into a series of national churches in loose association under the leadership of the Chief Archbishop of England, which came to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. As time went on, the national character of the churches remained and strengthened. Some groups stay in association or communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and as the mainstream groups left Scripture behind, some groups such as the AOC have not been in communion, holding to Scriptural principles long abandoned by the mainstream.

As a result of the principles behind the Anglican Church, its members have been very active in our country, as well as other countries. For instance, in the United States, over 70 percent of our military flag officers (Generals and Admirals, the leaders) have been Anglicans, from George Washington on, as well as roughly the same percentage of Presidents, from the aforementioned General Washington, through to President George

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Bush⁴, including both Roosevelts and both Bushes. Anglicans are disproportionately represented in leadership positions because Scripture, being their guide, calls for hard work, perseverance, loyalty and moderation. We support our country's Constitution because we wrote it!

THE CHURCH AND THE MILITARY

We believe strongly in the defense of our country. We love our country as no other, we do not blindly love her, but love her with the full realization she can be made better with our effort. We are not in favor of war, we feel war is a bad thing; just not as bad as slavery. We value freedom above security or safety. Like Henry VIII, we believe no one in any other nation should have the right to decide the actions of or dictate to an American. Killing is a serious business; the commandment to commit no murder dictates we only go to war when there is no other reasonable alternative. When we fight, we must fight to win. Honorably, but with as much force as possible so as to minimize our own casualties.

On the other hand, the only way to prevent war is to be ready, willing and able at all times to win a war someone else starts.

THE CHURCH AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT

While the United States was formed as a country almost entirely by Christians, there was amongst our Founding Fathers a great spirit of tolerance for others ways of worship. The principles of the country were unquestionably Christian. At the same time, they were quite mindful of Jesus' admonition to "**Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**" We were not to have a Theocracy, but a government based on Christian morals that allowed for free exercise of religion.

As many of our members and ministers are military, either active or retired, we are cognizant of the Oath of Office they took pledging to "uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and to obey the *lawful* orders of those appointed over me." As a body, the AOC has unquestioned loyalty to our country, whether the United States of America or the country of the national church of which a person might be a member. The loyalty is to the Constitution, not the government, however.

IMMIGRATION

As a church, we believe in a nation of laws. Every one being descended from Adam and none living in the Garden of Eden, we are all immigrants. We believe in immigration as a way of life. We believe in the Rule of Law, that is a Scriptural Principle central to our lives, thus we also believe in only legal immigration. We also believe in our country. Thus, we believe that the only people who should be allowed to come here and become citizens are those who want to have as their primary and only identity Americans. Each national church has the same concept for their own country.

⁴ It must be noted that President Bush moved to the Methodists in 1977 when he married Laura. On the other hand, Methodists had as their central method, following the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and Scripture!

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We do not accept hyphenated people. In this country, there are only Americans. In India, only Indians. In Pakistan, only Pakistanis. So on and so forth. Our first loyalty is to God, the second to Honor, the third to Country and the fourth to Family.

WELFARE

Christians are commanded to care for those who cannot take care of themselves. That is very clear. But, there is a difference between those who cannot and those who don't feel like it. We have an obligation to provide for those who cannot take care of themselves. It is our Christian duty. What of those who do not feel like working, who do not want to make the effort? As Saint Paul instructed the people of Thessalonica in his Second Letter, "if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Work is central to our lives. God put us here on earth to make a difference in the world, not to have a good time. It is His Plan that we work hard to make this world a better place. We start by taking care of our own families. It is each man's job to provide for his family. In his First Letter to Timothy, Saint Paul writes, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

When we will not work, we deny God's clear instruction. If we cannot work, we deserve charity, that is to say loving help. Those who will not work are a burden on others, those who cannot work are meant for that love called charity. Welfare in general encourages behavior that is not beneficial to society and conducive to a strong and healthy country.

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIETY IN WHICH IT MUST EXIST

It is not commonly understood that the Church (that is to say the body of believers in the temporal world) must live in this world, but not be of this world. Our allegiance must be first to God, second to Honor, third to Country and fourth to Family. We must put those things that are of eternal importance ahead of those things which are of temporal importance.

The Church must conform to the Rule of Law in the country in which it abides. But, only to the point it does not conflict with the God's Laws. We must work in this world to further God's will.

Our loyalty on this earth must first be to God. We can have no loyalty to our so called Church that would cause us to go against the Law that has been given us by God. Things temporal are only temporary, what "stature" the AOC attains among men, what wealth it controls, what "numbers" it attains are of absolutely no importance if it varies from God's Plan. Scripture is clear.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARTHLY THINGS TO THE CHURCH (OR LACK THEREOF)

The Church here on earth is the body of believers come together to do the Will of God, it is NOT a non-profit corporation set up for the benefit of a select few. For the most

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part, it is best the Church not think of itself too highly. In the United States of America portion of the AOC, it does not appear there are currently any paid ministers or bishops. That is really as it should be. While parishes can get so big that they may require the services of a full time minister, we have no such parishes. When parishes get so large, it does present a problem. People start thinking they are important, not God. They think of it as their personal parish, not God's gift on loan to them for safekeeping and investment for His Purposes.

That being said, the Church does need funding. While the United States of America portion of the AOC operates on very little funding, it also functions as the Worldwide Communion's Headquarters. The vast majority of spending is on mission expansion, done like all the AOC on a shoestring with local self-help. When you put your money in the offering plate, you can be sure that it will be spent on God's Work, not some fancy goods for a puff haired fancy talker. You can double our clergy's salary without changing the bottom line by one cent.

