

natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of the Fathers has handed down to us.

Source: Chalcedon Creed, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 7.

CHURCH FATHERS, SAINTS, AND MYSTICS

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

During the first three centuries C.E., several Roman rulers systematically persecuted Christians. Some victims were outspoken leaders, and others became conspicuous for not participating in pagan religious rituals. In either case they were barbarically executed, as were Jesus and the Apostles before them. Stories of religious martyrs became an important part of early Christian writing, both to commemorate the tragic events and to instill a sense of religious bravery in those who might experience a similar fate. The most popular of all early stories of martyrs is that of Polycarp (c. 69–c. 155), bishop of Smyrna, who was arrested during a pagan festival for failing to participate. He was burnt to death after refusing to renounce his faith.

9. As Polycarp was entering the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. When he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect for your old age," and similar things, according to their custom, [such as], "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists." But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." Then the proconsul urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty; reproach Christ." Polycarp declared, "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" . . .

12. While he spoke these and many other like things, he was filled with confidence and joy. His countenance was full of grace, so that not merely did it not fall as if troubled by the things said to him, but, on

the contrary, the proconsul was astonished. He sent his herald to proclaim in the middle of the stadium three times, "Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian." This proclamation having been made by the herald, the whole multitude—both of the heathen and Jews who dwelt at Smyrna—cried out with uncontrollable fury, and in a loud voice, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice, or to worship the gods." Speaking this, they cried out, and besought Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. But Philip answered that it was not lawful for him to do since the shows of wild beasts were already finished. Then it seemed good to them to cry out with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. . . .

13. This, then, was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken. The multitudes immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to custom, eagerly assisting them in it. . . .

15. When he had pronounced this *amen*, and finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. As the flame blazed in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, saw a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed the body of the martyr like a circle. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived a sweet odor [coming from the pile], as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there.

16. Eventually, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished.

Source: *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, adapted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1.

TERTULLIAN ON HERETICS

Early Christians were forced to defend their faith against attacks by both Jewish and Roman critics. Christianity was new and comparatively distinct from more ancient religious traditions and was thus frequently ridiculed by outsiders. Even within Christianity, theological disputes erupted between factions, resulting in defenses on

both sides of the issue. One of early Christianity's most influential defenders was Tertullian (c. 160–c. 225), who emphasized the importance of nonrational faith when confronting the more perplexing doctrines of Christianity, such as the divine incarnation and the crucifixion of Jesus. In the selections here we find Tertullian's most famous anti-intellectual expressions: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" and "It is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd."

These [pagan philosophies] are "the doctrines" of men and "of demons" produced for itching ears of the spirit of this world's wisdom. This the Lord called "foolishness," and "chose the foolish things of the world" to confound even philosophy itself. For (philosophy) it is which is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and the dispensation of God. Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy. . . . Whence spring those "fables and endless genealogies," and "unprofitable question," and "words which spread like a cancer?" From all these, when the apostle would restrain us, he expressly names philosophy as that which he would have us be on our guard against. Writing to the Colossians, he says, "See that no one beguile you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and contrary to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost." He had been at Athens, and had in his interviews (with us philosophers) become acquainted with that human wisdom which pretends to know the truth, while it only corrupts it, and is itself divided into its own manifold heresies, by the variety of its mutually repugnant sects. What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from "the porch of Solomon," who had himself taught that "the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart." Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides.

Source: Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics*, ch. 7, adapted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3.

There are, to be sure, other things also quite as foolish [as the birth of Christ], which have reference to the humiliations and sufferings of God. Or else, let them call a crucified God "wisdom." But Marcion will apply the knife to this doctrine [of the crucifixion] also, and even with greater reason. For which is more unworthy of God, which is more likely to raise a blush of shame, that God should be born, or that He should die? that He should bear the flesh, or the cross? Be circumcised, or be crucified? be cradled, or be confined? be laid in a manger, or in a tomb? Talk of "wisdom!" You will be more arbitrary if you refuse to believe this also. But, after all, you will not be "wise" unless you become a "fool" to the world, by believing "the foolish things of God." Have you, then, cut away all sufferings from Christ, on the ground that, as a mere phantom, He was incapable of

experiencing them? . . . The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed because men are ashamed of it. And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And He was buried, and rose again; the fact is certain, because it is impossible. But how will all this be true in Him, if He was not Himself true—if He really had not in Himself that which might be crucified, might die, might be buried, and might rise again?

Source: Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ*, ch. 5, adapted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3.

