



Session 1

Introduction to the Westminster
Confession of Faith and the Shorter
and Larger Catechisms

Scope of the course

We will not:

1. **Memorize** the Confession and Catechisms. They are for reference.
2. **Debate** the doctrines of Confession and Catechisms, they are just a guide.

We will:

1. **Analyze** the history and text of the Confession and Catechisms.
2. **Compare** the difference between them and other forms of Christianity.
3. **Study** the Bible using the Confession and Catechisms.
4. **Apply** the Confession and Catechisms to our life.

Prerequisite: This class will require knowledge of Bible stories and basic Christian theology to fully understand

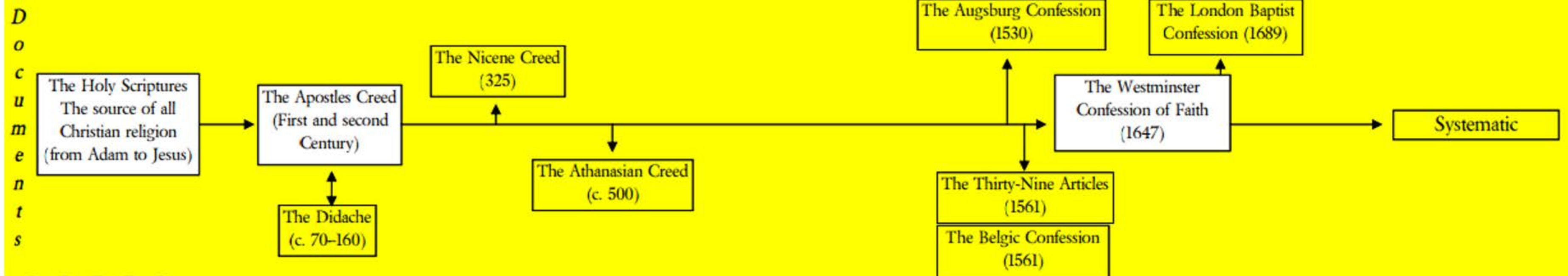
Introductory Topics

1. The background of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF).
 - The WCF was written by **Puritans (Presbyterians and Congregationalists)**.
2. Apologetics Correlates to the confessions and creeds.
 - Creeds were created to **defend** against erroneous teachings.
 - Christianity does not need to “**reinvent the wheel.**”
3. The Apostles Creed is the foundation of the WCF.
 - The WCF is a **Systematic** explanation of the Apostles Creed.
4. The Origin of the “Catechism.”
 - Protestants (**Lutherans** and **Calvinists**) invented the “Catechism.”
5. Where did Christianity go wrong?
 - The “Evangelistic” twist (**Methodism**).
 - The change of curriculum in Church and Public school.
 - The devastating outcome of abandoning Catechizing.

The WCF and the other Confessions

The Development of Systematic theology in Church history

The Apostolic Church	The Persecuted Church	The Imperial Church 313 - 476	The Medieval Church 476 - 1153	The Medieval Church 1153 - 1453	The Reformation 1453 - 1648	The Modern Church 1648 to the present
Jesus and the Apostles (30 - 100)			Columba (c. 521 - 597) Bede (c. 672 - 735) Boniface (c. 672 - 754) Alcuin (c. 735 - 804) Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033 - 1109) Peter Abelard (c. 1079 - 1142)			Jonathan Edwards (c. 1703 - 1758) John Wesley (c. 1703 - 1791) Charles Hodge (1797-1878) John Nelson Darby (c. 1801- 1882) B.B. Warfield (c. 1851 - 1921) Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871 - 1952) Louis Berkhof (1873 - 1957) Paul Johannes Tillich (1886 - 1965)
	Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200 - 258) Athanasius (c. 296 - 373) Basil the Great (c. 330 - 379) Jerome (c. 331 - 420) Ignatius of Antioch (c.? - 108) Justin Martyr (c. 100 - 165) Irenaeus (c. 108 - 200) Tertullian (c. 150 - 212) Origen (c. 185 - 254)				Martin Luther (c. 1483 - 1546) Ulrich Zwingli (c. 1484 - 1531) William Tyndale (c. 1490 - 1536) Thomas Cranmer (c. 1489 - 1556) John Calvin (c. 14509 - 1564) Menno Simmons (c. 1496 - 1561) John Knox (c. 1483 - 1546) John Owen (c. 1616 - 1683) John Bunyan (c. 1628 - 1688) George Fox (c. 1624 - 1691)	
				Francis of Assisi (c. 1181 - 1228) Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225 - 1274) John Wycliffe (c. 1330 - 1364) John Huss (c. 1372 - 1415)		



