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**A SUMMARY OF THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH**

How do you become a true Christian?

I believe that I can not by my own reason or strength believe in my Lord Jesus Christ, or come to him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.

Through what institution does the Holy Spirit work?

The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and preserves the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

What do you receive in the Church through the Holy Spirit

In the Christian Church the Holy Spirit daily and abundantly forgives me and all believers all sins.

What is your hope for the future?

On the last day Christ will raise me up and all the dead and will give to me and all believers everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

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**THE HISTORICAL NECESSITY FOR CREEDS AND
CONFESSIONS OF FAITH**

James Edward McGoldrick

No creed but Christ, no law but love!
Doctrine divides, love unites!
Down with doctrine, up with love!

The above contention may well appeal to Christians today who, like their unbelieving neighbors, have lost interest in truth. In a time when megachurches are competing with one another to give people what they want rather than what they need, a plea for confessional Christianity must appear strange and badly out of step with the trends of church life. Perhaps it is time to reconsider those trends in the light of history and thereby to ask why creeds and confessions are necessary. That is the objective of this article.

The practice of Christians proclaiming their beliefs is an ancient one. Even in Old Testament times it was customary for the Hebrews to affirm their monotheism by frequent recitation of the *shema*, the first Hebrew word in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone." Public recitation of that text remains the most prominent feature of synagogue worship until the present. It is evident that Jesus required his New Testament disciples to confess him publicly, for he said, "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

The earliest Christians readily proclaimed Jesus as "Lord" and "Christ," as when Peter asserted to the Savior, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). The apostle Paul admonished believers in the Roman congregation, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Affirming Jesus' messianic office and Lordship was the practice of believers individually, and it soon became customary when they congregated for corporate worship. Their faith led them to confession. A proverb among Latin Christians was *credo, ergo confiteor*—"I believe, therefore I confess."

Confessing the faith is an intelligent act, one which indicates the specific content of what a person or an ecclesiastical body believes. It goes beyond acknowledging the existence of God and declares a personal confidence in him, as he has revealed himself. Early Christian creeds affirm acceptance of the historic realities of God's actions and of the doctrinal implications which those realities entail. When an early Christian stated *credo*, "I believe," he or she thereby expressed gratitude to God and rendered to him appropriate adoration. Often new believers made their first public confessions at baptism. On that occasion converts recited a brief summary of Christian doctrine and avowed their allegiance to Christ and the church. Ancient baptismal formulas then became precedents for more elaborate statements of faith, among them the *Apostles' Creed*. When heresies challenged the integrity of Christian teaching, the church responded with precise declarations, and the emphases of such documents reflect the issues in dispute at those periods.

Creeds and confessions have been necessary because God left the task of organizing and explaining his revelation to believers. This has been the work of individual scholars, or at times, of small groups or large assemblies. In

order to combat heresies, to provide systematic instruction for her own members, and to keep teachers of doctrine united in their instruction, the church adopted the creeds and regarded them as standards of orthodoxy. This insistence upon sound doctrine distinguishes Christianity from most other religions, which, often stress cultic duties more than precise theology. As a consequence few non-Christian religions have produced creeds comparable to those of Christianity, although contact with Christians has sometimes led other religions to compose and issue statements of belief.¹

The first Christian creeds enjoyed only local acceptance, and in large cities distinguished bishops promoted their own confessions, with Rome in the forefront because of its prestige as the church in the imperial capital. Although such creeds were diverse in wording, their contents were closely similar. References to a *regula fidei*—a rule of faith—appeared in the third century, but by the second half of the fourth century, a Roman creed had acquired broad acceptance in the West. This became the *Apostles' Creed*, although the present form of that document is from the eighth century. Contrary to ancient legend, it was not the work of the apostles but a summary of their teachings.

