

Waldensian Statement of Faith

THE CONFESSIONS OF THE WALDENSES, OR THEIR OWN CREEDS

The following Confession of Faith was extracted from the Mennonite book Martyr's Mirror, by Thielemann J. van Braght. The note at the end of this confession is the citation of van Braght's sources. – *Paul W. Davis*

Since the Waldenses were very ancient, and were spread over very many parts of the world, it came that they, from time to time were compelled, by the demand of those with and among whom they lived, to give an account of their faith; hence it is, that different creeds of the Waldenses were made and are still extant. However, it is not our intention, to relate them all, but simply to present to you one or two, which have been celebrated from ancient times, and are judged to be of the best.

Jean Paul Perrin Lionnoys, in his *History of the Waldenses*, translated from the French into Dutch, by J. M. V., *first part, first book, page 43*, makes mention of a certain confession of the Waldenses, in which they speak of various matters of faith, particularly of the holy Scriptures. It reads thus:

Article I. We believe and hold fast all that is contained in the twelve articles of the Apostolic Creed; and regard as error all that differs therefrom, and does not agree with said twelve articles.

Article II. We believe that there is one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Article III. We confess and hold as holy canonical Scriptures, the books of the Holy Bible, namely these: The five books of

Moses, called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The historical books, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. The didactic books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon. The greater prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. The lesser prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Then follow the books of the Apocrypha, which were not received by the Hebrews; hence we read them, as Jerome says, in the preface to the Proverbs, for the edification of the people, but not for the purpose of confirming church doctrines. They are: I Esdras, II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom; Ecclesiasticus, or Jesus Sirach; Baruch, with the letter of Jeremiah; the additions to the book of Esther, from the tenth chapter to the end; the Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace; the History of Susanna; of the Dragon at Babel; the three books of the Maccabees.

Then follow the books of the New Testament. The Gospels, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The Acts of the Apostles. The epistles of Paul, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John. (How it comes that III John is not mentioned, we do not know). The epistle of Jude, the Revelation of John.

Article IV. The afore-mentioned books teach this: That there is one God, who is omnipotent, allwise, and alone good, who created all things according to His goodness; for He created Adam after His image and likeness; but that, through the envy of the devil and the disobedience of Adam, sin came into the world, and that we are sinners in and through Adam.

Article V. That Christ was promised to the fathers, who received the law, that by it they might know their sin,

unrighteousness and unfitness, and long for the coming of Christ; to which end He atoned for sin and Himself fulfilled the law.

Article VI. That Christ was born at the time appointed by His Father; namely, when all manner of wickedness abounded; and this not for the good works' sake, for they were all sinners; but to show us grace and mercy, as being the true and faithful one.

Article VII. That Christ is our Way, Truth, Peace, Righteousness, Shepherd, Advocate, Sacrifice, and High Priest; who died for the salvation of them that believe, and was raised for our justification.

Article VIII. And, consequently, we maintain, that there is no other mediator and advocate with God the Father, than Jesus Christ. But as regards the virgin Mary, we hold, that she was holy, humble, and full of grace; likewise we believe of all the other saints, that they . . . wait for the resurrection of their bodies in the day of judgment.

Article IX. We believe that after this life there are but two places; the one for the blessed, the other for the damned; and utterly deny purgatory, which is a dream and invention of antichrist against truth.

Article X. We have likewise always believed, that all human inventions are an unspeakable abomination before God; such as feast days, vigils of the saints, the so-called holy water, abstaining from flesh on certain days, and like things, especially masses.

Article XI. We abhor all human inventions, as proceeding from antichrist, and which carry with them destruction, and prevent the freedom of the spirit.

Article XII. We believe that the sacraments are signs of holy things, or visible representations of invisible grace; and

deem it well, that believers should from time to time use these visible signs or representations, when it is possible for them to do so; nevertheless we also believe and hold, that said believers can be saved, though they do not receive these signs; that is, when they have no place or opportunity where to receive or use them.

Article XIII. We have never confessed that there is any other sacrament than baptism and the Supper.

Article XIV. We must honor the secular authorities with subjection, obedience, willingness, and taxes.

The above fourteen articles are extracted from the book called by the Waldenses, "The Spiritual Almanac," and from the "Memoirs of George Morel." Also 3 "Hist. of the Waldens.," 1st part, 1st book, cap. 12, pages 43-48.