Background of WCF and Catechisms

- Started with Puritan discontent with **King James I** (1603–1625, King James Bible) and continued with **Charles I** (1625–1649, The Book of Common prayer).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_VI_and_I#King_and_Church
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_I_of_England#Religious_conflicts
- Most Puritans who migrated to North America came in the decade between 1630-1640 in what is known as the **Great Migration**.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Puritans_in_North_America
- Written during the **English Civil War** (1642–1649). The purpose of the Westminster Assembly was to provide official documents for the reformation of the Church of England. The Church of England attempted to abandon **Episcopalianism** for **Presbyterianism**.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith
- The **Church of Scotland** adopted the document, without amendment, in 1647
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith
- Oliver Cromwell** became “Lord Protector” from 1653 – 1659 instead of a King.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cromwell
- Under **Charles II** (1660-1685), the **Act of Uniformity of 1662** mandated the *Book of Common Prayer* resulting in **the Great Ejection** and **Conventicle Act 1664** prohibited religious assemblies of more than five people.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Ejection

Apologetics and origin of the Confessions

Apologetics (from Greek ἀπολογία, "speaking in defense") is **the discipline of defending a position** (often religious) through the systematic use of information. Early Christian writers (c. 120–220) who defended their faith against critics and recommended their faith to outsiders were called **apologists**.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetics>

Christian polemics In its strictest sense, an *apologia* is **a defense against a perceived prior attack**, whether real or imagined: Christian apologetics would arise from anti-Christian polemic.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_apologetics

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1Pe 3:15 NAS)

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as **a workman who does not need to be ashamed**, handling accurately the word of truth.” (2Ti 2:15 NAS also 2Ti 4:2-3)

Deductive Reasoning and Paradoxes

- **Deductive Reasoning** is the **logical** process of reasoning from one or more statements (premises) to reach a logically certain conclusion.
 - The WCF and Catechisms were built from deductive reasoning.
 - "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, (Isa 1:18 NAS)
- A **paradox** is a statement that, despite apparently sound reasoning from true premises, leads to a **self-contradictory or a logically unacceptable** conclusion. Some logical paradoxes are known to be invalid arguments but are still valuable in promoting critical thinking.
 - Many Christian doctrines end in paradox because God is infinite and cannot be fully understood.
 - Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Rom 11:33 NAS)
- Christianity has logical reasons for what is taught. We should not rely on the solution "faith."

Development of Systematic Theology

Theology

Ecclesiology

Soteriology

Eschatology

The Persecuted Church 100 - 313

The Medieval Church 476 -1453

The Reformation 1453 - 1648

The Modern Church 1648 -

A.D.

1-200

201-400

401-600

601-800

801-1000

1001-1201

1201-1400

1401-1600

1601-1800

1801-2000

Present

The Imperial Church 313 -476

*The beginning of the
Roman Catholic Church*

The Apostles Creed
Circa 2nd Century

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth, and in
Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of 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 arose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the
right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the
living and the dead.

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

5 B.C. - 75
Jesus and the
Apostle's

Theology

Soteriology

Ecclesiology

Eschatology

354 - 430
Saint Augustine

The Dark Ages

1509 - 1584
John Calvin

The Westminster Confession of Faith 1647

I. Theology

The Holy Scripture, God and the Holy Trinity
God's Eternal Decree, Creation, Providence

II. Anthropology

The Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment
Thereof, God's Covenant with Man

III. Soteriology

Christ the Mediator, Free will
Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption,
Sanctification, Saving Faith, Repentance unto Life,
Good Works
The Perseverance of the Saints
the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

IV. Ecclesiology

The Law of God, Christian Liberty and Liberty of
Conscience, Religious Worship and the Sabbath
Day
Lawful Oaths and Vows, the Civil Magistrate,
Marriage and Divorce.
The Church, The Communion of Saints
The Sacraments, Baptism and the Lords Supper
Church Censures, Synods and Councils