JEROME'S PREFACE TO THE VULGATE

During the first few centuries, disorganized and conflicting Latin versions of the Christian scriptures circulated among churches. Hoping to finally put the matter in order, near the close of the fourth century Pope Damasus commissioned a scholar from Italy named Jerome (c. 342–420) to compile a definitive Latin text of the Old and New Testaments. The project took some time, but Jerome succeeded in translating most of it. His work became the foundation for the Latin Vulgate, the authoritative text of the Bible in the Roman Catholic world. The following is his Preface to the four Gospels, which was addressed to Pope Damasus in 383 C.E. The issues Jerome raises here are precisely those that modern translators of the Bible must also face.

You urge me to revise the old Latin version, and, as it were, to sit in judgement on the copies of the Scriptures which are now scattered throughout the whole world; and, inasmuch as they differ from one another, you would have me decide which of them agree with the Greek original. The labor is one of love, but at the same time both perilous and presumptuous; for in judging others I must be content to be judged by all. And how can I dare to change the language of the world in its hoary old age, and carry it back to the early days of its infancy? Is there a man, learned or unlearned, who will not, when he takes the volume into his hands, and perceives that what he reads does not suit his settled tastes, break out immediately into violent language, and call me a forger and a profane person for having the audacity to add anything to the ancient books, or to make any changes or corrections therein? Now there are two consoling reflections which enable me to bear the odium. First, the command is given by you who are supreme bishop; and secondly, even on the showing of those who revile, readings at variance with the early copies cannot be right. For if we are to pin our faith to the Latin texts, it is for our opponents to tell us *which*; for there are almost as many forms of texts as there are copies. If, on the other hand, we are to glean the truth from a comparison of *many*, why not go back to the original Greek and correct the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators, and the blundering alterations of confident but ignorant critics, and, further, all that has been inserted or changed by copyists more asleep than awake? I am not discussing the Old Testament, which was turned into Greek by the Seventy

elders, and has reached us by a descent of three steps. . . . I therefore promise in this short Preface the four Gospels only, which are to be taken in the following order, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as they have been revised by a comparison of the Greek manuscripts. Only early ones have been used. But to avoid any great divergences from the Latin which we are accustomed to read, I have used my pen with some restraint, and while I have corrected only such passages as seemed to convey a different meaning, I have allowed the rest to remain as they are.

Source: Jerome, Preface to the Four Gospels, adapted from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 6.

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

Perhaps the most important theologian in the history of Christianity is Augustine (354–430), bishop of the North African city of Hippo. Like Tertullian, Augustine defended Christianity against attacks by Roman pagans and Christian heretics alike. He wrote on a range of issues of Christian doctrine, and his views helped shape the direction of the religion. His most famous work is his autobiography, the Confessions, which describes his struggle to find spiritual contentment through hedonism, through the Manichean religious cult, and finally through Christianity.

Book 2. . . . I will now call to mind my past foulness, and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but that I may love you, O my God. . . . I had a desire to commit robbery, and did so. I was compelled neither by hunger, nor poverty, but through a distaste for doing right, and a desire for wickedness. For I stole things that I already had, and much better. Nor did I desire to enjoy what I stole, but only the theft and sin itself. There was pear tree close to our vineyard, heavily loaded with fruit, which was tempting neither for its color nor its flavor. Late one night, a few of us shameless young folk went to shake and rob it, having, according to our disgraceful habit, prolonged our games in the streets until then. We carried away great loads, not to eat ourselves, but to fling to pigs, having only eaten some of them. This pleased us all the more because it was not permitted. . . .

Book 3. I came to Carthage, where a cauldron of unholy loves bubbled up all around me. . . . I contaminated the spring of friendship with the filth of sensuality, and I dimmed its luster with the hell of lustfulness. Foul and dishonorable as I was, through an excess of vanity, I nevertheless craved to be thought elegant and urbane. I fell rashly, then, into the love in which I longed to be ensnared. . . . [In time] I directed my mind to the Holy Scriptures, so that I might see what they were. . . . [but] my inflated pride rejected their style, nor could the sharpness of my wit pierce their inner meaning. . . . I then fell among [Manichean] men proudly raving, very carnal, and voluble, in whose mouths were the snares of the devil—the lure being composed of a mixture of the syllables of your name, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Intercessor, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. . . .

Book 5. . . . For nearly the whole of those nine years during which, with unstable mind, I had followed the Manicheans, I had been looking forward with great eagerness for the arrival of [the Manichean teacher] Faustus. The other members of the sect whom I had chanced to encounter, when unable to answer the questions I raised, always directed me to look forward to his coming. By discoursing with him, these, and greater difficulties if I had them, would be most easily and amply cleared away. When at last he arrived, I found him to be a man of pleasant speech, who spoke of the very same things as they themselves did, although more fluently, and in better language. But of what profit to me was the elegance of my cup-bearer, since he failed to offer me the more precious draught for which I thirsted? . . . When it became plain to me that he was ignorant of those arts [of rhetoric] in which I had believed him to excel, I began to despair of his clearing up and explaining all the perplexities that harassed me.