Latin Christians, like their Hebrew predecessors, showed little interest in speculation about mysterious aspects of belief. Greek Christians, however, were less inclined to accept doctrines by faith, and they sometimes subjected the more arcane ones to rigorous analysis. This led to controversies, requiring the church to produce definitive statements about issues in dispute. By the fourth century, the key example was the person of Christ. When Arius of Alexandria (c. 260-336) denied the essential and eternal sonship of Jesus Christ, the church rebuked him and his followers by promulgating the *Creed of Nicea* as an unequivocal declaration that Christ is fully God and fully

man. The Council of Nicea (325) condemned Arianism as heresy. In 381 the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the decision of Nicea and responded to later errors in Christology. The *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed* became the official statement of the Eastern church and remains in frequent use there. The *Apostles' Creed* continues to be the most popular affirmation of faith in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches of the West. Since the *Creed of Nicea* was the first such confession authorized by an ecumenical council of bishops, it gained acceptance throughout Christendom. Had the ancient church allowed heresies such as Arianism to go unanswered, the damage to the faith would have been incalculable. The crisis required a clear, definitive confession.²

The third ancient confession of great distinction is the *Athanasian Creed*. Although it is not the work of the famous theologian Athanasius (c. 300-73), it upholds his doctrine as he defended it at the Council of Nicea. The *Athanasian Creed* originated early in the sixth century, perhaps in Gaul, as a vigorous defense of the trinity and the incarnation of Christ in detailed, exact terms even more precise than those of the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Creed of Nicea*. It appears that the compilers of this statement were familiar with Augustine of Hippo's exposition and defense of the trinity, which appeared about 420. The *Athanasian Creed*, more than any previous confession, is strongly polemical in denouncing heretics. It contends that belief in the orthodox doctrine of the trinity and the incarnation is necessary for salvation, and it pronounces damnation upon those who teach otherwise.

Between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, criticism of church traditions and authoritarian policies became increasingly common. Followers of Peter Waldo (d.c. 1216) and others sought to return to New Testament simplicity. Such movements found discrepancies between Scripture and some ecclesiastical practices, so they desired internal

reform. Papal authorities often responded with persecution of the dissidents, and that led to schism. By this time there was much controversy about the number and significance of the sacraments. The Roman church replied to dissenters academically through the writings of Scholastic theologians and juridicially by means of the Inquisition. The Waldenses, in the fourteenth century, met papal opposition with their *Seven Articles of Faith* and a catechism to instruct their adherents in doctrine and morality. Supporters of John Hus (c. 1375-1415), after the martyrdom of their leader, issued a *Confessio Taboritarum* as a statement of beliefs for which they suffered persecution. In 1503 the United Brethren of Bohemia presented to their king a confession in which they denied the traditional role of departed saints as mediators with God, purgatory, and transubstantiation as the correct understanding of the Eucharist. These and other pre-Reformation nonconformists drafted and published confessions to justify their dissent from Rome by showing the scriptural character of their principles.

The growing disaffection from the papacy is evidence that Christians needed confessions that would address matters about which the ancient creeds are silent. The Protestant reformers undertook that task with relish. While they revered the ancient creeds and often declared their concurrence with them, the Protestants realized that those documents do not assert the sole authority of Scripture, nor do they explain biblical teaching about sin and salvation in any detail. They are silent about supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, and they make only passing references to the sacraments.

By the sixteenth century Christendom had become confused about many doctrines of the faith, and the Roman church of the Middle Ages had never taken a dogmatic stand with regard to some beliefs Protestants discovered in the Bible, doctrines which for centuries the medieval church

had ignored or distorted. The Protestants invoked the principle of *sola scriptura*, and as they did so, they rejected some traditional teachings of the papal church as incompatible with clear biblical revelation. The Reformers therefore found it necessary to clarify their understanding of Scripture in new confessions of faith. The Lutherans led the way, and their *Augsburg Confession of Faith* (1530) became the first of several Reformation creeds. Since the ancient statements do not address specific aspects of soteriology, such as original sin, election, regeneration, and justification, the Protestant Reformers stated their beliefs about these matters boldly and in explicit terms.

Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), Martin Luther's closest associate on the faculty at the University of Wittenberg, was the major author of the *Augsburg Confession*, which he presented to the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire in order to explain the biblical basis of evangelical (Lutheran) doctrine. He did not include a specific affirmation of *sola scriptura* because that had not yet become the fundamental item of contention with Rome, and some papal theologians were arguing that traditional Catholicism was entirely faithful to Scripture. The emperor and the imperial diet rejected the Lutheran position, and Charles V (reigned 1519-56), the monarch, threatened military action against accused heretics in Germany. Melancthon later issued an *Apology for the Augsburg Confession* in which he answered Roman charges in belligerent terms. The *Augsburg Confession* rather quickly gained recognition in all the Lutheran bodies of Europe, and it remains, in principle, the official statement of Lutheran beliefs around the world.

