

Chapter 10

Human Response

Every religion of the world holds out the expectation of the appropriate human response to its perception of the divine. The appropriate response of the religion of ancient Israel differs markedly in form from the appropriate response expected within modern day Judaism. Even within modern Judaism, variations of the response exist among the groups in the family of Judaism. Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative, and Hasidic Jews have varying ways of carrying out the form of their response to God while belonging to the same family of faith. Likewise, Islam has several groups within its family, including the Sunnites, Druse, and Shiites. The family of Hinduism has as many “denominations” as it has regions of the subcontinent who reverence patron deities. Buddhism has three main groups: the Theravada, the Mahayana, and the Vajrayana. While each group within these families have distinctives that set them apart from their brothers and sisters, these distinctives in no way nullify the essential characteristics of the particular religions. Despite the varieties of expression of Christian responses to God in light of the gospel by the various major denominational groups and many minor groups, all share a central core response that sets Christianity apart from the other religions of the world.

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The appropriate response to God presented in the New Testament has a basic pre-Mosaic origin, which appears at the same time both simple and highly demanding. Its simplicity leaves critics asking “Is that all?” But it is this very simplicity that shreds all of the superficiality that too easily clings to religion, which leaves others protesting, “The cost is too high.”

The Gospels

As this book has argued, the New Testament presents Jesus as the central factor in humanity's relationship to God. While many religions have great central figures, Jesus functions in a radically different way for Christians than those central figures do for other religions. The function of Jesus, in fact, forms the essential scandal of Christianity. Jews have profound respect for Moses and Muslims for Mohammed, but neither accords to their prophet what Christians accord to Jesus. To do so would be unspeakable blasphemy. Hindus affirm the countless avatars of divinity, and Buddhists affirm oneness with the divine Buddha, but the exclusive claims of Christians for the uniqueness of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ seems to Hindus and Buddhists like so much intolerance. Given the gospel as it has been examined in this book, it should come as no surprise that the early church defined the appropriate response to God in terms of how one responds to Jesus. He issues a call for people to come to him personally.

Following. Jesus issued a simple call for people to follow him. The simplicity of the invitation always came in relation to the consequences of accepting the invitation. The idea of following has both a positive and negative dimension, for to follow Jesus means to leave something behind. The call to follow meant a variety of things to different people when Jesus sought them. To some it meant leaving a vocation (Matt. 4:19–22; 9:9; Mark 1:17–18, 20; 2:14; Luke 5:27; John 1:40, 43), to others leaving family and friends (Matt. 8:19–22; 10:37; Luke 9:57–62; 14:26), and to still others leaving a place of belonging, property, or wealth (Matt. 19:21, 27; Mark 10:21, 28; Luke 18:22, 28). To all it meant leaving one's life as it had been (Matt. 10:38–39; 16:24; Mark 8:34–37; Luke 9:23–25; 14:27; cf. John 12:25–26).

Leaving comes as a consequence, rather than as a focus, of following Jesus. Leaving emerges as a possibility only because Jesus appears comparatively as so much more delightful than what one has left behind. In following Jesus, one discovers a life of such surpassing value that he or she will exchange anything to possess it (Matt. 13:44–45). Those who do not appreciate the value of following Jesus make their choice for the base and inferior. Jesus declares, "In the

same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). To those who leave all and follow, however, Jesus promises the kingdom (Matt. 19:27–30; Mark 10:28–31; Luke 18:28–30) and life eternal (John 5:40; 8:12; 10:25–28).

Following does not represent an activity so much as an attitude toward life and a way of living. Following Jesus involves more than the physical activity of entering the school of an itinerant rabbi. It involves a new orientation to God and life (John 1:37, 43; 21:19, 22). Following becomes the natural orientation of life, for in following Jesus people find themselves (Matt. 20:34; John 10:1–10). Acceptability for Jesus does not depend on the length of time in following but in the fact of following, because the call of Jesus does not involve a hierarchy of followers who merit more consideration than others (Matt. 20:1–16). All who respond to the call and come to Jesus receive the gift (11:28–30).

Repentance. The Synoptic Gospels elaborate the positive and negative dimensions of following by the term *repentance*. Israel had understood repentance as the appropriate response to God, for it involved turning away from sin and turning toward God in terms of one’s attitude and heart desire. John the Baptist provided the continuity with that ancient prophetic tradition by calling on people to repent (Matt. 3:2, 6, 8; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 7–8). When Jesus began his public ministry, he likewise preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15). In fact, at one point he identified his mission as one to call sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

Jesus presented himself as the cause that should occasion repentance. His appearance presented the alternative that required choice. If Tyre and Sidon had seen the miracles of Jesus, they would have repented (Matt. 11:21; Luke 10:13). The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah; Jesus presented himself as one greater than Jonah, whose message required repentance as the only acceptable response (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32). Thus, Jesus identified himself with his message, insisting on the necessity of repentance, without which people would perish (Luke 13:3, 5; 16:30–31). While repentance involves a mental reorientation, Jesus also insisted that repentance involved a change in behavior reflecting the new orientation (Matt. 21:28–32). This response to God results in rejoicing in

heaven as a person accepts his or her place in creation by turning away from a way of life independent of God and turning to God (Luke 15:7, 10, 17–20).

Jesus instructed his followers to make the preaching of repentance a cardinal element of their following him. When he sent the Twelve out on their mission, they “preached that people should repent” (Mark 6:12). After the resurrection he reconfirmed the importance of repentance by instructing the apostles that they should preach repentance and forgiveness (Luke 24:47).

Faith in Jesus. John’s Gospel, the last one to be written, does not mention repentance. Instead, the author focuses attention on the necessity of faith in Jesus as the appropriate response to God. In his prologue, John identifies this response as a key theme of his message, declaring that those who believe on the name of Jesus receive the power to become children of God (John 1:12). This power is the Holy Spirit, who comes to all who have faith in Jesus (7:38–39).

