



Session Three: Creed

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Overview

LC: "We have seen [in the Ten Commandments] all that God wants us to do or not to do. Now there properly follows the Creed, which sets forth to us everything that we must expect and receive from God..." (398)
"We shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead. Everything that we believe is related to these three persons. So the First Article, about God the Father, explains creation. The Second Article, about the Son, explains redemption. And the Third, about the Holy Spirit, explains sanctification." (399)

First Article: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

LC: "We learn from this article that none of us owns for himself, nor can preserve his life nor anything that is here listed or can be listed..." (400)

"If we believed this teaching with the heart, we would also act according to it. We would not strut about proudly, act defiantly, and boast as though we had life, riches, power, honor, and such, of ourselves... Wherever we escape from disaster or danger, we ought to remember that it is God who gives and does all these things. In these escapes we sense and see His fatherly heart and His surpassing love toward us. In this way the heart would be warmed and kindled to be thankful, and to use all such good things to honor and praise God." (400-401)



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Second Article: And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

*What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,
Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,
That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,
Just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.
This is most certainly true.*

LC: "Let this, then, be the sum of this article: the little word *Lord* means simply the same as *redeemer*. It means the One who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points that follow in this article serve no other purpose than to explain and express this redemption..."

"The entire Gospel that we preach is based on this point, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rests. It is so rich and complete that we can never learn it fully."
(402)

Third Article: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

*What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith.
In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.
In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.
On the Last Day, he will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.*

LC: "Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe on Him, and have Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel...So that this treasure might not stay buried, but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word He has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore, sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good, which we could not get ourselves." (403)



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“I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ. This group is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with many different gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms...Through this congregation He brings us to Christ and He teaches and preaches to us the Word. By the Word He works and promotes sanctification, causing this congregation daily to grown and to become strong in the faith and its fruit, which He produces.” (404-405)

“While sanctification has begun and is growing daily, we expect that our flesh will be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness. Then we will come forth gloriously and arise in a new, eternal life of entire and perfect holiness. For now, we are only half pure and holy. So the Holy Spirit always has some reason to continue His work in us through the Word. He must daily administer forgiveness until we reach the life to come. At that time there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people. We will be full of godliness and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body.” (405)

“You see, all this is the Holy Spirit’s office and work. He begins and daily increases holiness upon earth through these two things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins. But in our death He will accomplish it altogether in an instant... This is the article of the Creed that must always be and remain in use. For we have already received creation. Redemption, too, is finished. But the Holy Spirit carries on His work without ceasing to the Last day.” (405)

Summary

LC: “The whole world with all diligence has struggled to figure out what God is, what He has in mind and does. Yet the world has never been able to grasp any of these things. But here we have everything in richest measure. For here in all three articles God has revealed Himself and opened the deepest abyss of His fatherly heart and His pure, inexpressible love. He has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us. In addition to giving and imparting to us everything in heaven and upon the earth, He has even given to us His Son and the Holy Spirit, who brings us to Himself. For (as explained above) we could never grasp the knowledge of the Father’s grace and favor except through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is a mirror of the fatherly heart, outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But we couldn’t know anything about Christ either, unless it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit.” (406)

Class notes/personal observations:

Next: The Lord’s Prayer