V. Eschatology

The State of Men after Death, The Resurrection of
the Dead, The Last Judgement

*Theology,
Anthropology,
Soteriology, and
Ecclesiology need
to be clear in order
to understand
Eschatology.*

Origin of the Catechisms

- ▶ The word "catechism" as a manual for instruction appeared in the Late Middle Ages **by protestant reformers** to teach the laity.
- ▶ *Martin Luther* wrote **Luther's smaller and larger Catechism** in 1529.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catechism#Lutheran>
- ▶ *John Calvin* produced the **Geneva catechism** in 1541.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catechism#Genevan_Catechism
- ▶ *The Council of Trent* published the **Roman Catechism** in 1566 in response to protestants during the Catholic *Counter-Reformation* by the *Council of Trent*, for the clergy.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catechism

Evangelism

The Actual Definition

From Old French *evangeliser* 'to spread or preach the Gospel.'

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=evangelize>

Today's Definition

Evangelize means to Convert or seek to convert (someone) to Christianity.

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/evangelize

Modern "Evangelism"

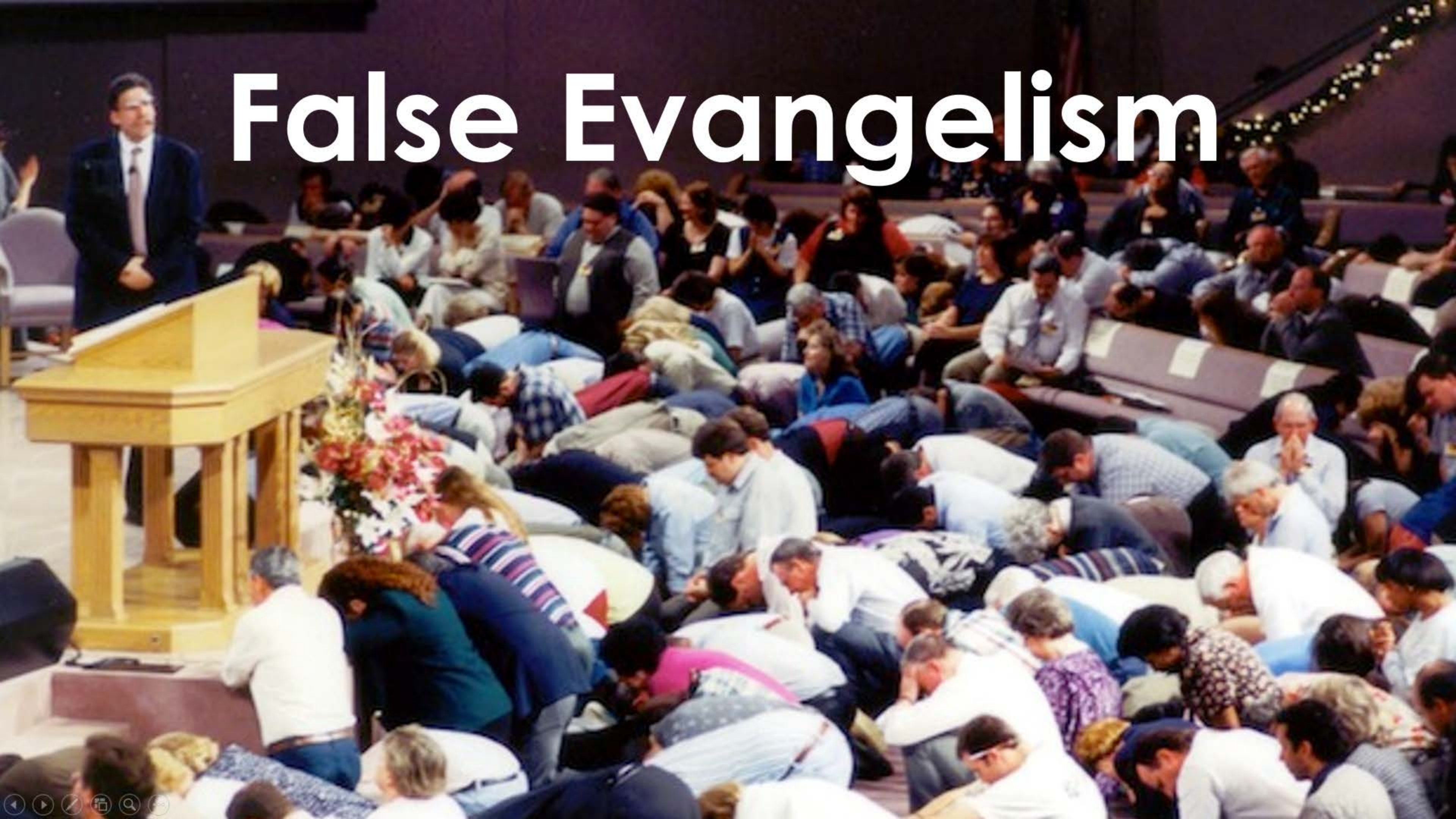
Methodism: The emphasis "social holiness", "Perfectionism", missionary zeal, and making converts.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodism>

