

The FOUNDATION
of
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
GATHERED INTO SIX PRINCIPLES

*And it is to be learned by ignorant people
that they may be fit to hear sermons with profit,
and to receive the Lord's Supper with comfort:*

*The entrance into Your words shows light,
And gives understanding to the simple. — Psalm 119.130*

By William Perkins
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TO ALL IGNORANT PEOPLE

who desire to be instructed.

Poor people, your manner is to soothe yourselves as though you were in a most happy estate. But if the matter comes to a just trial, it will fall out far otherwise. For you lead your lives in great ignorance, as may appear by these common opinions of yours which follow.

1. That faith is merely a man's good intentions, and his good serving of God.
2. That God is served by repeating the ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed.
3. That you have believed in Christ ever since you could remember.
4. That it is a pity that someone should live, who in any whit doubts his salvation.
5. That none can tell whether he is certainly saved or not; but that all men must be of a good belief.
6. That however a man lives, if he yet calls upon God on his deathbed, and says, "Lord have mercy upon me," and so goes away like a lamb, he is certainly saved.
7. That if any is strangely visited, he is either taken as deranged,¹ or bewitched.
8. That a man may swear as lawfully when he speaks nothing but the truth, and swears by nothing but that which is good, as he would by his faith, or solemn pledge.
9. That a preacher is a good man only as long as he is in the pulpit. *They think all are like themselves.*
10. That a man may repent whenever he wants, because the Scripture says, *At whatever time a sinner repents of his sins, etc.* Luk 15.10+
11. That it is an easier thing to please God, than to please our neighbor.
12. That you can keep the commandments only as well as God allows you.
13. That it is the safest to do in Religion, as most do.
14. That merry ballads and books, such as *Scoggin, Bevis of Southampton*,² etc., are good to while away the time, and to remove heart-qualms.
15. That you can serve God with all your heart, and you would still be sorry.
16. That a man need not hear so many sermons, unless he could follow them better.
17. That a man who comes to no sermons, may believe as well as someone who hears all the sermons in the world.
18. That you know all the Preacher can tell you. For he can say nothing except that every man is a sinner, that we must love our neighbors as ourselves, that every man must be saved by Christ — and all this you can tell as well as he can.
19. That it was a good world when the old religion existed, because all things were cheap.
20. That drinking and getting drunk in the ale-house or tavern is good fellowship, and shows a good kind nature, and maintains neighborhood.
21. That a man may swear by the Mass because it is nothing now, and by the Lady because she is gone out of the country.³

¹ Originally, "taken with a planet;" planet means *wanderer* — figuratively, the person's senses have wandered.

² Bevis (Bevois): a mythical character in 12th century Anglo-Norman poetry. He had a magic sword, a magical horse, and a giant for his page and squire. It was said that he founded Southampton, and did many heroic deeds.

³ Under Elizabeth I, England was a mixture of Protestantism and Catholicism. Catholic practices and allegiances continued, which the Puritans opposed. Mary Queen of Scots, a Catholic, had been executed by Elizabeth in 1567.

22. That every man must be for himself, and God for us all.
23. That a man may make of his own whatever he can.⁴
24. That if a man remembers to say his prayers every morning (even if he never understands them) he has blessed himself for the whole day following.
25. That a man prays when he says the ten commandments.
26. That a man eats his Maker in the Sacrament.⁵
27. That if a man is no adulterer, no thief, no murderer, and does no man harm, he is a right honest man [*i.e.*, righteous].
28. That a man need not have any knowledge of religion, because he is not book-learned.
29. That one may have a good intent, even though he says and does that which is evil.
30. That a man may go to wizards, called “wise men,” for counsel, because God has provided a salve for every sore.
31. That you are to be excused in all your doings, because even the best men are sinners.
32. That you have so strong a faith in Christ, that no evil company can hurt you.

What do these and similar sayings indicate, if not your gross ignorance? Now, where ignorance reigns, there reigns sin. And where sin reigns, there the devil rules. And where he rules, men are in a damnable case.

You may reply to me that you are not so bad as I would make you. If necessary, you can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. And therefore you will receive God’s relief, say all men what they will, and you defy the devil from your hearts.

I answer that it is not sufficient to say all these from memory, unless you can understand the meaning of the words, and be able to make a right use of the Commandments of the Lord’s Prayer, by applying them inwardly to your hearts and consciences, and outwardly to your lives and conduct. This is the very point in which you fail.

And for a help in your ignorance, to bring you to true knowledge, unfeigned faith, and sound repentance, I have set down here the principal points of Christian religion in six plain and easy rules, even such that the simplest may easily learn them. And to this is adjoined an exposition of them word by word. If you lack other good directions, then use my labor in this for your instruction. In reading it, *first learn the Six Principles*. And when you have them in mind without a book, and the meaning of them as well, *then learn the Exposition also*. This being well-conceived, and in some measure felt in the heart, you will be able to profit by sermons, whereas now you cannot. And the ordinary parts of the Catechism — namely, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the institution of the two Sacraments, will be more easily understood.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
WILLIAM PERKINS.

⁴ That is, a man is his own authority in religious matters (thus abusing the right of private judgment).

⁵ Alluding to Roman Catholic *transubstantiation*, that the bread and wine are the physical body and blood of Christ.

THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION ⁶
Gathered into Six Principles

The First Principle

The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

Question: What do you believe concerning God?

