

A Brief and Untechnical Statement of the Reformed Faith

Benjamin B. Warfield

We believe that our one aim in life and death should be to glorify God and enjoy him forever; and that God teaches us how to do this in his holy Word, that is, the Bible, which he has given by the infallible inspiration of this Holy Spirit in order that we may certainly know what we are to believe concerning him and what duty he requires of us.

We believe that God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and incomparable in all that he is; one God but three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier; in whose power and wisdom, righteousness, goodness and truth we may safely put our trust.

We believe that the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, are the work of God hands; and that all that he has made he directs and governs in all their actions; so that they fulfill the end for which they were created, and we who trust in him shall not be put to shame but may rest securely in the protection of his almighty love.

We believe that God created humankind after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and entered into a covenant of life with humanity upon the sole condition of the obedience that was his due; so that it was by willfully sinning against God that humankind fell into the sin and misery in which we have been born.

We believe that, being fallen in Adam, our first father, we are by nature children of wrath, under the condemnation of God and corrupted in body and soul, prone to evil and liable to eternal death; from which dreadful state we cannot be delivered except through the unmerited grace of God our Savior.

We believe that God has not left the world to perish in its sin, but out of the great love wherewith he has loved it, has from all eternity graciously chosen unto himself a multitude which no one can number, to deliver them out of their sin and misery, and of them to build up again in the world his kingdom of righteousness; in which kingdom we may be assured we have our part, if we hold fast to Christ the Lord in obedient faith.

We believe that God has redeemed his people unto himself through Jesus Christ our Lord; who, though he was and ever continues to be the eternal Son of God, yet was born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those who are under the law; we believe that he bore the penalty due to the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, and fulfilled in his own person the obedience each of us owes to the righteousness of God, and he now presents us to his Father as his purchased possession, to the praise of the glory of his grace forever; wherefore renouncing all merit of our own, we put all our trust only in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

We believe that Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who died for our offenses was raised again for our justification, and ascended into the heavens, where he sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty, continually making intercession for his people, and governing the whole world as head over all things for his Church; so that we need fear no evil and may surely know that nothing can snatch us out of his hands and nothing can separate us from his love.

We believe that the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ is effectually applied to all his people by the Holy Spirit, who works faith in us and thereby unites us to Christ, renews us in the whole person after the image of God, and enables us more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness; until, this gracious work having been completed in us, we shall be received into glory; in which great hope abiding, we must ever strive for perfect holiness in the fear of God.

We believe that God requires of us, each and all, under the gospel, first of all, that, out of a true sense of our sin and misery and apprehension of his mercy in Christ, we should turn with grief and hatred away from sin and receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation; that, so being united to him, we may receive pardon for our sins and be accepted as righteous in God's sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. Thus and thus only do we believe we may be received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

We believe that, having been pardoned and accepted for Christ's sake, it is further required of us that we walk in the Spirit whom he has purchased for us, and by whom love is shed abroad in our hearts; fulfilling the obedience we owe to Christ our King; faithfully performing all the duties laid upon us by the holy law of God our heavenly Father; and ever reflecting in our life and conduct the perfect example that has been set for us by Christ Jesus our Leader, who has died for us and granted to us his Holy Spirit just that we may do the good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We believe that God has established his Church in the world and endowed it with the ministry of the Word and the holy ordinances of Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Prayer; in order that through these as means, the riches of his grace in the gospel may be made known to the world, and, by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in those who by faith receive them, the benefits of redemption are communicated to his people; for which reason also it is required of us to make diligent use of these means of grace with preparation and prayer, so that through them we may be instructed and strengthened in faith, and in holiness of life and in love; and that we use our best endeavors to carry this gospel and convey these means of grace to the whole world.

We believe that as Jesus Christ has once come in grace, so also is he to come a second time in glory, to judge the world in righteousness and assign to each his eternal award; and we believe that if we die in Christ, our soul shall be at death made perfect in holiness and go home to the Lord; and when he shall return to his majesty we shall be raised in glory and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity: encouraged by which blessed hope it is required of us willingly to take our part in suffering hardship here as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, being assured that if we die with him we shall also live with him, if we endure, we shall also reign with him. And to Him, our Redeemer, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons, one God, be glory forever, world without end. Amen, and Amen.

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921) is widely recognized as the greatest English-speaking orthodox theologian of the early twentieth century, and perhaps of the whole century.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, he entered Princeton College in 1868 and later graduated from the Seminary in 1876. After a brief spell of pastoral ministry in Baltimore, he taught at Western Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania before succeeding A. A. Hodge as Professor of Didactic and Polemical Theology at Princeton in 1887.

Always generous in his acknowledgment of God-given scholarly gifts and insights, Warfield was also devastating in his critical analysis of every misuse to which he saw such gifts being devoted.

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