All the blessings of God come to those who have faith in Jesus. Through this faith people participate in the resurrection and experience eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 11:25–26; 14:1–6; 20:31). Faith in Jesus also results in an enlightenment that provides people with a way to live that is positive and acceptable to God (12:36, 44–46). Furthermore, faith in Jesus as the messianic Son of Man sets people free from the guilt of sin and the fear of judgment (9:35–38). On the other hand, those who do not have faith in Jesus experience condemnation, death, and the wrath of God (3:18, 36; 8:24).

Faith. While the Synoptic Gospels do not speak of faith *in Jesus* as the appropriate response to God, they do stress the necessity of faith. Having clearly established a personal need to follow Jesus, these Gospels elaborate the genuineness of following in terms of a life of faith. Faith represents the substance of repentance, and it arises through encountering Jesus. He utters a recurring lament for those who have little faith, for faith is not a generic commodity but a matter of confidence in him as the One who is able to help or make a difference (Matt. 6:30; 16:8; 17:17; Mark 9:19; 16:14, 16; Luke 9:41; 12:28; 24:25).

Those who do have faith experience the coming of the kingdom in their midst. When Jesus saw the faith of those who lowered the

crippled man through the roof for healing, he both forgave sins and healed the man (Matt. 9:2; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20).

Faith in Jesus resulted in the healing of many:

the centurion's servant	Matt. 8:10; Luke 7:9
a leper	Matt. 8:2; Mark 1:40; Luke 5:12
Jairus' daughter	Matt. 9:18; Mark 5:23; Luke 8:50
the bleeding woman	Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; Luke 8:48
two blind men	Matt. 9:28–29
Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter	Matt. 15:28; Mark 7:29
Bartimaeus	Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42–43
a leper	Luke 17:19

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus represents the locus of faith in God, for God exercises his power through Jesus. Those who do not have faith do not see the power of God (Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:56). But those who have even the barest of faith will experience the kingdom (Matt. 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–20; cf. 17:6). Jesus is the one who elicits this faith (Mark 9:24; Luke 7:50). A failure of faith amounts to a failure of trust in Jesus (Matt. 8:18, 23–27; 17:20; Mark 4:35–40; Luke 8:22–25).

In John's Gospel, many people began to believe in Jesus because of the miracles he performed (John 2:11; 4:53; 11:42, 45; 12:11). Others refused to believe unless they saw miracles (4:48; 6:30), and some of these refused to believe even when they saw them (12:37–40). Jesus put little stock in people who followed him simply because of his ability to perform miracles, for he knew the human heart (2:23). He expected faith that he is in the Father and the Father in him (14:10–14). John specifically wrote in order that people might come to that faith (20:31).

Doing the words. In the Gospels, an appropriate response always includes an appropriate resulting action; faith produces godly behavior. Jesus expects people to do his words (Matt. 7:24; Luke 6:46–49). Those who have faith in him are the ones who love him, and those who love him obey him (John 14:15–24; 15:9–12). Through Jesus people come to know the will of God, but unless they act on that knowledge, they have not received the word with faith.

Thus, Jesus can speak of obedience not as a cause of salvation, but as a sign of salvation (Mark 3:35; 4:21–25; Luke 11:28; John 3:21; 17:6, 8). Zacchaeus represents that person whose faith in Jesus manifests itself in a change of behavior that amounts to doing righteousness (Luke 19:8–9). The one who hears, understands, and acts is the one who has true faith that leads to life (Matt. 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:4–15; John 12:47–50).

Attitude. Jesus also speaks of the appropriate attitude of the person responding to God. Essentially, his message involves taking on the attitude of Christ, so that listening to Jesus forms the necessary first step to an appropriate response to God (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 10:39, 41–42). Since Jesus lived a life of humility, those who refuse to humble themselves will never enter the kingdom; but those who do humble themselves and confess their sinfulness will be accepted by God (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14–15; Luke 18:14, 16–17; 23:40–43). Just as Jesus forgave his tormentors, those who follow him must be willing to forgive (Matt. 6:14–15; 18:21–35; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37; 17:3–4). Ultimately, one must desire a loving heart for God and a compassion for other people (Matt. 18:5; 22:34–40; 25:34–46; Mark 9:33–37; 12:28–34; Luke 9:46–48).

Accepting Jesus. Receiving Jesus makes it possible to become a child of God (John 1:12). By accepting him, one accepts God, while rejecting Jesus means rejection of God (Matt. 21:33–44; 22:1–14; John 13:19–20; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–18; Luke 14:15–24). Accepting Jesus involves acknowledging who he is in relationship to God and how he provides access to him. Peter, Martha, and Thomas made confessions of their faith under differing circumstances (Matt. 16:13–20; Mark 8:27–29; Luke 9:18–20; John 11:27; 20:24–29). Verbal confession and its validity must be seen in light of the other issues already discussed in this chapter. Peter's confession preceded his denial. Thomas's confession only came with empirical proof, which Scripture elsewhere suggests does not constitute faith. Some believed in Jesus during his lifetime, but they did not confess him for fear of being put out of the synagogue (John 12:42–43). In this regard, acceptance of Jesus carries with it the expectation of a willingness to be identified publicly as a follower of Jesus (Matt. 10:32–33; Luke 12:8–9).

General Apostolic Writings

In the New Testament, those who followed Jesus did not refer to themselves as Christians. In terms of their relationships to one another, they called themselves “brothers” and “sisters”; in terms of what Christ was doing for them, they referred to themselves as “saints”; in terms of their response to God and their basis for unity as a people, they referred to themselves as “believers” (Acts 1:15; 2:44; 4:32; 5:12; 9:41; 10:45; 11:2; 15:2, 5, 23; 16:1, 14–15; 21:25; 1 Cor. 6:5; 7:12–14; 9:5; 14:22; 2 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2:10; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:16; 6:2; James 2:1; 1 Peter 2:17); in terms of defining themselves and establishing the boundaries of their community, Paul distinguished those who belonged to Jesus from “unbelievers” (1 Cor. 6:6; 7:14–15; 10:27; 14:23; 2 Cor. 4:4; 6:14–15).