Go therefore and make **disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
(Mat 28:19-20 NAS)

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the **discipline** and **instruction** of the Lord
(Eph 6:4 NAS)

False Evangelism



True Evangelism



What did God command?

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. "And **these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.**

(Deu 6:5-7 NAS also see Deu 4:9-10 , Deu 11:19)

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but **whoever keeps and teaches them**, he **shall be called great** in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:19 NAS)

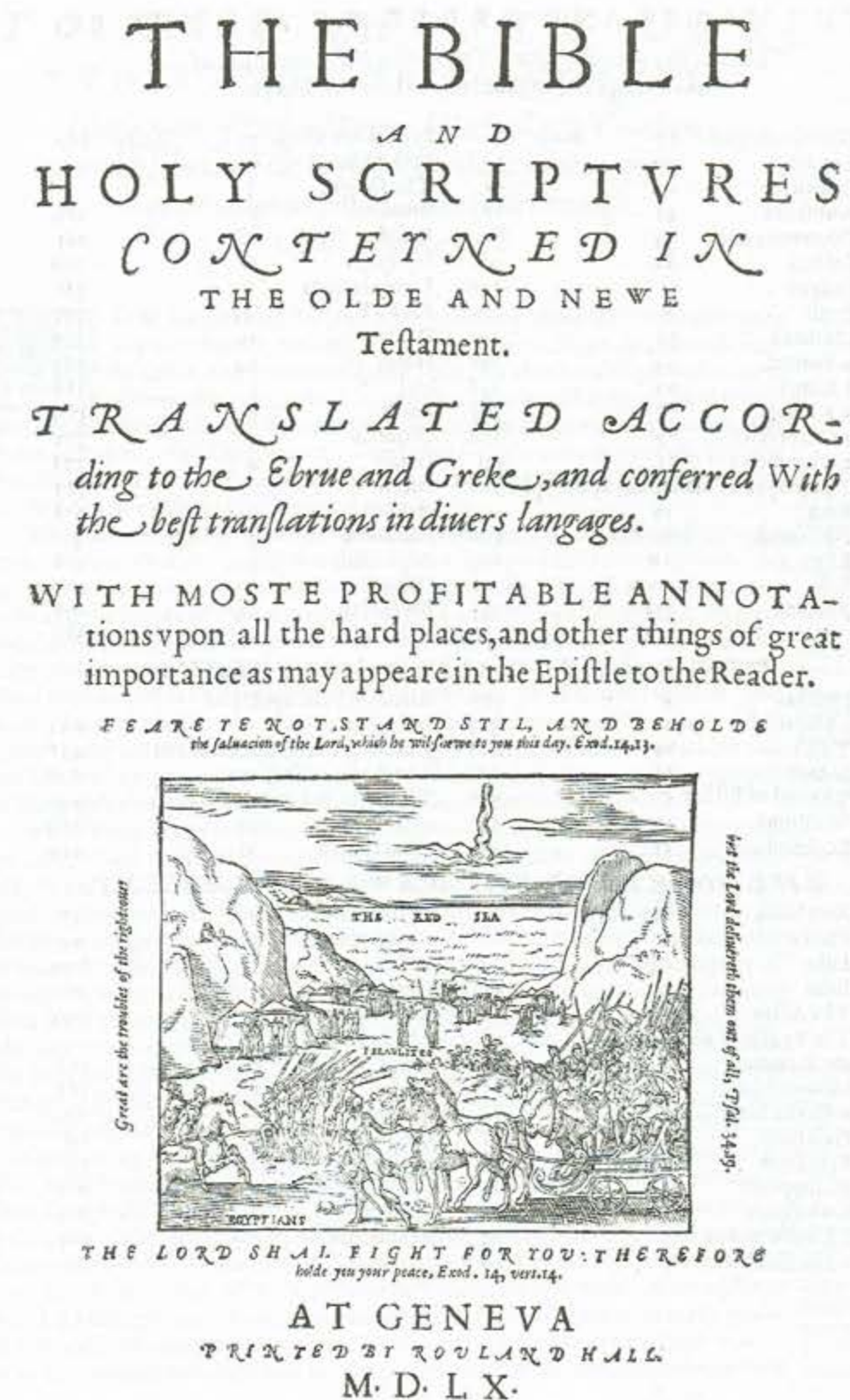
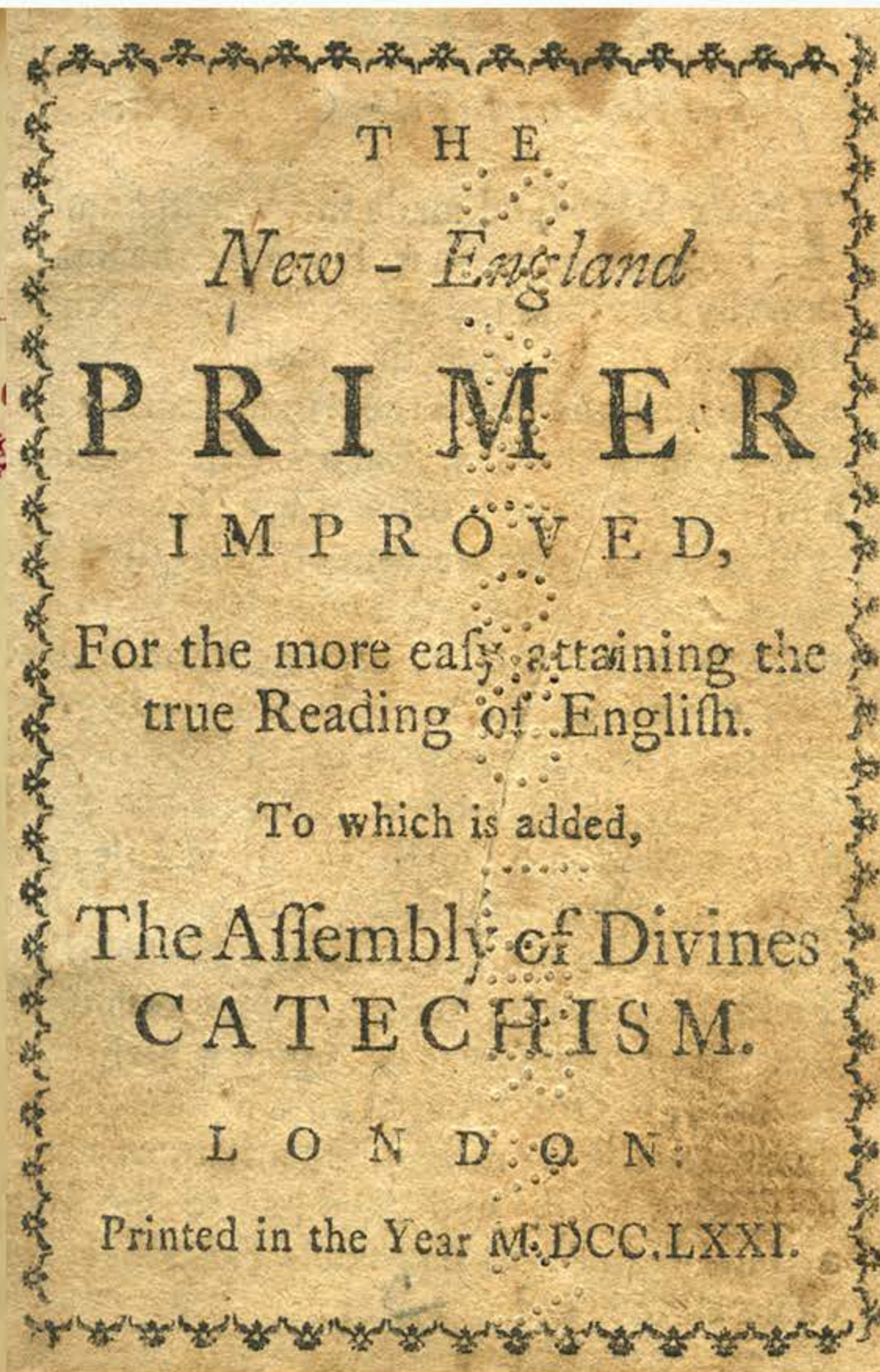
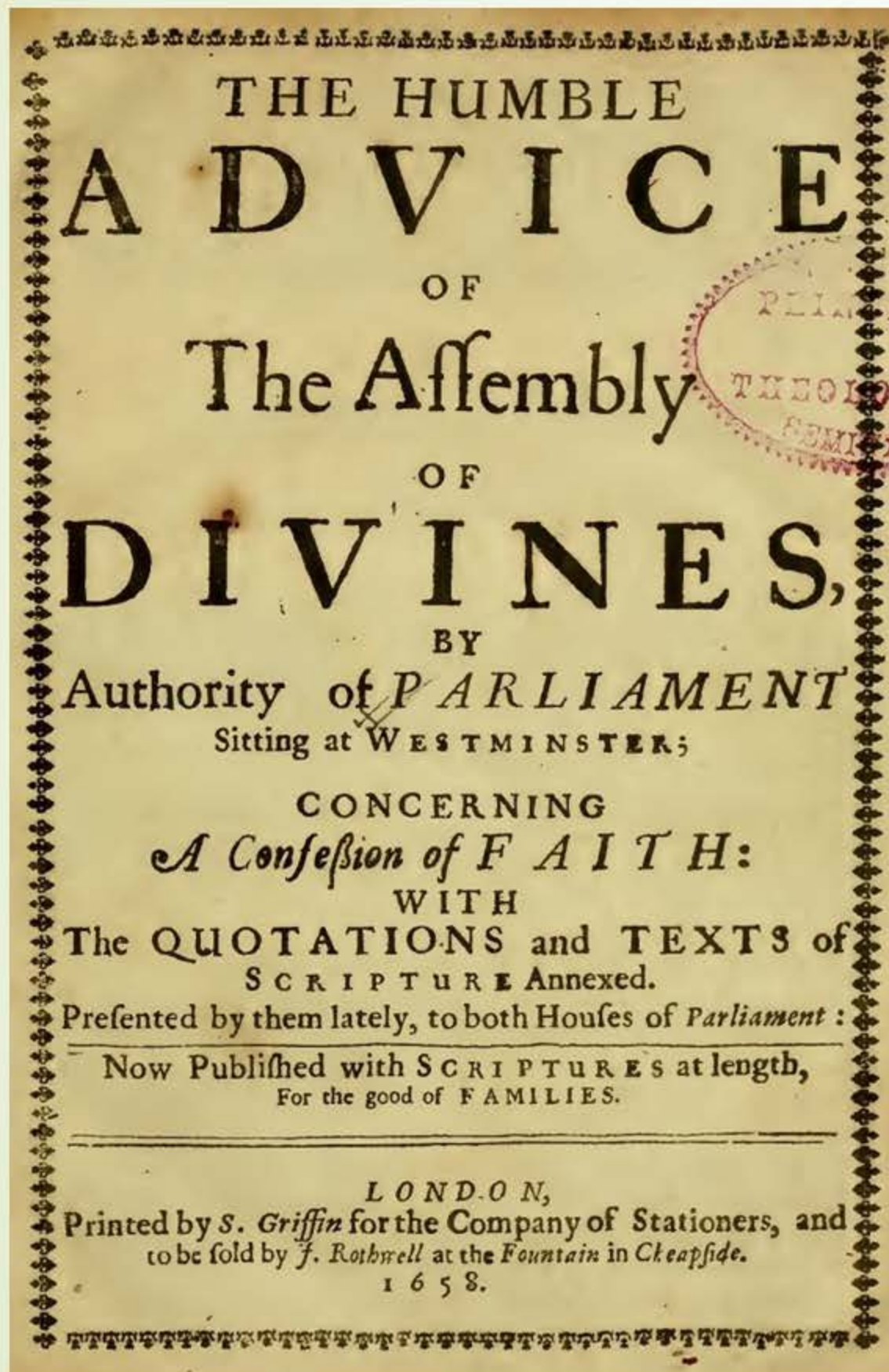
So **faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ**

