

COMPARISONS

Eastern Orthodox: "What was Christ's doctrine? The Gospel of the kingdom of God, or, in other words, the doctrine of salvation and eternal happiness, the same that is now taught in the Orthodox Church (Mark 1:14-15). How have we salvation by Christ's doctrine? When we receive it with all our heart, and walk according to it. For, as the lying words of the devil, received by our first parents, became in them the seed of sin and death; so, on the contrary the true Word of Christ, heartily received by Christians, becomes in them the seed of a holy and immortal life (1 Peter 1:23). How have we salvation by Christ's life? When we imitate it. For He says, 'If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be' (John 12:26)" (*The Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church*, questions 196-98).

Lutheran: "But the Gospel is properly the kind of teaching that shows what a person who has not kept the Law (and therefore is condemned by it) is to believe. It teaches that Christ has paid for and made satisfaction for all sins (Romans 5:9). Christ has gained and acquired for an individual—without any of his own merit—forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life [Romans 5:10]" (FC Ep V 5; *Concordia*, p. 484).

Reformed/Presbyterian: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when, and where, and how He pleases. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.... God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them" (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 10.3 and 11.4).

Roman Catholic: "The Synod furthermore declares that ... the beginning of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ ... that so they, who by sins were alien grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and cooperating with that said grace" (Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session 6, chapter 5). Wesleyan/Methodist: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have not power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will" (*Methodist Articles of Religion*, article 8).

Baptist: "We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation" (*The New Hampshire Baptist Confession*, article 6).

Liberal: "Theologically, the content of Christology is to be found by asking two questions: 'From what do men need to be saved?' and 'How is Jesus psychological 'nature' which we inherit, we shall, of course, interpret the work of Christ in terms of His 'natures,' divine and human. But if we think of sin concretely and refer it to its psychological causes, we shall interpret salvation in terms of conscious experience. We shall then not ask concerning the 'nature of Jesus, but rather concerning His religious consciousness and life. We shall emphasize His God consciousness and His ability to create in His disciples a trust in God, which gives spiritual insight and moral power. As Schleiermacher declared, the important thing about Jesus is His God-consciousness (Gerald Birney Smith, ed., *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916], pp. 531-32).