



One Truth

— — —

Many Lies

**Continually return to God's Holy Word.
Deepen our understanding of faith as Lutheran Christians.
Speak about our faith to others.**

Jim MacGregor



psalmstudy.org

When Brothers Dwell in Unity

Psalm 133: *Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!*

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore. (ESV)



The Goodness and Pleasure of Unity

“Living in unity is as soothing as being anointed with oil, as refreshing as dew from the mountains on a parched desert. Descriptions of the goodness and pleasure of unity and brotherhood remind us that we often experience discord, strife, and disunity instead. This is true of our families, our communities, and our churches. Yet Christ’s prayer is that ‘they may be one even as we are one’ (John 17:11). He bestows that unity through the Holy Spirit in the refreshing waters of baptism.” (*Lutheran Study Bible*, “Psalm 133”)

Jesus Keeps Us in His Name

John 17:9-12: *I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (ESV)*

Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart

Proverbs 3:5-7: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.*
(ESV)

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1-18: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made him known. (ESV)*

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Preface

This paper, “One Truth, Many Lies - Supplemental Material”, was prepared for adult Bible study (i.e., “Sunday school”) at Living Savior Lutheran Church. It is based on the structure of the book (Concordia Publishing House) of the same title by Erik Rottmann.

[Note: Erik Rottmann is a published author of several books in the Lighthouse series and children's books.]

When I started preparing for our Bible study, this topic was new to me other than vague memories of ideas that I had been taught in high school religion classes and college theology classes. This is a collection of notes and related Scripture passages reflecting what I learned from many sources while being guided by the book *One Truth, Many Lies* which is a study of heresies in the church. The material in this paper is organized by topic to supplement the book *One Truth, Many Lies*. The discussions (below) of individual heresies and their Bible verses are to be used in conjunction with weekly handouts from the book. We should have some interactive sharing of knowledge and what we want to learn about. Let's share what insights we have or what difficulties we have with heresy, creeds, or Scripture in general. The study leader views this paper as a vehicle for mutual sharing.

Sharing what the leader learned (like a “book report”).

Sharing what participants have learned in their life experiences.

Any discussion of the Scriptural basis of our basic tenets of Christian faith, as represented by the creeds, is based on extensive studies done elsewhere and is not within the scope of this paper. The book *One Truth, Many Lies* starts with the Athanasian Creed as our touchstone for truth. Rottman mentioned the Athanasian Creed only once and then organized the class material according to each part of the Apostles' Creed.

[Notes: See Athanasian Creed below (p. 31) where the text in bold is that cited by Rottman.]

The table of contents shows the planned outline for our discussions. There are also a bibliography of material used and brief biographies and descriptions of sources mentioned in the bibliography.

All Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted. Some Scripture references and verses - the “tools” necessary to expose false teachings and remain faithful to God's Word - are repeated in their entirety under each heading that they pertain to minimize the need for the reader to stop and look up references. Each instance is identified with “(ESV)” in accordance with the publisher's rules for use in non-saleable media.

[Note: The ESV is the Bible translation of choice of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.]

Extracts from the Book of Concord (e.g., *Augsburg Confession*, *Small Catechism*, *Ecumenical Creeds*) may be used freely. According to the publisher “The texts used here are from *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: German-Latin-English* published as a memorial of the quadricentenary jubilee of the Reformation in 1917 by resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). These texts are in the public domain and may be freely copied.”

[Notes: Triglot = in three languages. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States became the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.]

The book *One Truth, Many Lies* is copyright protected, and no material from the book has been copied here. Copies of the pages for the individual lessons which Rottman indicated may be

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reproduced and distributed to the study participants, will be handed out in the lessons on the individual heresies.

There are citations of sources that are of various theological persuasions (e.g., Lutheran, General Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Baptist, and others). Every attempt has been made to avoid any distinctively sectarian doctrines and to draw upon only material that focuses on the particular topic in a manner that is consistent with a fundamental Christian understanding of the Bible when comparing Scripture with Scripture. Non-Christian references are used for factual definitions and histories of heretical beliefs and not for their theological points of view.

Jim MacGregor
Living Savior Lutheran Church
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Introduction

Our Purpose in Studying Heresy

Our purpose is threefold: 1) To continually return to God's Holy Word. 2) To deepen our understanding of faith as Lutheran Christians. 3) To be able to speak about our faith to others.

Our purpose IS NOT to become experts in individual heresies!

Our Purpose Explained

The quotes below from the New Testament elaborate on our purpose in studying heresy.

Purpose: To continually return to God's Holy Word

Acts 17:10-11: *The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.* (ESV)

2 Peter 3:17-18: *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* (ESV)

1 Peter 3:15: *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,* (ESV)

Purpose: To deepen our understanding of faith as Lutheran Christians

Psalms 51:5: *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (ESV)

Romans 5:12: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned* (ESV)

2 Peter 3:17-18: *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* (ESV)

Purpose: To be able to speak about our faith to others

Matthew 28:18-20: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**"* (ESV)

Mark 16:15: *And he said to them, "**Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.**"* (ESV)

John 21:15-17: *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**" He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**" He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**" (ESV)*

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1 Corinthians 9:16-19: *For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. **Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.** What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.* (ESV)

An Underlying Theme in the Study of Heresy

The underlying theme in the study of heresy may be deduced from these few verses.

Genesis 3:6: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.* (ESV)

Proverbs 3:5-7: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.* (ESV)

Proverbs 28:26: *Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.* (ESV)

Mark 16:15-16: *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.* (ESV)

John 3:36: [Jesus said] *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."* (ESV)

John 20:29: *Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (ESV)

James 1:5-6: *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.* (ESV)

The underlying theme of the topic of heresy is a human flaw of misguided, foolish pride. We are driven by our need to understand and explain God, His Creation, His purposes, and indeed His entire Providence - God conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny - by our abilities to reason. This drive is so strong in us humans as to distract even the most committed, faithful, and Bible believing Christians from knowing revealed truth by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and instead attempting to know revealed truth by our understanding of human concepts and how things appear to us in the world. Our nature tempts us to reason from ourselves and our world to God rather than reasoning from belief in what God has revealed about Himself to us and our world. To learn truth from Scripture we must humbly give up our ideas and prayerfully try to learn what God reveals to us in His Word. Our flaw stems from original sin and our fallen nature inherited from our first parents. The world order and Satan leverage our nature to make us feel good about ideas and beliefs that are not Scriptural.

The implicit beliefs of the earliest Christians were challenged by people who could not (or did not want to) believe in the truths revealed to us in Scripture and its fulfillment in Jesus; people who wanted to use some human-based concept or other to understand and explain it. Each challenge was met first by Apostolic preaching and writing (i.e., New Testament books) and then by the formulation of statements of belief based on Scriptural revelation - the creeds. The creeds, however, only describe the doctrines that we believe based on Scripture. They do not explain the doctrines so that we truly understand them (e.g., creation, virgin birth, Trinity, one person of Jesus with two natures - divine and human). There is an inherent human need to

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explain what we experience by our senses. When that need drives us to try to understand those doctrines, then we get into trouble. Our minds cannot comprehend God and His Word. They can only believe, trust, and rely on our Maker and His Word.

We have to remember that we are not to judge others, but only to prayerfully explain to them what we know to be right if we believe that they are wrong and to accept correction ourselves when we agree that we are wrong. Jesus gave us an “escape hatch” from doubt, confusion, and lack of understanding. He told us to watch and pray, and He comforted us by saying that He came to save us, and that *“all things are possible with God”*.

Matthew 19:26: [Jesus said something in the context of commitment to Him. The same may also be applied to believing His teachings and accepting His comfort when we are in doubt.] *When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (ESV)

Luke 21:36: *“But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* (ESV)

John 3:17: *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* (ESV)

What Is Heresy?

Heresy Explained in Scripture

From the Bible's point of view, heresy is a lie. No matter how attractively it may be wrapped or how appealing it may be to our vanity, heresy is a deviation from the truth of God that promotes or actually produces division in the church. Lies and division within the church indicate the presence of heresy.

Early in our history, Moses wrote the following.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3: *If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, “Let us go after other gods,” which you have not known, “and let us serve them,” you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* (ESV)

Ezekiel wrote about the false prophets.

Ezekiel 13:1-3; 6-9: *The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts: ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’ Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! ... They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, ‘declares the Lord’, when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfill their word. Have you not seen a false vision and uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said, ‘Declares the Lord,’ although I have not spoken?” Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Because you have uttered falsehood and seen lying visions, therefore behold, I am against you, declares the Lord God. My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord God. ... ”* (ESV)

The Apostle John wrote the following.

John 8:44: [Jesus said to the Pharisees] *“... You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”* (ESV)

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Revelation 12:9: *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.* (ESV)

The Apostle Luke wrote this in Acts, quoting the Apostle Paul addressing the Ephesian elders.

Acts 20:29-30: *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.* (ESV)

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to his protégé, Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:1: *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,* (ESV)

From the Bible's point of view, heresy is stealing. Jesus taught us that there will be spiritual thieves and robbers to take us from our Savior.

John 10:1-5: [Jesus said] *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”* (ESV)

From the Bible's point of view, heresy creates disunity, dissent, and departure from the Gospel. There is no room for differences within Christianity when those differences depart from the Gospel. When do disagreements become heresy? We may not be able to give a definitive answer on every debated doctrine, but we can look at principles in Scripture for guidance. At times, we will disagree with other Christians, but if we allow Scripture to be the authority then we will be united, even if we do not agree on every detail. We are called to be of one mind, but we are sinful people with limited understanding.

[Note: While we are united in the gospel of Christ, sincere, Bible-believing Christians may reach different conclusions on other matters. The discussion of this, which deals with the specific beliefs of Christian denominations about certain matters (e.g., baptism, communion), is outside the scope of this paper.]

Paul recognized that there will be disputes among Christians, and the early church - in Acts 15 - gave us an example of how to resolve differences prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit for guidance. Acts 15 tells the story of the Council of Jerusalem that resolved issues regarding circumcision and the conversion of Gentiles.