(Rom 10:17 NAS)

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom **teaching and admonishing one another** with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(Col 3:16 NAS)

How did Puritans evangelize America?



Public School and the Church

- In the beginning **The New England Primer** was the first reading book designed for the American Colonies...it became the foundation of most schooling before the 1790's. The Primer consisted of:
 1. Alphabet and Syllables
 2. The Apostles Creed, Lords Prayer, Ten Commandments, Golden Rule
 3. Poems, Prayers, Hymns, Verses
 4. The Shorter Catechism
- Then, The New England Primer was supplanted by Noah Webster's **Blue Back Speller** after 1790. The Blue Back Speller consisted of:
 1. Alphabet, Phonetics and Syllables
 2. Pronunciations and words
 3. Fables

1 Timothy 4:1-11 NAS

¹ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times **some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,**

² by means of the **hypocrisy** of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

³ *men* who **forbid marriage** and **advocate abstaining from foods**, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude;

⁵ for it is **sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.**

⁶ In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, **constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine** which you have been following.

⁷ But **have nothing to do with worldly fables** fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;**

⁸ for **bodily discipline is only of little profit**, but **godliness is profitable for all things**, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.

⁹ It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

¹¹ **Prescribe and teach these things.**

What was the outcome?

The effect of the change in curriculum during the 1800's

- Mormonism
- Semi-Pelagianism "Alter call"
- Modern Atheism
- Jehovah Witness
- Seventh Day Adventism
- Modern Freemasonry
- Pentecostalism
- Liberal Theology
- Dispensationalism
- Zionism

The effect of the change in curriculum during the 1900's

- Removal of God from Public School
- Evolution and Atheism
- Moral breakdown
- War mongering
- Reliance on government
- Decline of the Church

Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and **instruction**. For the time will come when they will **not endure sound doctrine**; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers **in accordance to their own desires**; (2Ti 4:2-3 NAS)

The Modern Christian message

It is mostly based off of the “Seven Deadly Sins”

- Lust – Stay away from movies, music, books, and images (porn)
- Gluttony – Alcohol, Tobacco, drugs, or eating too much
- Greed – Give money to the Church, Tithe
- Sloth – Dress nice, groom yourself, Keep busy
- Wrath – Feel happy all the time, don't be angry
- Envy – “Keeping up with the Jones” or “I wish I was like ...”
- Pride – Deny self respect, flog yourself, surrender, low self esteem

The message is focused on the “sin of self .”

- The only verse found about sin towards your own body is 1 Cor 6:18 will be discussed in Section 5. Q. 14. What is sin?

Consequences

- He is on the **path of life who heeds instruction**, But he who **forsakes reproof goes astray**. (Pro 10:17 NAS)
- "I said, 'Surely you will revere Me, **Accept instruction**.' So her dwelling **will not be cut off** According to all that I have appointed concerning her. (Zep 3:7 NAS)
- Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem **all the disaster** that I have pronounced against them; because I spoke to them but they **did not listen**, and I have called them but they did not answer.' (Jer 35:13-17 NAS)
- For it is time for **judgment to begin with the household of God**; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1Pe 4:17 NAS)
- But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will **secretly introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, **bringing swift destruction** upon themselves. (2Pe 2:1 NAS)

Next lesson - Session 2

➤ Westminster Confession of Faith

- WCF Chapter 1 Of the Holy Scripture

➤ Catechism

- **Q. 1. What is the chief and highest end of man? (WSC Q.1)**
- Q. 2. How doth it appear that there is a God?
- **Q. 3. What is the Word of God? (WSC Q.2)**
- Q. 4. How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?
- **Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach? (WSC Q.3)**
- Q. 6. What do the Scriptures make known of God?