Answer: There is one God, Creator and Governor of all things, distinguished into the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. THERE IS A GOD. For the invisible things of Him, that is, His eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation of the world, being considered in His works to the intent that they should be without excuse. (Rom 1.20) Nevertheless, He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. (Act 14.17)
2. THIS GOD IS ONE. Concerning therefore meat sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. (1Cor 8.4)
3. HE IS CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Gen 1.1) Through faith we understand that the world was ordained by the word of God, so that the things which we see are not made of things which are visible. (Heb 11.3)
4. HE IS GOVERNOR OF ALL THINGS. The eyes of the Lord in every place behold the evil and the good. (Pro 15.3) Indeed, all the hairs on your head are numbered. (Mat 10.30)
5. DISTINGUISHED INTO THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. And Jesus, when he was baptized, came straight out of the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to him, and John saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And behold, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Mat 3.16-17) For there are three which bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the holy Spirit; and these three are one. (1Joh 5.7)

The Second Principle

All men are sinners

Question: What do you believe concerning man, and concerning your own self?

Answer: All men are wholly corrupted with sin through Adam's fall, and so they have become slaves of Satan, and guilty of eternal damnation.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. ALL MEN ARE CORRUPTED WITH SIN. As it is written, "There is none righteous, no not one." (Rom 3.10)

⁶ *Foundation* is singular. These are not six foundations, but one foundation comprised of six fundamental principles which govern the Christian life. Thus, it is not the foundation of "the" Christian Religion, but of *Christian Religion*.

The Six Principles

2. **THEY ARE WHOLLY CORRUPTED.** Now the very God of peace sanctify you throughout, & I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be kept blameless till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1The 5.23) This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that henceforth you should not walk as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds; having their cogitation darkened,⁷ and being strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart. (Eph 4.17-18) When the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil, continually. (Gen 6.5)

3. **THROUGH ADAM'S FALL.** Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death went over all men, for all men have sinned. (Rom 5.12)

4. **AND SO THEY HAVE BECOME SLAVES OF SATAN.** In times past you walked according to the course of the world, and after the Prince that rules in the air, even the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. (Eph 2.2) For as much, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that he might destroy through death, the one who had the power of death; that is, the devil. (Heb 2.14) In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds, that is, of infidels (unbelievers), that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them. (2Cor 4.4)

5. **AND GUILTY OF ETERNAL DAMNATION.** For as many as are under the works of the law, are under the curse. For it is written, "Cursed is every man who does not continue in all things which are written in the books of the Law, to do them." (Gal 3.10) Likewise, then, as by the offense of one, the fault came on all men to condemnation, so by the justifying of One, the benefit abounded toward all men, to the justification of life. (Rom 5.18)

The Third Principle

Jesus Christ is the Only Savior

Question: What means is there for you to escape this damnable estate? ⁸

Answer: Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, being made man, by his death on the cross, and by his righteousness, has perfectly alone, by himself, accomplished all things that are needful for the salvation of mankind.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. **CHRIST JESUS, THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD.** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, as the glory of the only begotten (Son) of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Joh 1.14)

2. **BEING MADE MAN.** For he in no way took on ⁹ the Angels, but he took on the seed of Abraham. (Heb 2.16)

⁷ *Cogitation* is not just our understanding, but the very way we think. The Greek is *dianoia* (Strongs 1271). This is Perkins' own translation of the text, though the Geneva Bible (1560) was available to him.

⁸ *Estate*: a condition or state of being.

⁹ Originally, "in no sort took the Angels, but he took the seed of Abraham." The Greek word is *epi-lambanomai*, to overtake, lay hold of, or attain to. Various translations, "give aid to" or "help," as if taking someone by the hand.

The Six Principles

3. BY HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was broken for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isa 53.5)

4. AND BY HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One, many shall also be made righteous. (Rom 5.19) For He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we should be made the righteousness of God in him. (2Cor 5.21)

5. HAS PERFECTLY. Therefore he is also able to perfectly save those who come to God by him, seeing that he ever lives to make intercession for them. (Heb 7.25)

6. ALONE BY HIMSELF. Neither is there salvation in any other, for among men there is given no other name under heaven, by which we must be saved. (Act 4.12)

7. ACCOMPLISHED ALL THINGS NEEDFUL FOR THE SALVATION OF MANKIND. He is the reconciliation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1Joh 2.2)

The Fourth Principle

Saving Faith in Christ

Question: But how must you be made partaker of Christ and his benefits?

Answer: A man of contrite and humble spirit, by faith alone apprehending and applying Christ with all His merits to himself, is justified before God, and sanctified.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. A MAN OF CONTRITE AND HUMBLE SPIRIT. For thus says He who is high and excellent; He who inhabits eternity, whose name is the Holy One: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to those who are of a contrite heart." (Isa 57.15) The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit, a contrite and broken heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psa 51.17)

2. BY FAITH ALONE. As soon as Jesus heard that word spoken, he said to the ruler of the Synagogue, "Be not afraid, only believe." (Mar 5.36) So Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it up for a sign, and when a serpent had bitten a man, then he looked to the serpent of brass, and lived. (Num 21.9) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (Joh 3.14-15)

3. APPREHENDING AND APPLYING CHRIST WITH ALL HIS MERITS TO HIMSELF. But as many as received Him, to them he gave power to be the sons of God, to those who believe in His name. (Joh 1.12) And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that believes in me shall never thirst." (Joh 6.35)

4. IS JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Rom 4.3) Even as David declares the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." (Rom 4.6-7)

The Six Principles

5. AND SANCTIFIED. And he put no difference between us and them, after he had purified their hearts by faith. (Act 15.9) But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (1Cor 1.30)

The Fifth Principle

The Means of Faith

Question: What are the ordinary or usual means for obtaining faith?