By 1577 disputes within Lutheran ranks required a fuller, clearer expression of doctrine, and the *Formula of Concord* supplied that need. This thorough statement of evangelical theology acknowledges the ancient creeds as accurate summaries of Christian beliefs to which Lutherans

adhere heartily, but the challenges of the sixteenth century required them to offer more extensive and precise declarations. The *Formula* affirms *sola scriptura* as the formal principle of the Protestant Reformation. In 1580 Lutherans published the *Book of Concord* as a compendium of their major doctrinal affirmations. This tome contains the *Augsburg Confession*, *Melancthon's Apology*, Luther's two catechisms, and the *Smalkald Articles* (1527), which Luther compiled for an organization of evangelical states, together with the *Formula of Concord* and the three ancient ecumenical creeds.³

As Protestants applied the formal principle of the Reformation, they developed some disagreements among themselves, especially with regard to the sacraments. This led to a contentious debate between Luther and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the reformer of Zurich, and the confessions of faith they helped to produce reflect their divergent views. In 1523 Zwingli published the *Sixty-seven Articles* as the first confession to express the distinctive beliefs of that branch of Protestantism which became known as the Reformed churches. He sent his own confession to the Diet of Augsburg while Melancthon was there, even though neither the Catholics nor the Lutherans had invited him to participate.

When the Reformation spread to Geneva, John Calvin (1509-64) came into prominence as the leader, and he soon established the reputation of that city as the fountainhead of Reformed theology. Unlike Zwingli, Calvin maintained fine relations with Luther, and at one point he signed a version of the *Augsburg Confession* as a display of Protestant unity. Calvin had published the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536, a treatise for which the *Apostles' Creed* was the outline—further evidence of the Reformers' eagerness to align with the Catholic church of antiquity. Their frequent citations from Augus-

tine of Hippo (354-430) also demonstrated this desire.

In 1549 the churches of Zurich and Geneva established fraternal relations on the basis of a joint confession, the *Consensus of Zurich*, due to the work of Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75), the successor to Zwingli as chief pastor in Zurich. Although Philip Melanchthon expressed disapproval of the Reformed view of the sacraments, he was well impressed with the *Consensus* and discarded his suspicions toward the Swiss Protestants after reading it.

Both Lutheran and Reformed influences spread to England and Scotland during the reigns of Henry VIII (r. 1509-47) and Edward VI (r. 1547-53). Henry despised Protestantism, but Edward, his son, embraced it heartily. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) eventually became a convinced Protestant, and he composed the *Forty-two Articles of Religion* as a confession for the Church of England with the king's approval. This statement reflects both Lutheran and Reformed influences, but the articles about soteriology are Calvinistic. In the *Book of Common Prayer* Cranmer incorporated Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed elements and provided Englishmen with a manual of worship in their own language. In that way the Church of England preserved *catholic*, but not *papal*, traditions in harmony with Scripture.⁴

During the reign of the Catholic Queen, Mary I (r. 1553-58), there was a violent repression of Protestants. Many Protestants fled to the continent, some to Geneva, where they became vigorous Calvinists. When the Protestant Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603) ascended the throne, they returned to England, where some became bishops in the Anglican church. Cambridge University became a center for the teaching of the Reformed faith, and there Calvin's *Institutes* was the principal textbook in theology.

Elizabeth's Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504-75), supervised a revision of Cranmer's confession

to include some more Lutheran elements, and that project became the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, which remain the official statement of the Anglican and Episcopal churches.