In summary, God cares about results, not about looks. We aren't fancy, but we work.

PRIORITIES

Much of life centers around priorities; in the end all of it. You always put first things first, unless you are lost. Conversely, if you don't put first things first, you are by definition lost. One of our member's family motto is a fine example of priority:

God • Honor • Country • Family

If you do not put God first, you are without honor, your country will fail and your family will perish. God will never ask you to fail your duty to honor, country or family. If one of them asks you to disregard your duty to God, they are false.

Once you have the big picture down, you have to put it into practice on the micro level.

Problem	Solution
Too tired to go to church No time to read the Bible	Go to bed earlier on Saturday night. Turn off your television, quit reading fiction.
No time to spend with your family	Quit going out with friends, playing sports, going out to dinner, watching television.
Problems relating to your children	Spend time with them, all your spare time. Find things to do with them, not away from them.
Your spouse isn't doing their share	Do your and part of theirs and be joyful.

Do you see a pattern? Simply do what your supposed to do and quit doing what you want to do.

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God created Heaven and Earth and all that therein is; that includes us. And, So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.⁵

Recognizing Jesus gave His earthly Life for us in agony and spent three days in Hell so we might have life eternal, can you still go to the party and be *too tired* to get up for church?

HOLINESS

The word holy means to be set aside. It can also mean sacred, saintly, awe-inspiring and the like. We are called by God to a life of holiness. That is that our lives must be set aside to do God's Will, not our will. While we live in this world, our lives, like Jesus' Kingdom, must not be of this world. We are called to live or lives conformed to His Will, not our will. If we will do so, we will find true happiness and some fun along the way.

People who are not Christian are often surprised by the joy and happiness they find in the lives of Christians. The fact they are surprised is merely a reflection of their own loss. For who would be surprised when a machine runs better when operated in accordance with the maker's instructions?

When we follow God's Will, we find happiness. We find holiness.

PERSEVERANCE

We want things now! If it must be done, let it be done NOW. That is our way. We want instant results, we have been that way since Adam. So, patience seems to have been in short supply since the beginning of the world.

NOW has been God's Way sometimes, other times not. He oft sets things in motion, then waits for the result. While He knows what will happen, He still waits. We need to take His example as our direction.

We need to do what we are supposed to and keep at it, not give up just because **we** don't see results. When a minister preaches a sermon, when a worker gives a hand, when you give way to someone in your car, when you smile at a person, you don't know what effect that will have in the end. Just do what you are supposed to do, every day, all the time, as much as it is in you. God takes care of the rest.

People will say, I read the Bible, it did nothing for me. Ask them, did you read through and through and think on it as you went? Well, no. I opened it read a few pages and that was that. The Bible holds all of history, and all the future; it holds the keys to the universe and you read a couple of pages? It is not hard to understand, it takes doing, not just a cursory glance.

⁵ St. John iii. 16

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I prayed and it did not work. That just does not cut it. Did you pray without ceasing and more important listen for the answer? We oft pray for what we want and God gives us what we need; we don't recognize it.

We must keep acting and never ever give up. We must do our best to do God's Will, not merely claim to have done our best and quit. We must push forward and act as He would have us act. It is a tough thing to do, but in the end much easier on us than giving up and going down into the pit. Heaven is at the end of an uphill trail. The easy downhill trail does not lead to the summit.

SALVATION

We were given our souls and born into this world. Our lives end here, our soul leaves our earthly body which will turn back into the dust from which it came. When the soul leaves, where goes it?

It goes to Heaven or Hell. When we die, that is our Judgment Day. There is no way we can have lived our life as perfect; few of us have managed to not break the Ten Commandments many times over. Yet, unless we are accounted as perfect, we are destined for Hell, for the Pit.

There is hope yet!

John 3:16

King James Version (KJV)

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Since the world began, humans have been failing to follow God's Law. We try, from time to time, but we always fail, some more spectacularly than others. But, as Saint Paul says, "All fall short."

Romans 3:23

King James Version (KJV)

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

So, if we all fall short of what God demands to get into heaven and the alternative is the Pit, how do we get out of this mess?

A sacrifice! If you recall much of the Old Testament covers sinners sacrificing animals' lives to make up for their sin. The problem is we soon run out of little animals as those insufficient sacrifices cannot fully atone for our failure to follow God.

What is needed is:

- A perfect sacrifice;
- One sacrifice;
- One time;
- For all mankind;

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- For all time.

A perfect sacrifice must be truly without blemish, truly perfect. This means the only possible sacrifice to meet the criteria would be perfect; that is to say God. For, only God is perfect. As complete and total proof of His Love for us He sent His Only Begotten Son to give His earthly life for us that we might be accounted perfect in our Judgment Day.

He created imperfect creatures with free will, bound to fail, and redeemed our failure with His Perfection, His Son.

There are many explanations for how Jesus' death on the Cross as a sacrifice for our sins and to account us as perfect before God results in our salvation, some may be less wrong than others. The only part that we are really sure of is that Jesus, who rose from the dead, told us that by His Death He Conquered death for us and that through Him we would have life everlasting.

When you have live everlasting, life eternal, you never die. Your earthly body will die, it will turn to dust, but you will live on in an immortal restored and improved literal but heavenly body. Thus, you are immortal now, you don't have to wait for the benefits until after you die. You must start acting as if you will live for ever right now, for it is by your actions you are known.