I came to Milan and went to Ambrose the bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men. . . . I studiously listened to him preaching to the people, not with the proper motive, but, as it were, trying to discover whether his eloquence matched his reputation. . . . And while I opened my heart to admit how *skillfully* he spoke, there also gradually entered with it how *truly* he spoke! These things also began to appear to me to be defensible. The Catholic faith, for which I had felt nothing could be said against the attacks of the Manichaeans, I now conceived might be maintained without presumption. . . . And so I earnestly bent my mind to see if I could possibly prove the Manichaeans guilty of falsehood. . . . Because these philosophers were without the saving name of Christ, I utterly refused to have them cure my fainting soul. I resolved, therefore, to be a catechumen in the Catholic Church, which my parents had commended to me, until something settled should manifest itself to me towards which I might steer my course.

Book 6. . . . When I had disclosed to my mother that I was now no longer a Manichaean, though not yet a Catholic Christian, she did not leap for joy. . . . She replied to me that she believed in Christ, that before she departed this life, she would see me a Catholic believer. . . . Active efforts were made to get me a wife. I wooed, I was engaged, my mother taking the greatest pains in the matter, that when I was once married, the health-giving baptism might cleanse me. . . . A maiden came forward who was two years under the marriageable age, but, as she was pleasing, I waited for her. . . . Meanwhile my sins were multiplying. My mistress was torn from my side as an impediment to my marriage, and my heart, which clung to her, was racked, and wounded, and bleeding. She went back to Africa, making a vow to you to never know another man, and leaving with me my natural son by her. But I unhappily could not imitate her and, impatient of delay, I took another mistress—since it would be two years until I was to marry my betrothed, and I was not so much a lover of marriage as a slave to lust. . . .

Book 8. The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me. . . . But when a profound reflection had, from the secret depths of my soul, drawn together and heaped up all my misery before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by as mighty a shower of tears. So that I might pour forth fully with natural expressions, I left [my friend] Alypius; for it seemed to me that solitude was fitter for the business of weeping. So I retired to such a distance that even his presence could not be oppressive to me. . . . I flung myself down, how, I do not know, under a certain fig-tree, giving free course to my tears, and the streams of my eyes gushed out, an acceptable sacrifice to you. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, I spoke to you: "But you, O Lord, how long? How long, Lord? Will you be angry forever?" . . .

I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice, sounding like a boy or girl—I don't know which—coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and repeating, "Take up and read; take up and read." Immediately my expression changed, and I earnestly considered whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing these words. Nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from heaven to open the book, and to read the first chapter I should light upon. For I had heard that Anthony, accidentally coming in while the gospel was being read, received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him: "Go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." And by this oracle he was immediately converted to you. I quickly returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose from there. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." I did not read any further, nor did I need to; for instantly, as the sentence ended—by a light of security, so to speak, infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

Source: Augustine, *Confessions*, adapted from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1886–1890), series 1, vol. 1.

THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT

Benedict of Nursia (480–547), an Italian monk within the Roman Catholic Church, is most remembered for the Rule, or list of precepts, that he created for a monastic community that he founded in southern Italy. Hailed for its balance and moderation, his Rule was adopted by monasteries throughout Western Europe, resulting in Benedict's designation as "the Father of Western Monasticism." The Rule consists of

seventy-three sections; the three presented below deal with the varieties of monastic life, vows of silence, and vows of poverty.

Concerning the kinds of monks and their manner of living. It is evident that there are four kinds of monks. The cenobites are the first kind; that is, those living in a monastery, serving under a rule of an abbot. Then the second kind is that of the anchorites; that is, the hermits, —those who, not by the new fervor of a conversion but by the long probation of life in a monastery, have learned to fight against the devil, having already been taught by the solace of many. They, having been well prepared, in the army of brothers for the solitary fight of the hermit, being secure now without the consolation of another, are able, God helping them, to fight with their own hand or arm against the vices of the flesh or of their thoughts.