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 1:10-12: *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."* (ESV)

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 4:1-6: *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*** (ESV)

[Note: The *Lutheran Study Bible* has these notes on these verses. “We are truly one because God’s Spirit made the Church one in Christ. True unity is neither created nor destroyed by our actions. Rather, Paul exhorts us to

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treasure this unity and act accordingly. ... Verses 4-6 are poetic, possibly a quotation from an early Christian hymn or creed. The Church's unity is rooted in the Trinity: one Spirit; one Lord; one Father.”]

Ephesians 4:11-13: ***And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*** (ESV)

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Church at Philippi.

Philippians 1:27: ***Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,*** (ESV)

Paul wrote the following to his protégé, Timothy.

1 Timothy 6:3-5: ***If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.*** (ESV)

2 Timothy 2:23: ***Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.*** (ESV)

From the Bible's point of view, heresy sheds light upon truth. The darkness of the heresy causes the truth to be seen in a brighter light.

[Note: The Greek word translated as “heresy” has only the sense of “party” in Acts (Acts 5:17, 15:15, and 26:5) - in a neutral sense of “differences”. In the Epistles, however, the same word indicates a separation or split from the true Gospel - a false faith.]

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Church at Corinth about abuses of the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:18-19: ***For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.*** (ESV)

The Apostle John wrote the following.

1 John 2:18-19: ***Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*** (ESV)

From the Bible's point of view, heresy is a work of the flesh. We have to ask ourselves if we desire to follow human ideas, which may include our own, rather than God's. If so, we are committing a work of the flesh because we are exalting someone other than God. This is heresy, and it causes division in the church. As Christians, we must be willing to humble ourselves and allow God's Word to determine our beliefs. Instead of using man's fallible and ever-changing ideas to reinterpret Scripture, we need to base our beliefs on the Bible. The Apostle Paul stated that heresies were a work of the flesh. In other words, if one's view is derived from a desire to please mankind rather than trying to faithfully interpret the Word of God, then that belief would be a work of the flesh.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Galatia.

Galatians 5:16-21: ***But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the***

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Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (ESV)

The Apostle Peter wrote.

2 Peter 2:1-2, 17-89: ***But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ... These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. (ESV)***

Jude wrote this.

Jude 1:1-8: *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day - just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. (ESV)*

To commit heresy, one must refuse to be corrected. A person who is ready to be corrected or who is unaware that what he has been saying is against church teaching is not a heretic. A person must be baptized to commit heresy. **This means that movements that have split off from or been influenced by Christianity, but that do not practice baptism (or do not practice valid baptism), are not heresies, but separate religions. Examples include Muslims, who do not practice baptism, and Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not practice valid baptism.**

Solomon told us who to correct and how to do it.

Proverbs 9:8-9: ***Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. (ESV)***

Jesus taught us how to deal with faithlessness.

Matthew 18:15-18: [Jesus said] ***"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*** (ESV)

Luke 17:3: ***Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, (ESV)***

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Galatia.

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Galatians 6:1: *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.* (ESV)

Paul wrote the following to his protégé, Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16: *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* (ESV)

Heresy Explained by Various Authors

Heresy has been explained over the centuries by many theologians from the Church Fathers to the Reformers, to later scholars.

Hilary of Poitiers (300-368) wrote this.

“For there have risen many who have given to the plain words of Holy Writ some arbitrary interpretation of their own, instead of its true and only sense, and this in defiance of the clear meaning of words. Heresy lies in the sense assigned, not in the word written; the guilt is that of the expositor, not of the text.” (*On the Trinity, Book II*)

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was drawn to the Manichean heresy (i.e., an alleged eternal competition between good and evil), which was active in Africa. He was a devoted Manichean from 373-382. He convinced his friends to embrace Manicheanism, and he delighted in disputing with those in the Church. Eventually, he saw the feebleness of the Manichean philosophy compared to the catholic position and rejected it. After his conversion to the true Christian belief, he wrote many treatises and letters against the false doctrines and philosophies threatening the Christian belief at that time and established and strengthened an orthodox understanding of the Christian truth against the Manichean interpretation of the problem of evil.

Augustine wrote this in his book on Genesis.

“There is no part of Scripture, I mean to say, which is not the easiest thing in the world to find fault with, to the dismay of those who do not understand it. But that is precisely why Divine Providence permits so many heresies to come along with various errors; it's so that when they taunt us and shower us with questions we do not know the answers to, we may at least in this way be shaken out of our mental sloth and start longing to become acquainted with the Divine Scriptures.” (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Book I*)

Augustine wrote this in his treatise *Against Heresies*.

“Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced ... more true than the truth itself. One far superior to me has well said, in reference to this point, ‘A clever imitation in glass casts contempt, as it were, on that precious jewel the emerald (which is most highly esteemed by some), unless it come under the eye of one able to test and expose the counterfeit. Or, again, what inexperienced person can with ease detect the presence of brass when it has been mixed up with silver?’ Lest, therefore, through my neglect, some should be carried off, even as sheep are by wolves, while they perceive not the true character of these men, because they outwardly are covered with sheep's clothing (against whom the Lord has enjoined in Matthew 7:15 us to be on our guard), and because their language resembles ours, while their sentiments are very different, I have deemed it my duty ... to unfold to you ... these portentous and profound mysteries, which do not fall within the range of every intellect, because all have not sufficiently purged their brains.” (*Against Heresies, Book I, Preface*)

[Note: “One far superior to me” is unidentified in the text.]

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Augustine defended the goodness of God and the created beings. He developed doctrines on human fall, original sin, and predestination. Augustine's philosophy became established as the orthodox catholic theology.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) wrote [in greater detail than this paraphrase] that a person who holds the Christian faith aright, assents, by his will, to Christ, in those things which truly belong to His doctrine and that heresy is kind of infidelity in men who, having professed the faith of Christ, then corrupt its dogmas. Heresy is a corruption of the Christian faith. Heresy does not imply a corruption of the Christian faith if a man has a false opinion in matters that are not of faith (e.g., geometry and other sciences). Heresy is present only when a person has a false opinion about things belonging to the faith, that is the articles of faith themselves or matters whose denial leads to the corruption of some article of faith. Just as the heresies of the Pharisees were about opinions relating to Judaism or Pharisaism, so also heresies among Christians are about matters touching the Christian faith. A person commits heresy when he explains Scripture in sense other than that revealed by the Holy Ghost. (*Summa Theologica*)

Moreover a man professes his faith by the words that he utters, since confession is an act of faith. Inordinate words about matters of faith may lead to corruption of the faith. The enemies of Christ's cross lie in wait for our every deed and word, so that, if we but give them the slightest pretext, they may accuse us untruthfully of agreeing with heretics. (*Summa Theologica*)

John Calvin (1514-1572) is frequently quoted as saying: “The fanaticism which discards the Scripture, under the pretense of resorting to immediate revelations is subversive of every principle of Christianity. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency is always to bury the Word of God so they may make room for their own falsehoods.” (Frequent quote with document source not identified)

Martin Luther (1483-1564) wrote that “Heresy is stubborn error in an article of faith in opposition to Scripture; is an individually made doctrine and mode of living; springs from pride; cannot endure grace and substitutes other works for those commanded by God; is not evolved from Scripture, but from perverted minds; pretends to be Scriptural; refuses to listen or be opposed; sins against Holy Ghost; errs in a fundamental doctrine; errorists strive against recognized truth and their own conscience.” (*Lutherans Persisting*, “On Heresy”)

Luther also wrote this about heresy in general.

“You shouldn't dare to reinterpret the Word of God your own way. It's better to think, ‘I don't understand these words. But before I change them, take something away from them, or add to them, I would rather leave them alone. I'll give them to God.’ The Scriptures should always be handled with reverence and respect.” (*Faith Alone: A Daily Devotional*)

“With these introductory words of St. John's Gospel [i.e., John 1:1-16], as also with the Nicene Creed, the devil and all hierarchies of the past as well as of the future can be vanquished decisively. For though the heretics impudently presumed to carp at this belief, to pervert it and surround it with a lovely semblance of rationality, still their foolishness was finally revealed and condemned by Christendom as a lie of the devil, and they came to a disgraceful end.” (*Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4*)

[Note: The Nicene Creed was adopted at the First Council of Nicaea. See the Nicene Creed on page 32.]

“The contention and argument between the true and the false church date back to the beginning, and it will never cease. The sects and the heretics have always assailed the true church, as this woman does [i.e., the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42] when she says ‘Do you, an excommunicated Jew, ask me, a holy Samaritan, to give you a drink?’ The Samaritans firmly believed that they would be saved because they worshipped God on Mount Gerizim. This young woman is ... however, not headstrong and

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incurrable. This is how we would like to see many of those who are enveloped in the darkness ... and cannot find their way out of the gloom by themselves. Would that they were led out and converted by Christ! They would belong in the category of this Samaritan woman.” (*Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4*)

Johann Gerhard (1582 - 1637) - a Lutheran Church leader and Lutheran Scholastic theologian) explained heresy like this. “For one to be properly called a heretic, it is required -

- (1) that he be a person received by the Sacrament of Baptism into the visible church;
- (2) that he err in faith;
- (3) that the error conflict directly with the very foundation of faith;
- (4) that to the error be added malice and obstinacy, in which he stubbornly defends his error, though repeatedly admonished;
- (5) that he stir up dissensions and scandals in the church and rend its unity.” (*LCMS Christian Cyclopedia, “Heresy”*)

C. F. W. Walther (1811 - 1887) - The first President of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and perhaps its most influential theologian, summarized the teaching of Luther and the Lutheran dogmatists: A heretic -

- (1) errs in a fundamental article;
- (2) brings about divisions;
- (3) continues in his perverse ways despite repeated admonitions and contrary to his own better knowledge and conscience. (*LCMS Christian Cyclopedia, “Heresy”*)

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) - A twentieth century Christian writer, wrote this.

“An open mind, in questions that are not ultimate, is useful. But an open mind about the ultimate foundations either of Theoretical or of Practical Reason is idiocy. If a man's mind is open on these things, let his mouth at least be shut. He can say nothing to the purpose. Outside the Tao there is no ground for criticizing either the Tao or anything else.” (*The Abolition of Man*)

[Note: To capture Lewis' metaphorical meaning, substitute the word “Scripture”, “Word”, or “Revelation” for the word “Tao”.]