Generic faith. Faith or belief often appears as a generic expression for the appropriate response to God, but these instances seem to lack any concrete content. Sometimes the context means faith in God (Gal. 3:6–9; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:1; 11:1–40; 1 Peter 1:21). Frequently it describes the attitude of someone who receives the benefits of relationship to God (Acts 15:9; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:18–19; Heb. 4:3; James 2:5; 5:15). Faith itself arises as a consequence of the gracious initiative of God (Acts 14:27; 18:27). It forms the foundational quality for experiencing an appropriate relationship to God, and out of faith arises the ability to endure and become beneficial to God (Acts 19:18; Rom. 11:20, 23; 13:11; 1 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 2:8; 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8; 1 Tim. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:9; 2 Peter 1:5). Rather than a generic quality without specific content or object, faith in the New Testament always has an understood object. Even the generic usages of “faith” occur in the context of a community that placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus. When the apostles preached and called on people to respond appropriately to God, they spoke in terms of faith, trust, or intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes to those who have faith or trust in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 10:43; 11:17; 16:31; 26:18). The apostles urged people specifically to have faith in Jesus Christ (2:38; 20:21; 22:16; 24:24). The issue at stake in the preaching of the apostles was that people would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 5:12; 9:42; 14:23; 16:31).

The benefits of salvation do not come on the basis of generic faith, but through a faith directed specifically toward Jesus Christ. Faith in him leads to the many dimensions of salvation:

Righteousness	Rom. 3:22; Phil. 3:9
Atonement	Rom. 3:25
Justification	Rom. 3:26; Gal. 2:15–16
Adoption	Gal. 3:26–29
Eternal Life	1 Tim. 1:16
Access to God	Eph. 3:12
Indwelling of Christ	Eph. 3:17

Faith means faith that Jesus can save because of who he is as the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord of Lords (Heb. 3:1; 13:15; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 3:23; 5:1, 10). Faith involves that kind of knowledge of Christ that creates in one a trust that can only come from intimacy (2 Peter 1:8; 1 John 2:3, 20–21; 3:6; 2 John 1–3).

The message of faith. Faith in the New Testament explicitly refers to Jesus Christ, who is known through the gospel message: “Those who accepted his message were baptized” (Acts 2:41). The *content* of faith rests in the message about Jesus that people have accepted and thereby begun a life of following and trusting Jesus, whom they met in that message. Simply put, faith begins through believing the stories about Jesus (Acts 4:4; 8:12; 15:7; 16:14–15; 17:12; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21; 15:1–2, 11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:10; 3:1; Titus 1:9; Heb. 4:2). Faith is not a nebulous matter individually constructed and privately held. Rather, the apostles write of *the* faith, a specific and particular understanding of reality revealed in Jesus Christ from creation through his expected return (Acts 6:8; 14:22; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:23; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 1:27; 1 Tim. 2:7; 3:9; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10–12, 20; 2 Tim. 2:18; 4:7; Titus 1:13; Heb. 4:14; Jude 3). Instead of a strictly private matter, the faith or message about Jesus forms the basis for community and the binding matter of common concern for those who become the church: “All who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

Believing the testimony of the witnesses about Jesus formed the basis for accepting people into the fellowship of “believers” as well as for receiving the benefits of salvation (Acts 14:1; 17:34;

28:24; 2 Cor. 4:13–14; Gal. 3:2, 5; Eph. 1:13–14; 1 Thess. 4:14–18; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 1:1–4). “The faith” functioned as a synonym for “the gospel” in the apostolic writings, and both implied a particular message about Jesus as the substance of faith (Rom. 1:16; 10:14–15; 1 Cor. 15:1–2, 11; 2 Cor. 9:13; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 4:6; 1 Peter 4:17–18).

Continuing faith. The apostles define faith as a continuous state of relationship with God rather than as a static experience. While faith in Christ may have a beginning, it has no end. Faith that ends is not faith but infatuation. If faith comprises the essence of the appropriate response to God, then faith involves a continuing experience of unending response to God:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (Col. 2:6–7)

Faith grows, as Jesus had said, like a mustard seed and results in a life that continually gives itself over to Christ (2 Cor. 10:15; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Peter 3:18). Salvation therefore belongs to those who continue in the faith, “not moved from the hope held out in the gospel” (Col. 1:22–23; cf. 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Tim. 1:19; 4:3; 6:11–12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 2:1–3; 3:6, 8–12, 14; 6:12; 9:28; 10:32–39; 2 John 9). Thus, the apostles were concerned to know if faith was genuine or if it had been merely a vain, superficial expression (1 Thess. 3:5, 6–10). In the face of persecution or pleasure, the genuineness of faith is revealed as more than mere verbal assent or intellectual acceptance of theological concepts (Phil. 1:29; 2 Thess. 1:4; James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7). The apostles observed the possibility of affirming “the faith” without having faith in the One of whom “the faith” spoke (1 Tim. 4:1; 6:10, 20; 1 John 2:19). Others departed by rejecting the message of faith or its implications for living (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:18; Heb. 4:11; 2 Peter 2:15, 21).

As a result, the apostles urged the followers of Jesus to remain in him, to stand firm in the faith, and to continue to pursue the life of faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 14:22; 2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:5; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Tim. 2:15; 3:9; 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:22; Titus 1:9; 2:2; Philem. 5; Heb. 4:14; 10:22, 23; 2 Peter 1:12; 1 John 2:27–28; 3:24; 2 John

4; 3 John 1, 3–4; Rev. 14:12). A life of faith forms the basis for doing the work of God, exhibiting the character of Christ, and knowing one belongs to Christ (2 Cor. 2:9–10; Phil. 2:17; 1 Tim. 1:4–5; 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:10; 1 John 5:13; Rev. 2:19). The test for whether one has faith or merely fascination in Christ is revealed over time, for faith continues. The only way for faith to continue is if it has as its focus the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who through faith strengthens and preserves his people (Heb. 12:1–3; 1 Peter 1:5; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 1:7; 2:4–6).

Repentance. While a working definition of *metanoia*, the Greek word generally translated as “repentance,” usually means a change of mind, the significance of this change often goes unappreciated. It is not the sort of change of opinion that says, “I will have steak instead of roast.” Instead, it constitutes change in the way one’s mind perceives the nature of things and says, “I will not eat meat again because I believe it will kill me.” The change of mind forms a deep-seated conviction that governs one’s life. In the latter days of twentieth-century America, the term used to describe this kind of change of mind is “paradigm shift.” Once the shift has taken place, it is impossible to undo it and see the world from the old perspective. Once Europeans perceived the world as round, they could not return to living as though it were flat.