But a third very bad kind of monks are the sarabaites, approved by no rule, experience being their teacher, as with the gold which is tried in the furnace. But, softened after the manner of lead, keeping faith with the world by their works, they are known through their tonsure to lie to God. These being shut up by twos or threes, or, indeed, alone, without a shepherd, not in the Lord's but in their own sheep-folds,—their law is the satisfaction of their desires. For whatever they think good or choice, this they call holy; and what they do not wish, this they consider unlawful. But the fourth kind of monks is the kind which is called gyratory. During their whole life they are guests, for three or four days at a time, in the cells of the different monasteries, throughout the various provinces. They are always wandering and never stationary, given over to the service of their own pleasures and the joys of the palate, and in every way worse than the sarabaites. Concerning the most wretched way of living of all of such monks it is better to be silent than to speak. These things therefore being omitted, let us proceed, with the aid of God, to treat of the best kind, the cenobites.

Concerning silence. Let us do as the prophet says: "I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue, I have kept my mouth with a bridle: I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good; and my sorrow was stirred." Here the prophet shows that if one ought at times, for the sake of silence, to refrain from good sayings; how much more, as a punishment for sin, ought one to cease from evil words. And therefore, if anything is to be asked of the prior, let it be asked with all humility and subjection of reverence, lest one seem to speak more than is fitting. Scurrilities, however, or idle words and those exciting laughter, we condemn in all places with a lasting prohibition: nor do we permit a disciple to open his mouth for such sayings.

Whether the monks should have anything of their own. More than anything else is this special vice to be cut off root and branch from the monastery, that one should presume to give or receive anything without the order of the abbot, or should have anything of his own. He should have absolutely nothing—neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen—nothing at all. For indeed

it is not allowed to the monks to have their own bodies or wills in their own power. But all things necessary they must not expect from the Father of the monastery; nor is it allowable to have anything which the abbot did not give or permit. All things shall be common to all, as it is written: "Let not any man presume or call anything his own." But if any one shall have been discovered delighting in this most evil vice, being warned once and again, if he does not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.

Source: The Rule of Saint Benedict, Sects. 1, 6, 33, tr. Ernest F. Henderson.

AQUINAS ON FAITH AND REASON

During the Middle Ages, one of the chief theological issues was the relation between faith and reason. Tertullian addressed this issue with his famous rhetorical question "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" implying that reason plays no role in matters of faith. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) argued to the contrary that reason can go a long way in establishing religious truths, such as the existence and nature of God. However, he argued, faith in divine revelation still is required for establishing the more particular truths of Christianity. In the selection below, Aquinas explains the dual paths toward knowledge of God, the need for faith in addition to reason, and the compatibility of faith and reason.

3. *The Truths which we Confess concerning God Fall under two Categories.* The truths that we confess concerning God fall under two categories. Some things that are true of God are beyond all the competence of human reason, such as that God is three and one. There are other things to which even human reason can attain, such as the existence and unity of God, which philosophers have proved to a demonstration under the guidance of the light of natural reason. It is clear that there are points of absolute intelligibility in God that are altogether beyond the compass of human reason. . . . Human understanding cannot go so far with its natural power as to grasp God's substance, since, under the conditions of the present life, knowledge and understanding begin with the senses. Therefore, objects beyond the senses cannot be grasped by human understanding except so far as knowledge is gathered of them through the senses. But things of sense cannot lead our understanding to discover in them the essence of the divine substance, since they are effects inadequate to the power that caused them. Nevertheless our understanding is thereby led to some knowledge of God, namely, of his existence and of other attributes that must necessarily be attributed to the first cause. There are, therefore, some points of intelligibility in God, accessible to human reason, and other points that altogether transcend the power of human reason. . . .
4. *It is an Advantage for the Truths of God, known by Natural Reason, to be Proposed to Humans to be Believed on Faith.* If a truth of this nature were left to the sole inquiry of reason, three disadvantages would follow.

One is that the knowledge of God would be confined to few. The discovery of truth is the fruit of studious inquiry, and very many people are hindered from this. . . . Another disadvantage is that those who did arrive at the knowledge or discovery of the aforesaid truth would take a long time to gain it, because of the profundity of such truth and the many prerequisites to the study. . . . A third disadvantage is that, because of the infirmity of our judgment and the disquieting force of imagination, there is some mixture of error in most of the investigations of human reason. . . .

7. *The Truth of Reason is not Contrary to the Truth of Christian Faith.* The natural dictates of reason must certainly be quite true: it is impossible to think of their being otherwise. Nor again is it permissible to believe that the tenets of faith are false, being so evidently confirmed by God. Since therefore falsehood alone is contrary to truth, it is impossible for the truth of faith to be contrary to principles known by natural reason. Whatever is put into the disciple's mind by the teacher is contained in the knowledge of the teacher, unless the teacher is teaching dishonestly, which would be a wicked thing to say about God. But the knowledge of principles naturally known is put into us by God, since God himself is the author of our nature. Therefore these principles also are contained in the divine wisdom. Whatever therefore is contrary to these principles is contrary to divine wisdom, and cannot be of God. . . .
8. *The Relation of Human Reason to the first Truth of Faith.* Things of the senses, from which human reason takes its beginning towards knowledge, retain in themselves some trace of imitation of God, insofar as they exist and are good. Yet this trace is so imperfect that it proves wholly insufficient to declare the substance of God himself.