CHRISTIAN LIFE⁶

- The Nature of Worship
- The Word
- Hymnology and Worship

This section covers three important aspects of Christian Life:

1. Nature of Worship;
2. Centrality of the Word to Christian Living;
3. Hymnology and its importance in worship.

The Nature of Worship

Public

- Public worship conforms to the sure Counsel of God:

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Heb 10:24-25)

Reverent

- Our Worship must be done with reverence:

⁶ Based on a Bible Study Seminar conducted on 26 December 2014 at the Atlanta Korean Presbyterian Church by AOC Presiding Bishop Jerry L. Ogles, Guest Minister

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- Remember Moses removing his shoes before the Burning Bush, the presence of God renders the area Holy Ground.

²⁸ Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:28-29)

Nature

- Worship must be biblically-centered in form and substance;
- It is warm, joyful, and particularly reverent;
- God is trinitarian in nature and form, His Form is reflected in the universe around us; thorough out the Bible we find constant references to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost from the very beginning in Genesis through to the very end in Revelation: The Great I AM, the Spirit of God moving on the waters, to the creation of all that therein is by the Son and Creator.

The universe is composed of three elements: matter, time and space. Matter is composed of three dimensions: length, breadth and height. Time is composed of three factors: future, present and past. These triunities reflect the aspects of their creator.

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Man in God's image is soul, body and spirit. When we look at a person we see his body; we look at Jesus and see God in a body. Behind the body of a man is a soul which animates his body. Behind Jesus is the Father who manifests himself in his Son. A man's soul expresses his will through his body emanating spiritual influence. God the Father expresses his will through his Son sending the Holy Spirit to do his work. Which part of a man is man, soul, body, or spirit? All three! Which part of the trinity is God? All three in eternal divine unity. Man, however is only a miniature replica of God. In God, each person of the trinity is magnified to an individual identity. Man as a replica is not a perfect illustration, but in my opinion it's better than a triangle or a shamrock. *Russ Ogden, PhD*

Participatory

- Worship is participatory – singing, praying, listening.

Communal

- Is there a communal prayer in the Bible?
 - “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen* (Matt 6:9-13)

True

- Worship must be based on theological truth!
- The first truth of theology is the existence of God. The first question: How does man learn the existence of God?

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- In recent decades there has been a sharp deviation from the simple, God-centered, ordinary-means-of-grace-driven approach to public worship which has characterized the Reformed Church for centuries to one of popular appeal and entertainment seeking higher and higher public opinion ratings. The church has become a market-research-oriented commercial enterprise, rather than an institution whose sole purpose is to implement God's Word.

Theological Basis

Part of this diversion from traditional worship has been a new approach to theology being taught in almost all seminaries of every denomination. To understand this new theology, we need to look at the two different approaches: These two may be divided into two divergent streams:

1. Polemic Theology
2. Irenic Theology

Polemic

The theology of the Reformers.

Polemic Theology has been defined as direct refutation of error.

Robert L. Dabney
renowned Presbyterian theologian of the 19th century

Polemic theology does not consider there to be any truth of God that can be believed outside Scripture. It actively reveals and rejects error.

Robert Dabney
Systematic and Polemic Theology, 27 April 2012

By its very nature, Polemic Theology is both Systematic and Dogmatic Theology. It asserts absolute biblical proofs and rejects the creeping errors of man-made religion!

Irenic

A new approach to theology of the past 150 years that attempts to promote peace; it is conciliatory, non-confrontational; peaceful. The concept sounds sweet to the human mind, but it is alien to God when peace must be achieved with the acceptance of other than absolute truths of the Bible. It avers to accept all opinions on an equal footing as valid. This obviously leads to acceptance of error for the sake of unity and peace.

Valid theology and true is that which is based upon the truth, love and beauty of God's Word: "8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil 4:8-9)

The above verses (Philippians 4:8-9) are two of the most defining comments of the bible on the Word of God:

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1. It is TRUE;
2. It is HONEST;
3. It is PURE;
4. It is LOVELY;
5. It is of GOOD REPORT!

In summary, the Word is Jesus Christ written in the alphabet of every nation in the world.

Who Created the World?

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Centrality of the Word to Christian Living

The Word of God is not some narrative novel – it is very truth (uncompromising and definite) It is both primitive and contemporary. It is PERSONAL to you – every WORD and every character! Jesus is not the I WAS, or the I WILL BE – He is the Great I AM. He is ever present in time and eternity. Alpha and Omega – the first and last letter of every alphabet and every letter in between.

Jesus Christ is the WORD INCARNATE, and He is our Manna from Heaven. As you will recall, Manna could not be gathered up and hoarded for future us except on the day before the Sabbath. It had to be gathered daily for it was daily bread to the Children of Israel. Jesus is the daily Bread of Christians. We must eat the rice and vegetables of the physical in order to sustain our bodies; but we must also feed daily upon the Bread of Heaven to sustain our spiritual lives.

³² Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ³⁴ Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. ³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (John 6:32-35)

Jesus is also the Water of Life for man cannot live on Bread alone – he must have the Holy ghost as his guide and compass to understand the deep truths of Scripture. Remember the Woman at the Well in Samaria? (John 4)

To personalize His truth and to make it more directly understandable to the human condition, Jesus taught in Parables. If you knew nothing more of the Word of God than the Parables, you would have a very sound elemental understanding of Christ.

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The Holy Bible – our Sword and Shield

Luke writes of two salient Parables known by men and women all over the world – even quoted, unwittingly, by non-Christians:

- Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32 see also Verse One of same chapter)

The Good Samaritan

²⁵ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? ²⁷ And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁸ And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. ²⁹ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? ³⁰ And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. ³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, ³⁴ And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. ³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? ³⁷ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:25-37)

Let's examine this parable in detail together.