“You cannot go on ‘explaining away’ forever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on ‘seeing through’ things forever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it.” (*The Abolition of Man*)

Other Explanations of Heresy

The term heresy connotes, etymologically, both a choice and the thing chosen. However, the meaning is narrowed to the selection of religious or political doctrines and adherence to parties in Church or State. The word translated as “heresies” is derived from the Greek term *haireseis*, which refers to divisions or factions within a group. A heretic is someone who adheres to beliefs contrary to what has been commonly accepted by that group. In Scripture, it refers to someone who introduces or follows doctrines contrary to the teachings of Christ and His apostles (2 Peter 2:1).

2 Peter 2:1: *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.* (ESV)

Perhaps heresy is a form of presumption. The term “presumption” is explained in some contemporary literature as pertaining to people who put themselves and their own thinking ahead of others (also of others before them) who have had to make certain decisions along the same lines as they do. Or, they have taken their own reasoning as superior to what the plain Word of

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God says, and they have come up with much justification based on human reasoning, based on evolutionary thought, based on just plain old pride. Such things as “Well, we know more now, than they used to know.” Or, “The pastor never studied into this. And so it’s okay (since we know more) to make this decision.” Or, “The pastor didn't have the people around him to give him the information that he needed to make a sound decision.” And so they throw out what he had decided - or taught - in favor of their own reasoning. Other justifications include:

“Times have changed. We don't need that anymore. We are better now.”

”That's not relevant any more, and so we can change it, in this way, to fit the times.”

”Well, we have the authority to do it.” This refers to such authority that is nowhere given to them, especially not by Scripture.

Presumption indicates that:

We know more than has been revealed in the Bible.

We know as much as or more than God.

Perhaps there is a line drawn somewhere between faith and presumption. Perhaps we can stand in presumption rather than in faith. Perhaps that presumption is self-love - pride - rather than love of God and others. If we couch heresy in these terms, we may not be sure where the line starts to blur, but we know it’s there. We know that we can define that line by studying Scripture, discussing our doubts with Christians whom we trust (e.g., Pastor) and refreshing our understanding of the creeds based on Scripture.

Organization of Material in *One Truth, Many Lies*

There have been many heresies in the history of the Church, many of them persisting in different variations and other names to this day. Each of the twelve heresies discussed here posed serious threats to the Church for many decades and required years of labor to refute.

The discussion of individual heresies in this paper is organized according to the structure of the book *One Truth, Many Lies* which groups the heresies according to the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed - not chronologically.

First Article

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Second Article

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Third Article

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Twelve Heresies

The twelve heresies addressed in the book are explained briefly in this paper, some with Scripture verses that refute them. Each heresy is the topic of a weekly lesson. The handout for each lesson will contain numerous Scripture verses relative to correct Christian beliefs.

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These heresies have strange-sounding titles that do not relate to our daily experience outside of academic circles. However, non-Christian and anti-Christian beliefs, based on human philosophy, lurk under their fancy titles.

[Note: The descriptions of many of the heresies listed are taken from multiple sources: *One Truth, Many Lies*, *The Augsburg Confession*, the *Christian Encyclopedia* (Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod), the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and from *Catholic Answers*.]

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Heresies against the First Article of the Apostles' Creed - Of Creation

The four heresies discussed under this title are Humans, Manichaeans, Arians, and Sabellians.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? Answer:

“I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.” (*Small Catechism*)

Humans

This is the worst heresy of all.

Then

Adam and Eve chose between what God said and what seemed reasonable to them.

Genesis 2:17: “ ... *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.* ” (ESV)

Genesis 3:6: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.* (ESV)

Sin pierced Adam and Eve and all their descendents.

Romans 5:12, 18: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ... Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.* (ESV)

Ephesians 1:3-4: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.* (ESV)

Ephesians 2:1-2: *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience* (ESV)

Now

The sin in us permeates our existence: We often chose between what God said and what seems reasonable to us. Wittingly or not we adopt an arrogant position of pride and self-righteousness. A frequent pattern for this throughout history and today is to have strong personal thoughts or feelings about an agenda of theology, justice, charity, or something else, and find one or more selected Bible passages that both fit the desired concept and can be used to defend it. Heresy avoids comparing Scripture with Scripture to test the ideas, but shares those ideas liberally with others to solicit their support. We see this in the many non-Christian religions, sects, cults, and movements in our society. Many of these heresies began in prior centuries and persist today. We shall see some specific examples in the discussions of each heresy addressed by *One Truth, Many Lies*. Here are some general examples.

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Prosperity Gospel: Some may have the idea that God wants them to be wealthy, and all they need to do to get rich is do good works. The “best” work is giving money to the church. This is a form of salvation by works. For if one considers God’s approval best expressed in the material wealth, then buying God’s approval is really a good investment.

Matthew 6:24: [Jesus said] *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”* (ESV)

Political Gospel: Righteousness must be upheld in the political arena. Therefore, some say that the “good Christian” is a member of one party or another depending on that person’s one-sided view of the morality of different political solutions to problems. This is a disease that particularly afflicts democracies. The heresy comes in presuming that the state, which is temporal, is the primary agent of things eternal.

Mark 12:17: *Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at him.* (ESV)

[Note: Luther was pessimistic about human nature. That pessimism was reflected in his political ideas. He was convinced that most men were not, and would never be, truly Christian. In a society of real Christians, secular authority would not be needed. But, since men are by nature sinful and evil, the restraints of the law are necessary to check their wicked desires. Therefore, the state exists by divine ordinance, and the magistrate should wield the sword to repress the evil and protect the good. It is right for Christians to serve the state, even if it means using force to punish evildoers. Similarly, war is justifiable in defense of the state. John Calvin recognized an eternal law binding on men in all ages and places. This natural law or, as Calvin also called it, the moral law, had two chief articles: to worship God and to love one another. Equity, which is embodied in this law, must be the aim of all man-made laws.]

Many Pathways: This heresy holds that people outside of Christianity will be saved if they are righteous enough. The mistaken argument is that, since Christ will judge them fairly, some will be righteous and therefore saved even though they did not accept or never heard the Gospel.

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (ESV)

Therapeutic Deism: This concept holds that what people really need to hear from the church is the way to get better. The prime focus of many churches is now in pop psychology, fixing our relationships, finances, etc. By doing this, Christians will ostensibly lead happy, fulfilled lives. Note the difference: no one claims this technique will make you sinless - just happy and fulfilled. Christ is just a “happy addition” to the “really important stuff”; the Scripture, a handy source of quotations to make the important points.

John 11:25-26: *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* (ESV)

This can also be seen in a mis-application of Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to our spiritual nature by defining man’s actions as determining his greater good. “Self Actualization” or “Self Fulfillment” is a humanistic philosophy emanating from Maslow’s 1943 paper “A Theory of Human Motivation”. “Self Actualization” implies the attainment of the basic needs of physiological, safety/security, love/belongingness, and self-esteem. If we think of life as a series of choices, then self actualization is the process of making each decision a choice for growth. According to the philosophy, in the process of self-actualizing we become more aware of our inner nature and act in accordance with it. The philosophy operates on the premise that man is naturally good, and he is operating in his natural capacity by being self actualized. This view by

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itself is questionable because just by observing humans it is obvious that we seem drawn to that which is not good.

John 6:44-45: [Jesus said] *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.”* (ESV)

Religious Pluralism: Religious Pluralism is gaining more and more acceptability as a philosophy of life in secular society worldwide.

John 14:5-7: *Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”* (ESV)

It has become increasingly common for people to assert the notion that all religions are basically saying the same thing. That idea lacks intellectual depth and integrity. Some people promote a simplistic pluralism that does not do justice to what the different religions are talking about. In the attempt to find a common ground they end up ignoring what most of the religions actually teach, thereby creating a new religion that is exclusive in its own way. For example, when we reduce all religions down to their basic beliefs we may think we can agree that God is an all loving spirit. But, if that is the case, we have just ruled out Buddhism, which does not believe in a loving God, and we have made a theological claim that does not capture the depth and dimension of Christianity, Islam or Judaism. There are some problems with Religious Pluralism.

Religious Pluralism allows Jesus in our beliefs as long as we call him a teacher and a prophet, but not God. The fact that he offers salvation through his substitutionary atonement on the cross simply does not agree well with Buddhist or Muslim theology. In this paradigm, religious pluralism is only achieved by excluding what the gospels are really saying about Jesus. Doing that is a form of exclusiveness in its own right.

Religious Pluralism is based on truth claims of its own. We are all exclusive in our beliefs about religion, but in different ways. While denouncing the arrogance of religious particularity, pluralists inevitably develop a view of God that is itself very particular. It is no more narrow to claim that one religion is right than to claim that only one way to think about all religions (namely that all are equal) is right.

Pluralists ask what grounds we can show for regarding the Bible as uniquely authoritative when other religions also have their sacred books. We have to ask them back what the vantage point is from which they claim to relativize all the absolute claims which these different scriptures make? What higher truth do they have which enables them to reconcile the diametrically opposite statements of the Bible and the Koran about Jesus? Are they actually advising that it is better not to believe in anything?

There is an implicit irony within the pluralistic position. While pluralists argue that it is too exclusive to claim one way to God they develop a theology that is just as exclusive.

Manichaeans

Then

Manichaeism was one of the major Persian gnostic religions. Its beliefs were based on local Mesopotamian gnostic and religious movements. This heresy eliminates any personal responsibility for sin.

Manichaeism was founded by a Persian named Mani in the latter half of the third century. It taught an elaborate cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. It had some strange-sounding teachings.

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Through an ongoing process which takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light from which it came.

Salvation is real and necessary because the One Soul is seen to be trapped in the Illusion of Matter at this time. Unless the One Soul can be freed, it runs the risk of being extinguished by the corruption of the False Creation. With the extinction of the One Soul, all its components, meaning all sentient life in the physical universes will cease to exist meaning the real “us” will cease to exist.