Answer: Faith comes only by the preaching of the word, and increases daily by it; and also by the administration of the Sacraments and prayer.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. FAITH COMES ONLY BY THE PREACHING OF THE WORD, AND INCREASES DAILY BY IT. But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom 10.14) Where there is no vision, the people decay; but he that keeps the law is blessed. (Pro 29.18)

2. AND ALSO BY THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS. After he received the sign of circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had when uncircumcised, that he should be the father of all those who believe, not being circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also. (Rom 4.11) Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, etc. (1Cor 10.1)

3. AND PRAYER. For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Rom 10.13)

The Sixth Principle

The Last Judgment

Question: What is the estate of all men after death?

Answer: All men shall rise again with their own bodies, to the last Judgment, which being ended, the godly shall possess the kingdom of heaven; but unbelievers and reprobates ¹⁰ shall be in hell, tormented with the devil and his angels forever.

Proofs out of the word of God:

1. ALL MEN SHALL RISE AGAIN WITH THEIR OWN BODIES. Do not marvel at this, for the hour shall come in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice. And they shall come forth who have done good, to the resurrection of life; but those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Joh 5.28-29)

2. TO THE LAST JUDGMENT. For God will bring every work unto judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecc 12.14) But I say to you, that of every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account of it at the day of Judgment. (Mat 12.36)

¹⁰ *Reprobate:* a person without moral principles.

The Six Principles

3. WHICH BEING ENDED, THE GODLY... And delivered righteous Lot, troubled with the unclean conduct of the wicked. (2Pet 2.7) And the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark on the forehead of those who mourn and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of it. (Eze 9.4)

4. SHALL POSSESS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "Come you blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." (Mat 25.34)

5. BUT UNBELIEVERS AND REPROBATES SHALL BE IN HELL, TORMENTED WITH THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. Then he will say to those on the left hand, "Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mat 25.41)

The Scriptures used for proof were only quoted by the author to move you to search them. The words themselves I have so expressed, at the earnest request of many, that you may more easily learn them. If you would yet be ignorant, then your malice is evident. If you gain knowledge, then give God the glory in doing His will. — *Your T. S.* [True Servant]

THE EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES

The First Principle expounded.

The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

Q. What is God?

A. God is spirit, or a spiritual substance, most wise, most holy, eternal, infinite. (Joh 4.24)

Q. How do you persuade yourself that there is a God?

A. Beside the testimony of the Scriptures, plain reason will show it.

Q. What is one reason?

A. When I consider the wonderful frame of the world, I think the silly creatures who are in it could never make it. Neither could it make itself. And therefore, besides all these, the Maker of it must be God. Even as when a man comes into a foreign country, and sees fair and sumptuous buildings, and yet finds no living creatures there besides birds and beasts, he will not imagine that either birds or beasts erected those buildings, but he quickly conceives that some men either were or have been there. (Rom 1.20; Act 14.15-17)

Q. What other reason do you have?

A. A man who commits any sin, such as murder, fornication, adultery, blasphemy, etc., even if he so conceals the matter, that no man living knows of it, still oftentimes has a griping in his conscience, and feels the very flashing of hellfire. This is a strong reason to show that there is a God, before whose judgment seat he must answer for his act. (Rom 2.15; Gen 3.8-10; Gen 42.21)

Q. How many Gods are there?

A. No more than one. (Isa 45.22)

Q. How do you conceive this one God in your mind?

A. Not by framing an image of Him in my mind (as ignorant folks do, who think He is an old man sitting in heaven); but I conceive Him by his properties and works. (Deu 4.16; Amo 4.13)

Q. What are His chief properties?

A. *First*, he is most **wise** (Job 12.13), understanding all things aright, and knowing the reason for them. *Second*, he is most **holy** (Isa 6.3), which appears in that he is most **just** and **merciful** to His creatures (Exo 20.5-6). *Third*, he is **eternal**, without beginning or end of days. (Isa 41.4) *Lastly*, he is **infinite**, (Psa 139.7-12) both because he is *present in all places*, and because he has *sufficient power* to do whatever he wills. (Deu 10.14; Job 9.4).

Q. What are the works of God?

A. The creation of the world, and everything in it (Jer 10.12), and their preservation, being created by his *special providence*. (Psa 33.6)

Q. How do you know that God governs every particular thing in the world by his *special providence*?

A. Omitting the Scriptures (Mat 10.30; Pro 16.33), I see it by experience: Food, Drink, and Clothing, being void of heat and life, could not preserve the life of man unless there were a *special providence* of God to give virtue (effectiveness) to them. (Lev 26.26; Mat 4.4)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. How is this one God distinguished?

A. Into the Father (1Joh 5.7), who begets the Son (Joh 1.18); into the Son, who is begotten of the Father (Mat 3.17); into the holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. (Joh 15.26)

The Second Principle expounded.

All men are sinners

Q. Let us now come to *ourselves*, and first tell me what is the natural estate of man?

A. Every man is by nature *dead* in sin (Eph 2.1; 1Tim 5.6), like a loathsome carrion, or as a dead corpse lies rotting and stinking in the grave, having in him the seed of all sins.

