

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 their 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 as 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.