Repentance describes the reorientation that comes with faith in Jesus Christ. Occasionally the apostles speak of repentance and faith together, but normally they use repentance as an alternative term to describe the appropriate response to God (Acts 20:21). Alternatively, the apostles sometimes address this same idea by calling on people to “turn” from sin or darkness to God and Christ (Acts 3:19, 26; 9:35; 11:21; 26:18; 2 Cor. 3:16; 1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:19). In the early sermons of Acts, Peter called on people to repent or turn to God from wickedness. He said nothing about faith (Acts 2:38; 3:19, 26; 5:31; 9:35) until he spoke to the Gentile Cornelius and his household, but in that situation he did not mention repentance (10:43). When Peter gave an account of the Gentile conversion to the church in Jerusalem, he declared that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just as the others “who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ” (11:17). Instead of agreeing that the Gentiles had faith, however, the members of the church replied, “God has granted even the

Gentiles repentance unto life” (11:18). In other words, the church of Jerusalem, with its Jewish heritage and dynamic understanding of the unity of faith and repentance, used the terms interchangeably as describing different dimensions of the same experience.

Repentance represents the behavioral effect of faith, for it is a reorientation that touches all dimensions of life. It should be evident in one’s behavior (Acts 26:20). God expects people to respond to him in a way that repentance describes (17:30; 2 Peter 3:9). The kindness of God and genuine encounter with him through faith leads to repentance; those who lack this attitude toward God have no faith and will face wrath (Rom. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 7:10; Heb. 6:1, 6; Rev. 9:20–21).

Obedience, faith, and righteousness. The behavior of repentance and faith is obedience; the status of repentance and faith is righteousness. Paul speaks of “the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom. 1:5). John indicates that obedience provides a basis for assurance that one knows Jesus (1 John 2:3; 3:21–24). Obedience accompanies faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 9:13). For the apostles, however, obedience also meant obeying the command to believe the gospel and have faith in Christ, such that rejecting Christ constitutes disobedience (Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 4:6; 1 Peter 1:22–25; 2:4–8; 4:17–18).

Faith, therefore, forms the basis for righteousness or acceptability to God. God accepts those who trust him. Those that do not have faith have no use for God. Abraham serves as the example of God’s acceptance of people on the basis of their faith in him (Rom. 4:1–25; Gal. 3:6–29; Heb. 11:8–19). Instead of law, God gave the patriarch a promise, and he believed God. On the basis of this faith, God accepted him as righteous (Gen. 15:6). The faith of Abraham, however, manifested itself in a way that can only be called repentance. That is, his faith in God caused a change in his way of relating to the world. Following God meant leaving language, culture, religion, family, land, and people. God put everything else in perspective so that Abraham believed God and valued him more than anything else that had a claim on him. He manifested the obedience of faith rather than the obedience of consequences. He obeyed because of his relationship with God, not to earn a relationship with God.

This right relationship or acceptability to God comes through faith (Rom. 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; 9:30; 10:4–8; Gal. 2:15–16; 3:6–9, 11,

22–25; 5:5–6; Phil. 3:9). God himself makes the relationship right for those who have faith in his Son (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:26–30; 5:1–2; 9:32; 10:9–10). By faith in Christ, who came from God and has returned to God, people can enter into the same type of relationship with God that Christ enjoys.

Baptism. In Acts, those who accepted the message were baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:12–13, 36; 9:18; 10:47–48; 16:33; 18:8; 19:2–5). Peter's Pentecostal sermon included a call to be baptized, as did Paul's conversion account (2:38; 22:16). Reference to baptism appears in the major bodies of the apostolic writing as the universal practice of the church. Believers were baptized (Rom. 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 1:13–17; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:2; 1 Peter 3:21). Baptism functioned for the church as an outward and visible sign of an inner and spiritual grace, for in baptism the new convert acted out the drama of his or her faith in the Christ as Savior. Unlike the discreet baptisms of the latter twentieth century in the United States, those baptisms took place in the most public area where an abundance of water could be found. The humiliating spectacle of someone being soaked in public made the paradigm shift of faith all the more vivid and observable. The early believers became publicly marked people, suspect and unacceptable to the population at large.

Rejection of Christ. To discuss an appropriate response to God implies an inappropriate response. The early believers considered rejecting Christ as the step that would cut off access to God (Acts 4:11; Rom. 2:8; 2 Thess 2:10–12; 2 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:14–15; 1 Peter 2:4–8). Any who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ have rejected God's initiative in relationship (Acts 3:22–23; 19:9; 1 John 2:22–23; 5:10). Those who do not believe cannot enter what God offers to those who have faith (Heb. 3:19; Jude 5). If people reject Jesus, they have no other means of access to God (Heb. 10:26–31). And those who have heard the gospel and enjoyed the community of faith only to turn to another belief system cannot reexperience repentance, for they have relegated Christ to an old way of looking at things—the old paradigm (Heb. 6:4–6).

Conclusion

The apostles experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Because of their faith in him, they viewed all of reality in a new

perspective oriented toward Christ, which they called repentance. This new orientation created a basis for obedience to Christ, rooted in their relationship with him. By virtue of this relationship established by the initiative of God and received by faith, people are acceptable or righteous in the sight of God.

HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the apostolic period, baptism coincided as closely as possible with the conversion experience. By its symbolic nature, it expressed the faith of a convert and dramatically portrayed the experience of repentance—turning from an old way of life to a new life. In turning to Christ, a person demonstrated his or her rejection of all other loyalties through baptism. By the second century the church began delaying baptism for a period of instruction, but this delay did not alter the impact of the declaration that baptism communicated.

