

Waldensian Confessions of Faith

1120 AND 1544

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Waldensian Confessions of Faith, 1120

1. We believe and firmly maintain all that is contained in the twelve articles of the symbol, commonly called the apostles' creed, and we regard as heretical whatever is inconsistent with the said twelve articles.
2. We believe that there is one God - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We acknowledge for sacred canonical scriptures the books of the Holy Bible. (Here follows the title of each, exactly conformable to our received canon, but which it is deemed, on that account, quite unnecessary to particularize.)
4. The books above-mentioned teach us: That there is one GOD, almighty, unbounded in wisdom, and infinite in goodness, and who, in His goodness, has made all things. For He created Adam after His own image and likeness. But through the enmity of the Devil, and his own disobedience, Adam fell, sin entered into the world, and we became transgressors in and by Adam.
5. That Christ had been promised to the fathers who received the law, to the end that, knowing their sin by the law, and their unrighteousness and insufficiency, they might desire the coming of Christ to make satisfaction for their sins, and to accomplish the law by Himself.
6. That at the time appointed of the Father, Christ was born - a time when iniquity everywhere abounded, to make it manifest that it was not for the sake of any good in ourselves, for all were sinners, but that He, who is true, might display His grace and mercy towards us.
7. That Christ is our life, and truth, and peace, and righteousness - our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice and priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and rose again for their justification.
8. And we also firmly believe, that there is no other mediator, or advocate with God the Father, but Jesus Christ. And as to the Virgin Mary, she was holy, humble, and full of grace; and this we also believe concerning all other saints, namely, that they are waiting in heaven for the resurrection of their bodies at the day of judgment.
9. We also believe, that, after this life, there are but two places - one for those that are saved, the other for the damned, which [two] we call paradise and hell, wholly denying that imaginary purgatory of Antichrist, invented in opposition to the truth.
10. Moreover, we have ever regarded all the inventions of men [in the affairs of religion] as an

unspeakable abomination before God; such as the festival days and vigils of saints, and what is called holy-water, the abstaining from flesh on certain days, and such like things, but above all, the masses.

11. We hold in abhorrence all human inventions, as proceeding from Antichrist, which produce distress (Alluding probably to the voluntary penances and mortification imposed by the Catholics on themselves), and are prejudicial to the liberty of the mind.

12 We consider the Sacraments as signs of holy things, or as the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard it as proper and even necessary that believers use these symbols or visible forms when it can be done. Notwithstanding which, we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs, when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them.

13. We acknowledge no sacraments [as of divine appointment] but baptism and the Lord's supper.

14. We honour the secular powers, with subjection, obedience, promptitude, and payment.

Waldenses Confession of 1544

1. We believe that there is but one God, who is a Spirit - the Creator of all things - the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth - upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity. We love him as the source of all goodness; and reverence him as that sublime being, who searches the reins and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and image of the Father - that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that by Him alone we know the Father. He is our Mediator and advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven by which we can be saved. In His name alone we call upon the Father, using no other prayers than those contained in the Holy Scriptures, or such as are in substance agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray; being by Him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy church, comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be to the end thereof. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head - it is governed by His word and guided by the Holy

Spirit. In the church it behooves all Christians to have fellowship. For her He [Christ] prays incessantly, and His prayer for it is most acceptable to God, without which indeed there could be no salvation.

5. We hold that the ministers of the church ought to be unblameable both in life and doctrine; and if found otherwise, that they ought to be deposed from their office, and others substituted in their stead; and that no person ought to presume to take that honour unto himself but he who is called of God as was Aaron - that the duties of such are to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre's sake, or as having dominion over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

6. We acknowledge, that kings, princes, and governors, are the appointed and established ministers of God, whom we are bound to obey [in all lawful and civil concerns]. For they bear the sword for the defence of the innocent, and the punishment of evil doers; for which reason we are bound to honour and pay them tribute. From this power and authority, no man can exempt himself as is manifest from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily paid tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.

7. We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us - namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through [the faith of] Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life.

8. We hold that the Lord's supper is a commemoration of, and thanksgiving for, the benefits which we have received by His sufferings and death - and that it is to be received in faith and love - examining ourselves, that so we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures.

9. We maintain that marriage was instituted of God. That it is holy and honourable, and ought to be forbidden to none, provided there be no obstacle from the divine word.

10. We contend, that all those in whom the fear of God dwells, will thereby be led to please him, and to abound in the good works [of the gospel] which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them - which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, sobriety, and the other good works enforced in the Holy Scriptures.

11. On the other hand, we confess that we consider it to be our duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the minds of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creature, as well as to depart from the good works of the gospel, and to regard the inventions of men.

12. We take the Old and the New Testament for the rule of our life, and we agree with the general confession of faith contained in [what is usually termed] the apostles' creed.