²⁵ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Questions

What was the lawyer's purpose in asking this question?

“and tempted him”

He was not sincere, but thought he could trap Jesus.

What was wrong with the material aspect of the question?

“what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

A striking problem of modern Christianity is that of wanting to 'do' and show our worthiness. But God accepts us by no merit of our own, but of free Grace.

Note the sincerity of Jesus' response: “²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?”

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The question is also directed to YOU and to ME. How do you read the question of salvation in Scripture – is it of works, or is it of pure, unmitigated GRACE?

Please note the absolute accuracy of the lawyer's response: "27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." How could he answer so accurately and yet not understand? There are so many today – both in the ministry and in the laity - who know Scripture, but do not understand its personal application.

The man quoted accurately from Leviticus, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD." (Lev 19:18b) and Deuteronomy "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut 6:5)

But we cannot rightly love God or our neighbor until we have God's love in our own heart, for "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom 5:5)

How is it possible for us to love God?

19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (1 John 4:19)

Love is the whole key to Godly living. Love enables us to keep the Commandments of God. "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." (Prov 10:12)

Jesus always gives credit where credit is due even toward hearts that bear Him malice: "And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

The lawyer is adamant in his attempts to prove himself right regardless of what the Scriptures say. Many are like that today. "29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?"

Now the parable that is so full of meaning:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Who was this man – the Judaic Lawyer?

That man was you, and me, and everyone who has fallen victim to the sins of Adam!

Who is symbolized by the Good Samaritan? JESUS CHRIST

What was the Jewish man's DIRECTION?

He was going DOWN from the Holy City to Jericho.

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What happened to the man on the road of life?

He fell among thieves because the world is full of thieves only who care not for our well-being or our souls. The devil will take EVERYTHING you have!

How is it that we are left half-dead by the devil?

Because we are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins even though we are in a living body of flesh. If the spirit is dead, the man is half-dead! “¹ And you hath he quickened (made ALIVE), who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph 2:1)

“³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” The priest had been cleansed in the Temple and cared not to defile himself with the blood of a stranger though both were Jews. He cared more about his religion than He did about the Author of his faith. We too often pass by on the other side when God desires us to serve our neighbor.

“³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.” The Levite was an hereditary Temple worker of the tribe of Levy. He too had been cleansed for his work at the Temple. At least, he came and looked upon the man, but finally passed on.

Even our brothers and sisters of the church will often pass us by when we are down and out. They will act as if they are not aware of our troubles. They may offer to “pray for us” and never give another thought to our great need.

A Samaritan comes along...

A man so hated by the Jews that they will also pass by on the other side as if he were a dead man.

“³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,”

What did the Samaritan do for the dying man (for you and for me?)

1. “came where he was” The Christian brother will not wait for the troubled brother to come to them, he will go to the place of trouble to helpo.
2. “he saw him” He did not make a cursory look, but examined the man carefully.
3. “he had compassion on him,” just as Christ always has done for the hurt sinner – the Samaritan had compassion on the man.
4. “And went to him” just in the same way that Jesus came to us, born of a virgin in the flesh, and suffered more than any of us but FOR us!
5. And “bound up his wounds” He even expended his precious resources on the man – “pouring in oil and wine.”
6. And, “set him on his own beast.” The Samaritan would walk and give his beast to the injured man to ride. He would sacrifice his comfort for the greater need of the stranger – just as Christ has done for us.

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7. "and brought him to an inn." He did not send the man away to find treatment – he went with him. Jesus will go with you all of the WAY!
8. "and took care of him." When Jesus receives you into His Heart of Love, He does not leave you to fend for yourself. He goes WITH you always.
9. "And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him." Jesus, too, had to leave us, but left us in charge of the Inn Keeper (Comforter) whom He sent to care for us until He returns with great power and glory. He provides the means of our living and health even in His absence.

Jesus will settle all accounts at His return: "and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Now Jesus levels a serious question to the lawyer, and to you and me:

³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

³⁷ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Notice the arrogance of the lawyer! He could not bear to mention the identity of the hated Samaritan, so he responded "He that shewed mercy on him!"

The message to us: Go and do likewise. Have the love and compassion of Christ in dealing with others. He died for us while we were yet sinners!

The Prodigal Son

¹¹ A certain man had two sons: ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

Who do the two sons represent?

Perhaps the Old Testament Church and the New Testament Church, or perhaps simply examples of two Christians who belong to their Father God, but one goes astray into a FAR COUNTRY.

The father was not obligated to grant the younger boy's wish, but he did. It worried him to no end, so why did he?

Discussion

¹³ And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

Example Salt: Matthew 5:13 "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." NaCl

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He wasted no time. It is in the nature of man to rebel against any authority figure over them.

He went into a FAR COUNTRY! This is far from the will of the father and a place where all are strangers and care little for the boy.

In the meantime, the father is watching all. He knows of his young sons behavior and it grieves him. So why doesn't the father go and bring his son home?

Discussion

When we believe God is not watching, we live our lives according to the flesh and not the Spirit.

Disobedience to God always results in a famine – either of the body or of the spirit.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

This is not simply a want of bread, but of love and compassion.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

When we are in a far country, far from God, we will always join ourselves to a person who is foreign to our values and faith. The devil will do us no good, but use and destroy us.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

What could be more disgusting and degrading to the Hebrew boy than to be forced to work among pigs – even in the pigsty?