Q. What is sin?

A. Any breach of the law of God, even if it is no more than the least want of that which the law requires. (1Joh 3.4; Rom 7.7; Gal 3.10)

Q. How many sorts of sin are there?

A. Sin is either the corruption of our nature, or any evil actions that proceed from it, as the fruits of it. (Col 3.9; Psa 51.5)

Q. In whom is this corruption of nature?

A. In all men, none excepted. (Rom 3.10)

Q. What part of man is it in?

A. In every part of both body and soul, like a leprosy that runs from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. (Gen 6.5; 1The 5.23)

Q. Show me how every part of man is corrupted with sin.

A. *First*, in the mind there is nothing but ignorance and blindness concerning heavenly matters. (1Cor 2.14; Rom 8.5) *Second*, the conscience is defiled, always being either numbed with sin, or else turmoiled with inward accusations. (Tit 1.15; Eph 4.18; Isa 57.20; Rom 2.15) *Third*, the will of man only wills and lusts after evil. (Phi 2.13; Job 15.16) *Fourth*, the affections of the heart, such as love, joy, hope, desire, etc. are moved and stirred to that which is evil, to embrace it; and they are never stirred to that which is good, unless it is to escape it. (Gal 5.24; 2Tim 3.2-4) *Lastly*, the members of the body are the instruments and tools of the mind for the execution of sin. (Rom 6.19)

Q. What are those evil actions that are the fruits of this corruption?

A. Evil thoughts in the mind, which come either by a man's own conceiving, or by the suggestion of the devil (Gen 6.5; 1The 3.5); or evil motions [*i.e.*, inclinations] and lusts stirring in the heart. (Joh 13.2; Act 5.3; 1Chr 21.1) And from these arise evil words and deeds, when any occasion is given. (Jas 1.15a)

Q. How did it come to pass that all men are thus defiled with sin?

A. By Adam's infidelity and disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit (Rom 5.12, 18, 19; and Gen 3) — even as we see great personages, by treason, not only hurt themselves, but also stain their blood, and disgrace their posterity.

Q. What hurt comes to man by his sin?

A. He is continually subject to the curse of God in his lifetime, in the end of his life, and after this life. (Gen 2.17; Gal 3.10; Jas 1.15b)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What is the curse of God in this life?

A. In the **body**, diseases, aches, and pains; in the **soul**, blindness, hardness of heart, horror of conscience; in **goods**, hindrances and losses; in **name**, ignominy and reproach; and in the **whole man**, bondage under Satan, the prince of darkness. (Deu 28.21, 22, 27, 65-67)

Q. What manner of bondage is this?

A. This bondage is when a man is the slave of the devil, and has the devil reign in his heart as his god. (Heb 2.14; Eph 2.2; 2Cor 4.4; Luk 11.14)

Q. How may a man know whether Satan is his god or not?

A. He may know it by this: if he gives obedience to him in his heart, and expresses it in his conduct.

Q. And how shall a man perceive this obedience?

A. If he takes delight in the evil motions that Satan puts into his heart, and fulfills the lusts of the devil. (Joh 8.34, 44; 1Joh 3.8)

Q. What is the curse due to man in the end of this life?

A. Death, which is the separation of body and soul. (Rom 5.12)

Q. What is the curse after this life?

A. Eternal damnation in hellfire, of which every man is guilty, and is in as great a danger of it, as the traitor apprehended is in danger of hanging, drawing, and quartering. (Gal 3.10; Rom 3.19; Mat 10.28)

The Third Principle expounded.

Jesus Christ is the Only Savior

Q. If damnation is the reward of sins, then a man is the most miserable of all creatures. When a dog or a toad dies, all their misery is ended. But when a man dies, it is the beginning of his woe.

A. It would be so indeed, if there were no means of deliverance. But GOD has shown his mercy in giving a *Savior* to mankind.

Q. How is this Savior called?

A. Jesus Christ. (Mat 1.21; 16.16, 20)

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. The eternal Son of God who is made man in all things (Joh 1.14; Phi 2.6-7), even like other men in his infirmities, except in sin. (Heb 4.15; Heb 5.6-7; Mar; 13.32)

Q. How was he made man, void of sin?

A. He was conceived in the womb of a virgin (Mat 1.18), and sanctified by the holy Spirit at his conception (Mat 1.20).

Q. Why must our Savior be both God and man?

A. He must be man, because man had sinned, and therefore a man must die for sin, to appease God's wrath. He must be God to sustain and uphold the manhood, to overcome and vanquish death. (1Tim 2.5-6)

Q. What are the offices of Christ to make him an all-sufficient Saviour?

A. He is a Priest, a Prophet, and a King. (Psa 110; Deu 18.15, 18; Luk 1.33; 4.8)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. Why is he a Priest?