Source: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book 1, chs. 3, 4, 7, 8. Adapted from *Of God and His Creatures*, tr. Joseph Ricaby (London: Burnes and Oates: 1905).

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

Held between the years 1545 and 1563, the Council of Trent was the nineteenth ecumenical council recognized by the Catholic Church, and was initiated at the insistence of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to help bridge the gap between Catholics and Protestants. While Protestant representatives attended some of the sessions, the end result of the Council was the reaffirmation of Catholicism's doctrines that had spawned the Protestant Reformation to begin with. The Council of Trent marks the beginning of a period of Church history known as the Counter-Reformation during which time the Catholic Church combated the Protestant doctrine and the advance of Protestantism in Europe and elsewhere. The selections below address several of the most central issues that divide Catholicism from Protestantism, namely, transubstantiation, purgatory, religious images, and indulgences.

On Transubstantiation. Because Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod does now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.

On Purgatory. The Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this ecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the prayers of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar. Accordingly, the holy Synod commands to bishops that they diligently endeavor that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ. But let the more difficult and subtle questions, which tend not to edification, and from which for the most part there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude. In like manner, such things as are uncertain, or which labor under an appearance of error, let them not allow to be made public and so treated. While those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition, or which savor of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandals and stumbling-blocks of the faithful. But let the bishops take care that the prayers of the faithful who are living, that is, the sacrifices of masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which have been customarily performed by the faithful for the other faithful departed, be piously and devoutly performed, in accordance with the institutes of the church. Whatever is due on their behalf, from the endowments of testators, or in other ways, shall be discharged, not in a thoughtless manner, but diligently and accurately, by the priests and ministers of the church, and others who are bound to render this service.

On Sacred Images. The images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples. Due honor and veneration are to be given them, not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or, that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols. But [honor and veneration are given to them] because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent. Accordingly, by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ. And we venerate the saints, whose likeness they bear, as, by the decrees of Councils, and especially of the second Synod of Nicaea, has been defined against the opponents of images.

On Indulgences. The power of conferring Indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church, and she has, even in the most ancient times, used that power, delivered to her by God. The sacred Holy Synod teaches, and commands, that the use of Indulgences, for the Christian people most salutary, and approved of by the authority of sacred Councils, is to be retained in the Church. It condemns with anathema those who either assert that they are useless, or who deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them. In granting them, however, it desires that, in accordance with the ancient and approved custom in the Church, moderation be observed to help prevent ecclesiastical discipline from being weakened by excessive practice. And being desirous that the abuses which have crept therein, and by occasion of which this honorable name of Indulgences is blasphemed by heretics, be amended and corrected, it ordains generally by this decree, that all evil gains for the obtaining thereof (from which source a most prolific cause of abuses amongst the Christian people has been derived) be wholly abolished. But as regards the other abuses which have proceeded from superstition, ignorance, irreverence, or from whatever other source, since, by reason of the manifold corruptions in the places and provinces where the said abuses are committed, they cannot conveniently be specially prohibited. It commands all bishops, diligently to collect, each in his own church, all abuses of this nature, and to report them in the first provincial Synod, that, after having been reviewed by the opinions of the other bishops also, they may forthwith be referred to the Sovereign Roman Pontiff, by whose authority and prudence that which may be expedient for the universal Church will be ordained; that this the gift of holy Indulgences may be dispensed to all the faithful, piously, holily, and incorruptly.

Source: Council of Trent, Sessions 13, 25, tr. J. Waterworth.

TERESA OF AVILA ON THE PRAYER OF UNION

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), a sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, entered a Carmelite convent at age 19. With St. John of the Cross she established the Discalced (barefoot) order, which was stricter and wore only sandals. She had visions and raptures; in her most memorable vision, an angel pierced her heart with a flaming arrow, which, when removed, left her with a love for God. Teresa's most systematic work, Interior Castle (1577), uses the metaphor of seven series of mansions to represent various stages of spiritual development. The mystic enters the castle door through prayer and then roams the mansions' millions of rooms at will. She describes the fifth series of mansions as the Prayer of Union, by which the mystic's soul is possessed by God. In the following selection, she explains the effects of this union using the analogy of a silkworm. The silkworm starts from a tiny egg that feeds on mulberry leaves, spins a cocoon, and emerges as a butterfly. The silkworm represents the soul, its nourishment is the Church, the silk house is Christ, and the spinning of the cocoon is the prayer of union. Thus, the union experience, which does not last even a half hour, transforms the mystic, and the new "butterfly" feels like a stranger in its new world.