When Protestantism arrived in Scotland, it was the evangelical doctrine of Luther, but, as in England, the Reformed faith quickly supplanted it. In 1544 George Wishart (c. 1513-46) returned to Scotland from Switzerland and brought the *Helvetic Confession of Faith* (1536), which a number of Reformed theologians had drafted. The popularity of this statement in Scotland is difficult to explain, but it gained acceptance readily and led the Scottish Reformation away from its Lutheran foundation. Wishart was a close friend of John Knox (c. 1513-72), who was the chief author of the *Scots' Confession* (1560), a strongly Calvinistic statement. The stridently anti-Roman language of this confession reflects the suffering Protestants had endured at the hands of Catholic authorities.⁵

The Netherlands was another site of great persecution of Protestants, as Spain conducted an Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) to reduce the Low Countries to obedience and to eradicate heresy by means of the Inquisition. In the midst of this struggle, Protestants adopted the *Belgic Confession of Faith* (1561), the principal author of which was Guy de Brès (c. 1523-67), an evangelist whom Spanish officials hanged for his efforts to spread the Reformed faith. De Brès addressed the *Belgic Confession* to King Philip II (r. 1556-98) in the hope of convincing the monarch to stop persecuting his Protestant subjects. De Brès failed in that objective, but his composition became the official doctrinal statement of the Dutch Reformed Church, a confessional monument to the heroes of the Dutch struggle for freedom.

Late in the sixteenth century, the Netherlands experienced the first challenge to Protestant soteriology to arise within Reformed ranks. The appearance of Arminianism led to the publication of opposing confessions of faith and

to a permanent division among Protestants. Disciples of the late James Arminius (1560-1609), a professor at the University of Leyden, in 1610 published a *Remonstrance* to express their objections to the Reformed doctrine of sin and salvation. A national Synod of the Dutch Reformed church met at Dordt in 1618-19, and representatives of several other Reformed bodies attended. This synod replied to each assertion of the *Remonstrance* with a reaffirmation of undiluted Calvinism which became the *Canons of Dordt*, often cited as the *Five Points of Calvinism*. The same assembly ratified the *Belgic Confession* and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, which had originated in the German state of Palatine in 1562. By requiring strict adherence to its confession, the Dutch Reformed church repulsed the Arminian challenge.

While Protestants were formulating their doctrines and publishing them in a systematic manner, the Roman Catholic Church found it necessary to clarify its own teachings and to defend them against the Reformers. The most comprehensive and enduringly influential effort of this character was the work of the Counter-Reformation Council of Trent, which Pope Paul III (1534-49) convened in 1545. By that time scholars from the new Society of Jesus had become papal theologians, and that status enabled the Jesuits to shape the theological course of proceedings at Trent.

Trent compiled and organized decisions of medieval councils, papal decrees, and Patristic and Scholastic writings as the means to rebut Protestantism. To the regret of some Catholics as well as Protestants, the council showed little interest in Augustinian teachings. In soteriology, therefore, a Semi-Pelagian view remarkably similar to that of later Arminianism, prevailed and precluded a return to Augustine's teaching about grace. The *Canon and Decrees of Trent* (1563), ratified by Pope Pius IV (1559-65) became the creed of the Counter-Reformation Roman church. The

decrees of Trent comprise the Catholic defense against the Reformers, and the canons express *anathema* against their alleged heresies. The decisions of Trent amounted to a declaration of war against Protestantism. There would not be another general council of the Roman church until 1870, when Vatican Council I declared the infallibility of the pope a dogma of the faith. Papal approval of the Tridentine decrees placed them alongside the ancient creeds as possessing divine authority of revelation, which means the church can never abrogate them.⁶

Trent rejected *sola scriptura*, the formal principle of Protestantism, by asserting the equal authority of Scripture and tradition. This meant that a lack of biblical evidence is no impediment to the promulgation of new dogmas. Thus in 1854, Pope Pius IX (1846-78) made it mandatory for all Catholics to believe in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, despite the absence of any scriptural support for that teaching. In a similar way Roman Catholics were obliged to affirm that the body of the Virgin was taken into heaven at the end of her earthly life. This was a declaration of Pope Pius XII (1939-58) in 1950. Roman Catholic scholars in general admit there is no New Testament basis for this claim.

Although the Council of Trent called for some wholesome reforms in ecclesiastical finances, moral supervision of the clergy, and improved education, it left medieval doctrine in place and pronounced severe condemnations upon anyone who teaches to the contrary. The council's decisions comprised the most extensive and systematic statement of Roman Catholic teachings which had ever appeared, and the church required all clerics and converts from other churches to subscribe to the *Tridentine Canons and Decrees*. A militant anti-Protestantism was to be the posture of the Roman church well into the twentieth century.

