

COMPARISONS

Eastern Orthodox: "What must we join with prayer in order to be grounded in the hope of salvation and blessedness? Our own exertions for the attainment of blessedness (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21). What doctrine may we take as our guide in these exertions? The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is briefly set forth in His Beatitudes, or sentences on blessedness" (*The Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church*, questions 435-36).

Lutheran: "We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be kept in the Church with great diligence as a particularly brilliant light. By this distinction, according to the admonition of St. Paul, God's Word is rightly divided [2 Timothy 2:15]" (FC Ep V 2; *Concordia*, p. 484).

Reformed/Presbyterian: "They whom God has 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. ... Nevertheless they may ... 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" (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 17.1, 3).

Roman Catholic: "If anyone says, that the man who is justified and howsoever perfect, is not bound to observe the commandments of God and of the Church, but only to believe; as if indeed the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of observing the commandments; let him be anathema. If anyone says, that Jesus Christ was given by God to men as a Redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a Legislator whom to obey; let him be anathema." (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session 6, On Justification, canons 20-21).

Baptist: "We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church" (*New Hampshire Baptist Confession*, article 12).

Wesleyan/Methodist: "Original sin stands not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually" (*Methodist Articles of Religion*, article 7).

Liberal: "Today we are coming more and more to think of religion as a normal and natural experience. Those who confuse experience with its doctrinal interpretation are greatly perplexed by this tendency, for it seems like abandoning fundamental realities of Christianity. But the history of religion has made us aware that, so far as the supernaturalistic details of a doctrine of salvation are concerned, these appear in various forms in pagan religions as well as in Christianity. ... The distinctive qualities of Christian salvation must be looked for in the kind of moral and religious character produced by Christian faith" (Gerald Birney Smith, ed., *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), p. 523)..