You will have heard of the wonderful way in which silk is made—a way which no one could invent but God—and how it comes from a kind of seed which looks like tiny peppercorns. (I have never seen this, but only heard of it, so if it is incorrect in any way the fault is not mine.) When the warm weather comes, and the mulberry-trees begin to show leaf, this seed starts to take life; until it has this sustenance, on which it feeds, it is as dead. The silkworms feed on the mulberry-leaves until they are full-grown, when people put down twigs, upon which, with their tiny mouths, they start spinning silk, making themselves very tight little cocoons, in which they bury themselves. Then, finally, the worm, which was large and ugly, comes right out of the cocoon a beautiful white butterfly. . . .

The silkworm is like the soul which takes life when, through the heat which comes from the Holy Spirit, it begins to utilize the general help which God gives to us all, and to make use of the remedies which He left in His Church—such as frequent confessions, good books and sermons, for these are the remedies for a soul dead in negligences and sins and frequently plunged into temptation. The soul begins to live and nourishes itself on this food, and on good meditations, until it is full grown—and this is what concerns me now: the rest is of little importance.

When it is full-grown, then, as I wrote at the beginning, it starts to spin its silk and to build the house in which it is to die. This house may be understood here to mean Christ. I think I read or heard somewhere that our life is hid in Christ, or in God (for that is the same thing), or that our life is Christ. (The exact form of this is little to my purpose.)

Here, then, daughters, you see what we can do, with God's favor. May His Majesty Himself be our Mansion as He is in this Prayer of Union which, as it were, we ourselves spin. When I say He will be our Mansion, and we can construct it for ourselves and hide ourselves in it, I seem to be suggesting that we can subtract from God, or add to Him. But of course we cannot possibly do that! We can neither subtract from, nor add to, God but we can subtract from, and add to, ourselves, just as these little silkworms do. And, before we have finished doing all that we can in that respect, God will take this tiny achievement of ours, which is nothing at all, unite it with His greatness and give it such worth that its reward will be the Lord Himself. And as it is He Whom it has cost the most, so His Majesty will unite our small trials with the great trials which He suffered, and make both of them into one.

On, then, my daughters. Let us hasten to perform this task and spin this cocoon. Let us renounce our self-love and self-will, and our attachment to earthly things. Let us practice penance, prayer, mortification, obedience, and all the other good works that you know of. Let us do what we have been taught; and we have been instructed about what our duty is. Let the silkworm die—let it die, as in fact it does when it has completed the work which it was created to do. Then we shall see God and shall ourselves be as completely hidden in His greatness as is this little worm in its cocoon. Note that, when I speak of seeing God, I am referring to the way

in which, as I have said, He allows Himself to be apprehended in this kind of union.

And now let us see what becomes of this silkworm, for all that I have been saying about it is leading up to this. When it is in this state of prayer, and quite dead to the world, it comes out a little white butterfly. Oh, greatness of God, that a soul should come out like this after being hidden in the greatness of God, and closely united with Him, for so short a time—never, I think, for as long as half an hour! I tell you truly, the very soul does not know itself. For think of the difference between an ugly worm and a white butterfly, it is just the same here. The soul cannot think how it can have merited such a blessing—whence such a blessing could have come to it, I meant to say, for it knows quite well that it has not merited it at all. It finds itself so anxious to praise the Lord that it would gladly be consumed and die a thousand deaths for His sake. Then it finds itself longing to suffer great trials and unable to do otherwise. It has the most vehement desires for penance, for solitude, and for all to know God. And hence, when it sees God being offended, it becomes greatly distressed. In the following Mansion we shall treat of these things further and in detail, for, although the experiences of this Mansion and of the next are almost identical, their effects come to have much greater power, for, as I have said, if after God comes to a soul here on earth it strives to progress still more, it will experience great things.

Source: Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansion, ch. 2, from *Interior Castle*, tr. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961). Reprinted by permission.

PROTESTANT STATEMENTS OF FAITH

LUTHERANS: AUGSBURG CONFESSION

As Protestant Christian Churches throughout Europe took issue with the Roman Catholic Church, they created confessions of faith that defined their principal theological tenets. Among the first of these was the Augsburg Confession, written in part by Martin Luther (1483–1546) in 1530. Even today it is a foundational statement for most Lutheran denominations, and Lutheran clergy take an oath by it upon ordination. In spite of Luther's harsh attacks on core Catholic doctrine, the original twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession highlight the similarities between Lutheran Protestants and Catholics, rather than the differences. Seven articles added later discuss Catholic abuses. The selected articles have a distinctively Lutheran tone.