A. To work the means of salvation in behalf of mankind. (1Tim 2.5)

Q. How does he work the means of salvation?

A. *First*, by making *satisfaction* to his Father for the sin of man. (1Pet 1.18-19) *Secondly*, by making *intercession*. (Heb 7.25-26)

Q. How does he make satisfaction?

A. By two means: and the first is by offering a *sacrifice*.

Q. What is the sacrifice?

A. Christ himself, as he is a man consisting of body and soul. (Isa 53.10)

Q. What is the altar?

A. Christ, as he is God, is the *Altar* on which he sacrificed himself. (Rev 8.3; Heb 13.10)

Q. Who was the Priest?

A. None but Christ, as he is both God and man. (Heb 5.5-6)

Q. How often did he sacrifice himself?

A. Only once. (Heb 9.28)

Q. What death did he suffer when he sacrificed himself?

A. A death upon a cross, peculiar to himself alone. For besides the separation of body and soul, he also felt the *pangs of hell*, in that the whole wrath of God due to the sin of man, was poured forth upon him. (Isa 53.5; Joh 12.27; Rev 19.15; Luk 22.44)

Q. What profit comes by his sacrifice?

A. God's wrath is appeased by it. (Heb 9.26)

Q. Could the sufferings of Christ, which were but for a short time, countervail everlasting damnation, and so appease God's wrath?

A. Yes. For seeing Christ suffered, God suffered, though not in his Godhead. And that is more than if all men in the world had suffered forever and ever. (Act 20.28; 2Cor 5.15)

Q. Now tell me the other means of *satisfaction*.

A. It is the perfect fulfilling of the Law.

Q. How did he fulfill the Law?

A. By his perfect *righteousness*, which consists of two parts. The first is the *integrity and pureness* of his human nature. (1Cor 1.30; Rom 3.25; 2Cor 5.21) The other is *his obedience* in performing all that the Law required. (Mat 5.17; Rom 5.19)

Q. You showed how Christ makes *satisfaction*. Tell me likewise how he makes *intercession*.

A. He alone continually appears before his Father in heaven, making the faithful and all their prayers acceptable to Him by applying the merits of his own perfect *satisfaction* to them. (Rom 8.34; 1Pet 2.5)

Q. Why is Christ a *Prophet*?

A. To reveal to his Church the way and means of salvation. And this he does outwardly by the mystery of his word, and inwardly by the teaching of his Spirit. (Joh 6.45; Mat 5.17)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. Why is he also a *King*?

A. That he might bountifully bestow on us, and convey to us, all the aforesaid means of salvation. (Isa 9.7)

Q. How does he show himself to be King?

A. In that, being *dead* and *buried*, he rose from the grave, he quickened (revivified) his dead body, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of his Father, with full power and glory in heaven. (Act 10.40; Eph 4.8; Act 1.9; 1Pet 3.22)

Q. How else?

A. In that He continually inspires and directs his servants by the divine power of his holy Spirit, according to his holy word. (Isa 9.7; Joh 14.26)

Q. But to whom will this blessed King communicate all these means of salvation?

A. He offers them to many, and they are sufficient to save all mankind. But all shall not be saved thereby, because they will not receive them by faith. (Mat 20.16; Joh 1.11)

The Fourth Principle expounded.

Saving Faith in Christ

Q. What is faith?

A. Faith is a wonderful grace of God, by which a man apprehends and applies Christ and all His benefits to himself. (Heb 11.1; Joh 1.12; Joh 6.35; Gal 3.7; Col 2.12)

Q. How does a man apply Christ to himself, since we are on earth, and Christ is in heaven?

A. This applying is done by *assurance*, when a man is truly persuaded by the holy Spirit, of God's favor towards himself *particularly*, and of the forgiveness of his own sins. (2Cor 1.21-22; Rom 8.16; Heb 10.22)

Q. How does God bring men to truly believe in Christ?

A. First, He prepares their hearts, that they might be *capable* of faith; and then He *works* faith in them.

Q. How does God prepare men's hearts?

A. By bruising them, as if one would break a hard stone into powder; and this is done by *humbling* them. (Isa 2.11; Eze 13.19)

Q. How does God humble a man?

A. By working in him a *sight* of his sins, and a *sorrow* for them.

Q. How is this *sight* of sin wrought?

A. By the moral law, the sum of which is the *Ten Commandments*. (Rom 3.20; Rom 7.7-8)

Q. What sins may I find in myself by these commandments?

A. **TEN.** (Exo 20.1-17)

Q. What is the **first**?

A. To make something into your god, which is *not* God, by fearing it, loving it, and so trusting in it more than in the true God. (Exo 20.3)

Q. What is the **second**?

A. To worship false gods, or the true God in a false manner. (Exo 20.4-6)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What is the **third**?

A. To dishonor God in abusing His titles, words, and works. (Exo 20.7)

Q. What is the **fourth**?

A. To break the Sabbath, in doing the works of their vocation, and of the flesh; and in leaving undone the works of the Spirit. (Exo 20.8-11)

Q. What are the **last six**?¹¹

A. To do anything that may hinder your neighbor's dignity (5th), life (6th), chastity (7th), wealth (8th), or good name (9th), even if it is only in the secret thoughts and motions of your heart, to which you give no liking or consent (10th). (Exo 20.12-17)

Q. What is *sorrow* for sin?

A. It is when a man's conscience is touched with a lively feeling of God's displeasure for any of these sins (Act 2.37-38), in such a way that he utterly despairs of salvation regarding anything in himself, acknowledging that he has deserved shame and confusion eternally. (1Tim 1.15; Luk 15.21; Ezz 9.6-7)

Q. How does God work this sorrow?

A. By the terrible curse of the Law.

Q. What is that?

A. Whoever breaks but one of the commandments of God — even if but once in his lifetime, and that is only in one thought — he is subject to, and in danger of eternal damnation by it. (Gal 3.10; Jas 2.10)