There were two kinds of Manichaeans, the Elect Saints and the Hearers. The Elect, who formed the nucleus of a Manichaean cell, were committed to a missionary life of poverty and celibacy. They were strict vegetarians, drank no wine, and were forbidden even to harvest or prepare food, because Mani had a revelation that it is a kind of murder to damage plants by harvesting. The sect survived because the Hearers incurred the sin of preparing food, and were released from sin by the prayers of the Elect who ate it.

Initially, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was a Manichaean. His stated reasons for eventual disenchantment with Manichæanism were:

Manichæan philosophy was depraved - “They destroy everything and build up nothing”.

Manichæans practiced immorality in contrast with their affectation of virtue.

Manichæan arguments in controversy with the Catholics were feeble. Their only reply to Scriptural arguments was: “The Scriptures have been falsified.”

Worse than all, Augustine did not find science among the Manichæans - science in the modern sense of the word - that knowledge of nature and its laws which they had promised him. When he questioned them concerning the movements of the stars, none of them could answer him. “Wait for Faustus,” they said, “he will explain everything to you.” Faustus of Mileve, the celebrated Manichæan bishop, at last came to Carthage; Augustine visited and questioned him, and discovered in his responses the vulgar rhetorician, the utter stranger to all scientific culture. The spell was broken. (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*)

Although Augustine did not immediately abandon the Manichæan sect, his mind rejected their doctrines. He stayed with their position for nine years. He later established and strengthened an orthodox understanding of the Christian truth against the Manichaean interpretation of the problem of evil. He defended the goodness of God and the created beings. He articulated Christian doctrines on human fall, original sin, and predestination. Augustine's thought became established as the orthodox catholic theology. Another Church Father who defended the faith against this heresy was Alexander of Lycopolis (early fourth century). (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*)

Martin Luther (1483-1546) wrote this.

“The heretical Manichaeans ... took offense at the assertion that the Son of God had become man. ... they averred that Mary was not the true, natural, and physical mother of Christ. ... They claimed that Christ had only resembled a shadow of a man, but in reality was no true human. Thus they reduced Him to a ghost; this implies, of course, that the Jews crucified an incorporeal phantom.” (*Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4*)

The Manichaean heresy was condemned in AD 382 by decree of Emperor Theodosius I (Roman emperor of the East 379-392).

Now

There is a United Manichaean Assembly. Religious history is viewed by modern Manichaeans as a perpetual series of revelations to diverse peoples across the world. These alleged revelations supposedly come in the form of a Divine Messenger who provides the Pure Teaching, the Divine

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knowledge required to liberate souls from the illusion of Matter. Supposedly there was a Divine Manifestation of the Third Messenger (a manifestation of the Living Spirit in our Universe) back in the Spring of 2011, when he called for the restoration of the “Religion of Light in the World” - another term for “Manichaeism”. Modern Manichaeans believe that Manichaeism is in this age because, as they say, humans, as a species, desperately need to wake up and figure out what the “real program” is and how to be liberated while there is still time left.

Arians

Then

The Arian doctrine is associated with Arius (ca. AD 250-336), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt, who lived and taught in Alexandria, Egypt. Arianism was an Eastern attempt to rationalize the creed by stripping it of mystery so far as the relation of Christ to God was concerned. This heresy was influenced by a dualistic view that all spirit is good and all material is evil. In that view, God could not have become incarnate. This led people to believe that God created evil and that evil did not exist in us because of original sin. Arianism denied the Trinity; denied the true divinity of Jesus Christ by holding that He was created by the Father, not equal with God the Father, but a created being, that He had a beginning in time, and that the title “Son of God” was a courtesy one. According to Arius, “There was a time when the Son was not”. The Arians denied that God could have a Son in any true sense (as Mohammed later also denied). We have learned to call that denial Unitarianism.

Arianism was the first among the doctrinal disputes which troubled Christians after Constantine had recognized the Church in AD 313, and the parent of many more heresies during some three centuries. Arianism occupies a large place in ecclesiastical history.

Arius was first pronounced a heretic at the First Council of Nicea (AD 325), and he was later exonerated as a result of imperial pressure and finally declared a heretic after his death. The heresy was finally resolved in AD 381 by the First Council of Constantinople.

Now

Today Arianism takes a different form, and comes to us in the guise of humanism, a belief system that takes man as the measure of all things. This humanism is a conglomeration of different modernistic beliefs, but the summary of it all is materialism - that this physical world is all there is, human history is all that matters, and the advancement of the human race in this physical realm is the only thing worth fighting for.

The cultural context of the heresy and its expression is different today, but the essence of the heresy is the same as it always was - that Jesus Christ is a created being, that His “divinity” is something that developed or was added to his humanity by God.

Arianism today is a watered down interpretation of Christianity according a materialistic, humanistic philosophy. According to modern Arians Jesus Christ as the Divine Son of God and the co-eternal second person of the Holy Trinity does not make sense. Instead Jesus is supposedly only a “good teacher”, a “wise rabbi”, a “beautiful example”, a “martyr for a noble cause”. He is supposedly a human being who is so fulfilled and self actualized that he has “become divine”, who is so complete a human being that He reveals to us the divine image in which we were all created - and therefore shows us what God is like. In this heresy there is a sense in which this “divinization” happened to Jesus as a result of the graces he received from God, the life he led, and the sufferings he endured.

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There are branches of the Arian belief that continue to this present day. One of them is the Jehovah's Witnesses. Founded in the mid- to late nineteenth century, this group contains several million adherents in numerous countries. Like the ancient Arians, these modern day Witnesses believe that Jesus is a created being who is therefore not eternal and not God. They take Jesus at his word when he said: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) They do not worship Jesus, as they do not believe that he is Almighty God.

They specifically argue that Jesus was Michael the Archangel. However, by examining a number of Scriptures, their contentions do not hold up.

The Arian concept is still held today by more than 1.5 billion Muslims, who adhere to the teachings of the Koran. Muslims do not hold the divinity of Jesus Christ and his unique role as Savior. The teachings of Islam (a separate religion) in this respect have been likened to a compound heresy composed of elements of Arianism, Nestorianism, and Docetism with some Pelagian and also other anti-Trinitarian elements. According to the Koran, Jesus was not killed, was not crucified, but only seemed to have been.

[Note: Arianism, Nestorianism, and Docetism with some Pelagianism are discussed later in this paper.]

Sabellians

Then

The Sabellian heresy was first formally stated by Noetus of Smyrna, a presbyter of the church of Asia Minor ca. AD 190 and refined by Sabellius, a theologian and priest ca. AD 210. Noetus accepted the fourth Gospel, but regarded its statements about the Word (Greek "Logos") as allegorical. The term Sabellianism comes from Sabellius. This heresy, also known as modalism, modalistic monarchianism, or modal monarchism, is the nontrinitarian belief that the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God, as perceived by the believer, rather than three distinct persons in God Himself. They taught that Jesus Christ and God the Father were not distinct persons, but two aspects or offices of one person. According to them, the three persons of the Trinity exist only in God's relation to man, not in objective reality. (One wonders how they could know that; how they could define "objective reality" so that it would be objective as God sees it!) This heresy plays on the fact that the number three is never mentioned in relation to God in scripture, which of course is the number that is central to the word "Trinity". That assertion flies in the face of the following Scripture references.

Mathew 28:16-20: Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (ESV)

2 Corinthians 13:14: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (ESV)

1 John 5:6-9: This is he who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. (ESV)

The Sabellian heresy appeals to our sinful nature and leads us to believe that we can use reason and logic to solve the mysteries of Scripture.

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Noetus was condemned by the presbyters of Smyrna. Tertullian wrote against this heresy. Sabellius was condemned by Pope Callistus I in AD 220.

[Note: There is a related heresy, not discussed here, called “Patripassionism”. That long, strange word is a theological error dealing with the Godhead which states that the Father became incarnate, was born, suffered, and died on the cross. Hence the Father’s (patri) passion (suffer) on the cross. (How do people keep dreaming this stuff up?) This is an error because we know that Jesus spoke to the person of the Father and that it was Jesus who went to the cross. If the father and Son are the same person that how is it possible for the Father and Son to speak to one another and have separate wills? It is not. Therefore, the doctrine of patripassionism is incorrect and heretical.]

Now

Today, Sabellianism, despite being rejected by the Church for nearly 1800 years, is accepted primarily by some Pentecostal groups, who are sometimes referred to as Oneness Pentecostals or “Jesus Only” Pentecostals. Some evidence shows that Joseph Smith believed in a Sabellian-type theology throughout the early years of his career, and that this Sabellian belief system permeates the Book of Mormon. Mormons today dispute this point and refute the allegation. Today they claim to believe that Father and Son are distinctly separate individuals.

Heresies against the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed - Of Redemption

The four heresies discussed under this title are Nestorians, Eutychians, Docetists, and Montanists.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

What does this mean? Answer:

“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.” (*Small Catechism*)

Nestorians

Then

This was a fifth century heresy about the person of Christ. It was initiated by Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, who denied Mary the title of Theotokos (Greek: “God-bearer” or, less literally, “Mother of God”). Nestorius claimed that she only bore Christ’s human nature in her womb, and proposed the alternative title Christotokos (“Christ-bearer” or “Mother of Christ”). He emphasized the disunion between the human and divine natures of Jesus. This erroneous belief would have the effect of taking Christ, as the Son of God, out of the Eucharist, thereby making Communion meaningless.

Orthodox Catholic theologians recognized that Nestorius’s theory would fracture Christ into two separate persons - one human and one divine, joined in a sort of loose unity - only one of whom

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was in Mary's womb. The Church reacted in 431 with the Council of Ephesus, defining that Mary can be properly referred to as the Mother of God, not in the sense that she is older than God or the source of God, but in the sense that the person she carried in her womb was, in fact, God incarnate (i.e., "in the flesh").

The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) defined the dogma that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God and presented the teaching of the truth of one divine person in Christ. The Council was convened against the heresy of Nestorius.

Now

The Assyrian Church of the East is a Nestorian body with congregations in Iraq and Eastern Iran. It is sometimes referred to as the Assyrian Orthodox Church and became the largest non-Muslim group in Iraq. Many of its members later rose to power in the Ba'ath Party government, the most prominent being Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. A single parish exists in China. The Church has its headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.