When you are totally depraved, no man will help you – you become a creature of loathing!

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

“All who are apart from God are not in their right mind.” G.K. Chesterton

The Holy Ghost continues to call even though our hearts may be calloused by years of disobedience. Finally, God took the boy to the depths of his being. He had no place to go but up.

He remembered his father's house, and the joy he had there.

The first step in reconciling with God the Father is to recognize our own depravity and total lack of worthiness!

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¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee ¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

The boy repented his waywardness. He made a resolution, but a resolution is of no value unless acted upon.

It is true that dishonor of our fathers and mothers is a sin against God our Father.

²⁰ And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Very revealing verse! His father has watched that same road as it wound over the horizon for months, and those months turned into years – yet, he never gave up hope on his wayward son.

Now the old father is aged, weak and poor of sight. He probably is bowed over with care and age. But one day, as he sat peering down that long, lonely road, a figure emerged on the distant horizon. The figure was dressed in rags and covered in filth. He walked with a limp, yet, even at a great distance, the old man recognized him! God our Father is not so concerned with the distance we are from Him as the DIRECTION we are traveling!

Love gave the old man feet to even run!

Amazing what we can accomplish when we love enough!

He ran to the boy!

Though the boy had not bathed in months, and smelled badly of the pig sty – the father paid no regard to that filth that adorned his frail frame.

He fell on his neck, hugging and kissing this boy whom the world so readily discarded and gave up for dead.

That, my friends, is what the Father in Heaven does for us.

There was a time in the pig sty when the boy resolved to come and repent before his father.

But the resolution is not sealed until the deed is accomplished. When we repent in prayer, our subsequent actions must follow through with the conviction in our hearts.

²¹ And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

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Can you bring yourself to say before God that you are not worthy to be His son or daughter? YOU MUST!

None of us are worthy in our own right. What makes us worthy?

²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

Do you notice anything unusual about the father's response?
If so, what?

The father reacted as if he heard not a word, or needed one, from his son. He was only joyful to have the boy home!

The robe covered his filth. The White Robe of Christ covers ours.

The ring granted the authority of the father upon the son. It is the same with all who base their authority on the Word of God.

Shoes represent freedom – always confiscated from captured soldiers so that they cannot escape. We are not free until God sets us free.

There is rejoicing in heaven at the repentance of a single sinner!

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. (Luke 15:7)

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Hymnology and Classical Hymn Singing

In the not so very remote past, the church hymns were directly taken from Scripture; for example, the hymns sung in the Presbyterian Church of the 17th century came directly from the Psalter.

Hymns are not simply entertainment or time fillers. A major purpose of hymns is to teach doctrine. We remember by the tune, and may recall hymns when a Bible is not at hand.

Today, there has arisen a certain measure of popular worship which has abandoned the rich old biblical hymns of the past.

Some hymns sung in modern charismatic churches were actually taken from church pre-kindergarten material from the last century.

Let us examine two hymns; one of the modern songs that is sung today in many churches and then a classical hymn:

God is so Good

God is so good,
God is so good,
God is so good,
He's so good to me!

He cares for me,
He cares for me,
He cares for me,
He's so good to me!

I love Him so,
I love Him so,
I love Him so,
He's so good to me!

I praise His Name,
I praise His Name,
I praise His Name,
He's so good to me!

How many Bible verses or profound truths do we find in this song?

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O Worship the King

O worship the King,
all glorious above!
O gratefully sing
his power and his love!
Our shield and defender,
the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor,
and girded with praise.

O tell of his might!
O sing of his grace!
Whose robe is the light,
whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath
the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path
on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store
of wonders untold,
Almighty, thy power
hath founded of old,
hath 'stablished it fast
by a changeless decree,
and round it hath cast,
like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care,
what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air;
it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills,
it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills
in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust,
and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust,
nor find thee to fail;
thy mercies, how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless Might,
ineffable Love,
while angels delight
to worship thee above,
the humbler creation,
though feeble their lays,
with true adoration
shall all sing thy praise.

The youth of St. Andrews found 22 different Bible verse in this great hymn – O Worship the King – directly related to its composition.

How many do you find?

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THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

The Thirty-Nine Articles were not intended as a complete statement of the Christian faith, but of the position of the Church of England in relation to the Roman Catholic Church and dissident Protestants. The Articles argue against some Anabaptist positions such as the holding of goods in common and the necessity of believer's baptism. The motivation for their production and enactment was the absence of a general consensus on matters of faith following the separation with Rome. Wishing to pursue Elizabeth I's agenda of establishing a national church that would maintain the indigenous apostolic faith and incorporate some of the insights of Protestantism, the Articles were intended to incorporate a balance of theology and doctrine. The Articles are a revealing window into the ethos and character of Anglicanism, in particular in the way the document works to navigate a *via media*, or "middle path," between the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and of the English Puritans, thus lending the Church of England a mainstream Reformed air. The "*via media*" was expressed so adroitly in the Articles that some Anglican scholars have labeled their content as an early example of the idea that the doctrine of Anglicanism is one of "Reformed Catholicism."

The Articles highlight the Anglican positions with regard to the corruption of Catholic doctrine in the Middle Ages, to orthodox Roman Catholic teachings, to Puritanism, and to Anabaptist thought. They are divided, in compliance with the command of Queen Elizabeth I, into four sections:

Articles 1–8, "The Catholic Faith";
Articles 9–18, "Personal Religion";
Articles 19–31, "Corporate Religion";
Articles 32–39, "Miscellaneous."