Article 4. Of Justification. [Our Churches] . . . teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

Article 7. Of the Church. Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4, 5, 6.

Article 10. Of the Lord's Supper. Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

Article 11. Of Confession. Of Confession they teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible according to the Psalm: Who can understand his errors? Ps. 19, 12.

Article 21. Of the Worship of the Saints. Of the Worship of Saints they teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings. But the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and has promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon, 1 John 2, 1: If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, etc.

Article 23. Of the Marriage of Priests. There has been common complaint concerning the examples of priests who were not chaste. For that reason also Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were certain causes why marriage was taken away from priests, but that there were far weightier ones why it ought to be given back; for so Platina writes. Since, therefore, our priests were desirous to avoid these open scandals, they married wives, and taught that it was lawful for them to contract matrimony. . . .

Source: Augsburg Confession, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

ANGLICANS: THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Between 1534 and 1563—a particularly volatile period of British history—the Church of England moved toward Protestantism. In 1571, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Parliament enacted *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, which, influenced by Calvinist theology, defined the new denomination. Clergy today in the Church of England are required to assent to the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, and the *Articles of Religion* in other Anglican churches—such as the Episcopal Church in the United States—are based on these. Since 1784, Methodist churches have followed *Twenty-Four Articles of Religion* taken from these. The selections here reflect

Anglican views of Church hierarchy, rejecting the papacy and establishing the British monarch as the Church's head.

Article 19: Of the Church. The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred: so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

Article 23: Of Ministering in the Congregation. It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Article 37: Of the Civil Magistrates. The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England and other her dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not nor ought to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the Queen's Majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended, we give not to our princes the ministering either of God's word or of sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen doth most plainly testify: but only that prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in Holy Scriptures by God himself, that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers.

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England. The Laws of the realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men at the commandment of the Magistrate to wear weapons and serve in the wars.

Source: "Articles of Religion," from *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Bagster, 1855).

PRESBYTERIANS: WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

At the beckoning of the British Parliament, the Westminster Confession was created in 1646 by churches in England that followed the reformed theology of John Calvin (1509–1546). Although the Anglican Church abandoned it shortly afterward, the Confession was adopted by the Scottish Parliament in 1649, making it a cornerstone of

Presbyterianism. The Confession also was adopted in modified form by other Protestant denominations throughout Europe and America. The chapters presented here reflect the distinctively Calvinistic points of the Confession.

Chapter 6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof.
1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. 2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. 3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. 4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. 5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. 6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal. . . .

Chapter 10. Of Effectual Calling. 1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. 2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. 3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. 4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever than by Christ, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is without warrant of the World of God. . . .

Chapter 17. Of the Perseverance of the Saints. 1. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. 2. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. 3. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Source: *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882).

**BAPTISTS: FIRST LONDON BAPTIST
CONFESSION OF FAITH**

In sixteenth-century England, a group of independent churches emerged based on the conviction that local congregations should be free from the authority of larger governing bodies. By their very nature, these congregations were diverse, formulating their own practices and theology. In 1608, former Anglican minister John Smyth (1554–1612) founded the first Baptist church in Amsterdam. Smyth and his followers moved back to England, establishing Baptist churches there. After his untimely death from tuberculosis, Baptists split into two groups: General Baptists, who believed that Christ died for all people, and Particular Baptists, who held that he died only for the elect. In 1643, Particular Baptists in London created a confession of faith. Unlike later Baptist confessions, which were modifications of the Westminster Confession, this one has a distinct content. The following selections, taken from the 1646 edition of this Confession, highlight key points of Baptist theology, and article 21 specifically articulates the position of the Particular Baptists.

- 21. Jesus Christ by His death did purchase salvation for the elect that God gave unto Him: These only have interest in Him, and fellowship with Him, for whom He makes intercession to His Father in their behalf, and to them alone doth God by His Spirit apply this redemption; as also the free gift of eternal life is given to them, and none else. . . .
- 25. The preaching of the gospel to the conversion of sinners, is absolutely free; no way requiring as absolutely necessary, any qualifications, preparations, or terrors of the law, or preceding ministry of the law, but only and alone the naked soul, a sinner and ungodly, to receive

Christ crucified, dead and buried, and risen again; who is made a prince and a Savior for such sinners as through the gospel shall be brought to believe on Him. . . .