Eutychians

Then

Eutychianism was a fourth century AD heresy named after Eutyches (378-454), a monk of Constantinople, who taught that after the incarnation Christ had only one nature. He asserted that there were two natures in Christ before, but only one after, the incarnation. He postulated that the human and divine natures were mixed and utterly impossible to distinguish. Although he attempted to explain the unity, nevertheless both Christ's humanity and deity were deprecated in this view. His view, while difficult to explain exactly, was probably that the human body of Jesus had been deified in such a way that it no longer had any resemblance to humanity. This heresy arose as a reaction against Nestorianism, which taught that in Christ there is a human person as well as a Divine one.

No party of this heretical sect looked to Eutyches as a founder or a leader. Eutychian is a label for all those who, like Eutyches, rejected the orthodox expression "two natures" of Christ. The tenet "one nature" was common to all Eutychians.

John 3:34-36: *For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.* (ESV)

This heresy would have us believe that that Jesus did not really suffer, but rather only gave the appearance of suffering, thereby calling into question God's required atonement for our sins.

Martin Luther later wrote this.

"... first, that Christ is true God, to which we must hold against Turk, Jew, and heretic; secondly, that for our sakes He is also true man that we might be saved through Him, since otherwise His humanity would have profited us nothing. It is impossible to separate God from man in the person of Christ. It is also impossible to separate our salvation, this article about justification before God through Christ, or satisfaction for sin from the Person of Christ who is God. For He alone, and no other, rendered eternal satisfaction for sin." (*Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4*)

"The two natures of Christ, the human and divine, are inseparable, and they are united in one person. The characteristics of one nature are attributed to the other nature. For instance, dying is a part of being human. When human nature is united with the divine in one person, death also becomes a divine attribute. Therefore, we can say, 'God became a man. God suffered. God died.' If you separate the

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human from the divine, that statement would be a lie, for God cannot die. But if we say that two natures reside in one person, then we have spoken correctly.” (*Faith Alone: A Daily Devotional*)

[Martin Luther and other contemporary writers referred to the “Turk” when meaning “Muslims”.]

Eutyches was excommunicated in 448. The Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) defined the catholic dogma that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God and presented the teaching of the truth of one divine person in Christ. The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) answered the Eutychian heresy and affirmed the doctrine of two natures in Christ.

Now

The Eutychian heresy has survived to this day among people who are and are called “Monophysites”, a heresy related to the Eutichianism of old. They continue to exist today in the Coptic, Ethiopian and Armenian Orthodox Churches, usually grouped together as Oriental Orthodox Christians in contrast to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Yet for the Eastern Orthodox Church and for the Roman Catholic Church the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) remains binding since it adheres strictly not only to the theology of Cyril of Alexandria but also the Scriptures concerning the teaching on Christ where it is stated throughout that the Son of God was perfect in His divinity and perfect in His humanity and not a compound of the two.

Docetists

Then

Docetism is derived from the Greek *dokeo*, “to seem.” It is the erroneous belief that Christ only seemed to be human, that He did not really have a body of human flesh. It denied the Incarnation asserting that Christ did not really have Mary as His mother according to the flesh. It was one of the first theological errors to appear in church history, and it is probably the target of the warning of 1 John 4:2-3.

1 John 4:2-3: *“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”* (ESV)

The first known advocate of Docetism was Cerinthus (ca. AD 100) who was a Gnostic. He held that Jesus differed from other men only in that He was better and wiser than they, and that the divine Christ descended upon Him at the baptism and left Him at the cross. The effect of this reasoning was to make the incarnation an illusion. Either there was no human Jesus at all, but only an apparition, or else the real Son of God was simply using the human Jesus as a vehicle of expression, but was not in real union with him. Marcion, a bishop, (late second century) was willing to concede the reality of the suffering of Christ, but not the reality of His birth. In Marcion’s interpretation of Luke’s Gospel he made Christ to simply appear in the reign of Tiberius, by which we understand that He descended from heaven.

Docetism stemmed from the view that flesh and physical matter were either evil or the sources of evil. Therefore the Saviour could have had no contact with it. All Gnostics, which plagued the early Church, were Docetic. The essence of this heresy later influenced Mohammed, who denied the deity of Christ. It survived in some of the doctrines of Islam concerning Jesus, and in the modern cults which regard matter as evil.

This heresy would have us believe that that Jesus did not really suffer. In this view, God can leave us to our own devices and not be involved in our daily lives.

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It is thought that the Apostle John's Gospel was written against the Docetists (among other Gnostics). Docetism was condemned at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

[Note: The Nicene Creed was adopted at the First Council of Nicaea. See the Nicene Creed on page 32.]

Now

Today's church is hardly confronted directly with Docetism, as most modern errors affirm the humanity of Christ and deny instead the deity of Christ. The modern search for the "historical" Jesus vs. the Jesus of faith has Docetic tendencies; and, modern preachers and teachers who focus only on the deity of Christ are perhaps guilty of the same.

Although no modern religious groups may be properly classified as Docetists, there are still some groups that hold similar ideas. For example, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) still promote a variation of the Docetist theme (i.e. that God supposedly created Jesus before He created Adam). Christian Scientists (Mary Baker Eddy) still view matter as an utter fantasy. This can mean resolving difficult challenges with health, relationships, employment, and other personal and global issues through prayer only, although people who practice Christian Science are free to make their own choices about what to think and do in each situation, including health care. Others could be named but these should suffice as far as the cults are concerned. Unitarian Universalists reject the mingling of God and Man in the Incarnation. They find the idea of a God-Man union to be distasteful. This is why they hold to the idea of two separate persons within Jesus Christ: the mortal and fleshly Jesus and the divine and spiritual Christ. To Unitarians, the latter part is the essential substance of who Jesus Christ is. Consequently, the physical is neither totally real nor vitally important. Unitarians view God much as the Gnostics did: as totally impassible, as a vague Principle, Law or Mind Being - similar to the abstracted Logos of the Gnostics.

Certain other facets of Docetism still exist within Islam. The Docetic concept that God would not allow Jesus to die on the cross has been perpetuated in the Koran itself. The so-called Gospel of Barnabas plays into the common Muslim belief that Judas was crucified instead.

Montanists

Then

The earliest serious heresy that cropped up in Christian history was Montanism. It appeared suddenly in the middle of the second century, in central Anatolia, where it remained popular for a long time. It may have arisen, because of early believers' impatience waiting for Jesus' second coming. Montanism was founded by a man named Montanus, who suddenly announced that he was a prophet, speaking with the voice of the Paraclete, the "helper" that Christ had promised to send. He was a recent convert when he first began to prophesy in Phrygia. The same prophetic gift was believed to have descended also upon his two "prophetess" companions. We know little about who he was, prior to this. We have no direct record of Montanus's teachings, either from him or one of his followers. Any such records have long since been destroyed. All we have is what others said about it.

Montanists taught wrongly that Jesus would establish a thousand year reign, and that we can do something to hurry the start of that reign along. Montanus taught that any believer at all, could become a "prophet" as he was, for Christ had promised the Paraclete or Holy Spirit to all believers. Next, he taught that all believers are equal, men as well as women. Two of his most

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trusted disciples who became “prophetesses” were women. Montanist worship services included prophetic declarations, and could be presided over by women as well as men. A Spartan lifestyle was encouraged, one which minimized entanglements with the physical world (though Montanists were not ascetics or hermits). There were no clergy in Montanism - only senior members who taught doctrine to junior members.

The Montanists believed the following

The prophecies of the Montanists superseded and fulfilled the doctrines proclaimed by the Apostles.

Ecstatic prophesying was encouraged.

Christians who fell from grace could not be redeemed.

Strongly encourage the avoidance of sin, encourage strict church discipline, emphasize chastity, and forbid remarriage.

Celebrate Passover.

Montanism shared a rejection of the notion of clergy with Gnosticism and many other heretical movements. There is clearly some overlap between Gnosticism and Montanism. However, in its time Montanism was seen as something rather distinct; additionally, Gnosticism generally did not rely on “prophets” making declarations - something which was central to Montanism.

The churches of Asia Minor excommunicated Montanists around 177. Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis, presided over a synod which condemned the New Prophecy. The leaders of the churches of Lyon and Vienne in Gaul rejected Montanism in 177.

Now

Montanism is alive and growing rapidly today. It is often disguised as orthodoxy. However, it has taken the worst elements of the original Montanism and expanded them to new depths of error. Error always compounds itself unless it is checked and denounced by the plain teaching of the Scriptures. Heresy thrives when people are asleep and shallow in their devotion to God and the study of His Word.

Montanism has been compared to the Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement of recent times. These groups are identifiable by their belief in a latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit, much like the day of Pentecost. Many of the members claim to experience what is deemed the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which is supposedly evidenced by the act of speaking in tongues. These groups tend to bring a great deal of emotionalism and activity to their services, generally allow for the full equality of men and women in the activities of the worship service, and focus on the emotional aspects of Christianity.

Modern feminists assert that, unlike the hierarchical and patriarchal orthodox churches, Montanism elevated the status of women and was repudiated by the mainstream churches for such views and practices. With the coming of Methodism to America, women began to take on more active roles in these new frontier congregations. As Methodism took root in the US it developed offshoots, the main one being the Holiness movement, and from them eventually came Pentecostalism. Many of the leaders within charismania are women who are seen as “prophetesses” and they are having a huge impact on the lives of many gullible people.

Other Montanist movements are:

The “Signs and Wonders Movement”, also called the “Third Wave”, has made tremendous inroads into evangelicalism since the early 1980s. Current general opinion has been acceptance, indifference, or tolerance of the movement and its view of spiritual gifts, especially its form of “prophecy.” The prime

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justification for the revival of what this group terms the “prophetic gift” has been the work of a Wayne Grudem. Many articles have examined the exegetical, theological, and doctrinal errors of his position. An Edward Irving formed his own church called the “Catholic Apostolic Church”. A John Alexander Dowie a minister, originally a Congregational Pastor, left his denomination and formed his own called the “Christian Catholic Church”.