Baptism

Besides representing the relationship of the new believer and Christ, baptism also constitutes the ceremonial rite of incorporation whereby a person is accepted into the church. It appears evident that the patristic church considered the value of baptism to be in the sincerity of the confession made by it, as the lengthy period of instruction implies.¹ With the emergence of doctrinal disputes and the rise of heresy, faith increasingly came to be understood in terms of cognitive belief in affirmations about Christ more than in terms of a personal encounter with the living Christ.² The fathers of the church expressed their understanding of “the faith” in their writings. This practice eventually led to the development of the creeds, which represent the consensus of the universal church concerning the Christ in whom they believed.³

The questions asked of new Christians at baptism reflect the developing formulas of the faith, which coincided with the growing period of instruction prior to baptism.⁴ The *Didache* describes a period of instruction that candidates for baptism had to undergo. It also describes how the ceremony of baptism grew to include symbolism and ritual that reinforced the meaning of baptism. In addition to the implicit image of burial and resurrection through the medium

of the Holy Spirit represented by water, the formula of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit also occurred. The *Didache* also specified a preference for cold, running water, but made allowance for warm (stagnant) water and even for pouring, when insufficient water was available.⁵

In some regions, baptism was followed by placing a white robe and a garland on the new Christian. Such procedures emphasized that a person had accepted the seal of possession by Jesus Christ, for salvation and baptism belonged only to those who held to orthodox belief about Jesus Christ.⁶ By the third century, baptism commonly occurred only once a year. In some places this happened at Pentecost, emphasizing the reception of the Holy Spirit. In other places it took place at Easter, emphasizing the resurrection.⁷

The offer of baptism to any who came went far beyond the mystery religions, which practiced forms of ceremonial washing and tended to recruit "the better sort of person." The preaching to non-Christians continued to include the challenge to receive baptism, which would bring the benefits of salvation that the gospel promised.⁸ Precisely because the gospel promised a change in character, a cleansing of the spirit, and a new life that would never end, the invitation to Christian baptism had a powerful appeal, but it also earned the contempt of pagans, who reviled Christianity for the baser sort of person attracted to it.

Baptism addressed several key themes that concerned the classical mind. The theme of victory with Christ over hostile powers through the resurrection was made graphic in baptism. The cleansing, regeneration, and enlightenment that the Holy Spirit brings became experiential through baptism. The mystery cults promised knowledge and salvation in different forms through participation in a *mysterion* (Greek) or *sacramentum* (Latin). For the Christians, however, the act of baptism served as a covenant agreement whereby believers bound themselves to Christ. Unlike the mystery cults, they did not offer secret, esoteric knowledge. Instead, they proclaimed their message to any who would receive it. Baptism itself did not occur in secret grottoes as in the Mithra cult, but in public places, where all could witness the profession of faith in Christ.⁹

Concerned as he was with faithfulness in persecution, Tertullian advised people to put off baptism lest they be unable to live up

to the calling. He urged parents not to have their children baptized, which suggests that infant baptism had become common by the end of the second century.¹⁰ Hippolytus indicates that children were baptized as a matter of course from the third century on. Infant baptism comprised one of the major concerns of Augustine in his conflict with the Pelagians. The Pelagians taught that people were sinners not by nature but by choice. Infants had no need of baptism for the remission of sins, because they had not yet committed personal sin. The synods at Carthage and Milevis (416) condemned the Pelagian view, upholding the common view in the preceding two centuries of the necessity of infant baptism.¹¹

The acceptance of infant baptism as the norm coincided with the new official status of Christianity and the rapid growth of the church through the inclusion of what Davies calls "semi-converts."¹² Hinson argues that after the persecutions, baptism took on a quasi-magical acceptability that drew in large numbers of people attracted by the benefits of baptism, who did not necessarily appreciate the significance of the baptismal confession of faith.¹³ Such stories as the baptism of Constantine's army and Charlemagne's forced baptism of the Celts serve to illustrate how baptism had become separated from one's response to Christ as it served the same sort of function that the old sacrifices to Caesar had served in pagan days. The relationship of baptism and confession continued to exist on the frontiers of Christendom, where groups of people increasingly turned to Christ; but where the church enjoyed establishment status, instruction and confirmation replaced the old notion of conversion in practice.

Baptism marked people for life before Christianity became the state religion. One story illustrates its significance. Victorinus, a famous teacher of rhetoric in Rome, had a powerful impact on Augustine in the struggle of his own conversion. Victorinus privately confessed to Simplicianus that he was a Christian, but Simplicianus insisted that he would not believe it until he saw Victorinus in the church of Christ. Victorinus resisted this challenge for fear of how his friends and the public might respond, but a greater fear began to develop that Christ would deny him before the angels if he would not make a public profession of faith. He then sought public baptism, with all of the social implications.¹⁴ As infant baptism

became normative and Christianity assumed respectability, the radical decision of baptism was lost.

A thousand years later, baptism of consenting adults once again appeared as a major concern of the relatively small group of radical reformers known as Anabaptists. From the perspective of Catholics and Lutherans alike, the Anabaptists were rebaptizing Christians. From the perspective of the Anabaptists, however, no one truly experienced baptism unless he or she entered the water as a free moral agent. Infants could not be baptized since they could not of their own volition choose to express faith in Christ. Rather than being a united movement, a variety of groups in continental Europe and in England reached a conviction about "believer's baptism" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In theological perspective, some came from Lutheran, some from Calvinistic, some from Arminian, and some from Zwinglian traditions.

The Anabaptists of continental Europe and the Baptists of Britain did not identify the church with Christendom, but looked to Scripture for a model of a church composed of conscious believers. Their approach to church and society seemed to threaten the entire established social order. Many of those who sought to reintroduce believer's baptism to the church died as martyrs, including Felix Manz (d. 1527), Conrad Grebel (d. 1526), and Balthasar Hübmaier (d. 1528).¹⁵

In England, the Particular Baptists (Calvinistic) grew much more rapidly than the General Baptists (Arminian) in the period of the English Civil War, Commonwealth, and Protectorate (1644–1660). John Bunyan was converted and was baptized by immersion in the early 1650s and soon gained a reputation as a gifted preacher and writer. He also acquired a reputation as a bit of a controversialist. One of his most famous controversies found him at odds with other Calvinistic Baptists of London over the necessity of baptism by immersion for admission to communion in the church. The London Baptists held a strict view, but Bunyan insisted that the lack of immersion should not bar anyone from fellowship. Whereas the London Baptists regarded baptism as the door to the church and the Lord's livery, Bunyan held that only faith in Christ could admit someone to his church.¹⁶ He separated from the other Baptists over

this issue, and after his death his church became identified as a Congregational church.