Q. When men's hearts are thus prepared, how does God engraft faith in them?

A. By working certain inward motions in the heart, which are the *seeds of faith*, out of which it grows and multiplies.¹² (Act 6.7)

Q. What is the **first** of these seeds?

A. When a man, humbled under the burden of his sins, acknowledges and feels that he stands in great need of Christ. (Psa 51.3-7; Isa 6.5; Lam 3.54-58; Luk 18.13)

Q. What is the **second**?

A. A hungering desire and longing to be made partaker of Christ and all his merits. (Mat 5.6)

Q. What is the **third**?

A. A fleeing to the throne of grace, from the sentence of the Law pricking the conscience. (Act 2.37-38; Heb 4.16)

Q. How is it done?

A. By praying, with sending up loud cries for God's favor in Christ in the pardoning of sin; and with fervent perseverance in this till the desire of the heart is granted. (Luk 15.18-19; Mat 15.22-23; Act 8.22; 2Cor 12.8)

¹¹ The first four are known as FIRST TABLET commandments, which govern our relationship with God (vertical). The last six are known as SECOND TABLET commandments, which govern our conduct with neighbors (horizontal).

¹² Originally, "out of which it breeds."

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What follows after this?

A. God then, according to His merciful promise, lets the poor sinner feel the assurance of His love with which He loves him in Christ; this assurance is a lively faith. (Mat 7.7; Isa 65.24; Job 33.26)

Q. Are there diverse degrees and measures of true faith?

A. Yes. (Rom 1.17; Luk 17.5)

Q. What is the least measure of true faith that any man can have?

A. When a man of a humble spirit, because of the smallness of his faith, does not yet *feel* the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, he is yet persuaded that they are pardonable; and therefore he desires that they would be pardoned, and with his heart he prays to God to pardon them. (Isa 42.3; 55.7; Mat 17.20; Luk 17.5; Psa 25.11)

Q. How do you know that such a man has faith?

A. These *desires* and *prayers* are testimonies of the Spirit, whose property it is to stir up *longing* and a *lusting* after heavenly things, with *sighs* and *groans* for God's favor and mercy in Christ. (Gal 4.6; Mat 5.6; Rom 8.23, 26) Now, where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ dwelling; and where Christ dwells, there is true faith, however weak it is. (Rom 8.9; Eph 3.16-17)

Q. What is the greatest measure of faith?

A. When a man, daily increasing in faith, comes to be *fully persuaded* of God's love in Christ towards himself *particularly*, and of the forgiveness of his own sins. (Rom 8.38-39; Song 8.6-7)

Q. When will a Christian heart come to this full assurance?

A. Not at first, but in some continuance of time, when he has been well-practiced *in repentance*, and has diverse *experiences* of God's love to him in Christ. (2Tim 4.7-8; Psa 23) Then, after these, the fulness of persuasion will appear in his heart, which is the *ripeness* and strength of faith. (Rom 4.20-21)

Q. What benefits does a man receive by faith in Christ?

A. Hereby he is *justified* before God, and *sanctified*. (1Cor 6.11; Act 13.38; 26.18; Rom 4.1-6)

Q. What is it to be *justified* before God?

A. It comprehends two things. The first is to be cleared from the *guiltiness and punishment* of sin. The second is to be *accepted as perfectly righteous* before God. (Rom 8.33)

Q. How is a man cleared from the guiltiness and punishment of his sins?

A. By Christ's sufferings and death upon the cross. (Col 1.22; 1Pet 2.24; 1Joh 1.7)

Q. How is a man accepted for righteousness before God?

A. By the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to him. (Rom 4.23-25)

Q. What profit comes by being thus justified?

A. Hereby, and by no other means in the world, the believer shall be *accepted* before God's judgment seat, as worthy of eternal life by the *merits* of the same righteousness of Christ. (Rom 4.17; Rev 22.17)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. Don't good works then make us *worthy* of eternal life?

A. No. For God, who is perfect righteousness itself, will find in the best works we do, more matter of damnation than of salvation. And therefore we must condemn ourselves for our good works, rather than look to be justified before God by them. (Psa 143.2; Isa 64.6; Job 9.2-3)

Q. How may a man know that he is *justified* before God?

A. He need not ascend into heaven to search the secret counsel of God. Rather, he should descend into his own heart to search whether he is *sanctified* or not. (Rom 8.1; 1Joh 3.9) ¹³

Q. What is it to be sanctified?

A. It comprehends two things. The first is to be purged from the corruption of his own nature; the second is to be indued¹⁴ with inward righteousness. (Eph 4.22-24)

Q. How is the corruption of sin purged?

A. By the merits and power of Christ's death, which being applied by faith, is like a curative to abate, consume, and weaken the power of all sin. (Rom 6.4; 1Pet 4.1-2)

Q. How is a man indued with inherent righteousness?

A. Through the virtue of Christ's resurrection. Being applied by faith, it is like a *restorative* to revive a man who is dead in sin, to newness of life. (Rom 6.5-6; Phi 3.8-10)

Q. In what part of man is sanctification wrought?

A. In every part of the body and soul. (1The 5.23)

Q. In what timeframe is it wrought?

A. It begins in this life, in which the faithful receive only the *first fruits* of the Spirit; and it is not finished before the end of this life. (Rom 8.23; 2Cor 5.2-3)

Q. What graces of the Spirit visually show themselves in the heart of a sanctified man?

A. The *hatred* of sin (Psa 101.3; 119.163), and the *love* of righteousness. (Psa 119.97, 127; Rom 7.22)

Q. What proceeds from these?

A. *Repentance*, which is a settled purpose in the heart, with a careful endeavor to leave all his sins, and to live a Christian life according to all God's commandments. (Psa 119.57, 113)

Q. What goes with repentance?

A. A continual fighting and struggling against the assaults of man's own **flesh**, against the temptations of the **devil**, and against the enticements of the **world**.

Q. What follows after a believer ¹⁵ has gotten the victory in any temptation or affliction?

A. Experience of God's love in Christ, and so an increase of peace of conscience, and joy in the holy Spirit. (Rom 5.3-4; 1Cor 1.5; 1The 1.6)

¹³ Sanctification, or godliness, is not the *cause* of our justification by God, but it is the *evidence* of it. (Jas 2.18)

¹⁴ *Indued*: given qualities or abilities to do something.

¹⁵ Originally, "after a man" — but only a believer will experience what is contained in Perkins' answer.

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What follows if in any temptation, he is overcome and, through infirmity, falls?

A. After a while there will arise a *godly sorrow*, which is when a man is grieved for no other cause in the world than this: that by his sin he has displeased God, who has been a most merciful and loving Father to him. (2Cor 7.8-9; Mat 26.75)

Q. What sign is there of this sorrow?

A. The true sign of it is this: when a man can be grieved for his disobedience of God, in his own evil word or deed, even if he were never to be punished, and even if there were neither heaven nor hell. (1Pet 2.19; Heb 10.22)

Q. What follows after this sorrow?

A. Repentance, *renewed afresh*. (2Cor 7.11)

Q. By what signs will this repentance appear?

A. By **seven signs**. 1. a care to leave the sin into which he has fallen. 2. Utterly condemning himself for it, with a craving of pardon. 3. A great anger against himself for his carelessness. 4. A fear lest he fall into the same sin again. 5. A desire ever after to please God. 6. A zeal for the same. 7. Revenge upon himself for his former offense. (2Cor 7.11)

The Fifth Principle expounded.

The Means of Faith

Q. What outward means must we use to obtain faith, and all the blessings of God which come by faith?

A. The *preaching* of God's word, and the administration of the *Sacraments*, and *prayer*. (Pro 29.18; Rom 10.14; Mat 28.19-20; 1Tim 3.16)

Q. Where is the word of God to be found?

A. The whole word of God, needful to salvation, is set down in the holy **Scriptures**.

Q. How do you know that the Scriptures are the word of God, and not men's policies?

A. I am assured of it, first, because the holy Spirit persuades my conscience that it is so. (Eph 1.13) Secondly, I see it by experience, for the preaching of the Scriptures have the power of God in them to *humble a man* when they are preached, and to cast him down to hell, and afterward to *restore* and raise him up again. (Heb 4.12; 1Cor 14.25)

Q. What is the use of having the word of God preached?

A. First, it *breeds*, and then it increases faith in those who are chosen to salvation. But to those who perish, because of their corruption, it is *an occasion* of their further damnation. (Rom 1.16-17; 2Cor 2.15-16; Heb 4.2)

Q. How must we hear God's word, so that it may be effectual to our salvation?

A. We must come to it with hunger-bitten hearts, having an appetite for the word. We must mark it with attention, receive it by faith, submit ourselves to it with fear and trembling, even when our faults are reprov'd. Lastly, we must hide it in the corners of our hearts, so that we may frame our lives and conduct by it. (Jas 1.18-20; Act 16.14; Heb 4.2; Isa 66.2; Luk 2.51; Psa 119.11)

Q. What is a **Sacrament**?

A. A *sign* to represent, a *seal* to confirm, and an *instrument* to convey Christ and all His benefits to those who believe in him. (Rom 4.11; Gen 17.11; Gal 3.10)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. Why must a sacrament represent the mercies of God before our eyes?

A. Because we are dull to conceive and to remember them.

Q. Why do the Sacraments seal to us the mercies of God?

A. Because we are full of unbelief, and the doubting of them.

Q. Why is the Sacrament an instrument of the Spirit, to convey the mercies of God into our hearts?

A. Because we are like *Thomas*: we will not believe till we feel them in some measure in our hearts.

Q. How many Sacraments are there?

A. Two, and no more. *Baptism*, by which we have our *admission* into the true church of God, and the *Lord's Supper*, by which we are nourished and *preserved* in the true Church after our admission. (1Cor 10.1-4)

Q. What is done in **Baptism**?

A. In the assembly of the Church, the *covenant of grace* between God and the party baptized, is solemnly confirmed and sealed. (Act 2.38; Tit 3.5; Act 22.16; Mat 28.19)

Q. In this covenant, what does God promise to the party baptized?

A. Christ, with all blessings that come by Him. (Gal 3.27; 1Pet 3.21)

Q. To what condition is the party baptized bound?

A. To receive Christ, and to repent of his sin. (Mar 16.16; Rom 6.4)

Q. What does the *sprinkling* or *dipping in water* mean?

A. It seals to us remission of sins, and sanctification by the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. (1Pet 1.2)

Q. How does it come to pass, that after their baptism, many for a long time do not feel the effect and fruit of it, and some never do?

A. The fault is not in God, who keeps His covenants. But the fault is in themselves, in that they do not keep the *condition* of the covenant, to receive Christ by faith, and to repent of all their sins.

Q. When will a man then see the effect of his baptism?

A. At whatever time he receives Christ by faith, even if it is many years after, he will then feel the power of God to regenerate him, and to work all things in him, which he offered in baptism. (Heb 10.10; 1Pet 3.21)

Q. What if a man never keeps the condition to which he bound himself in baptism?

A. His damnation will be greater, because he breaks his vow made to God. (Deu 23.21-22; Ecc 3.4)

Q. What is done in the **Lord's Supper**?

A. The former covenant solemnly ratified in baptism, is renewed in the Lord's Supper, between the Lord himself, and the receiver. (1Cor 11.23-24; 12.13)

Q. Who is the receiver?

A. Everyone who has been baptized, and after his baptism has truly believed in Christ, and repented of his sins from his heart. (1Cor 11.28-31; Mat 5.23-24; Isa 66.2-3)

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What is the meaning of the bread and wine, and eating the bread and drinking the wine?

A. These outward actions are a second seal set by the Lord's own hand to His covenant. And they give every receiver to understand that, just as God blesses the bread and wine to preserve and strengthen the body of the receiver, so Christ — apprehended and received by faith — will nourish him, and preserve both body and soul unto eternal life. (1Cor 10.17-19)

Q. What will a true receiver feel in himself after receiving the Sacrament?

A. The increase of his faith in Christ, the increase of sanctification, a greater measure of dying to sin, and a greater care to live in newness of life. (1Cor 10.16-17; 11.24)

Q. What if a man, after receiving the sacrament, never finds any such thing in himself?

A. He may well suspect himself, whether he ever repented or not. And thereupon he is to seek means to come to sound faith and repentance. (1Joh 5.4)

Q. What is another means of increasing faith?

A. **Prayer.**

Q. What is prayer?

A. A familiar speech with God in the name of Christ, in which either we crave needful things, or give thanks for things received. (1Tim 2.1; Phi 4.6)

Q. In asking for needful things, what is required?

A. Two things: an earnest desire, and faith.

Q. What things must a Christian man's heart desire?

A. Six things especially. (see Mat 6.9-13 — the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer)

Q. What are they?

A. 1. That he may glorify God. 2. That God may reign in his heart, so he does not sin. 3. That he may do God's will, and not the lusts of his flesh. 4. That he may rely on God's providence for all the means of this temporal life. 5. That he may be justified, and be at peace with God. 6. That by the power of God, he may be strengthened against all temptations.

Q. What is faith?

A. A persuasion that those things which we truly desire, God will grant for Christ's sake.¹⁶

The Sixth Principle expounded.

The Last Judgment

Q. After man has led a short life in this world, what follows then?

A. Death, which is the parting asunder of body and soul.

Q. Why do wicked men and unbelievers die?

A. That their bodies may go in the earth, and their souls be cast into hellfire. (Luk 16.22-23)

Q. Why do the godly die, seeing that Christ by death has overcome death?

A. They die for this end: that their bodies may rest for a while in the earth, and their souls may enter into heaven immediately. (Luk 23.42-43; Act 7.60)

¹⁶ And, of course, that what we truly desire is to do the will of God.

Exposition of the Six Principles

Q. What follows after death?

A. The Day of Judgment. (1Cor 15.51-52; Heb 9.27)

Q. What sign is there to know this day from other days?

A. Heaven and earth shall be consumed with fire immediately before the coming of the Judge. (2Pet 3.11-12)

Q. Who shall be Judge?

A. Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Joh 5.22)

Q. What will be the coming to Judgment?

A. Christ shall come in the cloud in great majesty and glory, with an infinite company of angels. (1The 4.16-17; Mat 25.31)

Q. How will a man be summoned to judgment?

A. At the sound of a trumpet, the living shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye (1Cor 15.52), and the dead shall rise again, each one with his own body. (Joh 5.28-29) All shall be gathered together before Christ. And after this, the good shall be separated from the bad, the one on the right hand of Christ, the other on the left. (Phi 3.21; Mat 25.32-33)

Q. How will Christ try, and examine, every man's cause?

A. The books of every man's doings will be laid open (Rev 20.12; Dan 7.10). Men's consciences shall be made either to accuse them, or excuse them. (Rom 2.15) And every man shall be tried by the works which he did in his lifetime, because they are open and manifest signs of faith, or unbelief (Mat 12.36; Rom 2.12; 1Cor 3.13).

Q. What sentence will he give?

A. He will sentence the elect and godly to salvation, but he will sentence unbelievers and reprobates to damnation. (Joh 5.29)

Q. What state will the godly be in after the Day of Judgment?

A. They will continue forever in the highest heaven in the presence of God, having fellowship with Christ Jesus, and reigning with him forever. (Mat 25.34; Rev 21.1-5)

Q. What state will the wicked be in after the Day of Judgment?

A. In eternal perdition and destruction in hellfire. (Mat 10.28)

Q. What is that?

A. It stands in three things especially: *First*, a perpetual separation from God's comfortable presence. (2The 1.9) *Secondly*, fellowship with the devil and his angels. (Mat 25.41; Rev 20.10, 15) *Thirdly*, a horrible pang and torment both of body and soul, arising from the feeling of the whole wrath of God, powered forth on the wicked forever, world without end. (Rev 21.8) And if the pain of one tooth for one day is so great, endless will be the pain of the whole man, body and soul, forever.

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