Heresies against the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed - Of Sanctification

The four heresies discussed under this title are Gnostics, Judaizers, Pelagians, and Sadducees and Corinthians.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean? Answer:

“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.” (*Small Catechism*)

Gnostics

Then

Gnosticism was a syncretistic movement with roots in pre-Christian times. It flowered in AD 200-300 and continued to the AD 700s. Gnosticism is dualism which, roughly speaking, posits the existence of two creators. The first is ostensibly a god of goodness and pure spirituality (often called the “godhead”), while the second (often called the “demiurge”) is the supposed creator of the physical world, which has allegedly trapped divine souls in mortal form. The beginnings of Gnosticism may be found in the fusion of religious beliefs and cultures that arose as a result of Persian power and the conquests of Alexander the Great (BC 356-323). Elements of Gnosticism have been traced to Greek philosophical movements in Judaism, Hellenism, various cults, and religious thought in such countries as Babylonia, Iran, Egypt, and India. Some, on the basis of such literature as the Dead Sea Scrolls and Jewish apocalyptic writing, regard Judaism as a channel through which Gnosticism entered the Greco-Roman world.

[Note: Syncretism is the combining of different (often seemingly contradictory) beliefs, often while melding practices of various schools of thought. Syncretism involves the merger of several originally discrete traditions, especially in theology and mythology, thus asserting an underlying unity and allowing for an inclusive approach to other faiths. Syncretism also occurs commonly in expressions of arts and culture (known as eclecticism) as well as politics (syncretic politics).]

The basic theme of Gnosticism was redemption from an evil, material world and cosmos and escape into a world of freedom, thus achieving the liberty implied in human spirit. The soul, escaping from matter, was ostensibly to be reunited with the fullness of God. Gnostics attempted their redemption through initiations, rites, mysteries, and magic - each sect having its own peculiarities. This heresy would have us believe in private revelations from God. According to this heresy, Christ accomplished His work by teaching knowledge (gnosis), which is received only by a select few spirituals. The next class of men (psychics) must be content with faith; the lowest (material) are preoccupied with worldly cares. The ethical system resulting from

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Gnosticism tried to overcome flesh (matter) and developed into both strict asceticism and extreme libertinism.

The Gnostics were recognized as a non-Christian cult by the Apostle Paul well before the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325).

Galatians 1:8: But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. (ESV)

Other possible allusions to Gnosticism in the New Testament may be these.

Titus 3:9: But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (ESV)

1 Timothy 4:1-3: Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (ESV)

1 John 4:1-3. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. (ESV)

Irenaeus (dates unknown - sometime during the first half of the second century to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century), Bishop of Lyons, and every subsequent Church Father and council attacked the Gnostics. At no point did the Christian Church accept Gnosticism.

The division among the Christians grew, until Emperor Constantine, in AD 325, called a general Council, in order to heal the rifts. He had invited some Gnostics to attend, however, they did not take the Council seriously. If any did attend, we don't know about it. Thus, with no Gnostics present, the Council immediately, with little debate, denounced it as heresy.

Now

C. G. Jung, the Swiss psychotherapist and psychiatrist who founded analytical psychology, considered the ancient Gnostics to have been the virtual discoverers of "depth psychology" - ancient wisdom in its form of universal religion - prefiguring, and at the same time helping to clarify, the nature of (his) Jungian spiritual therapy. In the light of such recognitions one may ask whether Gnosticism is a religion or a psychology.

Forms of Gnosticism present themselves today under the name of the New Age Movement. However, it is the subtle forms of Gnosticism that are more pernicious - forms that even the most conservative churches have embraced. Here's an example. Gnosticism always attacks the creation account that the Bible teaches - that God created the universe in six literal days, and created it out of nothing. It attacks the idea that God spoke the universe into existence by nothing more than the power of His words for His own good pleasure. Gnosticism always distorts this truth. It attacks the creation account in a number of ways. It may say that the creation came into being through evolution. It may say that it came into being twice. It may say that there was a "gap" of millions of years before Adam and Eve arrived. It may say that God had some need to create it. It may say that the Bible is not clear about how it all happened. It may say that creation was a huge divine mistake. It may say that it really doesn't matter how it happened or what anyone believes about it. Whatever Gnosticism says about it, you can be sure it accuses those who hold to the orthodox view of creation as contentious and divisive trouble-

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makers. However, the problem does not lie with those who stand firm for Biblical truth; it lies with those who seek to undermine it. Some churches have willingly accepted a degree of Gnosticism in order to maintain unity of their congregation. To some pastors it seems like a minor compromise. But, once Gnosticism gets a foothold, it spreads and attacks other areas of Christianity. Soon, that orthodox Christian church is no longer either orthodox or Christian.

An Additional Note

We do not usually associate Martin Luther with the theory of evolution, mainly because that is a nineteenth century error. However, Luther wrote the following in his commentary on the Gospel of John.

Regarding John 1:3 (and by association with Genesis 1:1): “We must adhere to this view of creation. It is not true, as several heretics and other vulgar persons allege, that God created everything in the beginning, and then let nature take its own independent course, so that all things now spring into being of their own power; ... This not only contradicts Scripture, but it also runs counter to experience. In the doctrine of creation it is of primary importance that we know and believe that God has not withdrawn His sustaining hand from His handiwork. Therefore, when St. John declares that everything made was made through the Word, one must also realize tht all things created are also preserved by this Word. Otherwise they would not continue to exist very long.” (*Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4*)

Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* (ESV)

John 1:1-3: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (ESV)

Judaizers

Then

The Judaizers, also referred to as the Circumcisers, were the perpetrators of a first century AD heresy. The Circumcision heresy may be summed up in the words of Acts 15:1. The Apostle Paul repudiated this heresy.

Acts 15:1: *But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”* (ESV)

Galatians 2:21 - 3:3: *I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?* (ESV)

Galatians 5:2-3: *Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.* (ESV)

Many of the early Christians were Jews who brought to the Christian faith many of their former practices. They recognized in Jesus the Messiah predicted by the prophets and the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Because circumcision had been required in the Old Testament for membership in God’s covenant, many thought it would also be required for membership in the New Covenant that Christ had come to inaugurate. They believed one must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law to come to Christ. In other words, one had to become a Jew to become a Christian.

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But God made it clear to Peter in Acts 10 that Gentiles are acceptable to God and may be baptized and become Christians without circumcision. The same teaching was vigorously defended by Paul in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians - to areas where the Circumcision heresy had spread.

The Council at Jerusalem AD 48 (Acts 15) resolved this dispute recognizing the mission of Christians to the whole inhabited world, with its preponderance of Gentiles (or non-Jews) and the needlessness of circumcising gentiles.

Now

Most Judaizer teachers today don't come right out and directly say that one must follow the Law of Moses for salvation. On the strictest technical definition, then, a true Judaizer may be a rare thing in the church. But there is a prevalence of law-keeping in some churches and denominations today. For many, circumcision does end up coming back as something to do out of obedience. Many such believers do not say that circumcision is necessary for salvation, but they do say that it is necessary for true obedience; for breaking through to a "higher life". The Institute in Basic Life Principles is well-respected in many fundamentalist circles, and yet it centers around deducing "basic principles" from various verses or passages in Scripture, many taken out of context, and turning them into rules to live by if someone wants to truly be in the "in crowd" with God.

In Christianity there is today a movement that, by definition, consists of furthering Judaic laws and the ordinances of the Old Testament. This usually involves oppressing unsuspecting Christians with guilt trips, by asking things like "Don't you know Yahweh's laws are forever?" or "Didn't you know there were more than ten commandments?" Usually, some verbal gymnastics follow, and before long, the unlearned Christians have begun agreeing with the Judaizing missionary. Some Christians may label themselves as "Torah-observant". Others may be legitimately interested in "Hebrew roots" to understand the Jewishness of Jesus and add depth to their understanding of the Gospel.

Pelagians

Then

Pelagianism was a fifth century heretical belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without Divine aid. This heresy went so far as to deny the need for Christ and to work salvation from within ourselves. The argument was that just as one is not sinful 'in Adam', is one not righteous "in Christ." Grace, in this system, only helps one to do what one could do naturally. It is not, therefore of the essence of salvation.

Pelagius was a monk from Britain, whose reputation and theology came into prominence after he went to Rome sometime in the AD 380's. The historic Pelagian theological controversy involved the nature of man and the doctrine of original sin. Pelagius believed that the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin (the Fall) were restricted to themselves only. They denied the belief that original sin was passed on (or transferred) to the children of Adam and thus to the human race. Pelagianism teaches that human beings are born in a state of innocence with a nature that is as pure as that which Adam was given at his creation. Pelagius denied that we inherit original sin from Adam's sin in the Garden and claimed that we become sinful only through the bad example of the sinful community into which we are born. Conversely, he denied

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that we inherit righteousness as a result of Christ's death on the cross and said that we become personally righteous by instruction and imitation in the Christian community, following the example of Christ. Pelagius stated that man is born morally neutral and can achieve heaven under his own powers. According to him, God's grace is not truly necessary, but merely makes easier an otherwise difficult task. In other words, this heresy would have us believe that goodness resides in us, and that we can contribute to our salvation.

As a result of his basic assumption, Pelagius taught that man has an unimpaired moral ability to choose that which is spiritually good and possesses the free will, ability, and capacity to do that which is spiritually good. This resulted in a gospel of salvation based on human works. Man could choose to follow the precepts of God and then follow those precepts because he had the power within himself to do so.

After Augustine refuted the teachings of Pelagius, some tried a modified version of his system - Semi-Pelagianism. This admitted salvation by Christ but retained the "free will" claim that humans can reach out to God under their own power, without God's grace; that once a person has entered a state of grace, one can retain it through one's efforts, without further grace from God; and that natural human effort alone can give one some claim to receiving grace, though not strictly merit it.

"Free Will" - Who chooses whom? Note the following verses.

Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 1:17-18: *And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.* (ESV)

John 6:67-70: *So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil."* (ESV)

Luke 6:13: *And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:* (ESV)

John 1:43-48: *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."* (ESV)

John 15:16, 19: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ... If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."* (ESV)

John 13:18: *I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'* [Cited from Psalm, 41:9] (ESV)

Ephesians 1:3-5: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,* (ESV)

Revelation 17:12-14: [The angel said to John] *"And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. They will*

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make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” (ESV)

According to paragraphs 1 - 3 of “Article II: Of Original Sin” of *The Augsburg Confession*:

“Also they [Christian Churches] teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost. They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.”