36. Being thus joined, every [local] church hath power given them from Christ, for their well-being, to choose among themselves persons for elders and deacons, being qualified according to the word, as those which Christ hath appointed in His testament, for the feeding, governing, serving, and building up of His Church; and that none have any power to impose on them either these or any other. . . .
39. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, or that are made disciples; who upon profession of faith, ought to be baptized, and after to partake of the Lord's Supper. . . .
42. Christ hath likewise given power to His Church to receive in, and cast out, any member that deserves it; and this power is given to every congregation, and not to one particular person, either member or officer, but in relation to the whole body, in reference to their faith and fellowship.

Source: *Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London* (London: 1646).

CONGREGATIONALISTS: SAVOY DECLARATION OF FAITH AND ORDER

In addition to the Baptists, another group of independent churches in England was the Congregationalists. In 1658, representatives from about 120 of these churches met in Savoy Palace in an effort to unify their congregations. Modifying the Westminster Confession, they created the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order. The selection here is one of their two principal additions to the Westminster Confession, which asserts the right of a congregation to govern itself.

The Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in Them by Jesus Christ. 1. By the appointment of the Father all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner in the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head thereof. 2. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto communion with himself, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in Word. 3. Those thus called (through the ministry of the Word by his Spirit) he commandeth to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in this world. 4. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his Word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on that order in

worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the due and right exerting and executing of that power. 5. These particular churches thus appointed by the authority of Christ, and entrusted with power from him for the ends before expressed, are each of them as unto those ends, the seat of that power which he is pleased to communicate to his saints or subjects in this world, so that as such they receive it immediately from himself. 6. Besides these particular churches, there is not instituted by Christ any church more extensive or catholic entrusted with power for the administration of his ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his name. 7. A particular church gathered and completed according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. The Lord Christ having given to his called ones (united according to his appointment in church-order) liberty and power to choose persons fitted by the Holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord. . . .

Source: *Declaration of Faith and Order* (London: J. P., 1659).

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD: STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

The Pentecostal movement began around 1900 through the ministry of Charles Parham (1873–1929), who emphasized baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. In 1974, several independent Pentecostal congregations formed the Assemblies of God denomination. Pentecostals initially resisted creeds, but theological disputes prompted the General Council of the Assemblies of God to create a Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1916. Of the seventeen statements, the more uniquely Pentecostal ones are presented here.

5. *The Promise of the Father.* All believers are entitled to, and should ardently expect, and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service. The bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:1–31.
6. *The Full Consummation of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost.* The full consummation of the baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost and fire, is indicated by the initial sign of speaking in tongues, as the spirit of God gives utterance. Acts 2:4. This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. Acts 10:44–46; 15:8,9.
12. *Divine Healing.* Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers. Isa. 53:4,5; Matth. 8:16,17.
14. *The Blessed Hope.* The Resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ. The rapture of believers, which are alive and remain, and the translation of the true church, this is the blessed hope set before all believers. 1 Thess. 4:16–17; Rom. 8:23; Tit. 2:13.

15. *The Imminent Coming and Millennial Reign of Jesus.* The premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord to gather his people unto himself, and to judge the world in righteousness while reigning on the earth for a thousand years is the expectation of the true church of Christ.
16. *The Lake of Fire.* The devil and his angles, the beast and false prophet, and whosoever is not found written in the book of Life, the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators and all liars shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.
17. *The New Heavens and New Earth.* We look for new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 1 and 22.

Source: "A Statement of Fundamental Truths," General Council of the Assemblies of God, October 2-7, 1916.

RECENT SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS

UNITARIANISM: WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

Denominations emerging from the Protestant Reformation initially shared basic theological assumptions with the older Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Foremost among these were the notion of the Trinity and the idea that the Bible was the unique word of God. Growing political freedom in Europe and America permitted some Christian groups to step outside these traditional theological boundaries. One of the first such groups was the Unitarians, who, as their name implies, denied the Trinity in favor of a unified conception of God. Jesus, in their view, was a divinely appointed prophet and teacher, but not God himself. In America, Unitarianism became more formally organized through the efforts of William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), a former Congregationalist pastor. Though denying the Trinity, Channing remained committed to other tenets of Christianity. Some later Unitarians departed not only from Christian theology, but from all traditional religion, adopting instead a scientific humanism. The following selections are from Channing's seminal sermon Unitarian Christianity, delivered in 1819 at an ordination ceremony in Baltimore, Maryland.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired Apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians in whose name I speak, need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. We believe that God, when he speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may also say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more, than if communicated in an unknown tongue? . . .

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

1. In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's *unity*, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, that there is one God, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive, that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person, which the sagacity of later ages has discovered. We find to intimation, that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that, whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here, then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousness, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply