

# COMPARISONS

**Eastern Orthodox:** "What is necessary in order to please God and to save one's own soul? In the first place, a knowledge of the true God, and a right faith in Him; in the second place, a life according to faith, and good works" (*The Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church*, question 3).

**Lutheran:** "We believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine [Romans 7:12]. It teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and it rebukes everything that is sin and contrary to God's will. For this reason, then, everything that rebukes sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the Law" (FC Ep V 3—4; Concordia, p. 484).

**Reformed/Presbyterian:** "God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.... Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others" (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 19.1, 6).

**Roman Catholic:** "The holy Synod declares first, that, for the correct and sound understanding of the doctrine of Justification, it is necessary that each one recognize and confess, that, whereas all men had lost their innocence in the prevarication of Adam ... free-will, attenuated as it was in its powers, and bent down, was by no means extinguished in them" (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session 6, "Decree on Justification").

**Baptist:** "We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse" (*New Hampshire Baptist Confession*, article 3).

**Wesleyan/Methodist:** "Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, does not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any common-wealth, yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral" (*Methodist Articles of Religion*, article 6).

**Liberal:** "We cannot define Christian ethics in terms of a church-controlled society. Neither can we regard Christian duty as identical with biblical precepts.... Christian ethics should be defined as the determination of the duties of a modern Christian living in the modern world. To define it in terms of an ethical system belonging to another age is to fail to make Christianity ethical" (Gerald Birney Smith, ed., *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916], p. 570).