Martin Luther wrote in *The Bondage of the Will*: “For if we believe it to be true, that God fore-knows and fore-ordains all things; that He can be neither deceived nor hindered in His Presence and Predestination; and that nothing can take place but according to His Will (which reason itself is compelled to confess) then, even according to the testimony of reason herself, there can be no “Free Will” - in man, in angel, or in any creature!” Luther then discusses these points.

If Satan is the prince of this world, and is always fighting against the Kingdom of God, always snaring us, not wanting to let go of us without God’s intervention, then how can we claim to have free will?

If original sin has so destroyed us that we must be led by the Holy Spirit to do any good, then how can we claim to have free will?

If the Jews who strove for righteousness - strove to follow God’s commandments - continually fell into sin, and if the Gentiles have been given righteousness by the grace of God which they never thought of on their on, then how can we claim to have free will?

If we believe that Jesus redeemed us by His blood, then we must also believe that the entire man was lost or we then have to profess that Jesus saved only part of us. Believing that Jesus saved the entire man, how can we claim to have free will?

[Note: We shall see verses related to this in the weekly handout.]

Pelagianism is overwhelmingly incompatible with the Bible and was historically opposed by Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo, leading to its condemnation as a heresy at Council of Carthage in AD 418. These condemnations were summarily ratified at the Council of Ephesus (AD 431). Pelagian doctrine was banished in the Greek portion of the church. However, in the West, the teachings held on, primarily in Britain and Gaul.

[Note: While Pelagius (who was Irish) and Augustine were carrying on their theological debate, Patrick was still in Ireland as a young slave. Patrick returned to Ireland in AD 432 (after the death of Augustine). (We do not know when Pelagius died.) Some believe that Patrick’s mission may have had more to do with reforming Pelagian believers than with making new converts to Christianity. (“*Saint Patrick Apostle of Ireland - 389-461*”)]

Semi-Pelagianism was condemned at the Second Synod of Orange in AD 529. However, elements of Semi-Pelagianism continued in the Western church.

Now

The Mormon Church claims that men now living can also attain godhood. The *Doctrine and Covenants* says that those who obey the laws of Mormonism shall be gods. The late Elder James Talmage declared that, in spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Mormon church proclaims as eternal truth that as man is, God once was; as God is, man may be. According to Brigham Young, the Lord created us supposedly for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself; we are born to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven.

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Some modern churches encourage people to “make a decision for Christ” with the belief that we can choose Jesus rather than that He chooses us. Modern preachers - Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller among them - appealed to people with their notions of unleashing the inner person through positive thinking. Late twentieth century man focused more on himself and less on God, if on God at all. The influence of Eastern religions made God into a concept rather than Creator. Recreational drugs allowed people a further escape into themselves, a heightened “personal” and “pleasurable” experience. Meditation and therapy became commonplace in the 1970s and 1980s. Have a problem? Try meditation. Still having problems? Get some therapy. Many Christians advocated both. New Age therapies and techniques took off around the same time, gathering disaffected and the unchurched looking for a “peaceful”, “calming” way of life. Combining psychology and aspects of Theosophy as well as a fondness for things with notionally curative powers (e.g. crystals) the New Age movement has attracted many, including Christians.

[Note: Theosophy refers to hidden knowledge or wisdom that offers the individual enlightenment and salvation. The theosophist seeks to understand the mysteries of the universe and the bonds that unite the universe, humanity and the divine. The goal of theosophy is to explore the origin of divinity and humanity, and the world. From investigation of those topics theosophists try to discover a coherent description of the purpose and origin of the universe.]

Some modern “Celtic Christian” groups have chosen to teach some of these same errors. Their theology appeals to some who are history enthusiasts for the early Christian culture in Britain, trying to wish away the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic Church in the eleventh century. Such ideas are spiritual poison. The theology of churches with names like “Celtic Rite Old Catholic Church” does not agree with Augustine’s view of Original Sin. It sees Original Sin as the result of Adam's failure to be an adequate federal head of the human race. That failure supposedly produced only a wounding in the nature of man which weakened his will but did not disable it.

We must remember that, because of Christ, all people are able to respond to the call of God's grace to salvation and virtue.

Ecclesiastes 7:20: *Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.* (ESV)

1 John 1:10: *If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.* (ESV)

Sadducees and Corinthians

Then

The Romans discredited the Resurrection, the Jews denied it, and the Gnostics refused to believe it. For more than twenty centuries the Church has been fighting off the throngs of heretics who deny much or all of our Christian Faith, but there are few truths that exasperate the world more than the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:29-33: *And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.”* (ESV)

1 Corinthians 15:16-22: *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen*

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asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (ESV)

Unfortunately, the eyewitness accounts of those who were there and believed were not enough to convince everyone of the truth of the Good News. In time there were larger groups of people who could not accept that not only had God made Himself into man so that man could become more like Him, but also that God would allow Himself to be crucified, to die and to rise again three days later. Chief among the deniers and disbelievers was a sect generally known as Gnostics. One specific example of how Gnostic thinking filtered into the Christian world came in the form of the heresy called Docetism.

[Note: Gnosticism and Docetism are discussed elsewhere in this paper.]

There seems to be no record of any Church council or synod denouncing the heresy against the Resurrection in Sadducee context. The Fourth Council of the Lateran (AD 1215) condemned a form of Manicheanism which opposed marriage and all sacraments and belief in the resurrection of the body. Other later councils and synods addressed Jews, but regarding what we would now term secular legal and “civil rights” matters - not in the sense of wrong beliefs.

[Note: The Council at Jerusalem 48 AD (Acts 15) was not called because of questions about the Resurrection, but rather to resolve differences between two parties regarding circumcision.]

Now

Chuck Smith (Pastor, Calvary Chapel), the Jehovah’s Witness, and the Shepherd’s Chapel groups deny the resurrection of the flesh and assert that we get different bodies that are made out of the same stuff Heaven is made from. The Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ. They believe that after the crucifixion, Christ died and was resurrected as an invisible, non-material, glorious, spirit creature. They believe that Jesus appeared on earth after his resurrection in a special body that Jehovah created for him. The Holy Spirit they believe, is not a separate entity, but is simply a force: the method by which God interacts with the world. They believe that a person is the soul the Bible speaks of, and when a person dies nothing lives on, the person is dead and is conscious of nothing. When the time comes for God to resurrect them from the dead He will create a new body for them from His memory.

Preterism is the view that all Biblical prophecy was fulfilled at or before AD 70, and that the ongoing relevance and practical application of all Scripture continues since that time, and that the primary function of the Church is to bring healing to all nations, continually bearing good fruit as Revelation 21-22 states. This belief erroneously holds that Ancient Israel finds its continuation or fulfillment in the Christian church at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This heresy posits that Biblical prophecies-including Christ’s Second Advent and Christians’ resurrection were also fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and that we presently live in the new eon which orthodox believers have always understood to refer to the eternal state. This heresy is promulgated in many books, and expressed plainly by authors R. C. Leonard and J. E. Leonard in the book *The Promise of His Coming*.

[Note: The term preterism comes from the Latin praeter, which is a prefix denoting that something is “past” or “beyond”, signifying that either all or a majority of Bible prophecy was fulfilled by AD 70. Adherents of preterism are commonly known as preterists.]

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The Athanasian Creed

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. As there are not three Uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles, but one Uncreated and one Incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet they are not three Almighty, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none: neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another; But the whole three Persons are coeternal together, and coequal: so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped. He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood; Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ: One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

[Note: This creed was Written against the Arians. The text cited by Rottman in *One Truth, Many Lies*, is in bold.]

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The Nicene Creed

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 the 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 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 worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy 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.

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Biographies of Persons Mentioned in the Paper and in the Bibliography

Church Fathers

Athanasius of Alexandria

Athanasius of Alexandria (b. ca. 296-298 – d. 2 May 373), also referred to as St. Athanasius the Great, St. Athanasius I of Alexandria, St Athanasius the Confessor and (primarily in the Coptic Orthodox Church) St Athanasius the Apostolic, was the 20th bishop of Alexandria. His episcopate lasted 45 years (c. 8 June 328 – 2 May 373), of which over 17 were spent in five exiles ordered by four different Roman emperors. He is considered to be a renowned Christian theologian, a Church Father, the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism, and a noted Egyptian leader of the fourth century. He is remembered for his role in the conflict with Arius and Arianism. In 325, at the age of 27, Athanasius had a leading role against the Arians in the First Council of Nicaea. At the time, he was a deacon and personal secretary of the 19th Bishop of Alexandria, Alexander. Nicaea was convoked by Constantine I in May–August 325 to address the Arian position that Jesus of Nazareth is of a distinct substance from the Father. In June 328, at the age of 30, three years after Nicæa and upon the repose of Bishop Alexander, he became archbishop of Alexandria. He continued to lead the conflict against the Arians for the rest of his life and was engaged in theological and political struggles against the Emperors Constantine the Great and Constantius II and powerful and influential Arian churchmen, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia and others. He was known as “Athanasius Contra Mundum”. Within a few years of his departure, St. Gregory of Nazianzus called him the “Pillar of the Church”. His writings were well regarded by all Church fathers who followed, in both the West and the East. His writings show a rich devotion to the Word-become-man, great pastoral concern, and profound interest in monasticism. Athanasius is counted as one of the four great Eastern Doctors of the Church in the Roman Catholic Church and in Eastern Orthodoxy, he is labeled the “Father of Orthodoxy”. He is also celebrated by many Protestants, who label him “Father of The Canon”.

[Note: The Athanasian Creed was thought to be the composition of Athanasius of Alexandria whose name it bears. That view is generally not held today. Whether the Creed can be ascribed to St. Athanasius or not, it undoubtedly owes its existence to Athanasian influences, for the expressions and doctrinal coloring exhibit a marked correspondence, in subject-matter and in phraseology, with the literature of the latter half of the fourth century and especially with the writings of Athanasius, to be merely accidental. These internal evidences seem to justify the conclusion that it grew out of several provincial synods, chiefly that of Alexandria, held about the year 361, and presided over by St. Athanasius.]

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was born on 13 November, 354 at Tagaste, now Souk-Ahras, about 60 miles from Bona (ancient Hippo-Regius), which was at that time a small free city of proconsular Numidia which had recently been converted from Donatism. Although eminently respectable, his family was not rich, and his father, Patricius, one of the curiales of the city, was still a pagan. However, the admirable virtues that made Monica the ideal of Christian mothers at length brought her husband the grace of baptism and of a holy death, about the year 371. He lost his faith and later converted back to Christianity. At forty-two, became a bishop and occupied the See of Hippo for thirty-four years. He understood well how to combine the exercise of his pastoral duties with the austerities of the religious life, and although he left his order, his episcopal residence became a monastery where he lived a community life with his clergy, who bound themselves to observe religious poverty. The episcopal house of Hippo became a veritable nursery which supplied the founders of the monasteries that were soon spread all over Africa and the bishops who occupied the neighboring sees. Augustine earned the title of patriarch of the religious, and renovator of the clerical, life in Africa.

Hilary of Poitiers

Hilary (Hilarius) of Poitiers (beginning of fourth century-368) was Bishop of Poitiers and is a Doctor of the Church. He was sometimes referred to as the “Hammer of the Arians” and the “Athanasius of the West”. His name comes from the Latin word for happy or cheerful. Belonging to a noble and very probably pagan family, he was instructed in all the branches of profane learning, but, having also taken up the study of Holy Scripture and finding there the truth which he sought so ardently, he renounced idolatry and was baptized. Thenceforth his wide learning and his zeal for the Faith attracted such attention that he was chosen about 350 to govern the body of the faithful which the city had possessed since the third century. We know nothing of the bishops who governed this society in the beginning. Hilary is the first concerning whom we have authentic information, and this is due to the important part he played in opposing heresy. Arianism had made frightful ravages in various regions and threatened to invade Gaul,

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where it already had numerous partisans more or less secretly affiliated with it. Saturninus, Bishop of Arles, the most active of the latter, being exposed by Hilary, convened and presided over a council at Béziers in 356 with the intention of justifying himself, or rather of establishing his false doctrine. Here the Bishop of Poitiers courageously presented himself to defend orthodoxy, but the council, composed for the most part of Arians, refused to hear him, and being shortly afterwards denounced to the Emperor Constantius, the protector of Arianism, he was at his command transported to the distant coasts of Phrygia.

Medieval Theologians

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 7 March 1274) was an Italian Dominican priest of the Roman Catholic Church, and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism. He came from one of the noblest families of the Kingdom of Naples, with the title of “counts of Aquino”. He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology, and the father of Thomism. His influence on Western thought is considerable, and much of modern philosophy was conceived in development or refutation of his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law, metaphysics, and political theory. Thomas Aquinas is held in the Catholic Church to be the model teacher for those studying for the priesthood and the highest expression of both natural reason and speculative theology. He is one of the 35 Doctors of the Church, he is considered the Church's greatest theologian and philosopher.

Reformers

Martin Luther

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben in the Holy Roman Empire - in what is today southern Germany. He died 18 February 1546. He was the second son born to Hans and Margarete (Lindemann) Luther. He later entered the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt. In 1513, he began his first lectures on the Psalms. In these lectures, Luther's critique of the theological world around him began to take shape. Later, in lectures on Paul's Epistle to the Romans (in 1515/16) his critique became more noticeable. It was during these lectures that Luther finally found the assurance that had evaded him for years. The discovery that changed Luther's life ultimately changed the course of church history and the history of Europe. He had discovered (or recovered) the doctrine of justification by grace alone.

John Calvin

Jean Calvin (born Jehan Cauvin, 10 July 1509 - 27 May 1564) was an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. Originally trained as a humanist lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic Church around 1530. After religious tensions provoked a violent uprising against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland, where he published the first edition of his seminal work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. Calvin's writing and preachings provided the seeds for the branch of theology that bears his name. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches, which look to Calvin as a chief expositor of their beliefs, have spread throughout the world.

Later Theologians

Johann Gerhard

Johann Gerhard (October 17, 1582 – August 17, 1637) was a Lutheran church leader and Lutheran Scholastic theologian during the period of Orthodoxy.

C. F. W. Walther

C. F. W. Walther was born 25 October 1811 in Langenchursdorf, Kingdom of Saxony, as the eighth child (of twelve) to Pastor Gottlob Heinrich Walther and his wife Johanna Wilhelmina Zschenderlein. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod was formed on 26 April 1847, and Walther served as its president from 1847 to 1850 and again from 1864 to 1878. The college was moved from Perry County to St. Louis in 1850 and developed into Concordia Seminary. Walther became its first president and held this position until his death in 1887. He also founded the St. Louis Lutheran Bible Society in 1853 and started two important publications: *Der Lutheraner* (in 1844) and *Lehre und Wehre* (in 1855). He was author of many books and periodical articles, among which the most noteworthy *Pastoral Theology, Church and Ministry* and his classic treatise on "The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel." While holding synodical and seminary positions as well as editing and publishing several periodicals, Walther was also the head pastor of the four Saxon Lutheran congregations (called *Gesammtgemeinde*) in St. Louis

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(Trinity, Holy Cross, Immanuel and Zion). In August 1855 Walther turned down an honorary doctorate from the University of Goettingen, but he accepted a doctor of theology degree from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, in 1877.

Erik Rottman

Erik Rottman - A biography of Erik Rottman could not be found. He is the author of many Christian books published by Concordia Publishing House.

Michael Root

Michael Root has taught at Davidson College, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. For ten years, he was Research Professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France. Ecumenical dialogues have been at the center of Root's service. He was on the drafting team for the Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, and served on the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue both nationally and internationally, the international Lutheran-Anglican dialogue, and the US Lutheran-Methodist dialogue. He was a staff consultant to the 1993 World Conference on Faith and Order (Spain) and the 1998 Lambeth Conference (England). He has been the executive director of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology.

Erwin L. Lueker

Erwin L. Lueker, St. Paul's College, Concordia, Missouri, is the Editor in Chief of Lutheran Cyclopedia.

Tim Chaffey

Tim Chaffey is a Christian author and a writer/editor at *Answers in Genesis*, an apologetics (i.e., Christianity-defending) ministry, dedicated to enabling Christians to defend their faith and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively. *Answers in Genesis* focuses particularly on providing answers to questions surrounding the book of Genesis, as it is the most-attacked book of the Bible. The desire is to train others to develop a biblical worldview, and seek to expose the bankruptcy of evolutionary ideas, and its bedfellow, a "millions of years old" earth (and even older universe).

F. David Farnell

F. David Farnell is an Associate Professor of New Testament at The Master's Seminary.

Other Christian Writers

C. S. Lewis

Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) was born in Belfast, Ireland, on November 29, 1898, to Albert J. Lewis and Florence Augusta Hamilton Lewis. On May 20, 1925, Lewis was appointed Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University, where he served for twenty-nine years until 1954. During his time at Oxford, Lewis went from being an atheist to being one of the most influential Christian writers of the 20th century. 1931 was the year of Lewis's conversion to Christianity. He became a member of the Church of England. Lewis cited his friendship with J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as the writings of the converted G. K. Chesterton, as influencing his conversion.

Miscellaneous Christian Sources

Concordia Publishing House

Concordia Publishing House is the official publisher of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. For over 140 years it has served the needs of every single church, home, and school in the LCMS. Whether producing Bibles, Sunday School materials, Christian magazines, or church management software, each product and service at Concordia Publishing House is created with Gospel ministry in mind.

Catholic Online

Catholic Online gives educational and timely information about Catholicism. Its mission is to accurately represent the Catholic religion: its "past" and present. It provides over five million pages of content including the largest online historical and biblical database about the Catholic Church including comprehensive information about over 7,000 Catholic saints and comprehensive online scriptures from all books of the Old and New Testament.

Orthodox Christian

Orthodox Christianity is the life in faith of the Orthodox Church, inseparable from that concrete, historic community and encompassing its entire way of life. The Orthodox Christian faith is that faith "handed once to the saints" (Jude 3), passed on in Holy Tradition to the apostles by Jesus Christ, and then handed down from one generation to the

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next, without addition or subtraction. The sole purpose of Orthodox Christianity is the salvation of every human person, uniting him to Christ in the Church, transforming him in holiness, and imparting eternal life. This is the Gospel, the good news, that Jesus is the Messiah, that he rose from the dead, and that we may be saved as a result.

Catholic Answers

Catholic Answers is an apostolate dedicated to serving Christ by bringing the fullness of Catholic truth to the world. We help good Catholics become better Catholics, bring former Catholics “home,” and lead non-Catholics into the fullness of the faith. It is a source of information some of which is sectarian centered and some of which is applicable to Christians in general.

Early Christian History

Early Christian History discusses the early history of Christianity, a controversial yet interesting topic, due to the paucity of documentary evidence from the various periods, which is open to interpretation, as well as the wide variation in the documentation which has survived from that time.

The Master's Seminary

The Master's Seminary exists to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ by equipping godly men to be pastors and/or trainers of pastors for excellence in service to Christ in strategic fields of Christian ministry. This is accomplished through an educational program and an environment of spiritual fellowship and relationships which emphasize unreserved commitment to the worship of God, submission to the authority of the Scriptures, a life of personal holiness, the priority of the local church, and the mission of penetrating the world with the Truth.

Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry

The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry has the mission to defend and promote the Christian faith in all areas of life.

Let Us Reason Ministries

Let Us Reason Ministries evangelizes cults and other religions to bring them to the truth of the Gospel.

Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN)

Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) is the Roman Catholic Web site and TV network.

Non-Christian Writers

R. L. Pratt

R. L. Pratt, *MormonThink* is produced primarily by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are interested in the historical accuracy of the church and how it is being taught to its members and portrayed in the media. There is a lot of misinformation on the LDS Church that is presented by both critics and defenders of the faith - particularly on the Internet. MormonThink presents both viewpoints fairly and lets the reader decide.

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Weekly Handouts for Discussion