The concern of the Puritans to maintain true churches of visible saints cannot be separated from their concern for conversion. As Puritanism disintegrated into various factions, the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists all retained concern for these issues, though they pursued them in different ways. In New England among the Congregationalists a problem began to cause difficulty for maintaining a church of converted, visible saints. According to church teaching, only someone whose verbal profession of faith and Christian living testified to conversion could enter fully into the church covenant. The children of such people could receive baptism, but they did not become full members of the church and were not permitted to share the Lord's Supper until they made a profession of faith and acknowledged the covenant.

But what about baptized children of the converted who failed to express any evidence of conversion of their own? The Synod of 1662 adopted a new position, allowing for the baptism of the children of those who had never become full church members. This decision essentially brought to an end the attempt to maintain a church of converted saints, and the privilege of communion at the Lord's table was gradually extended to all who had been baptized as infants. This alteration in the Congregational concern for conversion became known as "The Halfway Covenant."¹⁷

Penance

Penance first began to develop in the life of the early church as a way of offering an expression of repentance after baptism. The *Didache* provided for public confession of sin in church, especially prior to observing the Lord's Supper.¹⁸ Tertullian allowed only one repentance after baptism when the problem of postbaptismal sins arose.¹⁹ He offered the possibility of a second repentance for remissible sins, but for sins like murder, idolatry, fraud, apostasy, blasphemy, and adultery he offered no hope of forgiveness after baptism.²⁰ He advocated acts of penance as the means of expressing this second repentance, just as baptism expressed the first repentance.²¹ Both of these acts constituted the "two planks" of salvation.²²

During the Novatian controversy the practice of forgiveness and restoration through prescribed acts of penance precipitated a crisis when a council meeting in North Africa in 251 approved penance to restore those who had offered sacrifices during the persecutions.²³ Following the persecutions, the belief developed that those martyrs who had survived their suffering had the power to declare sins forgiven. As a consequence, penitents came to them in great numbers seeking forgiveness, which the martyrs generally granted. Following the Decian persecution it became customary in the East for a special priest designated by the bishop to hear the confession of any who had sinned, to establish the terms of penance, and to grant absolution. Because of abuses, however, this practice was discontinued in the late fourth century.²⁴

By the third century penance had developed a common form that included confession of sin, exercises such as prayer and almsgiving, and absolution or reconciliation.²⁵ The Synod of Elvira in Spain (305?) had little inclination to provide for penance when grievous sin took place. On the other hand, the Synod of Ancyra in Asia Minor (314) recognized five degrees of penance for varying offenses.²⁶ The growth of this system of penance corresponded to the influx of people into the church in the post-Constantine era and began to replace in function some of the initiation process that had related to baptism of adult converts in the earlier centuries.²⁷ It provided a way to demonstrate commitment, obedience, and the seriousness of one's profession.

Pope Gregory departed somewhat from Augustine's views on election as he followed the modified Augustinianism of the Synod of Orange, which stressed God's foreknowledge rather than predestination. In so doing, he placed more emphasis on the responsibility of people to deal with their sin. He also stressed that works of penance and intercession by the saints and martyrs would lighten one's experience of discipline and cleansing in purgatory.²⁸ Private confession reemerged in the Middle Ages and with it the priest's instructions for penance, which now included such options as fasting, pilgrimages, self-flagellation, almsgiving, gifts to the church, or prayers. The priest, on the basis of the theory of apostolic succession, exercised the claim to remit sin, but only where true repen-

tance had occurred. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed that all Christians should go to confession at least once a year.²⁹

Indulgences appeared during the Middle Ages in the West as an alternative to the requirements of penance. In the East, penance tended to be regarded as a thanksgiving for forgiveness rather than as a condition for forgiveness. In the West the view arose that sin not dealt with in life would have to be purged in purgatory; therefore, plenary indulgences offered an attractive way to work off part of the load for the truly repentant. Urban II made one of the earliest offers of plenary indulgences to those who took part in the first crusade.

Alongside this theory of indulgences in place of penance, the scholastics developed the theory of the “treasury of the church.” According to this theory, the church had authority over the accumulated merit of the saints over and above what Christ had done. The church could draw against this treasury of merit to grant indulgences. Pope Clement VI endorsed this theory in 1343, and it soon expanded to include the view that the living could obtain indulgences for those already in purgatory.³⁰

John Wycliff (d. 1384) followed Augustine’s view of election and predestination. In so doing he concluded that salvation lay outside the control of the ministry of the church. He condemned the tradition that had grown up to make salvation secure, including the veneration of the saints, relics, pilgrimages, masses for the dead, and indulgences. His position cut to the heart of the spiritual control of the clergy as it had been developing in the West during the late Middle Ages. Over a hundred years would pass, however, before anyone mounted a powerful enough challenge to indulgences to split the church in the West.

As chapter 3 has suggested, Scripture provided the orienting feature of Luther’s career. The end of his efforts in studying Scripture, however, rested in his discovery of the idea of justification by faith. In his efforts to please or satisfy God so that he might enjoy salvation, Luther had tried the life of a monk, practicing self-deprivation, making pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, and taking advantage of holy relics. He even visited Rome in the Jubilee Year to benefit from the indulgence attached to such a visit. Despite all of these exercises that had gradually gained credence through the centuries as a basis for forgiveness, nothing brought Luther confidence in

salvation until 1515, when he came to the conviction that God expects only faith.

