

A.D. Norris A Summary of Christian Doctrine

1.— THE CREATION: - God made the world; and man "of the dust of the ground".

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2: 7).

2.—THE NATURE OF MAN: - Man is a material creature, kept alive by the spirit of God. When this is withdrawn at death, the conscious being ceases to exist, and cannot again exist apart from resurrection.

In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return. (Genesis 3: 19).

For in death there is no remembrance of thee. In the grave who shall give thee thanks? (Psalm 6: 5).

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12: 2).

3. —SIN:—This is rebellion against the will of God. It was first introduced by the decision of Adam and his wife to eat of the forbidden tree, and led to their death as God had decreed. The same tendency to sin, and the same mortality, descends upon ourselves as their children. A recognition of sin is a prime condition of approach to God.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5: 12).

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But everyman in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. (1 Cor. 15: 21 -23)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1: 8-10).

4.—THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION: This is made from the Start in God's assurance that the "Seed of the woman" (i.e. a child descended from her) will destroy the "Seed of the serpent" (i.e. the power of sin). This promise of the SEED is repeated to Abraham, where it is said He shall "possess the gate of His enemies", and is promised as the source of blessing to all nations. It is repeated to David also, where we are told that He is to be a king in David's line, and that God is to be His Father.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3: 15).

In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis22: 17, 18).

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and He shall be my Son. (2 Samuel 7: 12-14).

5.—JESUS CHRIST came to fulfil these promises. He was the "Seed of the woman" through Mary His mother, and the "Seed of David and Abraham" because Mary was in the line of descent from these patriarchs.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Matthew 1: 1).

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law. (Galatians 4: 4).

6.- THE VIRGIN BIRTH ensured that God was His Father. The power of the Holy Spirit caused the Virgin Mary to conceive and bring forth the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God. (Luke 1:35).

7.—JESUS HAD OUR NATURE through His descent from Mary. He was therefore "tempted in all points like as we are", with the possibility of sin.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8: 3).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2: 14).

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4: 15).

8.—YET HE WAS SINLESS, in that no wrong thing could be attributed to Him, and in that he

successfully sought always to do the Will of God. In these ways He reversed for Himself the course chosen by Adam, and followed by the rest of his race.

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. (1 Peter 2: 22).

But He answered and said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". (Matthew 4: 4).

Jesus saith unto them, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish His work". (John 4: 34).

9.—HE DIED to show that we cannot be well-pleasing to God while trusting in flesh, and because He had submitted Himself altogether to God's good pleasure, it was possible for God to raise Him.

And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. (Philippians 2: 8, 9).

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death. (Isaiah 53: 12).

10.—THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS took place in the body, which could be seen and handled.

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. (Luke 24: 39).

11.—JESUS ASCENDED TO HEAVEN shortly after His resurrection, and will in God's time return to the earth.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1: 9-11).

12.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD will take place at His return. It will include all those whom God judges to have known Him sufficiently to have the duty of obeying. It will not include those who, through ignorance or incapacity, were not so responsible.

.. .the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead and at his appearing and his kingdom. (2 Timothy 4: 1).

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as

have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (Romans 2: 12,16).

At that time we were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2: 12).

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (Ephesians 4: 18).

13.—THE JUDGMENT will decide among these, between the worthy and the unworthy. The former will be given eternal life in the body upon the earth, the latter will be destroyed.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25: 31-46).

14.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD will at this time be set up upon the earth, ruled over by Jesus and His immortal saints. The inhabitants of the earth who survive the time of trouble at His coming will be the subjects of the kingdom.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Daniel 2: 44).

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (1 Corinthians 15: 24-25).

15.—THE MILLENNIUM is the period of this state of affairs. At its end the power of sin will be finally overthrown. All who have known Jesus during that period will be raised at the judgment at the end of this period, the faithful given immortality, and the unfaithful destroyed.

... And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Revelation 20: 4—6).

. . . And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and: they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (Revelation 20: 12-14)

16.—THE END OF DEATH will mark this final culmination of this revealed, purpose of God, who will then reign unopposed and unmediated, over the whole earth, and the fellowship which was broken in Eden will be restored.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death . . . And when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15: 24, 26, 28).

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21: 4).

17.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE PAST. Jesus is to restore a kingdom which formerly existed, for He is to "sit upon the throne of David". This kingdom, over the Jewish nation, was set up when God first chose them, though its human kings began with Saul and David. It ceased for a time to exist when, after its division following the death of Solomon, each part was taken into captivity.

And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. (Exodus 19: 6). And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him. (Exekiel 21: 25-27).

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of His kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1: 32-33).

18.—THE ISRAELITES (commonly called the Jews) were the people of this kingdom. God called Abraham to bear His Name, and gave him promises (1) of inheritance in Palestine, (2) of the Seed (see No. 4), (3) of multitudinous descendants. Neither he nor his children Isaac and Jacob (to whom the promises were renewed) received them, and they must rise from the dead to do so.

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. (Genesis 12: 1).

All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (Genesis 13:15).

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:8).

In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. (Genesis 22:17).