The articles were issued both in English and in Latin, and both are of equal authority.

Articles I–VIII: The Catholic faith: The first five articles articulate the Catholic credal statements concerning the nature of God, manifest in the Holy Trinity. Articles VI and VII deal with scripture, while Article VIII discusses the essential creeds.

Articles IX–XVIII: Personal religion: These articles dwell on the topics of sin, justification, and the eternal disposition of the soul. Of particular focus is the major Reformation topic of justification by faith. The Articles in this section and in the section on the Church plant Anglicanism in the *via media* of the debate, portraying an Economy of Salvation where good works are an outgrowth of faith and there is a role for the Church and for the sacraments.

Articles XIX–XXXI: Corporate religion: This section focuses on the expression of faith in the public venue – the institutional church, the councils of the church, worship, ministry, and sacramental theology.

Articles XXXII–XXXIX: Miscellaneous: These articles concern clerical celibacy, excommunication, traditions of the Church, and other issues not covered elsewhere. Article XXXVII additionally states among other things that the Bishop of Rome had no jurisdiction in the realm of England.

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In 1628 Charles I of England prefixed a royal declaration to the articles, which demands a literal interpretation of them, threatening discipline for academics or churchmen teaching any personal interpretations or encouraging debate about them. It states: "no man hereafter shall either print or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and Full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense."

The Articles truly mean what they clearly say. In 2003, Anglican clergyman Chris Pierce wrote:

The Thirty-Nine Articles define the biblically derived summations of precise Christian doctrine. The Thirty-Nine Articles are more than minimally assented to; they are believed wholeheartedly. In earlier times English and Irish evangelicals would have read Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Ussher, and Ryle and would unreservedly agree with Dean Litton's assessment that (quoted by Dean Paul Zahl, in his work 'The Protestant Face of Anglicanism'), 'The Anglican Church, if she is to be judged by the statements of the Articles, must be ranked among the Protestant Churches of Europe.'

The Oxford Movement of the 19th century opposed this view and wanted to then, and does now, want to reintroduce the corruptions were the reason for the reformation in the first place.

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Articles of Religion

As established by the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in Convention, on the twelfth day of September, in the Year of our Lord, 1801

Comments in Blue ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

THERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in the unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

What this means to us is very simple and very clear, yet at the same time unique to Christianity: God is a single entity, with three distinct beings, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Each appears to be distinct, yet they form one being. A Triune God, that is three in one.

II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father. That is generated of Him with no outside assistance from before what we can understand to be the beginning of time. Jesus was sent by the Father to earth where He was born of Mary and was of two complete natures, God and man. He lived life as a man with all that entailed and gave His life for our sins, both the original sin and our actual day to day sins.

III. Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us, and was buried; so also it is to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

Jesus' earthly life ended on the Cross. Subsequent to that, He went down into Hell and fought the Devil for our souls and won.

IV. Of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

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After three days, Jesus returned to earth in a real body, flesh and blood, then ascended bodily to heave where He remains at this time. He will come back to earth to judge at the last day.

V. Of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

The Holy Ghost, the last of the three of the Triune God, came from them and with them forms the single Triune eternal God.

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books

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

And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras,	Baruch the Prophet,
The Fourth Book of Esdras,	The Song of the Three Children,
The Book of Tobias,	The Story of Susanna,
The Book of Judith,	Of Bel and the Dragon,
The rest of the Book of Esther,	The Prayer of Manasses,
The Book of Wisdom,	The First Book of Maccabees,
Jesus the Son of Sirach,	The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

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Only those things which can be clearly proved in Scripture must be believed to gain salvation. We accept the Old and New Testaments as listed above as Scripture. We think the Books of the Apocrypha⁷ have lessons in them, but do not believe they are of the same level as the two testaments and should not be used to establish doctrine. In other words, if it is not in the Bible, it need not be believed. We consider the King James Version, commonly called the Authorized Version to the standard for Scripture. We do not consider versions not derived from the Received Text to be valid, it should be noted that only the Received Text was referred to at the time of the adoption of the Articles.

VII. *Of the Old Testament.*

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

If you read the Old Testament with the help of the Holy Ghost, you will find the coming of Jesus foreshadowed, referred to and manifest in so many places. Nothing is in the Old Testament as to what has gone on in the past is that if read correctly is contrary to the New. On the other hand we are not bound by Mosaic Law in any way. It is to be considered, but in places it is contrary to the New. At the same time, it must be understood that we are still bound by the Ten Commandments, as evidenced by Jesus' Summary of the Law.

VIII. *Of the Creeds.*

The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

The two creeds, the Nicene and the earlier Apostles', are to be believed. Not because they are promulgated by the church, but rather because they establish positions in complete agreement with Scripture. All parts of each are readily provable by Scripture.

IX. *Of Original or Birth Sin.*

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, φρονημα σαρκος, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that

⁷ After all, Apocrypha means it probably is not true, but it should be.

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believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

Since the fall of Adam, people have had the tendency to follow themselves and not God; thus, they end up separated from God. Separation from God is a definition of sin. We cannot save ourselves any more than a drowning man can lift himself out of the water by his own hands.

X. Of Free Will.

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

We are imperfect creatures created with Free Will. That is we can do what we want to do. Without the guidance of God, through the Holy Ghost, to follow Jesus Christ, in the end we can do no good. With His Help, we can do much good. While a non-believer can do works that are good, they in and of themselves cannot save him or her. Nothing we can do will save us. We need help.