So strongly did Luther feel about the centrality of faith as the chief response God demands of people that he composed a list of ninety-five matters of dispute, chiefly arising from the sale of indulgences in his district to finance the rebuilding of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Luther did not object to the encouragement of "works of piety and charity," but these could not form the grounds for salvation. Even more did he condemn the idea of purchasing an indulgence in order to avoid one's good works.³¹ In his first proposition, Luther declared, "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying 'Repent ye,' etc., intended that the whole life of believers should be penitence."³² He affirmed the ongoing struggle of Christian life, which required a contrite stance toward God while relying on faith as the beginning point for the struggle.³³ Luther worked out his theology of conversion, like Augustine, largely in reflection on his own circumstances and in tandem with his scholarly exposition of Scripture.³⁴ In his *Lectures on Romans*, he emphasized human inability to prepare for conversion and stressed God's exclusive prerogative in preparation.³⁵ This stance precluded the mechanical methods that indulgences represented. The consistency of Luther's position may be seen in his criticism of attempts to convert Jews by force.³⁶ To him, such efforts profaned both the grace of God and justification by faith. Forced acquiescence does not constitute faith.

Grace and Choice

Sin and grace are issues that arise from the doctrine of God, and given the overriding concern of Augustine for the Creator God, these issues formed major concerns in the working out of his theology. The teachings of Pelagius on the human response to God ran afoul of these foundational concerns; therefore, Augustine engaged in a heated debate with the Pelagians. In simple form Pelagius taught that people had the freedom of will to choose to obey God, while Augustine taught that sin so dominated people as a result of the Fall that no one can turn to God apart from his initiative in grace to cause it to happen. All people have inherited a sinful nature in Adam, but God has chosen some by his mercy to receive pardon and salvation. Pelagius, on the other hand, held that people have a

moral duty to exert themselves in obedience to God's law, thus denying the concept of inherited sin and an impaired will. To Augustine such a view made grace unnecessary and God a mere bystander in the saga of human self-improvement.

Though condemned by synods in North Africa, Pelagius and Caelestius, his closest associate, made statements of faith that conformed to the orthodoxy of the creeds. Since the creeds did not address the issue of human response, Pope Zosimus found the two perfectly acceptable, reprimanding instead the North African bishops who condemned Pelagius.³⁷ The Pelagians held right belief about Jesus, but they did not hold to faith in Jesus as the criterion for salvation. Instead, they stressed moral obedience as the basis for salvation.

The semi-Pelagianism of John Cassian held to the Eastern view that God wills that all people should be saved. Whenever anyone gives the slightest inclination toward God, God strengthens that inclination by his grace. This view seemed to place the initiative with people rather than with God. Accordingly, the Synod of Orange (529), with the approval of Boniface II, condemned this position, though it affirmed that sufficient grace is bestowed in baptism for a person to achieve salvation.³⁸

During the Reformation, the issue of grace and free choice again emerged as a major source of conflict. Long before the Synod of Dort, Luther and Erasmus carried on a literary duel over the nature of the will. Erasmus advocated the humanistic understanding of free will while Luther upheld an Augustinian view of the will in bondage to sin. Erasmus approached this question largely from the perspective of moral philosophy and saw in Luther's stress on grace a dangerous antinomian tendency that might ignite the masses.³⁹ By his argument, he did not mean to disparage grace so much as to assert human responsibility.⁴⁰

Having pointed out in his *Ninety-Five Theses* the impotence of indulgences to affect salvation in any way, Luther raised the issue of free choice in his *Assertion* (1520).⁴¹ He rejected the notion that free choice or will had anything to do with attaining salvation. Erasmus, however, believed people could apply themselves "to the things which lead to eternal salvation or to turn away from them."⁴² In *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), Luther responded to Erasmus

and insisted that people act out of necessity. They have some limited choice with respect to the temporal world and may even choose to obey the commands of God. Performance of these works, however, do not make a person good or lead to salvation because of the failure of human motive. With respect to motive, one's choices are either motivated by God or by Satan.⁴³ Whereas Erasmus viewed human cooperation with God as a grounds for salvation, Luther viewed it as a consequence of salvation.

This perspective of Luther was amplified and eclipsed by Calvin and the Reformed churches, so much so that this position became known as Calvinism. The Protestants of France, Holland, Scotland, and many in England, Germany, and Switzerland championed this view. The Puritans in particular held to this view while the established Church of England became largely Arminian after the Restoration of 1660. The conflict between the great allies, Wesley and Whitefield, lies largely in the fact that Wesley held Arminian views on human free choice while Whitefield held Calvinist views. In the United States, this issue divided the evangelical wing of the church, particularly in the nineteenth century with the rise of revivalism.

With his emphasis on the Holy Spirit (see chapter 8), Charles G. Finney argued that people under conviction by the Holy Spirit can make a free decision to trust Christ.⁴⁴ He rejected the Calvinist understanding of predestination even before his conversion. Once converted, Finney passionately presented a gospel available to any who would respond, even though he was ordained a Presbyterian minister.⁴⁵ The "Old School" Calvinists, who stressed the sovereignty of God (see chapter 2), held that people could not make a free decision for or against Christ regardless of the means employed by a preacher—and Finney employed a number of means.

Finney came under harsh attack for introducing a number of "new measures" to facilitate responses to Christ. The Calvinists feared that the means he employed were manipulating the emotions of people, thus counterfeiting an experience of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ Finney held "anxious meetings" to counsel people on how to be saved and organized house-to-house visitation as well. He set apart a special section of pews in his services for "seekers" who were anxious about salvation. Finney prayed in public for the salvation of people by name. He also utilized "protracted meetings" of many

weeks duration. These and other new measures were intended to elicit responses to Christ.

Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton led the opposition to Finney and his new measures. The principal objection lay in offering the hope of salvation to everyone indiscriminately. To them, offering salvation to one not numbered among the elect constituted an affront to God. While a general armistice was reached between Finney and most of his opponents, the debate filtered into the mainstream of American theological dispute, with Calvinists generally alarmed by “public invitations” and other means designed to encourage people to decide for Christ.⁴⁷

The importance of decision has also played a central role in the development of the Christian existentialist school of thought. Søren Kierkegaard saw the exercise of the will as the ultimate theological/philosophical concern. A person must make the undetermined choice to accept or reject God’s word. In his own writing, Kierkegaard strove to confront his readers with choices. At the most fundamental level, choices had to be made without any criteria, for criteria limited and determined the choice. This most basic choice Kierkegaard called the “leap of faith.” This choice creates the criteria for all other decisions as a Christian subordinates his or her will to God’s word.⁴⁸ In contrast with the prevailing philosophical mood of the day, Kierkegaard rejected Hegel’s notion of inevitable progress and stressed the importance of human freedom in faith and repentance.⁴⁹ He held that no amount of objective evidence can form a basis for faith. On the contrary, the leap of faith occurs as an existential encounter.⁵⁰

HUMAN RESPONSE AS GOOD NEWS

For the sake of parallelism, this chapter requires the inclusion of this section, but this chapter is not like the others. The human response is not like the good news of what God has done. In the sense that the rest of the book has discussed good news, the human response called for by the gospel does not fall under the same category. The good news lies not in the human response, but in the invitation of God. It is good news that God has made the offer to which people may respond.