The climax of Protestant efforts to compose adequate

statements of belief may have occurred when the Westminster Assembly convened in London at a summons from parliament to revise the Anglican *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*. Between July 1, 1643 and February 22, 1648, English and Scottish Protestants studied and debated how best to express their understanding of Scripture. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and the *Shorter Catechisms* are the products of their methodical deliberations.⁷

Although Episcopalians and Independents attended the Westminster Assembly, a large majority of the participants were Presbyterians. The assembly met at a time when Arminian influences had infiltrated the Church of England, and the Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645) promoted the movement away from Reformed theology and toward authoritarian church government under the direction of bishops. Parliament, however, was in the control of Calvinists who resented the policies of the king and archbishop. Charles I was king of Scotland too, and there he tried to impose the Anglican form of worship and to encourage departure from the Reformed faith. This led the Scots in 1638 to affirm the *National Covenant* by which they vowed to defend the true religion. When the Scots rebelled, Charles used force against them, but this required him to summon Parliament in 1640 to raise funds, and that body had not met since 1629. The ruler's Puritan-Presbyterian critics controlled the legislature, and it convened the Westminster Assembly to advise it in matters pertaining to religion. The Westminster Assembly presented the *Westminster Confession of Faith* to Parliament in 1646, and the General Assembly of Scotland adopted it the next year. By 1648 the English Parliament and the Scottish Assembly had ratified the *Westminster Standards*, as the confession and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* became known. The *Westminster Confession* then was the doctrinal standard for England, Scotland, and Ireland until 1660, when, after a period of

civil war, England restored its monarchy and the Church of England returned to episcopal government and the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*.

When the printing of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* occurred, the *Apostles' Creed* appeared at the end of the booklet to link the work of the Westminster Assembly with the faith of the ancient church. Presbyterians in the British Isles and those who migrated to the New World maintained allegiance to the Reformed faith as expressed in the *Westminster Standards*, even though the Church of England did not. The theological precision and clear biblical support which characterize the *Westminster Standards* reflect the Reformed concern to expound the faith in logical, coherent terms. In this way Presbyterians obtained a comprehensive statement of their doctrines and an instrument with which to rebut the *Canons and Decrees of Trent*. American Presbyterians adopted the *Westminster Standards* at Philadelphia in 1729.

Although the *Westminster Confession* and its attendant catechisms are Presbyterian documents, their influence has spread far beyond that denomination. Baptists in England, for example, admired the work of the Westminster Assembly and soon modified their own confession to make it conform to the Presbyterian statement in almost all particulars. The *First London Confession* (1644) was a vigorous affirmation of Reformed beliefs about sin and salvation, as the Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists espoused them. In 1677 a *Second London Confession* appeared for which the *Westminster Confession* was the model. The mode and subjects of baptism and the form of church government are the only features of the *Second London Confession* which differ substantially from the Presbyterian standard. This was the case with a Baptist catechism compiled by Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) also.

When Baptists came to America, they, like the Presby-

rians, brought the Reformed faith with them, and they adopted the *Philadelphia Confession and Catechism* in 1742, which contains only slight modifications of the Particular Baptist Standard (1677). Arminianism eventually diluted the Calvinism of Baptists in America with the result that their statements of belief in the nineteenth century were less precise about human depravity and the sovereignty of grace. This is evident in the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith* (1833), which soon gained broad acceptance in Baptist circles across the United States.⁸

The history of creeds and confessions shows that Christians, since ancient times, have taken doctrine seriously and have often displayed great erudition in compiling their beliefs. Some of the finest minds in church history have engaged in this task, prompted by their love for truth. Even though diverse confessions reveal disagreements among churches, they all contain a core of beliefs about which there has been almost unanimous concurrence. No professedly orthodox church would, for example, deny the *Apostles' Creed*, which with other ancient creeds continue to enjoy the endorsement of a wide variety of ecclesiastical bodies. The appearance of later confessions is evidence of intellectual vitality among Christians, as they have endeavored to clarify their understanding of biblical truth.

