

Articles of Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a Reformed confession of faith, in the Calvinist theological tradition. Although drawn up by the 1646 Westminster Assembly largely of the Church of England, it became, and remains the 'subordinate standard' of doctrine in the Church of Scotland and has been influential within Presbyterian churches worldwide (with various changes it has also been adopted by some Congregationalists and even Baptists).

In 1643, the English Parliament called upon "learned, godly and judicious Divines", to meet at Westminster Abbey in order to provide advice on issues of worship, doctrine, government and discipline of the Church of England. Their meetings, over a period of five years, produced the Confession of Faith, as well as a Larger Catechism and a Shorter Catechism. For more than three centuries, various churches around the world have adopted the Confession and the Catechisms as their standards of doctrine, subordinate to the Bible. Westminster Larger Catechism

In 1643 when the Long Parliament of England called the Westminster Assembly to produce the Westminster Confession, it also asked for a directory of "catechising". The Assembly asked Herbert Palmer to produce a draft of the Larger Catechism. Robert Baillie and other Scottish delegates found the work disappointing. In December 1643 a committee was formed to write the Catechism. In January 1647 the Assembly gave up writing one catechism and split it into two. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was to be "more easie and short for beginners" and the Larger Catechism was to be "more exact and comprehensive". The Catechism was completed by the Westminster Assembly in 1647. It was then adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1648 and by the Presbyterian Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1788. Westminster Shorter Catechism

Read the details above under the heading Westminster Larger Catechism.

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