The gospel offers Jesus Christ, and people will either respond to Christ or they will not. A range of options does not exist any more than a range of options to a proposal of marriage exists. A marriage proposal is the closest analogy that the gospel message presents to human experience; it offers intimate relationship with God. Those who choose to bisect the elements of the response to Christ into rationalistic categories such as repentance, faith, obedience, and perseverance have missed the point of following Christ. Those who calculate the terms of a marriage proposal are negotiating terms for a contract.

The good news is not what Christ desires *from* us but rather that Christ desires *us*. The theological categories that describe levels of life at which response has an impact actually describe areas in which the call of Christ touches those who follow him. The gospel elicits the response to the invitation. The response does not cause salvation; it is the effect of the gospel on those who desire the relationship with Christ. The pearl of great price is not costly to the buyer because all else is valueless by comparison.

As this book has suggested, the gospel of Jesus Christ appeals to different levels and dimensions of spiritual need. It addresses the variety of human experiences. While this book has attempted to illustrate some of that variety, it by no means exhausts the subject. In truth, it may be little more than a personal testimony because of the inevitable cultural and theological filters I have brought to the study. For all its flaws, however, the study at least suggests the height and depth and width and breadth of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It also suggests that the church in any age has the capacity to reduce the gospel to one narrow experience of the truth of Christ, to the neglect of other aspects that would be good news for other people.

Too often the church lies in danger of shielding the gospel of Christ from people. This withholding of Christ is not intentional, but it happens any time we present theological conclusions that spoke powerfully to a past generation instead of the living Christ who speaks anew to the specific spiritual issues of each successive generation. In order to respond legitimately to Christ, a person must clearly see Christ. In order to understand the meaning of the gospel, a person must understand how Jesus Christ answers the questions of

that person's life. This book has illustrated how different elements of the gospel address different life issues. Furthermore, it has demonstrated how entire theological systems and traditions grew up around particular elements of the gospel. When we confuse the system or the tradition with the gospel, we place a veil between Christ and the one who needs to know him. By constantly returning to Jesus afresh, however, the gospel continues to speak to each successive generation after two thousand years as it addresses issues in a contemporary way that the previous generation could never have conceived. This approach does not produce a relative gospel; rather, it faithfully transmits a comprehensive gospel to the next generation of believers.

NOTES

1. E. Glenn Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Empire: Identity and Adaptability* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1981), 73–95.

2. J. G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 93.

3. For examples of these early “rules,” see Irenaeus, *Against Heretics* 1.10.1; Justin, *Dialog with Trypho*, 132.

4. See Justin, *First Apology*, 61.

5. *Didache*, 7.

6. Davies, *The Early Christian Church*, 104. See also Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, xxi. 12–18.

7. Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 20.

8. Hinson, *Evangelization of the Roman Empire*, 216–19; Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 152–56.

9. Hinson, *Evangelization of the Roman Empire*, 167–81.

10. Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 18.

11. Henri Rondet, *Original Sin: The Patristic and Theological Background*, trans. Cajetan Finegan (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1972), 123–27.

12. Davies, *The Early Christian Church*, 200.

13. Hinson, *Evangelization of the Roman Empire*, 221.

14. Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.3–5.
15. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 2:780–81.
16. For a discussion of this controversy, see my doctoral dissertation, “Evangelistic Fervency Among the Puritans in Stuart England, 1603–1688” (Louisville, Ky.: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 236–51.
17. Edwin Scott Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), 9–12.
18. *Didache*, 4:14; 14:1.
19. Tertullian, *On Repentance*, 7. Hermas also held this position.
20. Tertullian, *On Chastity*, 18–19.
21. Tertullian, *On Repentance*, 7.2.
22. *Ibid.*, 2.9.
23. Davies, *The Early Christian Church*, 130.
24. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1:217.
25. Davies, *The Early Christian Church*, 154.
26. Hinson, *Evangelization of the Roman Empire*, 124–26.
27. *Ibid.*, 129.
28. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1:340–41.
29. *Ibid.*, 1:528–29.
30. *Ibid.*, 1:529–30.
31. Martin Luther, “Ninety-Five Theses,” in *The Harvard Classics*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), 262.
32. *Ibid.*, 265.
33. Marilyn J. Harran, *Luther on Conversion: The Early Years* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), 105.
34. *Ibid.*, 55. Harran argues that an intimate relationship exists between Luther’s exegesis and his personal religious experience.
35. *Ibid.*, 100.
36. *Ibid.*, 103.
37. Davies, *The Early Christian Church*, 237.
38. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1:173–82.
39. E. Gordon Rupp, A. N. Marlow, Philip S. Watson, B. Drewery, trans. and eds., *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Library of Christian Classics 17; London: SCM, 1969), 9.
40. *Ibid.*, 10.
41. *Ibid.*, 13.
42. *Ibid.*, 47. Erasmus presented this position in his *Diatribes Concerning Free Will* (1524).

43. *Ibid.*, 17–18.
44. Lewis A. Drummond, *Charles Grandison Finney and the Birth of Modern Evangelism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), 111.
45. William Warren Sweet, *Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), 135.
46. Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792–1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 104–32.
47. Drummond, *Charles Grandison Finney*, 107–23.
48. Alasdair MacIntyre, “Søren Aabye Kierkegaard,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed. (New York: Macmillan / The Free Press, 1972), 4:336–40.
49. L. Joseph Rosas III, *Scripture in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 34.
50. *Ibid.*, 27–28.