XI. Of the Justification of Man.

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

Nothing we can do will save us. We need help. We can only be accounted as perfect at the final tally point by the one time sacrifice made by Jesus Christ for all time and all mankind. Our accounting as perfect is based on His Perfect Faith and sacrifice and our piggybacking on that Faith to be accounted at the final tally point. It is what He did, not what we do.

XII. Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

Action is the measure of belief. It is not sufficient to say you believe in Jesus Christ, you must live your life in that belief. Your actions must match your diction.

XIII. Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea

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rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

We are saved by Jesus Christ. It is His Sacrifice that makes us perfect. It is not our works. If you try to buy your way into heaven, not only will you fail; but you commit sin for trying.

XIV. *Of Works of Supererogation.*

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

You cannot do more than your duty, it is not possible. If you have the ability to do something and fail to do it, you fall short.

XV. *Of Christ alone without Sin.*

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin (as Saint John saith) was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

There has been only one person ever on this earth who was perfect, only one who never sinned, only one who never fell short. Jesus Christ the Righteous and he is the Propitiation for our sins. He is the only one. The only one. The rest of us all fall short. None of us is better than the others, though some are worse.

XVI. *Of Sin after Baptism.*

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

All fall short all the time. Christians constantly evaluate their performance, repent, reset and go forward to sin no more. We will fail, we must never ever give up.

XVII. *Of Predestination and Election*

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called

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according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

God has chosen those who will be His since before the beginning. Yet, we must chose Him or we will be lost. Has He chosen all? He did not say. Some places you could take it that way, others it seems like not all are chosen. If you are chosen, the Holy Ghost will be in you when you let Him in. If you are chosen, but you chose Him not, the Holy Ghost will not be in you.

XVIII. *Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.*

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

Jesus own words make it very clear: "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me."⁸ Has he made provision for others than Christians? We do not know. We do know that for all those who know of Him, there is a way. He is the Way. There is no other way but Him.

XIX. *Of the Church.*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

⁸ Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*
John 14:6

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As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

The Church is the Body of Believers who follow Scripture. It is not a building, it is not a set of vestments or an organ. It is not anyone who follows not Scripture.

XX. Of the Authority of the Church.

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

The Church has power on earth over earthly things. No Bishop, Priest or Deacon has any power to vary from Scripture. It may not tell people to believe or do things contrary to Scripture.

XXI. Of the Authority of General Councils.

[The Twenty-first of the former Articles is omitted; because it is partly of a local and civil nature, and is provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles.]

XXII. Of Purgatory.

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

There is Heaven and there is Hell. There is no Purgatory, nothing we do here will change what is in Heaven and Hell. We must pray only to God. If Jesus told us to pray only to God, but to ask in His Name, why would anyone consider praying to someone below Him?

XXIII. Of Ministering in the Congregation

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Ministers must be called by God, then by a group to lead them. In the AOC, a man believes himself to be called by God to the ministry. He talks to the Bishop, who in conjunction with others validates that call. After appropriate education, he is authorized to act as a minister, that is called ordination.

XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth.

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It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people.

We have a one to one relationship with God. It is not a community relationship. People must understand what they are praying and what is being said in their name. Each prayer ends with the word AMEN. That means *so be it* or *I agree*. You must not, you cannot say Amen to something you don't agree with or understand. Thus, the services must be in a language the people of the congregation understand.

XXV. Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

That's it, TWO. Not seven. These are all the Lord ordained.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

These are services, in the case of Confirmation, Orders and Matrimony, they are also contracts. They are not sacraments. They are good things, they are not sacraments.

The Sacraments are not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

Sacraments are not to be worshipped, rather used. Each of us is a sinner, every day. If you are not repentant, you should not receive any sacrament.

XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

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Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

Each of us is a sinner, every day. That includes the ordained ministers. That does not make the sacraments they administer less effectual. At the same time, if they are not repentant, they must go. If they do not change, they must go. You cannot accept an unrepentant unchanging person as a friend, let alone a minister.

XVII. *Of Baptism*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Baptism is a holy ordinance or sacrament appointed by Christ, for the continual admission of new members into His Church. Every Christian begins his Church membership by being solemnly baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Baptism, also, is a sign of regeneration or new birth, and has a most wholesome effect, as the Twenty-fifth Article says, in those who receive it worthily. Moreover, St. Paul says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.)

Not everyone who goes through the outward and visible portion of the sacrament does so with the same intent. Not all receive the inward spiritual benefit from the outward ordinance of baptism with water.

Myriads are outwardly baptized every year, who, from the font to the coffin, and from their births to their deaths, never give the slightest evidence that they have grace in their hearts, or have received any inward spiritual benefit at their baptism. They live and die apparently without knowledge, faith, repentance, obedience to God, or meetness for heaven. In fact, notwithstanding their baptism, they exhibit no more Christianity in their lives and characters than many heathens.

Judas Iscariot, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, and others mentioned in Scripture, were baptized but certainly not regenerate; that is the complete change of heart and character which the Holy Spirit works in a person when he becomes a real Christian⁹.

⁹ See JC Ryle's piece in the early part of the course.

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XVIII. *Of the Lord's Supper.*

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

The Lord's Supper is the memorial He commanded us to keep until his coming again. When we receive the Lord's Supper at the Holy Communion Service, we are part of that Last Supper.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

Transubstantiation is clearly a fable. One cannot be two places at one time, Jesus is in Heaven, He cannot also be in Bread and Wine. That notwithstanding, His words "This is My Body, My Blood" are clearly spiritual as He was saying them at the time and expected no one to take a bite out of Him.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

One may not "save" the Bread or Wine that has been consecrated. When the service is over, it is just bread and wine. Simple every day items with no special powers. When we take communion to the homebound, we consecrate the elements at that time. There are no special powers.