Some churches have assigned to creeds and confessions only *descriptive*, rather than *normative*, significance. That is, such statements relate the general beliefs which prevail within a church, but they do not constitute dogmatic pronouncements to which its officers must adhere. This has been so with some Congregational and Baptist bodies, and it has gained popularity in others which once required strict subscription. The Church of England, for example, does not bind its pastors to the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* but instead stresses uniform liturgical practices. Rationalists within various denominations have decried strict

subscription as an impediment to wholesome development of belief and practice.

Since historic Protestants affirm *sola scriptura*, the supreme authority of Scripture, they do not ascribe to creeds and confessions the same authority with which the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have invested them. For Protestants, Scripture possesses inherent authority because it is the Word of God. Creeds and confessions are witnesses to the truth of the Bible. They are necessarily subordinate standards. Scripture is the *regula fidei*, the rule of faith. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, on the contrary, regard the ancient ecumenical creeds as components of infallible tradition and therefore coordinate in authority with the Bible. The Orthodox churches attribute this dignity to only the first seven ecumenical councils, but the Roman church ascribes infallibility to the Council of Trent and to *ex cathedra* papal pronouncements along with the decisions of Vatican Council I (1870) and Vatican Council II (1965). Protestant churches have revised their confessions at times in order to address matters which earlier statements did not consider or to clarify the position they have taken on historic doctrines. Protestant bodies have demonstrated willingness to subject their statements to scrutiny with the possibility of improving them.

To insist upon *no creed but Christ* may appear to be the zenith of piety, but soon the question must arise, "Which Christ?" Heretics, ancient and modern, have professed to believe in Christ, but their conception is not that of the God-Man who is the center of the historic Christian faith. In the centuries since the Protestant Reformation many issues have arisen, often as consequences of deviations from biblical teachings even within Protestant ranks. Sometimes pseudo-Christian cults have revived ancient falsehoods such as the Arian view of Christ. Such chal-

lenges require occasional revisions of the creeds to meet new threats as they appear. Today, for example, it is necessary to affirm the sole authority of Scripture in opposition to the rationalism which has infected many churches and in opposition to charismatic groups that regard emotional experience as the keystone of genuine Christianity. Confessions are proclamations of orthodoxy which provide instruments for personal and congregational declarations of faith in Christ and the historic truths of his Word. They are excellent bases for thorough instruction in biblical doctrine. Those churches which have been overtly confessional and have required their officers to subscribe to their creeds, have thereby helped to preserve Christianity against dilution of its teachings and defection from its God. Conscious adherence to historic creeds links current church bodies with their predecessors and with other bodies of like belief. It enables congregations and denominations to practice genuine catholicity among the churches of the Reformation.

"If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved" (Romans 10:9-10).

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torical Writing, *The Historical Dictionary of Late Medieval England*, and the *Historical Dictionary of Tudor England*. He will become the professor of church history at Greenville Presbyterian Seminary (South Carolina) in the fall of 2001. He is a regular contributor to *Reformation & Revival Journal*.

Notes

1. The texts of almost all historic creeds and confessions appear in Schaff, Philip and David S., editors, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983 reprint of 1931 edition). For an excellent brief review of the creeds and confessions, see, W. A. Curtis, "Confessions," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, s. v.
2. Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1983); Philip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis: A History of General Councils, 325-1870* (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1961) are helpful accounts from Roman Catholic authors. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1972) and Gerald Bray, *Creeds, Councils, and Christ* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1984) are Protestant treatments.
3. Theodore G. Tappert, translator and editor, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1959).
4. James Edward McGoldrick, *Luther's English Connection* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1979) covers the first stage of Protestant development in England.
5. James Edward McGoldrick, *Luther's Scottish Connection* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989) is an account of the earliest Scottish Protestants.
6. H. J. Schroeder, translator, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1978 reprint).
7. John Leith, *Assembly at Westminster* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1973). This is a helpful analysis despite the author's neo-orthodox perspective, which is evident in his judgments. David W. Hall, *Windows on Westminster* (Norcross, Georgia: Great Commission Publications, 1993) is a readable account by an orthodox author.
8. W. L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1969) is a valuable resource. On Baptist origins, see James Edward McGoldrick, *Baptist Successionism: A Crucial Question in Baptist History* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1994).