And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 26:4)

Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, : and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 28: 14).

And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. (Acts 7: 5). By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise ... These all died in faith, not having received the promises. (Hebrews 11:9, 13).

19— THE JEWS IN PALESTINE failed to retain their part in the promise by their disobedience, and were scattered among the nations.

And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. (Deuteronomy 4: 27). And ye shall be left few in number whereas ye were as the stars in the heaven for multitude, because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 28: 62).

20.— THE RETURN OF THE JEWS must come about, however, for God has promised it. They are at present in no better position for salvation than the rest of men, having rejected Jesus, but when they return, they will have the opportunity of accepting Christ, and be treated accordingly.

For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. (Jeremiah 30: 11). He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. (Jeremiah 31: 10).

God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. (Romans 11:2). I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. (Ezekiel 11: 17).

21.—THE NATURE OF GOD. Throughout the Scriptures, the supreme position is given to the Father. The Son, glorified after His resurrection at the Father's will, always acknowledges His dependence upon the Father, and will at the last give up the kingdom to Him again. Although the purpose of God is so centred in Jesus that He is often spoken of as though existing before the time of His birth, His conscious, objective existence began then.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. (John 5: 19).

And when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15: 28).

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35).

22.—THE HOLY SPIRIT is the power of God directed to the accomplishment of His purpose. It was the means whereby He inspired the writers of the scriptures, and whereby Jesus and His disciples did the mighty deeds ascribed to them. The power to exercise its miraculous gifts was continued among the disciples only so long as was necessary to establish the church, and is not now conferred to disciples.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21).

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8). And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 4).

23.—THE ANGELS were always seen in the likeness of men, are engaged as "ministering spirits" in carrying out His purpose, and are possessed of eternal life such as the faithful will receive, for they shall be "like unto the angels to die no more".

And (Abraham) lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them ' from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. (Genesis 18: 2).

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1: 14).

For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. (Mark 12: 25).

24.—THE DEVIL (with the other terms applied in Scripture, such as Satan, the Evil One, etc.) is sin in whomever it occurs, and is not to be regarded as an angel fallen from grace.

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1: 14-15). That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2: 14).

25.—HELL is, in the Old Testament always, and in the New Testament often, the grave. The New Testament has, however, a special word, Gehenna, which refers to the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, used as a destructor of refuse and of the bodies of criminals. It is so used by Jesus to describe the permanent destruction, of those who rebel against Him.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption, (Psalm 16: 10; Acts 2: 27).

If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Gehenna). (Mark 9:47).

26.—SACRIFICE in the Old Testament served two purposes at least: (1) it showed submission to God on the part of the offerer, recognising his sin and the consequence, death; (2) it pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. (Hebrews 9: 9).

For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh . . . (Hebrews 9: 13).

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. (Hebrews 10: 3-4).

27.—THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS differed from the sacrifice of animals in being a willing one. It showed (see No. 9) the outcome of sin; it showed and submitted to the righteousness of God; it set up a new standard for us to conform to.

"Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22: 42).

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (Romans 3: 25).

28.—THE LOVE OF GOD was showed by it also, for Jesus was Son of God. His life displayed the likeness of God as men could understand it, and His death showed to what lengths God was

prepared to go for our redemption.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3: 16).

But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5: 8).

29.—DISCIPLESHIP involved "taking up the cross and following Jesus". It means that the disciple confesses that his flesh deserves death, puts off trust in it, and places his trust in God, undertaking a new manner of life.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16: 24).

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (Galatians 5: 24).

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:13).

30—THE SYMBOL OF THIS CHANGE (spoken of as "repentance", or a change of mind) is Baptism. The one who wishes to be baptized must, after instruction in the purpose of God, confess his belief and repentance, and be covered in the water. He rises then to a new life, striving constantly to do the will of God (where formerly it was in himself) and looking for the time of Jesus' return.

Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6: 3-4).

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16: 16).

31—THE BREAKING OF BREAD is a weekly observance commanded by Jesus to His disciples, in which they commemorate His death for them, and look forward to a full fellowship with Him in the Kingdom of God.

And as they were eating Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (Matthew 26: 26-29).

32.—PRAYER has a peculiar value for the disciple which it has not for the world, for Jesus, who showed God in the flesh when He was on earth, is now at hand to mediate the prayers of His disciples, and grant what is asked in faith according to His knowledge of our needs.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4: 15-16).

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

33.—SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD, in its unlawful pleasures and vices, is enjoined upon the disciple, as Jesus was "separate from sinners".

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6: 14, 17).

34.—NON-VIOLENCE is a necessary part of this separation, for Jesus' kingdom is not of this world, and the citizens of this kingdom are expected to occupy themselves in peaceful persuasion of those whom they meet, living in meekness and humility till He shall come to set up His power.

For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. (Matthew 26: 52).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. (2 Timothy 2: 24).

Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. (John 18: 36).

... In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1: 8).

35.—WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL is required of him too, and he is under duty to make known to men, by his life and (where possible) by his testimony, the salvation of God to which he has himself been able to respond.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 10: 32).

A.D. Norris