XXIX. *Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.*

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

Remember, bread and wine are simple every day items with no special powers. The power of communion is in the spirit. IF you "take communion" with an unclean heart, you are not in communion with Christ.

XXX. *Of both Kinds.*

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

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The Lord ordained His Supper with Bread and Wine. Everyone gets Bread and Wine, the Wine is not the province of those with special powers, the priests, for there are none, save the Lord, with special powers.

XXXI. Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.

The Offering of Christ once made in that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

The Lord Himself made one sacrifice, one time, for all mankind, for all time. That is the one and only sacrifice. Deacons, Priests and Bishops are all ministers of the Lord; their duty is to minister to their charges in their congregations. There is only one mediatory priest in Christianity, Jesus Christ. No one else makes a sacrifice. No one.

XXXII. Of the Marriage of Priests.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

Scripture instructs on the qualifications of the ministry, it includes being married, keeping yourself in line with God's will, as well as your family. Celibate priests are an invention of this world to keep the worldly church costs down and indicative of an organization that values itself over God and Scripture.

XXXIII. Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided.

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath the authority thereunto.

Someone who has been excommunicated has turned their back on God and His Church. You do not want to associate with them, except to encourage them to return to God.

XXXIV. Of the Traditions of the Church.

It is not necessary that the Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

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Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

Traditions and Ceremonies are local in nature, though some extend across the Worldwide Communion. This is understandable as Anglicanism is a system of National Churches in association through the Worldwide Communion. As long as they are in concert with Scripture, they ought to be followed. No Tradition or Ceremony may conflict with Scripture.

XXXV. Of the Homilies.

The Second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies

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| 1 Of the right Use of the Church. | 11 Of Alms-doing. |
| 2 Against Peril of Idolatry. | 12 Of the Nativity of Christ. |
| 3 Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches. | 13 Of the Passion of Christ. |
| 4 Of good Works: first of Fasting. | 14 Of the Resurrection of Christ. |
| 5 Against Gluttony and Drunkenness. | 15 Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. |
| 6 Against Excess of Apparel. | 16 Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. |
| 7 Of Prayer. | 17 For the Rogation-days. |
| 8 Of the Place and Time of Prayer. | 18 Of the State of Matrimony. |
| 9 That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue. | 19 Of Repentance. |
| 10 Of the reverend Estimation of God's Word. | 20 Against Idleness. |
| | 21 Against Rebellion. |

[This Article is received in this Church, so far as it declares the Book of Homilies to be an explication of Christian doctrine, and instructive in piety and morals. But all references to the constitution and laws of England are considered as inapplicable to the circumstances of this Church; which also suspends the order for the reading of said Homilies in churches, until a revision of them may be conveniently made, for the clearing of them, as well from obsolete words and phrases, as from the local references.]

As not all preach well, the Homilies form the basis for sound doctrine preaching and may be read in churches. At one time, most ministers were not licensed to preach, rather instructed to read the Homilies. Today, bishops across the Worldwide Communion work to improve preaching. The Homilies form a valuable resource for preaching.

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XXXVI. *Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.*

The Book of Consecration of Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this Church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said Form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

The Consecration of Bishops and the Ordering of Priests and Deacons has from time to time degenerated into a circus of papal like proportions. The Articles mandate the use of the standard form to keep this from happening in the Worldwide Communion.

XXXVII. *Of the Power of the Civil Magistrates.*

The Power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel, to pay respectful obedience to the Civil Authority, regularly and legitimately constituted.

We must live in the world, but not be of the world. Jesus captured this perfectly when he said "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Mark 12:17 To the extent it is morally possible, we are to be good citizens of the country in which we reside.

XXXVIII. *Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common.*

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same; as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Nothing in Scripture suggests we should hold goods in common or follow the Marxist precept of "Each to give according to his ability and take according to his need." Rather we are enjoined to work hard to provide for our families. We are also to give help to those in need. Not necessarily money which often makes things worse, but real help. Not a handout, but a hand up.

XXXIX. *Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching in justice, judgment, and truth.

Scripture prohibits cursing and taking the Lord's Name in vain; it allows committing one's honor to telling the truth and making that promise or affirmation before God.

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End Comment

The Anglican Orthodox Church today firmly holds to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the use of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, the Homilies, and the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible. The Bible is believed by the AOC to be the divinely inspired word of God and to contain all that is necessary for salvation. Additionally, the church preaches the importance of biblical morality both in an individual's life and as public policy. The AOC strongly identifies itself as being in the Anglican Low Church tradition and disallows the use of the title "Father" for its clergy, many of the priestly vestments commonly used in other Anglican jurisdictions, and any veneration of the saints.

The church holds a biennial convention at St. Peter's Anglican Orthodox Church in even-numbered calendar years. The headquarters of the Anglican Orthodox Church remain in the church's traditional facilities in Statesville, North Carolina along with Bishop Dees' home parish, St. Peter's Anglican Orthodox Church.

The Anglican Orthodox Church is most closely aligned with the original Anglican principles of the Reformation. Each of our members has a strong commitment to biblical teachings. None of us is perfect, but we believe by working together we can become at least somewhat better and spread the Word of God in a world which clearly needs it.

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